

THE INFLUENCE OF DIRECT SPEECH ON THE PLOT  
DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERIZATION IN THE BOOK  
OF JUDITH

Wendy P. Giles

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil  
at the  
University of St Andrews



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## Abstract

Although the Book of *Judith* has been thought to reflect a historical situation, this is not necessarily the case, and more recent literary critical studies have provided greater access to its intricacies. *Judith* contains a number of direct speeches, and direct speech in Hebrew literature in general, influences both plot development and characterization. This thesis is a discussion of how the direct speeches in *Judith* influence both its plot development and characterization. Since a number of the speeches contain irony, special attention has been given to this literary device.

I, Wendy Pauline Giles, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 50,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 in October 1990 and as a candidate for the degree of Master of Philosophy in October 1991; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1990 and 1994.

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This thesis is dedicated to my late stepmother, Marion Ann Elliot, whose warmth and caring will remain with me always. I also thank all my family and friends who have tirelessly encouraged me.



## Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Book of Judith

The Book of *Judith* presents a strange and bizarre tale filled with intrigue and emotion. A frequent inspiration for artists<sup>1</sup> and popular within Judaism and Christianity, its central themes have remained poignant since their composition in the second century BCE<sup>2</sup>. Its popularity and apocryphal status have produced two responses from biblical criticism<sup>3</sup>:

- a) that which assumes the Book of *Judith* reflects to some extent historical situations and personalities
  - b) that which views the Book of *Judith* as a work of great literary merit
- Neither approach necessarily excludes the other and while the first has always been popular, the second is becoming increasingly prominent<sup>4</sup>.

The rise of literary critical methods within biblical criticism<sup>5</sup> coupled with the demise of the historical approach<sup>6</sup> to *Judith*, have promoted

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<sup>1</sup> For examples see B. Bayer, 'Judith in the Arts', *Encyclopaedia Judaica* Vol. 10 (Jerusalem, 1971), pp.459-462; P. Montley, 'Judith in the Fine Arts: the Appeal of the Archetypal Androgyne', *Anima: the Journal of Human Experience*, 4(1978), pp.37-42; E. Purdie, *The Story of Judith in German and English Literature* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1927); and N. Stone, 'Judith and Holofernes: Some Observations on the Development of the Scene in Art', in J.C. VanderKam (ed.), *"No One Spoke Ill of Her": Essays on Judith* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992), pp.73-93.

<sup>2</sup> The Book of *Judith* was most likely composed during the Hasmonean period. See C.A. Moore, *Judith* Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1985), pp.67-70.

<sup>3</sup> Two other notable responses, which have not been included, are the textual work of Robert Hanhart, for example, and the theological work of John Craghan (see Bibliography). None of the responses listed are necessarily mutually exclusive.

<sup>4</sup> Studies by L. Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', *Protocol Series of the Colloquies of the Centre for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture* 11(March 1974), pp.1-20 and by T. Craven, *Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 1980) have brought about this prominence.

<sup>5</sup> Literary critical approaches have become especially popular in biblical criticism since the 1970's.

<sup>6</sup> Before the sixteenth century Reformation *Judith* was considered a pure historical record, but this is no longer the case. Many now believe that *Judith* is

greater opportunity for an awareness of its literary artistry. Both responses are important for a fuller understanding of *Judith* and its plot.

### Historical approaches

At first glance the Book of *Judith* appears to be a wholly historical account. This is not the case but the style of the author certainly lends itself to such an interpretation. *Judith* contains a number of devices which suggest it is a historical piece of writing, some of which are listed below:

1) specific dates: the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar

(1:1)<sup>7</sup>, in the seventeenth year (1:13), in the eighteenth year on the twenty-second day of the first month (2:1)

2) specific lengths of time: his forces rested and feasted for one hundred and twenty days (1:16), remained for a whole month (3:10), surrounded them for thirty-four days (7:20), hold out for five days more (7:30), a widow for three years and four months (8:4), she remained in the camp three days (12:7), all the people plundered the camp for thirty days (15:11), for three months the people continued feasting in Jerusalem(16:20)

3) some familiar countries, locations and rivers: Nineveh, Ecbatana, Ragau, Euphrates, Tigris, Persia, Cilicia, Damascus, Lebanon, Carmel, Gilead, Galilee, Esdraelon, Samaria, Jordon, Jerusalem, Bethany,

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either completely fictional, or partially inspired by particular historical persons and events. An inability to agree on which persons and events may have inspired the author, has led to a demise of the historical approach.

<sup>7</sup> All translations have been taken from The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books New Revised Standard Version (New York: Oxford University Press,1989), unless otherwise stated.

Tahpanhes, Tanis, Memphis, Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria, Moab, Ammon, Judea (1:1, 5-10,12), Mesopotamia, Japheth, Arabia, Sidon, Tyre, Jamnia, Azotus (Ashdod), Ascalon (Askelon) (2: 24, 25, 28), Dothan, Scythopolis, Kadesh-barnea, Heshbon, Egrebeh, Chusi, Mochmur (3:9, 10; 5:14, 15; 7:18)

4) well-known Israelite names: Joakim, Uzziah, Micah, Simeon, Joseph, Gideon, Ahitub, Elijah, Manasseh, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Laban (4:6; 6:15; 8:1, 2, 26)

5) well-known Gentile names: Nebuchadnezzar, Holofernes, Bagoas (1:1; 2:4; 12:11)

6) several identifiable ancient peoples: Assyrians, Medes, Chaldeans, Ishmaelites, Midianites, Israelites, Egyptians, Amorites, Edomites, Moabites (1:1, 6; 2:23, 26; 4:1; 5:12, 15; 7:8)

This list is by no means exhaustive and other devices which suggest an historical intent include the use of genealogical names (8:1), and the inclusion of laborious detail e.g. the close account of Judith's dressing in chapter 10. Also, the fact that the incidents of the plot form a logical sequence, that there are no supernatural occurrences, and that the story's psychology is believable<sup>8</sup>, lend support to the theory that *Judith* is a tale with a high degree of historicity.

However, although *Judith* contains these names and places etc. it also contains details which are not so familiar, such as the location of Bethulia. This Samaritan town is found in no other extant documents or inscriptions, yet it is of strategic importance for the nation and central to the whole narrative. While C.C. Torrey has argued that Bethulia is a pseudonym for Shechem<sup>9</sup>, this only detracts from the historicity of the

<sup>8</sup> For example Holofernes' treatment of Achior is not unexpected. See R.H. Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times; with Introduction to the Apocrypha (New York: Harper, 1949), pp.299-300

<sup>9</sup> See C.C.Torrey, The Apocryphal Literature: a Brief Introduction (New Haven: Yale University, 1945), pp.91-92.

Book rather than adding to it. Most notably though, *Judith* cannot be considered completely historical since it also contains a number of factual inaccuracies. One of the most striking is as follows<sup>10</sup>;

" Holophernes entire army marched from Nineveh to Northern Cilicia, a distance of about three hundred miles, in just *three days* (2:21), after which they cut their way through Put and Lud (usually identified by scholars with Lybia in Africa, and Lydia in Asia Minor, respectively ... ), only to find themselves crossing the Euphrates River and proceeding west *through Mesopotamia* (2:24) before arriving at Cilicia and Japheth, facing Arabia (2:25)! Either something is now missing from that itinerary, or the author knew nothing about Mesopotamian geography!"

So although the author uses familiar place names the information is presented in such a way that historicity must be denied. Another example is found in the opening verse where the author introduces the Book with the words,

" It was the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh. In those days Arphaxad ruled over the Medes in Ecbatana."

With respect to style this statement appears perfectly reasonable. It includes well-known names and places within a familiar syntax.

However, a closer examination of the juxtaposition of such data reveals serious historical anomalies, in particular, who is this Nebuchadnezzar who ruled over the Assyrians? No other references to a Nebuchadnezzar ruling over the Assyrians has been found, although one attempt to identify him was made by Claus Schedl<sup>11</sup>.

From Darius I of Persia's inscriptions four persons bearing the name Nebuchadnezzar can be identified, all reigning in Babylon. Very

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<sup>10</sup> Moore, *Judith*, p.47

<sup>11</sup> See C. Schedl, 'Nabuchodonoser, Arpaksad und Darius', *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 115(1965), pp.242-254

little is known about the first figure, Nebuchadnezzar I, who reigned in Babylon around 1130 BCE, whilst the second figure, Nebuchadnezzar II, is the most well-known of the four. Reigning from 604 until 562 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar II expanded his territory by conquering the surrounding nations and creating a vast empire. Under him the Israelites were exiled in 586 BCE and Jerusalem and its temple completely destroyed. It is Nebuchadnezzar II who features in the Book of Jeremiah. In comparison, information about both the third and fourth figures appears scanty. After a revolt in Babylon in October 522 BCE a new king Nebuchadnezzar III arose. He claimed to be the son of Nabonidus, Babylonian emperor from 555 to 538 BCE (although Darius believed him to be the pretender Nidintu-Bel, son of Aniri). He was later defeated in battle against Darius and executed in Babylon. A year later in September 521 BCE a second pretender appeared, also claiming to be the son of Nabonidus. This man, Nebuchadnezzar IV, (or Arkha an Armenian son of Halditha as Darius would have us believe), became king in Babylon too, but was then shortly defeated by the Persians.

For Schedl it is Nebuchadnezzar IV, or Arkha the Pretender, who is *Judith's* 'Nebuchadnezzar who ruled over the Assyrians'. Although he became king in Babylon and not Nineveh, he did conduct a campaign against the West and occupied Ninos, on the road between Aleppo and Carchemish in Syria<sup>12</sup>. Schedl maintains that these 'Syrians' Nebuchadnezzar IV reigned over are synonymous with *Judith's* 'Assyrians' of 1:1 since the terms 'Syrians' and 'Assyrians' can be seen to be interchangeable. Now *Judith* describes the twelfth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (1:1) and later refers to the seventeenth and eighteenth years of Nebuchadnezzar (1:13; 2:1), yet Nebuchadnezzar IV

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<sup>12</sup> Ninos was probably only a three day march from northern Cilicia (cf Jdt.2:21).

only reigned for a year at the most. By taking the date of Nabonidus' overthrow in 539/8 BCE, Schedl suggests the author of *Judith* is referring to the years 522/1 and 521/0 respectively. This shows a marked synchronicity with Darius' dating; but is Schedl right? K. Luke replies<sup>13</sup>,

" The difficulty about this interesting synchronism is that Nebuchadnezzar IV who ever stood in danger of Darius' attack from the east, would never have thought of conducting a campaign in the west, and even if he undertook such a daring action, it is impossible to see how his army could have penetrated into the land of Israel."

Also, Nebuchadnezzar IV wouldn't have been ruling over the Assyrians or Syrians in his twelfth year as Jdt. 1:1 maintains since he only came to power in 522/1, his 'seventeenth' or 'eighteenth' year.

This problem of the identity of Nebuchadnezzar is not the only anomaly that 1:1 poses. This verse also refers to Arphaxad who ruled over the Medes, yet no king of Media called Arphaxad has ever been recorded. Also, as the plot unfolds Nebuchadnezzar defeats his enemy Arphaxad and reduces the city of Ecbatana (1:13-15); yet Ecbatana and the Medes were conquered in 554 BCE by Cyrus the Great of Persia. Nineveh, the city from which Nebuchadnezzar supposedly rules (1:1), was destroyed in 612 BCE by the Medes (whom Nebuchadnezzar destroys) led by Cyaxares (625-585) and the Babylonians led by Nebupolassar (625-605), long before Ecbatana was ever destroyed.

These problems with known geography, the identity of Nebuchadnezzar, and the details from various military campaigns, have prompted a different approach to *Judith* which does not assume a wholly historical setting for the Book. Some scholars have maintained that the

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<sup>13</sup> K. Luke, 'The Book of Judith', Bible Bhashyam: an Indian Biblical Quarterly (March 1983), p.25

author has actually used pseudonyms as a disguise for other historical personages and locations<sup>14</sup>. Similarities with the Book of Daniel and with some of the Essene writings from Qumran can be cited as preconditions for such a theory. However, there is by no means one agreed pseudonym or set of pseudonyms, and various extracts from *Judith* have been used to support each theory. Some of the more salient figures believed to be designated by the name 'Nebuchadnezzar' are as follows:

a) Ashurbanipal of Assyria (668-627 BCE)<sup>15</sup>

This man reigned when the Assyrian empire was at its zenith, and although he expanded it as far as Thebes in Egypt (663) most of his time was spent defending his own position. The northern frontier comprising the Indo-Aryan people, including the Medes, had been a continuing problem for successive Assyrian kings and Ashurbanipal was no exception. Various campaigns against these peoples always saw him victorious and the frontier remained. However in 652 rebellion broke out within the whole empire; Ashurbanipal's elder brother Shamash-shum-ukin, deputy king in Babylon, incited rebellion in Babylon supported by Chaldeans, Elamites, and various people of the Iranian highlands; since 655 Egypt had withheld tribute and grown in power under Psammetichus I (664-610); possibly instigated by Psammetichus, rebellion spread in Palestine and Syria; and Arab tribes of the Syrian desert invaded Assyrian vassal states in eastern Palestine and Syria. Ashurbanipal finally overcame this emergency after a long

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<sup>14</sup> For example, Torrey, The Apocryphal Literature, pp.91-92, believes Bethulia to be a pseudonym for Shechem.

<sup>15</sup> A list scholars who are associated with this particular representation of Nebuchadnezzar can be found in Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times, p.293. Pfeiffer also gives a diagrammatic display of most of the figures with whom Nebuchadnezzar has been associated (cf p.295).

struggle and succeeded in reuniting his empire, with Shamash-shum-ukin committing suicide in 648 as Babylon fell. Although Egypt remained independent, the rest of Ashurbanipal's rule was peaceful.

Now if Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of *Judith* represents Ashurbanipal, then *Judith's* Arphaxad who ruled over the Medes represented either the Median king, Phraotes II or Deioces, or Ashurbanipal's brother Shamash-shum-ukin, or any other of Ashurbanipal's enemies. Since Ashurbanipal reigned from 668 until 627 BCE Achior's description, 'they were utterly defeated in many battles and were led away captives to a foreign country; the temple of their God was razed to the ground'(Jdt.5:18), and, 'they have come back from the places to which they were scattered'(Jdt.5:19) must refer to events during the reign of Manasseh in Judah (687-642 BCE). However, although Manasseh himself went into exile (cf 2 Chron. 33:10-13) the people never did and the temple was never destroyed as Achior suggests.

b) Artaxerxes III Ochus (358-338 BCE)<sup>16</sup>

Another candidate to have inspired *Judith's* Nebuchadnezzar is the Achaemenian ruler Artaxerxes III Ochus, who led campaigns against Phoenicia, including Sidon, in 351 (cf 2:28) and Egypt in 343 (cf 1:12). Not only did he have a general named Orophernes<sup>17</sup> and an officer named Bagoas, which displays marked similarity to *Judith*, but *Judith* is set in a postexilic period (cf 5:18,19), Persian names, terms, and practices do appear within the plot<sup>18</sup>, and in the song (16:1-17) the author mentions the Persians in conjunction with the Medes (16:10).

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid p.294

<sup>17</sup> Luke, 'The Book of Judith', p.19, demonstrates how the names Orophernes and Holophernes might be connected.

<sup>18</sup> See Moore, Judith, p.50.



c) Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 BCE) or (d) Demetrius I (162-150 BCE)<sup>19</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar may also be a pseudonym for either of the Syrian rulers Antiochus IV Epiphanes or Demetrius I. Antiochus marched through both the West against Judaea and Egypt (cf 1:7-12) and the East crossing the Euphrates (cf 2:24), annihilating both cities and temples (cf 4:1). Within Jewish literature he is most renowned for his merciless attack on Judaism resulting in the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem<sup>20</sup>; he thought of himself as god<sup>21</sup> and expected people to worship him as such (cf 3:8; 6:2). Yet the explicit details concerning Antiochus and the Jerusalem temple are missing from *Judith*, and so Antiochus' successor Demetrius who held similar views, is also a possible 'Nebuchadnezzar'. C. J. Ball<sup>22</sup> believes that the name Judith actually suggests that of Judas Maccabaeus, the leader of the Jewish army which defeated Antiochus.

These four figures are the result of much searching<sup>23</sup> and in conclusion while the representation of Artaxerxes II Ochus is the closest parallel with respect to military activity, it is by no means compelling and the association of the Book with Antiochus IV Epiphanes is equally viable. The pseudonym theory is not the only one to have been offered which accepts that *Judith* can not be considered historical in the full sense, so in what ways can *Judith* be considered historical, if at all?

<sup>19</sup> See Pfeiffer, History of New Testament times, p.294

<sup>20</sup> Cf 1 Maccabees 1:20-64 and 2 Maccabees 5:11-16

<sup>21</sup> See E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175BC-AD135) Vol.1 Revised English ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973), pp.146-48

<sup>22</sup> C. J. Ball 'Judith', in H.Wace (ed.), Apocrypha Vol.1(London: John Murray, 1888), p.248. See also B. M. Metzger, An Introduction to the Apocrypha (New York:Oxford University, 1957), p.52.

<sup>23</sup> The search for Nebuchadnezzar has led to an understanding that other characters within *Judith* must also be representatives. See Moore, Judith, p.53 for further details.

At the beginning of this century it was proposed that *Judith* was a text which had undergone an evolutionary type of development<sup>24</sup>:

i) " The evolving text theory explains the confusing historical data within *Judith* as being the result of various 'details of facts' being added, over the centuries, to what was originally a brief but consistent tale... thus, the story, starting from a brief and simple tale with very few personal or place names, gradually picked up at various points additional names, details, and local colouring, to which were added finally extended passages, including prayers, hymns, and conversations."

This evolutionary understanding is very elaborate, which makes it improbable; more recent studies however, offer a much higher degree of possibility.

ii) Moore<sup>25</sup> believes in a single author and not a series of editors. *Judith* was completed during the Hasmonean period and shows direct evidence of this, but the author was also influenced by traditions about Artaxerxes III Ochus, possibly oral in character. The details of chapters 1-3 appear more directly connected with Artaxerxes III Ochus than with any other monarch, but the tone of the whole book, especially chapters 4-16, suggest a Hasmonean context.

iii) Dancy<sup>26</sup> advocates an oral kernel with a series of compilers: " the earliest part was probably the song of *Judith* in chapter 16<sup>27</sup>. In origin this song would have been *about* *Judith*, not 'by' her, and would

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<sup>24</sup> See Moore, *Judith*, p.52

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid* p.55 and p.67

<sup>26</sup> J. C. Dancy, *The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha: Tobit, Judith, Rest of Esther, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel, and Prayer of Manasseh* Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p.68 and p.71

<sup>27</sup> P. Skehan, 'The Hand of *Judith*', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25(1963), pp.94-110, believes that the song of Ex. 15:1-19 was the poetic prototype of *Judith*'s song. However, A. E. Gardner, 'The Song of Praise in *Judith* 16:2-17 (LXX 16:1-

have been sung in a village procession to celebrate the local heroine. Only secondly, as men's memory faded, would there have been any need to tell the story itself; and the historical introduction would have been added later still ... There is in fact no reason to doubt - though it is impossible to prove - that the book was written by an orthodox Pharisee early in the first century BC"

iv) Cowley<sup>28</sup> concludes:

" The author is concerned with theology rather than with history, of which perhaps he had a not very exact knowledge, although he adopted this form as the most suitable for his purpose. He seems to have had in mind the time of Artaxerxes Ochus, with whose campaign in Syria many of the incidents agree, but it would be unsafe to assume that he is consciously depicting an episode in that campaign... It is, however, possible that the author adopted an existing story or popular tradition, purposely confusing his historical allusions in order to disguise it."

These four positions are very different. While there may have been an initial tradition about Judith, the way in which this was the inspiration for the Book we have today is unclear. If no tradition about her ever existed before, then Zeitlin's conclusion<sup>29</sup> is also possible:

" The book of Judith, as was well stated by Dr. Enslin in his Introduction, "is an example of Jewish fiction at its best." It is a fine short story of the period of the Second Jewish Commonwealth. It was very well constructed by a vivid imagination, characteristic of the best Jewish stories. The author was a good novelist and composed a popular Jewish novelette. The names mentioned in the book are fictitious and bear no resemblance to actual actions or events. Judith, the heroine of the

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17)', Heythrop Journal 29(1988),p. 413-422, believes the song of Deborah (Judges 5:2-31) was the literary model.

<sup>28</sup> A. E. Cowley, 'The Book of Judith', in R. H. Charles (ed.), The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p.243

<sup>29</sup> M.S. Enslin and S. Zeitlin, The Book of Judith (Leiden: Brill, 1972), p.1

story, is not an historical character. Similarly, Bethulia, Judith's hometown is fictitious. We seek in vain to identify the names mentioned in the book with kings and generals of the Persian period or with the rulers during the Hellenistic period. The author had no intention to write history; he wrote a charming story."

While the setting of the plot has obviously been influenced both by the period of its final composition i.e. the Hasmonean era, and by the Persian era, this influence does not necessarily imply that the author intended any historicity. Metzger<sup>30</sup> claims it is sheer fiction with a historical flavour to enhance dramatic effect. Also, both Torrey<sup>31</sup> and Oesterley<sup>32</sup> believe that the first verse of *Judith* unambiguously announces the fact that the author is writing fiction, not history. The discrepancies over the identity of Nebuchadnezzar, the city in which he lives, the people over which he is ruling, the identity of Arphaxad, etc., are only academic since the author later demonstrates his command of Israelite history with the speech of Achior (5:5-21). Torrey writes<sup>33</sup>: "It is just as though a modern story-teller should say: It happened at the time when Napoleon Bonaparte was king of England, and Otto von Bismarck was on the throne in Mexico. The Jewish novelist... knew that the readers and hearers of his own day, the young and old alike would see his meaning."

So while the names and places were familiar to the readers of 1:1, the juxtaposition of such data was ludicrous and so indicated a fictional work<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Metzger, An Introduction to the Apocrypha, p.50-51

<sup>31</sup> Torrey, The Apocryphal Literature, p.89

<sup>32</sup> W. O. E. Oesterley, The Books of the Apocrypha: their Origin, Teaching and Contents (London: Robert Scott, 1914), p.377

<sup>33</sup> Torrey, The Apocryphal Literature, p.89

<sup>34</sup> See also D.E. Gowan, Bridge Between the Testaments: A Reappraisal of Judaism from the Exile to the Birth of Christianity (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1976), p.354

In conclusion, there are clearly two positions concerning the extent of the historical content of *Judith*. The first advocates a degree of historicity which may to some extent involve a historical kernel, and the second claims that *Judith* is completely fictional. Both positions are equally valid. Another approach to the Book which does not involve these problems, is the literary critical approach.

### Literary Approaches

For most literary approaches any content which is of a historical nature is completely arbitrary . The literary approaches which have been applied to *Judith* are no exception and it is of little significance whether the Book contains any historical element or not. The two most notable studies are by Luis Alonso-Schökel and by Toni Craven, both of whom use very different methodologies. Alonso-Schökel favours an approach which centres on plot content and motifs whereas Craven prefers an approach which she terms 'compositional' analysis.

### Luis Alonso-Schökel

Alonso-Schökel states his intentions clearly at the beginning of his work<sup>35</sup> with:

"I intend in this paper to read and analyse the book of Judith as a piece of narrative, as a short story. There is a surprising and almost universal agreement among scholars on the literary excellence of this piece of fiction... There are many ways to analyse a piece of fiction... I

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<sup>35</sup> L.Alonso-Schökel,'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', Protocol Series of the Colloquies of the Centre for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture 11(March 1974), p.1

will analyse the book in the tradition of Hebrew narrative style, using some of the modern categories to explain its structure and meaning. It seems convenient to sort out as the main or more rewarding features the composition, irony, characters, interplay of celebration and parenthesis."

Using the categories of composition, irony, dénouement, characters, and interplay of celebration and parenthesis, he progresses through the Book chapter by chapter, as the following description of his work demonstrates<sup>36</sup>. He finishes with a brief appendix or conclusion.

### Composition

While *Judith* has often been divided into two parts<sup>37</sup> with the most common division separating chapters 1-7 from chapters 8-16, the role assigned to each part has often been different with chapters 1-7 playing an inferior or even negligible role<sup>38</sup>. For Alonso-Schökel however, chapters 1-7 play a vital role since if the author had only wanted to disclose Bethulia's plight and Judith's actions, then why not begin the plot at chapter 8 and omit chapters 1-7? He explains<sup>39</sup>: "The development of the first part (1-7) is clear, and except for the speech of Achior, strictly chronological<sup>40</sup>. The Jews become the first people to resist; Bethulia becomes an island emerging from a sea of conquered nations. When the people and authorities of Bethulia decide

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<sup>36</sup> Although Alonso-Schökel plans to analyse *Judith* only in terms of a Hebrew narrative style, he does accept that a Greek or Hellenistic narrative style will also have influenced its composition.

<sup>37</sup> For example, see Cowley, 'The Book of Judith', p.242; Metzger, An Introduction to the Apocrypha, p.43; and Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times.

<sup>38</sup> For example, see J.C. Dancy, The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha, p.67 and Oesterley, The Books of the Apocrypha, p.374.

<sup>39</sup> Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p.4. See also Moore, Judith, p.56.

<sup>40</sup> Alonso-Schökel is using the term 'chronological' here to describe a logical sequence of events which are taking place at a similar narrative pace.

to capitulate in five days, all resistance concentrates itself in one person, one woman, one widow. She stands against a universal and "eschatological" coalition of nations. She is greater than a legendary Arphaxad and stronger than his awe-inspiring fortifications. The author is building for his heroine a magnificent pedestal".

Thus the first part serves to set the scene for the second part in a way that is essential to the narrative as a whole. The character of Judith becomes of paramount importance to the reader and the crescendo of surrenders demonstrated by these earlier chapters characterises Holofernes as a man who expects and demands surrender. Holofernes later expects Judith to surrender to him also, and she uses this to flatter and deceive him. Alonso-Schökel does give a little to those who downgrade chapters 1-7 though, admitting<sup>41</sup>, "we must grant its artistic limits and express a feeling of delusion. Yes, it has a function which it duly fulfills, but lacks vividness. It wants to be impressive and terrifying. Maybe the reader at the time of the Seleucids found the descriptions frightening".

Once Judith enters the plot at 8:1, the account becomes more vivid but it is chapter 10 which heralds the centrepiece of the narrative<sup>42</sup>: "This center is no doubt the best part and a masterpiece of narrative art in Hebrew literature. It is this section which gives greatness to the book, fame to its author and popularity to the story among readers, writers, and artists."

It is the author's clever disguise of the plot so that the reader is ignorant of its outcome, and the resulting suspense experienced by the reader, which sustain a high degree of interest and intrigue. Although the reader almost expects a happy ending (cf 4:13; 8:32b), no idea of how

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<sup>41</sup> Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p.5

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p.5

it shall be achieved is forthcoming (8:32a, 34). The ultimatum given by Uzziah of 5 days adds to the panic of the siege and at the beginning of chapter 10 when Judith spends an extraordinary long time dressing<sup>43</sup>, the tension is heightened even further. Yet the time Judith spends dressing is important because it anticipates Bethulia's salvation<sup>44</sup>. Her recovered and outstanding beauty is mentioned several times (10:7, 14, 18, 23) and is essential for the plot, eventually bringing about the defeat of Holofernes. This motif or weapon of beauty is also mentioned by Alan Dundes<sup>45</sup>, but he accentuates the themes of male versus female, and life versus death, as the most central.

### Irony

Aside from her beauty Judith possesses two other weapons<sup>46</sup>; one is her piety and the details associated with it, such as her bag of provisions and her nightly prayer<sup>47</sup>, and the other is her use of irony<sup>48</sup>. Alonso-Schökel explains what he means by irony<sup>49</sup>:

<sup>43</sup> The account of Judith's dressing includes 9 or 10 actions (cf 10:3-4), which is the longest such account in any Hebrew narrative.

<sup>44</sup> cf Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p.7. J. Craghan, 'Esther, Judith, and Ruth: Paradigms for Human Liberation', Biblical Theology Bulletin 12 (Jan. 1982), pp. 11-19, agrees also, since Judith's beautifying process acts as a disguise for her true purpose, as a warrior intent on securing the safety of Bethulia.

<sup>45</sup> A. Dundes, 'Comment on "Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith"', in Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', Protocol Series of the Colloquies of the Centre for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture 11 (March 1974), pp. 27-29.

<sup>46</sup> See also C.C. Torrey, The Apocryphal Literature, p. 90, who concentrates on Judith's beauty as her weapon, and J. Craghan, 'Esther, Judith, and Ruth: Paradigms for Human Liberation', who includes powerlessness and sexuality.

<sup>47</sup> Judith's kosher diet and her nightly prayer can be considered a weapon. Not only does the ritual of nightly prayer provide an unsuspecting escape from the camp, but her pious appearance is an essential tool in her manipulation of Holofernes.

<sup>48</sup> See also D. Gros Louis, 'Narrative Art in the Book of Judith', in K. R. R. Gros Louis with J. S. Ackerman (eds.), Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), pp. 267-69.

<sup>49</sup> Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p. 8. See also I. Kikawada, 'A Comment on Irony: Observations on Luis Alonso-Schökel's "Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith"', in Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the



"As for the irony, let us take the word in a broad sense, including, among others, the following aspects:

- a) A character says something more or something different than he intends. The narrator and the reader, however, understand, sharing the hidden meaning in a silent complicity, as in the plays of Sophocles.
- b) A character says something more or something other than a second character can understand, sharing the irony with the narrator and the reader.
- c) The author or character makes a fool of a second character, winking on the side of the reader.
- d) There may be instances of double-entendre where the duplicity functions at different levels.

These aspects are not mutually exclusive; in fact they usually overlap. The "secret communion" of author and reader at the expense of some character is essential in each case."

He then offers some examples of irony within *Judith*, including:

- i) 10:16 and 11:3 Both the soldiers and Holofernes tell Judith she has saved her life by her actions. This will indeed be the case, but not in the way they are presuming.
- ii) Throughout their conversations Holofernes believes he is capable of attaining anything, including the beautiful Judith. Judith knows this and uses his expectations for her own ends. When he suggests she is a slave of his master Nebuchadnezzar, she flatters him by saying that she is his slave, commenting that if Nebuchadnezzar is to rule the world then it will be because of Holofernes; and he believes her.

iii) 11:9f Although Judith agrees with Achior, she reassures Holofernes that victory is at hand. He knows very little about Jewish religion and chooses to follow Judith rather than Achior.

iv) 11:16 Holofernes believes that this new god will bring him victory.

v) 11:21-23 The Assyrians acknowledge Judith's wisdom, but in reality pay very little attention to it!

vi) 12:4, 14, 18 In all three verses Judith is meaning one thing, yet Holofernes assumes another.

And from the earlier chapters:

vii) 1:1 The author is joking at the expense of more ignorant readers, while encouraging Jewish readers in their cleverness.

viii) 2:5-13 Nebuchadnezzar speaks as though he were God which Holofernes later imitates; is the author mocking them perhaps since neither is finally victorious?

Carey A. Moore also offers some examples of irony within *Judith* adding that the characters themselves are ironic. Judith may be a wealthy, childless widow, but she lives simply and brings spiritual and political life to a nation. Also, although she doesn't eat unkosher food and appears as a model woman, she lies and murders. Holofernes has already obtained much land but is unable to take Bethulia. He plans to use Judith's body, but it is Judith who abuses his. Achior is more faithful than the elders of Bethulia, and though a battle seasoned warrior he faints at the sight of Holofernes' head. Nebuchadnezzar claims to be lord of the whole world but events prove that this is not the case. For Moore, the whole Book can be considered 'ironic literature' and its theme is summed up by 16:6:

"But the Lord Almighty has foiled them by the hand of a woman."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Cf Moore, *Judith*, pp.78-85

## Dénouement

The result of Judith's beauty and irony, and the climax of the plot, is plain to see<sup>51</sup>:

"With the weapons of beauty and shrewdness Judith has already conquered the ignorant enemy, precisely because of his ignorance. Holofernes, inebriated with passion and wine, abdicates his power and surrenders to Judith while thinking that it is she who has surrendered to him."<sup>52</sup>

Once Holofernes is asleep and in contrast to the earlier techniques of suspense, he is swiftly beheaded and the two women make their escape<sup>53</sup>. They return to Bethulia and the scene changes to one of pageantry and liturgical celebration (unlike that of the Assyrian camp below). The final destruction of the enemy echoes patterns displayed in, for example, Judges 4 or 1 Samuel 17.

## Characters

There are two sets of characters, firstly Nebuchadnezzar, Holofernes, Bagoas, the court, the officers, and the army, and secondly Joakim, Uzziah or Ozias, Judith, and the people of Bethulia and Judah<sup>54</sup>, and between them is Achior.

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<sup>51</sup> Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p.12

<sup>52</sup> For I. Nowell, 'Judith: A Question of Power', The Bible Today 24 (Jan. 1986), pp.12-17, the main theme in *Judith* is that of power. It is the real power of a woman who trusts her God, who triumphs over the imagined power of a male commander, Holofernes, and over the male elders of Bethulia.

<sup>53</sup> As the women return to Bethulia their approach is described from the point of view of an observer. This is a rare Hebrew narrative technique (cf 2 Sam. 18:24-27) which Schökel describes as 'cinematographic' and indicative of artistic sophistication. Cf Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p.7

<sup>54</sup> W.H. Peterson, 'Observations on Luis Alonso-Schökel's "Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith"', in Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', Protocol Series of the Colloquies of the Centre for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture 11 (March 1974), pp.34-35, suggests that the crowds function as characters also.

i) Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes

Nebuchadnezzar acts as a kind of god, not only does he issue commands and expect people to worship him, but he speaks as though he were a god. The relationship between him and Holofernes is especially noteworthy<sup>55</sup>:

"Tensions arise in the story between the emperor and his general. Once Nebuchadnezzar has issued his orders, in the presence of a servile court, and to the commander in chief, the author relegates him to his distant Olympus and widens the stage for Holofernes. He has learned the language of his master: for example compare 6:2-9 with 2:5-13. He pays lip service to the emperor, intends to subject all nations to him (3:8), judges people in terms of their submission to the emperor (11:2), confesses Nebuchadnezzar as the only god (6:2) and king of the whole earth (11:1). Yet when Judith pushes him to the foreground and promises him a throne in Jerusalem, he does not refuse it. Judith and the narrator agree, and he enjoys playing his role of the master of life and death, giver of privileges and universal fame (11:23). But when Holofernes dies and shame falls on the house of the emperor (14:18), Nebuchadnezzar does not come to avenge his general."

Holofernes desires to usurp Nebuchadnezzar's position, but this only becomes apparent when Judith encourages him.

ii) Judith

Alonso-Schökel lists the many qualities exhibited by the character of Judith, including:

a) her beauty, wisdom<sup>56</sup>, and courage, which are recognised by both Jews and Assyrians

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<sup>55</sup> Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p.14

<sup>56</sup> Cf G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Judith', in M.E. Stone (ed.), Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus Compendia Rerum ad Novum Testamentum 2:2 (Philadelphia:

b) her behaviour as both prophetess and poetess

c) her association with and transformation of traditional characters, like Jael, Deborah, Miriam, and the wise woman of Abel Beth-maacah (2 Samuel 20)<sup>57</sup>

d) she is a widow, a fact accentuated by the mention of Manasseh's death and by 16:22

e) she is a representative of the people<sup>58</sup>:

"as a widow, she can represent the Jewish people in her affliction.

Forty months she mourns (8:4), which is like the time of her people's affliction, since the seige will last forty days... It is a well known *topos* to represent the capital in the image of a matron or a virgin, alternatively stressing beauty or fecundity..."

Also, Patricia Montley sees the character of Judith embodying several archetypes including the female warrior, the femme fatale, and the androgyne (behaving alternately in both a female and a male way)<sup>59</sup>.

She demonstrates great initiative and courage, with her own plan and is not afraid to follow it. Both traits are probably a result of her faith in God<sup>60</sup>.

iii) Achior

Achior is a stereotypical proselyte and with his conversion the law against the Ammonites (cf. Deut. 23:4) is purposefully nullified.

Fortress, 1984), pp.46-52, who claims "the didactic character of the book suggests connections with the wisdom tradition" p.49.

<sup>57</sup> See also Ball, 'Judith', p.248; J.E. Bruns, 'Judith or Jael', Catholic Biblical Quarterly 16(1954), pp.12-14 and 'The Genealogy of Judith', Catholic Biblical Quarterly 18(1956), pp.19-22; J.A. Duncan, 'A Hebrew Political Romance', Biblical World 3(1894), pp.429-34; Enslin and Zeitlin, The Book of Judith, p.180; Gowan, Bridge between the Testaments, p.354; Luke, 'The Book of Judith', p.27; and Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times, p.285.

<sup>58</sup> Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p.15

<sup>59</sup> Montley, 'Judith in the Fine Arts', pp.38-40

<sup>60</sup> Gros Louis, 'Narrative Art in the Book of Judith', p. 267, concludes about Judith's character "her complete faith in God and her awareness of her own perfect obedience to God and his laws. She trusts God, and she trusts herself as his loyal servant."

## iv) God

God is the subject of only one of the narrator's sentences (4:13) yet God's presence is readily apparent. Both the prayers and praise of the Jews including Judith, and Holofernes' acknowledgement, demonstrate God's vital role.

The Book of *Judith* between Celebration and Parenesis

In this section Alonso-Schökel discusses the relationship between *Judith* and the Jewish community at the time of composition. He asks<sup>61</sup>: "The author creates his story to express the faith of the Israelites, faith in the Lord, their God and Saviour. He is consciously traditional... But were the old stories not sufficient?"

Obviously not, since the author wanted to stimulate action and avoid a nostalgic attitude to faith<sup>62</sup>. This is reflected by the composition of the Book<sup>63</sup>:

"Israel expresses its faith mainly in the liturgy. The celebrative patterns are well-known. Afflicted the people pray, God listens and saves, the people praise and give thanks... Our book respects the pattern, from supplication in chapter 4 to hymn in chapter 16... So much so that the book achieves a curious liturgical quality."

However, it is the character of Judith which provides the key to understanding the whole narrative<sup>64</sup>:

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<sup>61</sup> Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', p. 17

<sup>62</sup> For Schökel the author obviously supported the Maccabean revolt, so much so that "the author delivers an explicit and polemic address to the collaborationist party, represented by the population and leaders of Bethulia. Their attitude is summarized... (7:27). This echoes Genesis 47:25... and other expressions in the desert (Exodus 16, Numbers 11, 14). Slavery as salvation contradicts the founding experience of the Exodus. For the benefit of the Jews who defend such a policy, the author speaks through Judith" Ibid. p.18.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p.17

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p.18

"The very existence and honor of the nation are at stake (8:23), and Judith herself embodies this fact. When she declares: "My honour is unblemished" (13:16), she is not only answering suspicions but also relieving the fears of the people. In the honor of Judith the honor of the people is at stake. The plot does not permit her to surrender. Moreover her symbolic function is suggested by several clues. Judith's prayer begins by recalling the defiling of Dinah as a national affront... (9:2)... (9:4). There is a unanimous judgement on the integrity of Judith (8:8) which lasts all her life (16:22)."

Judith's success is the success of the whole nation.

### Appendix

Alonso-Schökel completes his article by means of an appendix in which he comments upon his own methodological approach<sup>65</sup>:

"The *literary* method, as proposed here, while profiting from every useful piece of extrinsic information, studies the work "immanently", i.e. according to its inner structure. It may isolate the book from its tradition, or it may put it against the background of its tradition... The method does not stop at the pure form or interplay of the elements, regardless of the meaning of the elements and of the work. On the contrary, it considers the literary or stylistic analysis as a good way, perhaps the best, to lay bare the subtle meaning as well as the stated, thematized meaning. Moreover the practitioners feel that the literary analysis is an appropriate way of handling literature."

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid p.20

## Toni Craven

Toni Craven's dissertation entitled "Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith"<sup>66</sup>, approaches *Judith* in a different way to Alonso-Schökel. He proceeds through the Book discussing composition, irony, and characters, but she divides it into 'compositional units' and performs a 'compositional analysis'<sup>67</sup>. She describes her work<sup>68</sup>:

"The primary focus of this study is the story itself. It is a "close reading", of a literary/rhetorical kind, of the "structure" of the Book of Judith. When I use the word "structure" I have in mind something akin to a narrative x-ray of the architectural skeleton or compositional pattern that undergirds the story."

In this search for the 'architectural pattern' she has been particularly influenced by Robert Lowth and James Muilenburg, and has used their work to enable her to define a compositional unit and to discuss its relation to other units within the text as a whole. She focuses upon instances of repetition, and it is these repetitions which have led her to her conclusions.

### External design

The external design is the pattern or composition of the Book as a complete text. For Craven, *Judith* consists of two parts which are unavoidably joined<sup>69</sup> by means of repetitions or correspondences<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> T. Craven, Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 1980)

<sup>67</sup> 'Compositional units' and 'compositional analysis' are Craven's own terms which she uses to describe her methodology.

<sup>68</sup> Craven, Artistry and Faith (1980), p. 20

<sup>69</sup> Craven, Artistry and Faith (1980), Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', and Gros Louis, 'Narrative Art in the Book of Judith', all see both parts of Judith as essential for the complete narrative. Gros Louis claims that the themes of fear and military power versus God's power are present in both halves



The first part consists of chapters 1-7 and the second of chapters 8-16.

Examples of these correspondences include<sup>71</sup>:

The first act of each leading character i.e. Nebuchadnezzar and Judith, is to send for others (1:7; 8:10).

At a gathering they have called, both characters claim to have a plan, which they will execute through their hand (2:2,12; 8:10,33,34).

A period of three days precedes the plan (2:21; 12:10).

Fear and trembling fall on the respective groups (2:28; 15:2).

The narrative devices for implementing the plans are similar: fear and terror (2:28; 4:2; 7:4) because of ravaging (2:23-27), and marvelling (10:7, 14, 19, 23) because of beauty and wisdom (8:7-8).

The conditional faith of the Israelites is contrasted with the unconditional faith of Judith(cf 7:24f; 8:10f).

Holofernes and Judith are sexual opposites and employ different weapons; Judith uses beauty and wisdom, Holofernes uses military might.

Declarations of honesty to Holofernes are both true and false (5:5; 11:5).

The power of Nebuchadnezzar is contrasted with that of Yaweh<sup>72</sup>.

Encounters with Holofernes change Achior's group membership (6:5,9; 14:6,10).

A period of thirty-four days is significant (7:20; 15:11).

The conclusions to each part describe the enemy in distress (7:4; 14:19).

She comments<sup>73</sup>:

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of the Book, and that the two dances (Jdt.3:7; 15:12-13) form an ironic parallel between the parts.

<sup>70</sup> Craven lists four types of correspondence: expressed identities, expressed antitheses, implied antitheses, and artificial identities. See Artistry and Faith (1980), pp.53- 56 for clarification.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid pp.53-56

<sup>72</sup> For Craven the contest between Yahweh and Nebuchadnezzar is the central theme of the whole Book.

<sup>73</sup> Craven, Artistry and Faith (1980), p.59

"The kind of literary balance evidenced in the many correspondences between the halves of the book suggests the hand of a highly skilled writer who meant the subject of this story to be told in two parts. It is important to understand that Part I with a tag ending describing the surrender of Bethulia, would be a tragic but complete story. Similarly, Part II, with a brief introduction explaining the reasons for Judith's summoning of the officials of Bethulia would be a triumphant, equally complete story. But alone neither Part I nor Part II tells the same story that is told in the Book of Judith."

### Architectural Components of Part I

Craven divides both parts into compositional units, dividing the first part (chapters 1-7) as follows:<sup>74</sup>

Introduction to Nebuchadnezzar and his campaign against Arphaxad  
(1:1-16)

Nebuchadnezzar commissions Holofernes to take vengeance on the  
disobedient vassal nations (2:1-13)

#### Development

A The campaign against the disobedient nations; the people surrender  
(2:14-3:10)

B Israel hears and is "greatly terrified"; Joakim orders war  
preparations (4:1-15)

C Holofernes talks with Achior; Achior is expelled from the Assyrian  
camp (5:1-6:11)

C\* Achior is received into Bethulia; he talks with the people of Israel  
(6:12-21)

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid p.60

B\* Holofernes orders war preparations; Israel sees and is "greatly  
terrified" (7:1-5)

A\* The campaign against Bethulia; the people want to surrender (7:6-  
32)

Each unit in this threefold chiastic pattern is defined by a geographical shift and by an alternation between Assyria and Israel.

### Architectural Components of Part II

The second part of the Book is dominated by the character of Judith<sup>75</sup>. Its threefold chiastic pattern is broken by a centrepiece (10:11-13:10a) in which Judith overpowers Holofernes and thus the central theme of the identity of the true god is resolved.<sup>76</sup>

A Introduction to Judith (8:1-8)

B Judith plans to save Israel (8:9-10:9a)

C Judith and her maid leave Bethulia (10:9b-10)

D Judith overcomes Holofernes (10:11-13:10a)

C\* Judith and her maid return to Bethulia (13:10b-11)

B\* Judith plans the destruction of Israel's enemy (13:12-16:20)

A\* Conclusion about Judith (16:21-25)

### Conclusion

Craven can conclude<sup>77</sup>:

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<sup>75</sup> Once Craven has discussed the architectural composition of the Book, she turns her attention to how the character of Judith might have influenced the contemporary Jewish readers. Although the Book is humorous, its serious message of the relationship between tradition and convention is not to be missed. See also T. Craven, 'Tradition and Convention in the Book of Judith', in M.A. Tolbert (ed.), *The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics* (Semeia 28, 1983), pp.49-61.

<sup>76</sup> Craven, *Artistry and Faith* (1980), pp.62-63

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid* p.53

"Repetition is the major organizational feature of this narrative. Formal symmetries occur between the two halves of the story as well as within each of the two parts of the book. These inventive repetitions function to define the limits of each half of the story and to fix the relationship of these two parts as that of one whole, the Book of Judith."

### Conclusions

Although *Judith* may at first appear to be historically consistent, it is not a wholly historical account at all. It contains a number of historical inaccuracies and may even be completely fictional. Two studies which have not necessarily considered *Judith's* historicity are those of Alonso-Schökel and Craven. They have approached *Judith* from a literary critical standpoint, and have produced interpretations different from those of historical criticism. Alonso-Schökel favours an approach which concentrates on plot development and characterization, while Craven prefers an approach known as 'compositional analysis'. Compositional analysis reflects a prevailing trend within literary criticism which favours "the formal and structural aspects of biblical narratives... the study of techniques, modes of design, types of narration and other matters connected with the shape of the narratives"<sup>78</sup>.

It is the intention of this thesis to follow the examples set by the literary critics Alonso-Schökel and Craven, and to use literary criticism as a means of discovering new interpretations for *Judith*. Their work has demonstrated that both the content, i.e. plot development and characterization, and the form, i.e. repetitions, create interpretation or meaning. The Book of *Judith* contains twenty-five direct speeches and

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<sup>78</sup> S. Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible 2nd ed.(Sheffield: Almond, 1989), p.10

one song (16:1-17), and direct speech is a formal, or structural, aspect of narrative which affects plot development and characterization. Seven speeches are in part 1 (chapters. 1-7) and eighteen are in part 2 (chapters. 8-16). Characters who speak include Nebuchadnezzar, messengers, Achior the Ammonite leader, commanders of nations, people of Bethulia, Uzziah the chief elder, Assyrian soldiers, Bagoas the eunuch, and Joakim the high priest. Judith participates in just over half the speeches and Holofernes in one fifth. The speeches appear in the Book as follows:

Part 1 (chapters. 1-7)

i) Introduction to Nebuchadnezzar 1:1-16

ii) Nebuchadnezzar commissions Holofernes 2:1-13

*Direct speech given by Nebuchadnezzar 2:4-13*

iii) Development

A) Campaign against the nations and their surrender 2:14-3:10

*Direct reply via messengers 2:28-3:5*

B) Israel hears and is terrified; Joakim orders preparations for war

4: 1-15

C) Discussion between Holofernes and Achior; Achior is expelled

5:1-6:11

*Direct speech between Holofernes, Achior, and the men*

5:1-6:9

C\*) Achior arrives in Bethulia and talks to the Israelites 6:12-21

*The Israelites cry out to God 6:18-19*

B\*) Holofernes orders war preparations; Israel sees and is terrified

7:1-5

*The Israelites see the Assyrians 7:4-5*

A\*) Campaign against Bethulia and the people want to surrender 7:6-3

*Direct speech by the commanders 7:8-15*

*Direct speech between the people and Uzziah 7:23-31*

Part 2 (chapters 8-16)

A) Introduction of Judith 8:1-18

B) Judith plans to save Israel 8:19-10:9a

*Direct speech between Judith and the elders 8:11-36*

*Judith's prayer 9:1-14*

*Direct speech as she prepares to leave the town 10:6-9*

C) Judith and her maid leave Bethulia 10:9b-10

D) Judith overcomes Holofernes 10:11-13:10a

*Direct speech between the Assyrian patrol and Judith*

*10:11-16*

*The soldiers marvel at Judith 10:19*

*Direct speech between Holofernes and Judith 10:23-11:23*

*Direct speech between Holofernes and Judith 12:1-4*

*Judith's message to Holofernes 12:5b-6*

*Direct speech between Holofernes, Bagoas, and Judith*

*12:10-14*

*Direct speech between Holofernes and Judith 12:16-18*

*Judith's prayer 13:4b-5*

*Judith's speech 13:7-8*

C\*) Judith and her maid return to Bethulia 13:10b-11

*Direct speech by Judith to the watchmen 13:11*

B\*) Judith's plans to destroy Israel's enemies 13:12-16:20

*Direct speech between Judith and the people 13:14-14:5*

*Direct speech by Achior 14:6-8*

*Direct speech by the Assyrian soldiers 14:13*

*Direct speech by Bagoas 14:17-18*

*Direct speech by Joakim 15:8-10*

*Song of Judith 16:1-17*

A\*) Conclusion about Judith 16:21-25

The following chapters are an examination of the influence of direct speech on the plot development and characterization in this Book.

## Chapter 2: Direct Speech in Hebrew Literature

Although all extant copies of *Judith* are in Greek, it is possible that the original was composed in Hebrew<sup>79</sup>. The Book's narrative style is certainly reminiscent of certain types of Hebrew literature. The influence of direct speech on the plot development and characterization in *Judith* is likely to be similar to its influence in Hebrew literature generally. This chapter outlines the style of speech within Hebrew literature in general, and suggests some of the functions it performs.

### Style of direct speech

#### Direct and Reported or Indirect speech

There are two forms of speech in Hebrew literature, one is direct speech and the other is a reporting of speech or indirect speech. Examples of the latter include Esther 1:13, 'then the king consulted the sages who knew the laws' and Judges 14:17, 'and because she nagged him, on the seventh day he told her'. Direct speech has the effect of slowing down a narrative since it occurs within the same time that the reader reads it, unlike some actions or reported speech which have already happened. This creates a sense of vividness and a greater degree of reader participation. There is more direct speech within Hebrew narratives than indirect. Job is almost entirely composed of this form.

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<sup>79</sup> See C.A.Moore, *Judith* Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday,1985), pp.66-67



Hebrew direct speech is not literalistic; it does not imitate a natural, verbal speech style. For example, at 2 Sam.15:2 Absalom waits at the city gate, preparing to speak to anyone bringing a case before the king for judgement. One such person says to him, 'your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel'. The words 'such and such a tribe' are not literal; they are used to suggest that Absalom cares nothing for the identity of a person but is only concerned with winning them over to him (cf 15:6). Sometimes even a thought is given in the form of direct speech (eg 1 Sam.27:1).

Occasionally, direct speech includes a report of another speech. At 1 Sam.19:17 Michal reports to Saul the direct speech of David as 'he said to me, 'Let me go; why should I kill you?'. Michal has deceived Saul because David threatened her. Michal's words are the only record of David's threats; he may have said them and he may not. This is what Savran<sup>80</sup> terms a non-verifiable quote. A verifiable quote is when the original speech is already in the text. Savran claims that between Genesis and 2 Kings seventy per cent out of all quotes are verifiable, thirty per cent are not, and of those thirty, two thirds are believable or concurrent with the plot and characterizations. The remaining quotes are all fabrications and serve the interests of their inventor<sup>81</sup>.

#### Economy of words

Hebrew narrative in general mostly contains only elements which are essential to the plot or of relevance to characterizations. An example of this can be found at 2 Sam.14:25-26, where the author gives a detailed description of Absalom's beauty and attractive hair. His beauty is mentioned since it demonstrates Absalom's connection with

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<sup>80</sup> G. Savran, Stylistic Aspects and Literary Functions of Quoted Direct Speech in Biblical Narrative (Ph.D. Diss., Brandeis University, 1982)

<sup>81</sup> Savran, Stylistic Aspects, p.61

his father, David, who is also described as attractive (1 Sam.16:12, 18), and his hair is a symbol of his strength and power (cf Judges 16). The inclusion of this information aids in characterizing Absalom as extremely ambitious and as having a high self esteem. At 2 Sam.18:9 Absalom eventually meets his death after his head gets caught in the low branches of a tree; his beautiful head, heavy with his hair, is the means by which he is trapped. Similarly, Hebrew direct speech is almost always purposeful, and highly relevant to the plot.

### Participants

Although several characters may be involved in a dialogue, only one might speak directly. In other dialogues two or more characters might speak. In Gen.3:9-13, for example, there are three participants:

- verse 9 God speaks to the man
- 10 the man replies to God
- 11 God speaks to the man
- 12 the man replies
- 13a God speaks to the woman
- 13b the woman replies

God and the man speak first, and then God and the woman. Another conversation which involves three participants is Gen.34:8-18. Here, Hamor speaks first to Jacob's sons, then Shechem speaks to Jacob's sons, and then Jacob's sons speak to them both. At 2 Sam.19:19-23, which also has three participants, Shimei speaks to David first, then Abishai speaks to David, then David replies first to Abishai and then to Shimei. In both these conversations there are three participants who all speak directly. Sometimes a crowd of people might function as a single character and possess a solitary voice. For example, in Ruth 1:19 and

4:14-15 the women of Bethlehem appear as one character speaking with one voice, even though several women may be envisaged.

### Turn-taking

Characters speak one at a time and one after another. Each character speaks any number of times. If one participant speaks directly, then the resultant response of the other may be reported. For example, in Gen.16:2 Sarai speaks directly to Abram, proposing that he take Hagar to be his wife or concubine, and Abram's acceptance is noted in the form of a summary, rather than direct speech. If one character is already speaking and their direct speech is interrupted by the narrated repetition 'and she said' or 'he said' for example, this breaks the speech flow and can lead to a change in topic. When Jephthah's daughter replies to her father's announcement of his vow, her speech is divided into two parts. In Judges 11:36 'she replies' and accepts her fate, but at 11:37 the author interrupts her speech with 'she said', and she continues by requesting some time to mourn with her friends. She introduces a new topic, and the break provided by the repetition allows both her father and the reader time to assimilate her new information.

### Opening and Closing

Literal conversations, generally speaking, are nearly always initiated by an established opening phrase, such as "hello" or "good morning". This does not happen in Hebrew narrative since it is not literalistic, but some dialogues do contain a narrated opening. At Gen.22:1 and 22:11, God opens the conversation with 'Abraham!'(v.1) and 'Abraham, Abraham!'(v.11) and both times Abraham replies,'Here I am'. Similarly, at 22: 7, Isaac begins,'My father!' and Abraham replies,'Here I am, my son'.

Also, another example can be found in the Book of Esther. Queen Esther can only approach her husband, the king, if she follows the correct court procedure, which states, 'All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law- all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live'(4: 11). When Esther approaches the king, he holds out the scepter and she is allowed to come to him, so he can enquire of her petition and begin their conversation.

Similarly, literal conversations finish with an established closing phrase such as "goodbye" or "see you again". The two Books of Kings employ a narrated closing statement at the conclusions of the account of each ruler's reign, with 'Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the kings of Judah?'(1 Kings 14:29) for example. Closing statements in Hebrew direct speech are extremely rare.

### Adjacency pairs

When one character addresses another and they respond to this address, this is known as an adjacency pair. The many types of adjacency pairs include, for example:

- i) Question-answer
- ii) Request-response
- iii) Offer-acceptance/rejection

Sometimes a pair may not be immediately obvious, as the following example demonstrates. In Gen. 32:26-28 pair YY' has been inserted between pair XX':

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Man     | "Let me go, for the day is breaking"         |
| X Jacob | "I will not let you go, unless you bless me" |

- Y Man "What is your name?"
- Y' Jacob "Jacob"
- X' Man "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed"
- Z Jacob "Please tell me your name"
- Z' Man "Why is it that you ask my name?"

Speaker X, Jacob, assumes that the question Y is relevant and that the offer X will eventually be accepted. Since the change in Jacob's name is essential to his blessing, the request for his name is relevant. If the man had not responded to Jacob's proposal, then there would have been no adjacency pair. Pair ZZ' is also an adjacency pair even though the man's reply is in the form of a question and not an answer, as Jacob's question anticipates. The man's answer suggests that Jacob already knows his name.

### Topic

This can be defined as follows<sup>82</sup>, "The comments the participants make will cluster, and the focus of that cluster is a topic". Although we are aware of what it is that is being discussed, the actual topic is rarely made explicit. During one conversation it may change several times, and any new topic may or may not be related to the previous one. In 2 Sam.12:1-14 the topics discussed by David and Nathan change as follows:

Nathan chooses the topic of an unjustly treated poor man (v.1-4)

David continues with the chosen topic (v.5-6)

Nathan changes the topic, and the new topics introduced are related to the old one. He introduces a number of new topics, including David as the man who has unjustly treated Uriah, and his expected punishment from God (v.7-12)

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<sup>82</sup> R. Wardhaugh, How Conversation Works (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.139

David accepts the new topics, and admits he has been in the wrong  
(v.13a)

Nathan continues with the same topics (v.13b)

The relationship between the topic of v.1-6 and the topics of v.7-14 is different for each character. Nathan's intention is to show David his misdemeanor and so the change in topics at v.7f is barely apparent for him. David, on the other hand, is unaware of Nathan's agenda and so the break between them is more unexpected.

### Cooperation

For a literal conversation to occur, all participants must agree to interact in a similar manner. The philosopher Paul Grice has suggested at least five points regarding cooperation in conversation<sup>83</sup>:

"[1] The Cooperative Principle is: make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

[2] The Maxim of Quality is: try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

- i) do not say what you believe to be false;
- ii) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

[3] The Maxim of Quantity is:

- i) make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange;
- ii) do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

[4] The Maxim of Relevance is: make your contribution relevant.

[5] The Maxim of Manner is: be perspicuous, and specifically:

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<sup>83</sup> P. Cotterell and M. Turner, Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation (London:SPCK, 1989), p.261. See P. Grice, Studies in the Way of Words (New York:Harvard University, 1989), especially chapters 2-3 . These maxims are guides to perceived expectations within conversation , rather than an exact account of what actually happens.

- i) avoid obscurity;
- ii) avoid ambiguity;
- iii) be brief;
- iv) be orderly."

Although these maxims or expectations can be applied to literal conversation, they are also true for Hebrew narrative. For the author to portray a situation which the reader recognizes as a conversation, the author must correlate the literal experience of conversation with the literary experience of it. For example, cooperation requires that the speaker be truthful and avoid ambiguity, and such an expectation is essential in the encounter between Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38:14-18 ). Tamar's words, clothes, and actions combine to convince Judah that she is a prostitute; her whole disguise deceives him because he assumes that she is who she says and appears to be.

### Functions of direct speech

Direct speech enables both plot development and characterization.

#### Anticipation of plot action

By means of direct speech, the writer can anticipate actions which are to follow. When Naomi tells Ruth to approach her kinsman Boaz (Ruth 3:1-4), Ruth replies (directly) that she will and then she does. Similarly, when Daniel asks 'Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. You can then compare our appearance with the appearance of the young men who eat the royal rations, and deal with your servants according to

what you observe'(Dan. 1:11-13), the guard agrees (indirectly) and then compares them. The direct speech of God is especially anticipatory of action, as Gen.1 demonstrates. Direct speech is also used to recount episodes which have already happened and about which the audience knows nothing, and to add more details to events which have occurred previously.

### Relationship

The way a character addresses another defines the relationship between them, and anticipates the type of conversation which might ensue. For example, when the prophet Elisha speaks to his servant Gehazi, he uses no form of address and speaks only with commands or questions (cf 2 Kings 4:12-15). This demonstrates Elisha's relationship to Gehazi, where Elisha is in a socially superior position and Gehazi is his property. When the Shunammite woman replies to Elisha's declaration that she will have a son, she says 'No, my lord, O man of God; do not deceive your servant'(2 Kings 4:16b). She addresses him as both 'my lord' and 'O man of God', and refers to herself as 'your servant'. These terms indicate her politeness and deference when approaching a person in a socially superior position (even though she is a wealthy woman, she is respectful of Elisha's prophetic status). Similarly, King David is also approached with politeness and deference, even by his sons, such as 'Absalom came to the king and said,"Your servant has sheepshearers; will the king and his servants please go with your servant?'"(2 Sam.13:24). In this case Absalom is plotting to kill his brother Amnon, and so the appropriate respect towards his father as king is essential.

However, although David is usually addressed with a great deal of respect, including physical obeisance, this is not always the case. At 2



Sam.14: 22 Joab uses, 'my lord the king' and refers to himself as the king's servant, but at 2 Sam.19: 5-7 he uses no such niceties and rebukes David over his excessive grief. Similarly, Nathan changes his form of address toward David when he complains about the king's treatment of Uriah (cf 1 Kings 1:24-27 and 2 Sam.12: 7-12). Both these deviations from the accepted form of address serve to characterize Joab and Nathan;

"the combination of form and content in deviations from accepted court style carries considerably in characterizing the speakers: Joab chides David who is mourning for his son, thus revealing his insensitivity; Nathan rebukes David for sinning, thus indicating his courage and high moral standards."<sup>84</sup> Other deviations from the accepted norm include Jacob's confrontation with Esau at Gen. 33:1-16. Brothers and sisters usually address each other as, 'my sister' or 'my bother', but in this example Jacob calls Esau 'my lord'(v. 8, 13, 14, 15) and describes himself as Esau's servant (v. 5). Jacob uses this pronounced form of address as a means of indicating his guilt and desire to appease Esau. Esau addresses Jacob as 'my brother'(v. 9).

### State of mind

Direct speech can be used to indicate a character's state of mind in a given situation. For example, when David learns of Absalom's death he cries out, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!', which expresses his grief and indicates that 'the king was deeply moved'(2 Sam.18:33). It is the fact that Absalom was David's son which makes David's grief so deep, as the repetition of the phrase 'my son' demonstrates. His words display his sense of immediate loss. His request to have exchanged his

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<sup>84</sup> S. Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible 2nd ed.(Sheffield: Almond, 1989), p.68

life for Absalom's is a further expression of the grief he feels. David would rather have died himself than endure Absalom's loss. His speech is almost a plea and displays his marked degree of desperation.

### Reporting information

When a character uses their direct speech to report another's speech or actions, or even to reinterpret their own speech or actions, then they may add or omit certain details. This is a reflection of their personal agenda, and it may be an attempt to influence another character. Their words add both to their own characterization, and to the characterization of those they address. When king Ahab asks Naboth for his vineyard (cf 1 Kings 21:1-16), Naboth replies 'the Lord forbid that I should give you my ancestral inheritance'. Ahab becomes resentful and when his wife Jezebel asks him what is wrong, he tells her 'because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard for it'; but he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard''. Ahab refrains from telling Jezebel why Naboth refused to sell. The possession of the vineyard is foremost in his mind, and his selfish disposition leads eventually to Naboth's death.

### Contrast

Within a single episode, the direct speech of two or more characters may be contrasting. This acts as an aid for characterization. For instance compare the brevity of Amnon's speeches in 2 Sam. 13:11-16 with the long complaints of Tamar. Amnon's two abrupt requests, 'Come, lie with me, my sister' and 'Get out!', demonstrate his immediate lust and depict his failure to foresee the consequences. Such failure leads to his eventual death. In contrast Tamar's replies are long and

detailed, she says 'No, my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile! As for me, where would I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the scoundrels in Israel. Now therefore, I beg you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you' and 'No, my brother; for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me'. She tries to reason with Amnon, explaining the consequences of his actions for both of them, and suggesting an acceptable way for him to obtain what he wants. She is characterized, in contrast to Amnon, as forward-thinking and morally upright.

Another example can be found at Gen. 25: 29-34<sup>85</sup>. Esau returns from the fields and says to Jacob, 'Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!', and Jacob replies 'First sell me your birthright'(v.30-31). In this exchange Esau is concerned for his hunger and Jacob is concerned for his inheritance. The dialogue continues and Esau says, 'I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?' and before Jacob gives him the stew, Jacob demands he swear an oath, which he does. Esau is concerned for his present, physical situation, which contrasts with Jacob's concern for the future. Jacob already knows this about Esau and has chosen his moment to gain what he wants. He is characterized as wily whereas Esau is short-sighted.

#### Point of view

Sometimes the speech of a character will indicate what they have presupposed, or what knowledge they have, of the character they are addressing. They present their information so that it accords with the point of view of the other character. The knowledge they perceive

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<sup>85</sup> See A. Berlin, Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative (Sheffield: Almond, 1983), pp.39-41

to have about the other person may have already been disclosed in the narrative or it may not have. Such presuppositions serve to illuminate both or either character.

For example, when Hushai addresses Absalom at 2 Sam.16:15-19, both characters presume to have knowledge of the other. Absalom perceives that Hushai is David's friend, but Absalom has no real knowledge of their relationship (cf 15:33-34). Absalom says, 'Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?', where the repetition of 'your friend' serves to stress his understanding of Hushai's point of view with respect to David. Absalom suspects a close friendship, but is later convinced of Hushai's loyalty to himself. Unfortunately, his earlier assumptions are correct and his change of heart leads to his downfall.

Hushai, on the other hand, perceives Absalom's situation clearly and uses this knowledge to his own advantage. When he approaches Absalom, he cries, 'Long live the king! Long live the king', which is a calculated ambiguity. Hushai perceives that Absalom will doubt his loyalty (cf 15:33-34), and that such a cry will draw attention to this doubt. Is Hushai claiming loyalty to Absalom or is he supporting David as king? Hushai plans to demonstrate his loyalty to Absalom and so approaches the subject immediately with a view to impressing Absalom. Hushai uses his understanding of Absalom's point of view in order to begin to defeat Absalom's understanding of his (Hushai's) point of view.

Similarly, when the woman of Tekoa approaches David to ask his advice (2 Sam.14:4-24), she demonstrates a clear understanding of David's point of view, or situation. Under the guidance of Joab she uses David's advice for her own situation, which Joab has presupposed, in order to see David agree to Absalom's return to Jerusalem.

### Lack of speech

Occasionally the absence of direct speech is conspicuous. At 2 Sam.3:11, 'Ishbaal could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him'. In this case the reason for Ishbaal's silence is clearly given; his fear prevented him from speaking. Similarly, at 2 Sam.13:22, 'Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had raped his sister Tamar'. Absalom refuses to talk to his half brother because of his hatred for him. In both these examples the characters' lack of speech is due to a powerful emotional situation. Another example of lack of speech can be found at 2 Sam.13:21. After David discovers Amnon's rape of Tamar all we are informed of is, 'When King David heard of all these things, he became very angry'. David does not speak to Amnon, he does not comfort Tamar, and he does not approach Absalom. David avoids dealing with this issue by not speaking about it, and thereby estranges himself from his sons and daughters. Eventually Absalom murders Amnon, and 'David mourned for his son day after day'(13: 37).

### Summarizing of direct speech

Direct speech can be purposefully summarized, which has the effect of speeding up the narrative. The attention of the reader is not as concentrated as with direct speech and the speech is experienced in less time than it takes to actually speak it. It also helps to reduce any unnecessary repetition. For instance, in 1 Sam.17:8-10 Goliath shouts to the Israelites, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him

and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." And the Philistine said, "Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together." This is repeated at 17: 23, but in the form of the summary, 'and (Goliath) spoke the same words as before. And David heard him'. The first speech is impressive and fearful, and the focus is on Goliath's physical stature and frightening nature . The second, however, is a report of a repetition of the first and David is the focus of the narrative. The plot has changed from viewing Goliath to viewing David, and any repetition of the former's dominating appearance would distract from the latter's characterization. The repetition is included since David is characterized by means of his deed against Goliath.

### Examples of the style and functions of direct speech

Some of the categories above, attributed to both the style or functions of direct speech, can be seen in the two examples below.

#### i) 1 Sam. 21:1-10 David and Ahimelech<sup>86</sup>

21:1 David came to Nob to the priest Ahimelech. Ahimelech came trembling to meet David, and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one with you?" 2 David said to the priest Ahimelech, "The king has charged me with a matter, and said to me, 'No one must know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you'. I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. 3 Now then, what have you at hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." 4 The priest answered David , "I have no ordinary bread at hand,

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<sup>86</sup> R. Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981), pp.64-72

only holy bread- provided that the young men have kept themselves from women." 5 David answered the priest, "Indeed women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition; the vessels of the young men are holy even when it is a common journey; how much more today will their vessels be holy?" 6 So the priest gave him the holy bread; for there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the Lord, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away .

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord; his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds.

8 David said to Ahimelech, "Is there no spear or sword here with you? I did not bring my sword or my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste." 9 The priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you will take that, take it, for there is none here except that one." David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

10 David rose and fled that day from Saul; he went to King Achish of Gath.

David's arrival and appearance before Ahimelech opens the scene, and his leaving closes it. Their encounter is comprised mostly of direct speech, with a narrated interruption between verses 6-7. Verse 6 is an explanation about the cultic bread, and verse 7 is a note about the presence of Doeg. Doeg's presence is noted just after Ahimelech has given David the bread, and just before he gives him a sword, which is deliberate. When Doeg returns to Saul he incriminates both characters by means of the bread and sword (1 Sam.22:9-13).

David and Ahimelech's direct speech is not intended to be literalistic, as David's use of 'such and such a place'(v.2) demonstrates. The phrase is used to illustrate that he is lying. His style of speech contrasts

with that of Ahimelech, and this acts as a means of characterization for them both. Although Ahimelech is described as coming out 'trembling' to meet David, he is the one who speaks first and opens the conversation. David has come to him for help, and so from his position he initiates the dialogue. However, once the speech begins, it is David who sets the topics and who closes, and so demonstrates his ultimate socially superior position as the future king. David's speech contains explanations and reasons, and demands, whereas Ahimelech's, aside from his initial question, contains answers and a concern for cultic matters. David is characterized as cunning and hasty, and Ahimelech as a diligent priest and unsuspecting.

ii) 2 Sam. 17: 5-14 Hushai's speech to Absalom<sup>87</sup>

17:5 Then Absalom said, "Call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he has to say." 6 When Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom said to him, "This is what Ahithophel has said; shall we do as he advises? If not, you tell us." 7 Then Hushai said to Absalom, "This time the counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good." 8 Hushai continued, "You know that your father and his men are warriors, and that they are enraged, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Besides, your father is expert in war; he will not spend the night with the troops. 9 Even now he has hidden himself in one of the pits, or in some other place. And when some of our troops fall at the first attack, whoever hears it will say, 'There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom.' 10 Then even the valiant warrior, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will utterly melt with fear; for all Israel knows that your father is a warrior, and that those who are with him are valiant warriors. 11 But my counsel is that all Israel be gathered to you, from Dan to Beer-sheba, like the sand by the sea for multitude, and that you go to

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<sup>87</sup> Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, pp.223-237



battle in person. 12 So we shall come upon him in whatever place he may be found, and we shall light on him as the dew falls on the ground; and he will not survive, nor will any of those with him. 13 If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley, until not even a pebble is to be found there." 14 Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." For the Lord had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the Lord might bring ruin on Absalom.

Hushai has been asked by David to refute Ahithophel's advice (2 Sam.15:34), but this is difficult. Firstly, Ahithophel's advice is held in high esteem (16:23), and secondly, the advice Ahithophel has already given has been agreed to by Absalom (17:4). Hushai decides to use his speech as a means of convincing Absalom to reject Ahithophel's plans and follow his own. His plan is not necessarily any better than Ahithophel's, but the way he presents it to Absalom develops the plot in his favour, and so characterizes him as very astute.

v.7 Hushai begins by rejecting Ahithophel's advice. This is a brave move; Absalom has made it clear that he regards Hushai as less important than Ahithophel. By the use of 'too' in verse 5, Absalom only asks for Hushai's counsel as an afterthought. Although Hushai has demonstrated his loyalty to Absalom (16:16-19), he was a close friend of David's previously, and Absalom must still be suspicious of Hushai's affiliation. Hushai rejects Ahithophel's advice, but adds the qualifier 'this time'. By using this he indirectly implies that Ahithophel's advice is usually right, and thus agrees with Absalom about Ahithophel's high position. This device entices the audience, including Absalom, to listen to him. By accepting Ahithophel's authority Hushai demonstrates

affinity with the audience, convincing them that he too, accepts general opinion. By stating at the outset that he disagrees with Ahithophel, he invokes curiosity and a desire to hear more.

After his dramatic introduction, Hushai pauses to allow the audience to prepare. The repetition of the idea of Hushai speaking allows for such a pause. He continues and begins to tackle the second problem, the fact that Ahithophel's advice was very good. He divides his speech into two parts; the first part argues against Ahithophel's plan, and the second part presents his own alternative plan.

**v.8-10** The first part (v.8-10) is split into two sections. In verse 8 Hushai claims that Ahithophel's plan has no chance of succeeding. He appeals to Absalom's own knowledge about David by the use of 'you know', highlighting their relationship as one of father and son, and thus promoting the idea that Absalom should indeed 'know ' about his father David. Ahithophel never referred to David in this way, and thus failed to involve Absalom in the argument in such a direct way. Hushai takes care not to refer to David by name, which could remind Absalom of the previously close friendship between himself (Hushai) and David, and neither does he refer to him as king.

Hushai describes David's followers as 'his men'. This is deliberate since Hushai wants to illustrate that they are indeed David's men and loyal to no-one else; they are not just followers who might change their allegiance later on. He describes them as 'warriors' who are 'enraged', and with 'and that they are', accentuates both facets equally. 'Warriors' will be difficult to defeat, how much more men who are 'enraged' also! Their rage is easily imagined since Hushai uses the simile, 'like a bear robbed of her cubs' to depict it.

Ahithophel claimed that David would be weary and discouraged, that his followers would flee, and that David, left alone, could easily be

defeated. Hushai chooses not to deny this assumption, but accentuates the characteristics of David and his men. Although it was quite likely David was fatigued, Absalom knew that David and his men were indeed angry warriors. Hushai has sown the seeds of doubt that even if he were tired, David was still a formidable enemy. Hushai then adds to this fear by reminding Absalom that, 'your father is expert in war' and that any surprise attack at night, as suggested by Ahithophel, would be futile since David would be prepared for it. The phrase 'even now' conjures up a picture of David's preparations at that very instance, and the use of 'one of the pits' and 'some other place' conjures up an idea that David will not be easily found.

Hushai completes his denigration of Ahithophel's plan by elucidating the possible dangers such a plan might entail. He already has David and his men in hiding and prepared for attack, and with verse 9b he states 'when some of our troops fall at the first attack'. Here we see David attacking Absalom and not vice versa. Hushai continues by saying that the death of a few men will produce a rumour announcing the death of many men, implying that Absalom could lose everything if only a few die in this way. He speaks of the rumour as if it were being said at that very time, which allows Absalom to hear it as it could happen and to anticipate its message fully.

The metaphor in verse 10 demonstrates that such a rumour would cause the rest of Absalom's army to desert. It suggests that if one valiant man were petrified, then so would all the other valiant men be, and pity the poor unvaliant man! The verb 'utterly melt' and the image of a 'heart like a lion', produces a terrifying image for Absalom, who can see only too clearly now the consequences of Ahithophel's plan. Hushai then repeats the notion of David's invincibility, bringing Absalom's fear to a climax. This repetition signals the end of Hushai's

denigration of Ahithophel's plan. By summarizing points he has already made, Hushai emphasizes his position and urges Absalom to decide in his favour. The use of 'for all Israel knows' expands the 'you know' addressed to Absalom in verse 8, implying that what Hushai and Absalom know about David is shared by everyone, and since everyone knows this, then David and his men must be a real threat.

v.11-13 In this second part, Hushai explains his own plans. He has convinced his listeners that David and his men are practically invincible, and that David himself will be difficult to locate. So now he suggests that Absalom raise for himself a huge army, rather than a handful of men as Ahithophel proposed, and that by means of quantity rather than quality David might be overcome. A secret night raid can not be effective, but a large battle will be. The two similes, 'like the sand by the sea for multitude' and 'as the dew falls on the ground', provoke images of a grandiose body of men able to stealthily cover the whole land, which encourages Absalom's confidence. The repetition of 'all Israel' and the phrase 'from Dan to Beer-sheba'<sup>88</sup>, add further to this image of power and glory.

Although Hushai claimed earlier that David would be extremely well hidden, he now states that it will be possible to locate him. Without denying his previous assertion, Hushai uses, 'in whatever place he may be found', and implies that Absalom will eventually discover David's whereabouts. When he does, Absalom's army will completely destroy everyone. This is a contrast to Ahithophel's advice, who spoke of only king David being killed. Hushai now refers to David's followers as

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<sup>88</sup> A number of the expressions Hushai uses were probably common idioms. For example, the phrase 'from Dan to Beersheba' is found five times in the books of Samuel, once in Judges and once in Kings. Other common phrases include, 'like the sand by the sea', 'melt with fear', and 'like a bear robbed of her cubs'. This use of common idioms serves to create for Hushai the assumption that he is talking about widely established facts. By using these phrases he is subliminally convincing Absalom that all of what he is saying must be the truth.

'those with him' unlike the earlier 'his men', which highlighted the close bond they shared. Also, David has become a passive object to be acted upon, rather than an active subject, as in Hushai's previous speech. Hushai uses the pronoun 'we' to show his closeness to Absalom and to demonstrate that all Israel will be with him. Absalom is not unsupported and everyone, including Hushai, will be beside him.

In verse 13 the striking weakness of Hushai's plan is exposed, namely, that David will have time to occupy a fortified city. Ahithophel's advice suggested that Absalom attack swiftly, and thus prevent David from fortifying himself and preparing adequately for battle. Hushai, on the other hand, is proposing the gathering of a huge army, which will take time. By omitting the adjective 'fortified', Hushai plays down the seriousness of David's occupation of a city, and by using a fantastic image of 'all Israel' bringing ropes to drag the city to destruction, he distracts Absalom from the cold reality of such a siege. Hushai uses the word 'if' to voice the fears Absalom must have about such a situation occurring, and then refutes them. He purposely fails to include the name of David in his vision of annihilation, signifying David's nonexistence. The effect of such a speech is to render Absalom utterly confident in Hushai's plan, since even his doubts have now been dispelled.

v.14 In conclusion, Hushai thoroughly convinces Absalom to ignore Ahithophel's advice and to allow David time to prepare for war (v.14). This was the task set for him by his friend David, and in which he has most definitely succeeded. By using figurative language such as vivid metaphors and striking similes, and by including Absalom's point of view in his arguments, Hushai appeals to Absalom's emotions and persuades him that his advice is the best.

### Irony as a function of direct speech

Another function of direct speech which has not been demonstrated so far, is its ability to convey irony. This is especially important for the Book of *Judith*, which is highly ironic. Moore<sup>89</sup> even goes so far as to say, "the storyteller had a mind and a perspective which are best described as essentially and profoundly ironic in character". Irony can be defined as follows<sup>90</sup>:

"A figure of speech in which the intended meaning is the opposite of that expressed by the words used; usually taking the form of sarcasm or ridicule in which laudatory expressions are used to imply condemnation or contempt. A contradictory outcome of events as if in mockery of the promise and fitness of things."

This interpretation can be enlarged by combining it with other interpretations of irony.

In ancient Greece, any character who intended an irony and who executed it, was known as eiron, and any character who did not perceive an irony or was ridiculed by it, was known as alazon. If a single character acted as both eiron and alazon in the same irony (for example, if they were mocking themselves before an audience), then this was verbal irony. If separate characters acted as eiron and alazon, this was dramatic irony.

A further understanding of irony is to consider the ways in which it differs from its immediate counterparts. For example, how does irony differ from allegory or paradox? Muecke<sup>91</sup> has proposed a definition by outlining three attributes which irony alone possesses:

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<sup>89</sup> Moore, Judith, p.85

<sup>90</sup> The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (Oxford: Oxford University, 1993)

<sup>91</sup> D.C. Muecke, The Compass of Irony (New York: Methuen, 1969), pp.19-20

- i) It consists of two layers of meaning, but this attribute alone is not enough. If irony were just double-layered, then it would be indistinguishable from metaphor or allegory.
- ii) The two layers of meaning proposed by irony are not consistent with one another. This involves opposition between the two layers, by means of understatement or overstatement, or by saying exactly what is meant but in a sense unexpected by the listener. This eliminates both metaphor and allegory, but paradox and contrast can still be included as they both involve two possible, but conflicting, layers of meaning.
- iii) Muecke's final attribute is that irony contains an element of innocence or unawareness<sup>92</sup>. Those who do not possess certain information, or are unable to perceive certain information, are 'innocent' to the irony. This may be the predicament of a single character or several characters, and sometimes includes the reader or audience too. It is only when all three of these criteria are met, that irony alone exists and not some other literary device.

Irony can also be divided into different types or forms<sup>93</sup>. If a character or author is purposefully ironic, then this is an intended irony. If an irony is perceived but is not intended, then this is unintended irony. Overt irony is when an irony is made explicit or stated that it is an irony, and a covert irony is when it is not. An irony can be finite where it is directed at a specific situation, or infinite where it is directed at the universal. It can be fixed where it generates two layers of meaning, or unfixed where it generates more than two layers. Booth terms an irony

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<sup>92</sup> Muecke, The Compass of Irony, p.20 notes an exception, "There is one exception to this; in sarcasm or in very overt irony the ironist does not pretend to be unaware of his real meaning and his victim is immediately aware of it." Verbal irony may also be an exception, but Muecke comments "self-irony (or verbal irony) implies a 'splitting of the ego' and hence an ability to see and to present oneself as an 'innocent'"(p.20).

<sup>93</sup> See W.C. Booth, A Rhetoric of Irony (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1974), pp.5-6

that is intended, covert, fixed, and finite as a stable irony, and any irony that is not, an unstable irony.

Edwin M. Good defines irony specifically from the perspective of the Hebrew bible. He comments<sup>94</sup>:

"We may now summarize the argument, attempting to lay down guidelines for the identification of irony. We have seen that irony is criticism, implicit or explicit, which perceives in things as they are an incongruity. The incongruity is by no means merely mean and contemptible, though it may be wilful. Nor is it only accidental, the work of fate, a matter of the way the ball bounces or the cookie crumbles. The incongruity may be that of ironic satire, between what is and what ought to be. It may be an incongruity between what it actually so and what the object of ironic criticism thinks to be so, as in the irony of tragedy, or in the ironies we perceive in history.

But irony is distinguished from other perceptions of incongruity by two characteristics. One is the means of statement, which we may describe as understatement or a method of suggestion rather than of plain statement. The other is a stance in truth from which the perception comes."

Good's understanding is similar to those outlined above, but he interprets irony as a criticism of the prevailing order. He suggests that the eiron is offering a truth which the alazon does not possess.

All these interpretations can be combined to offer a fuller understanding of irony than any of these single definitions do by themselves. They can be combined further with Alonso-Schökel's<sup>95</sup> earlier definition to distinguish irony from other literary ploys in the

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<sup>94</sup> E.M. Good, Irony in the Old Testament 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Almond, 1981), pp.30-31

<sup>95</sup> L.Alonso-Schökel, 'Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith', Protocol Series of the Colloquies of the Centre for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture 11(March 1974), p.8



direct speech of *Judith*. These definitions can be applied to Hebrew literature generally, and a good comprehension of how they function is necessary before *Judith* can be interpreted. The following examples have been taken from Hebrew literature, and the ironies in these passages highlight the contrast between eiron and alazon, examine the layers of conflicting meaning, and demonstrate some of the different types of irony which may be present.

### Examples of irony in Hebrew literature

Esther 5:9-14 Haman went out that day happy and in good spirits. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and observed that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was infuriated with Mordecai; **10** nevertheless Haman restrained himself, and went home. Then he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh, **11** And Haman recounted to them the splendour of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honoured him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the ministers of the king. **12** Haman added, "Even Queen Esther let no one but myself come with the king to the banquet that she prepared. Tomorrow also I am invited by her, together with the king. **13** Yet all this does me no good, so long as I see the Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate." **14** Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go with the king to the banquet in good spirits." This advice pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

This is an extreme example of eiron/alazon irony, where Haman is alazon and the reader or audience is eiron. In these verses Haman is

described as 'joyful' and 'glad of heart', proud of his accomplishments, and honoured to be invited to Queen Esther's two banquets. His only anxiety concerns the behaviour of Mordecai, but at verse 14 it seems that this too will soon be added to his list of pleasures. He is unaware of Esther's identity as a Jewess and of her plans, and unaware of Mordecai's previous exploits (cf Esther 2:21-23). His unawareness is so great that it leads to his eventual death. It is not his adversary Mordecai who acts as the eiron though, but the audience. Only the audience is aware of the position of all the characters. This knowledge becomes essential as the plot unfolds, as Mordecai is rewarded, Esther reveals she is a Jewess, and Haman is hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai.

The irony of these particular verses is strong since Haman is so ignorant. He interprets Esther's invitations as profitable to himself, likewise the building of his gallows. He is innocent of the knowledge that Esther is inviting him to his own damnation, and that the gallows will be used to hang himself.

Judges 6:14-15 Then the Lord turned to him (Gideon) and said, "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you."  
**15** He responded, "But Sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."

The irony of this situation lies in the fact that Gideon misunderstands the power of God. In verse 14 God tells Gideon to go and deliver Israel, but Gideon replies that he is weak and insignificant. There are two sets of two layers of meaning within 'go and deliver Israel', and this is why Gideon misunderstands. Firstly, Gideon presupposes that he is

to be the one responsible for such a delivery, indicated by his use of the first person pronouns, 'I' and 'my'. Secondly, he presupposes that he possesses neither military strength nor leadership qualities, both of which will be needed to secure deliverance. On both counts Gideon has chosen the inappropriate level of meaning. In verse 16 God tells Gideon that God will be with him, and he is not to presuppose that he will be alone. As for his assumptions that he is weak and insignificant, and thus unable to deliver Israel, these are wrong since he does become significant (v.34-35) but he does not need vast armies and powerful weapons (v.19-23). For both ironies there are two layers of meaning and these layers are inconsistent with one another (since Gideon and God's understanding of how the deliverance of Israel is to come about are conflicting). Also, Gideon displays an element of unawareness or innocence, since he is unable to realise the potential of the double meaning within God's call.

Gen. 22:1-8 After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am" **2** He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." **3** So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. **4** On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. **5** Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." **6** Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac; and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. **7** Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he

said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

This short episode contains a number of ironies, beginning with the word, 'tested'. The reader is informed that Abraham is to be tested by God, and this is then followed by the request of v.2 to sacrifice Isaac. The layer of meaning suggested by these verses is that the sacrifice of Isaac is to be the test, but later it becomes clear that this is not the case, and the double meaning inherent in 'tested' becomes apparent.

Another irony can be found at v.6, where Isaac is the one carrying the wood, and Abraham takes the torch and the knife. Abraham, acting as eiron, believes Isaac is laden with the wood for his own death while he, himself, carries the implements of his death. Abraham perceives poor Isaac, the alazon, as ignorant of his fate. The use of 'father' and 'son' reminds the reader of Abraham's special relationship with Isaac<sup>96</sup>, and thus the irony is all the more poignant since surely father and son should not be eiron and alazon to each other.

The most complex of the ironies within this episode is found at verse 8, where eiron and alazon exchange places. Abraham says to Isaac, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son", and because of verse 2 Abraham has assumed that Isaac is to be the sacrificial lamb; but Isaac assumes that Abraham is talking literally about a lamb. However, in verses 12-13 it transpires that Isaac is not to be the sacrifice, but a ram will take his place; now it appears Isaac's assumption about v.8 was correct and Abraham's was wrong. The two layers of opposed meaning proposed

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<sup>96</sup> God has promised Abraham that through Isaac, Abraham will be the father of a great nation (cf Gen. 17:1-21).

by Abraham's statement remain the same, but the character who is unaware or innocent, has been reversed.

1 Kings 18:27 At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud!, Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."

This is a highly sarcastic<sup>97</sup> remark by the prophet Elijah directed at the prophets of Baal. Elijah has challenged them and the god Baal (v.22-24), and now he is waiting for a reply. The irony of the situation is indicated by the use of the word 'mocked', and so it is an instance of overt irony. One level of meaning supposes that Elijah is encouraging the prophets to summon Baal, and the other supposes that Elijah believes Baal is not able to respond. The audience is prepared for Elijah's double meaning because the irony is overt.

This chapter has outlined both the style and the functions of direct speech in Hebrew literature in general. This style and these functions will apply for the Book of *Judith* also, since the narrative style of *Judith* resembles certain types of Hebrew literature. Direct speech enables both plot development and characterization. The following chapter discusses each of the direct speeches in *Judith* in turn, and demonstrates how each speech influences the plot development and characterization in the Book.

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<sup>97</sup> Sarcasm can be described as a particularly critical or mocking, irony.

## Chapter 3: Direct Speech in the Book of Judith

All direct speech promotes plot development and characterization, and the twenty-six speeches in *Judith* are no exception. The majority of these speeches are found in part 2 (chapters 8-16) of the Book, and this may be one of the reasons why these chapters have been more instantly appealing. Each speech is described in turn below, and some of the ways in which each fulfills these functions of plot development and characterization are discussed. The ironies contained within each speech are examined also.

### Part 1 (chapters 1-7)

#### Idt. 2:4-13 Nebuchadnezzar commissions Holofernes

When he had completed his plan, Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, called Holofernes, the chief general of his army, second only to himself, and said to him, **5** "Thus says the Great King, the lord of the whole earth: Leave my presence and take with you men confident in their strength, one hundred twenty thousand foot soldiers and twelve thousand cavalry. **6** March out against all the land to the west, because they disobeyed my orders. **7** Tell them to prepare earth and water, for I am coming against them in my anger, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of my troops, to whom I will hand them over to be plundered. **8** Their wounded shall fill their ravines and gullies, and the swelling river shall be filled with their dead. **9** I will lead them away captive to the ends of the whole earth. **10** You

shall go and seize all their territory for me in advance. They must yield themselves to you, and you shall hold them for me until the day of their punishment. 11 But to those who resist show no mercy, but hand them over to slaughter and plunder throughout your whole region. 12 For as I live, and by the power of my kingdom, what I have spoken I will accomplish by my own hand. 13 And you- take care not to transgress any of your lord's commands, but carry them out exactly as I have ordered you; do it without delay."

Nebuchadnezzar's speech to Holofernes is preceded (2:1-4) by an indirect account of several related conversations in which Nebuchadnezzar 'summoned all his ministers and all his nobles and set before them his secret plan and recounted fully, with his own lips, all the wickedness of the region. They decided that every one who had not obeyed his command should be destroyed'. Quite possibly Holofernes was also present at these meetings, but the narrative uses direct speech to convey to him Nebuchadnezzar's desires. This is the first direct speech of the plot and its presence is very deliberate. The combination of the aforementioned indirect conversations and the change in narrative pace created by the direct speech, draw attention to the content of the words spoken, to their speaker, and to their receiver. Nebuchadnezzar is commissioning Holofernes to carry out his commands.

Nebuchadnezzar only speaks once throughout the plot, but it is his demands which dictate the ensuing action. This is in accord with his characterization as a powerful king, as is also expressed by his words. He refers to himself as 'the Great King' and as 'the lord of the whole earth', and describes his requests as 'commands' which Holofernes has been 'ordered' to follow. The fact that he is the first to

speak also supports this role. His relationship to Holofernes, who is 'the chief general of his army, second only to himself', is one of superior versus inferior as his phrases 'your lord' and 'carry them (Nebuchadnezzar's orders) out exactly' indicate.

Nebuchadnezzar requests that Holofernes gather a vast army, and march west against the nations that refused to aid him in his earlier military campaigns against Arphaxad. These nations now have two choices, either to surrender or to resist, and in both cases Nebuchadnezzar intends their punishment, and is 'coming against them in my anger'. He uses vivid imagery to describe their punishment such as, 'their wounded shall fill their ravines and gullies, and the swelling river shall be filled with their dead', which graphically reveals his experience and vision as a military commander. This action of the punishing of the nations and the choices they make is the major component of the subsequent plot.

Nebuchadnezzar closes his speech with verses 12 and 13, one of which contains an oath and the other a caution or threat. In v.12 he swears by his life and his power, two facets which define his existence, that 'what I have spoken I will accomplish by my own hand'. He identifies his belief in himself as all powerful by the way in which he refers to the strength of his words and the power of his deeds or his 'hand'. In v.13 he urges Holofernes to 'take care not to transgress any of your lord's commands, but carry them out exactly as I have ordered you', which is a caution for Holofernes to heed Nebuchadnezzar's power. The whole of Nebuchadnezzar's speech revolves around his power, and his power is demonstrated by the effect his speech has upon the plot.



**Irony** The irony in Nebuchadnezzar's words only becomes apparent as the plot is revealed. Nebuchadnezzar is threatening devastation and defeat of the west because he is so powerful, and Holofernes is to carry out his command. However, the Assyrians will eventually be defeated by a widow from a relatively small and insignificant nation, and it is by her hand and not Nebuchadnezzar's, that the Assyrians and not 'all the land to the west', are overthrown.

Idt. 2:28-3:5 Messengers suing for peace go to the Assyrians

So fear and dread of him fell upon all the people who lived along the seacoast, at Sidon and Tyre, and those who lived in Sur and Ocina and all who lived in Jamnia. Those who lived in Azotus and Ascalon feared him greatly.

**3:1** They therefore sent messengers to him to sue for peace in these words: **2** "We, the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, the Great King, lie prostrate before you. Do with us whatever you will. **3** See, our buildings and all our land and all our wheat fields and our flocks and herds and all our encampments lie before you; do with them as you please. **4** Our towns and their inhabitants are also your slaves; come and deal with them as you see fit."

**5** The men came to Holofernes and told him all this.

This is the second direct speech and it is a result of the action stipulated by the first. Holofernes has left Nebuchadnezzar and having ravaged Put, Lud, the Rassisites, the Ishmaelites, the towns alongside the brook Abron, the territory of Cilicia, the Midianites, and the Damascus plain (2:23-27), terrifies 'all the people who lived along the seacoast, at Sidon and Tyre, and those who lived in Sur and Ocina and all

who lived in Jamnia' and 'in Azotus and Ascalon'. These people now decide to come to Holofernes to sue for peace, and they are the first to do so. Several participants are involved in this encounter; the people who send the messengers, the messengers who remain nameless, and Holofernes who receives their message. The messengers are the only ones who speak, and the reason for this indirectness between Holofernes and the people suing for peace is that these people are acting as a paradigm. The distance created by the lack of direct contact between the two, and the anonymity of the messengers, distracts from the actual participants and focuses attention on the event of suing for peace itself. The exact identity of the people who are making this petition is ambiguous<sup>98</sup>, which also adds to the distraction from the participants.

This speech acts as a paradigm or example of what happens when peace is sought. By way of the messengers, the people describe themselves as 'the servants of Nebuchadnezzar' who 'lie prostrate before you'. Although they rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar previously (1:7-11), this is no longer the case and now they want to serve him. Alongside the polite term 'servants' and the sign of obeisance, they use 'the Great King', a term which Nebuchadnezzar used to describe himself (2:5). This is an introduction designed to appeal to Holofernes' point of view as Nebuchadnezzar's chief general. They have chosen to surrender to the Assyrians and they display this in their choice of address. The message continues with 'do with us whatever you will', which both accepts Holofernes' military power but also invites him to be lenient. They have surrendered and do not merit

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<sup>98</sup> The narrative does not make it clear whether it is all the people who lived along the seacoast, at Sidon and Tyre, and those who lived in Sur and Ocina and all who lived in Jamnia' and 'in Azotus and Ascalon' who are sending messengers, or just those who lived in Azotus and Ascalon.

the same treatment as he has afforded others. This is repeated in v.3 with respect to their property where Holofernes is told once more 'do with them as you please'. Similarly, the final verse and closing statement also affirms Holofernes' superiority and asks for leniency with, 'their inhabitants are also your slaves; come and deal with them as you see fit'. This threefold repetition, coupled with the use of 'see' in verse 3, act as an impressive plea.

C. A. Moore also believes this speech to be directed at Holofernes' point of view and has examined the form of the repetitions more closely. He translates the speech slightly differently with<sup>99</sup>,

2 "We, the servants of the great king Nebuchadnezzar, lie prostrate before you. Treat us as you please. 3 Our buildings, all our land, every wheat field, the flocks and herds, all the sheepfolds of our encampments- they are yours! Treat them as seems best to you. 4 Our towns and their inhabitants are your slaves. Come and treat them as you see fit."

and concludes<sup>100</sup>,

"This expression ('as you see fit' v.4) and "Treat us as you please" (v.2) as well as "Treat them as seems best to you" (v.3) are more than just literary variations designed to avoid boredom in the reader. Actually, they represent the envoys' skillful use of psychology, appealing as they do to Holofernes' conscious and unconscious needs, namely to his emotions (v.2) , his prudence (v.3), and his sense of justice (v.4). Although the overall effect of vv.2-4 is to create an image of terrified grovelling, the envoys shrewdly present their case, appealing to various criteria by which Holofernes might judge it."

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<sup>99</sup> C.A.Moore, Judith Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1985), p.136

<sup>100</sup> Ibid p.142

This affirmation of Holofernes' superior military position and request for leniency, or that they be treated differently from those who resisted, has striking consequences. The results of their plea are given in 3:8 where Holofernes 'demolished all their shrines and cut down their sacred groves; for he had been commissioned to destroy all the gods of the land, so that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar alone, and that all their dialects and tribes should call upon him as a god.'<sup>101</sup> It is not only their livelihood that Nebuchadnezzar requires but their adoration as well.

Idt. 5:1-6:9 Conversation between Holofernes, Achior, and the people outside

This is the first conversation in *Judith* and more than one participant speaks. General Holofernes questions the leaders of Moab, Ammon, and the coastland; Achior, the leader of the Ammonites, responds; the people outside offer their opinions; and finally Holofernes comes to a decision. Holofernes, Achior, and the people outside, are all direct participants whereas the leaders of Moab and the coastland are observers.

Idt. 5:1-4 Holofernes questions the commanders

It was reported to Holofernes, the general of the Assyrian army, that the people of Israel had prepared for war and had closed the mountain passes and

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<sup>101</sup> Nebuchadnezzar's direct speech of 2:4-13 does not include a commission to destroy all the gods of the land so that only Nebuchadnezzar should be worshipped. This is an instance of reported or indirect speech, and it explains Holofernes' actions towards the nations.

fortified all the hilltops and set up barricades in the plains. **2** In great anger he called together all the princes of Moab and the commanders of Ammon and all the governors of the coastland, **3** and said to them, "Tell me, you Canaanites, what people is this that lives in the hill country? What towns do they inhabit? How large is their army, and in what does their power and strength consist? Who rules over them as king and leads their army? **4** And why have they alone, of all who live in the west, refused to come out and meet me?"

The Assyrian army has arrived near 'Esdraelon, near Dothan, facing the great ridge of Judea'(3:9) and the Israelites have prepared for war. The general is informed that the Israelites are resisting and his response is one of anger. He summons the leaders of the nations that have already joined him and asks for their advice, which is a tactical ploy. It makes good military sense to consult the nations who are close to your enemy and who are probably more aware of their weaknesses than you yourself may be. Also, these nations act as a comparison for Israel. The Israelites are not yet a part of Holofernes' entourage unlike the people of Moab, Ammon, and the coastland.

Holofernes addresses the leaders as 'you Canaanites' which is derogatory and insulting, and reveals Holofernes' ignorance. Enslin and Zeitlin comment<sup>102</sup>, "hardly apt for Moabites or Ammonites" and Moore states<sup>103</sup>, "the term here, while admittedly designating an ethnic or geographical group, is artificial and archaic, the term properly being confined to the early history of Israel". The term Canaanite implies a solitary ethnic designation which denies that these are leaders of distinct and different communities. Also, because this is

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<sup>102</sup> M.S. Enslin and S. Zeitlin, *The Book of Judith* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), p.85

<sup>103</sup> Moore, *Judith*, p.158

an archaic term it fails to recognize that these communities even exist. It is derogatory and insulting since Holofernes obviously has little respect for the identity of these people. His use of 'you Canaanites' characterizes him as unconcerned for other cultures, and it also displays his ignorance of their histories and identities.

Holofernes continues by questioning the commanders and so queries the identity of the people he is about to approach. His questions demonstrate his concerns which are of a military nature. He enquires about the Israelite towns, the extent of their army and the source of their strength, and their king or leader. The form he uses, a series of questions, invites a response which urges the plot forward by means of adjacency pairs. His last question, 'why have they alone of all who live in the west, refused to come out and meet me?', draws attention to Israel's position as the only nation that has not surrendered, where 'come out and meet me' is a euphemism for surrender. This statement of Israel's single-mindedness, particularly in comparison to the nations who have surrendered, heightens the tension in the plot and the content of the question itself opens the way for an explanation of Israel's stance.

Jdt. 5:5-21 Achior replies to Holofernes

Then Achior, the leader of all the Ammonites, said to him, "May my lord please listen to a report from the mouth of your servant, and I will tell you the truth about this people that lives in the mountain district near you. No falsehood shall come from your servant's mouth. **6** These people are descended from the Chaldeans. **7** At one time they lived in Mesopotamia, because they did not wish to follow the gods of their ancestors who were in Chaldea. **8** Since they had

abandoned the ways of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God they had come to know, their ancestors drove them out from the presence of their gods. So they fled to Mesopotamia, and lived there for a long time. **9** Then their God commanded them to leave the place where they were living and go to the land of Canaan. There they settled, and grew very prosperous in gold and silver and very much livestock. **10** When a famine spread over the land of Canaan they went down to Egypt and lived there as long as they had food. There they became so great a multitude that their race could not be counted. **11** So the king of Egypt became hostile to them; he exploited them and forced them to make bricks. **12** They cried out to their God, and he afflicted the whole land of Egypt with incurable plagues. So the Egyptians drove them out of their sight. **13** Then God dried up the Red Sea before them, **14** and he led them by way of Sinai and Kadesh-barnea. They drove out all the people of the desert, **15** and took up residence in the land of the Amorites, and by their might destroyed all the inhabitants of Heshbon; and crossing over the Jordan they took possession of all the hill country. **16** They drove out before them the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Shechemites, and all the Gergesites, and lived there a long time.

**17** "As long as they did not sin against their God they prospered, for the God who hates iniquity is with them. **18** But when they departed from the way he had prescribed for them, they were utterly defeated in many battles and were led away captive to a foreign land. The temple of their God was razed to the ground, and their towns were occupied by their enemies. **19** But now they have returned to their God, and have come back from the places where they were scattered, and have occupied Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and have settled in the hill country, because it was uninhabited.

20 "So now, my master and lord, if there is any oversight in this people and they sin against their God and we find out their offense, then we can go up and defeat them. 21 But if they are not a guilty nation, then let my lord pass them by; for their Lord and God will defend them, and we shall become the laughingstock of the whole world."

Achior, the leader of the Ammonites, is the only commander to reply to Holofernes' questions. He addresses Holofernes as 'my lord' and twice refers to himself as 'your servant', both of which connote polite respect and are not unexpected since Achior is in a position of subservience to Holofernes. He opens his reply with an elaborate declaration of his intentions, exhorting Holofernes to 'listen' since his 'report' from his 'mouth' (twice repeated) will be the 'truth' and not a 'falsehood'. This repetition accentuates the importance of these matters where the themes of listening, the role of speech, and the claim to truth, are all prominent. Achior is demanding that Holofernes pay due regard to what he has to say.

Once Holofernes' attention has been attracted, Achior can begin a rendition of Israelite history, which is brief and reasonably accurate<sup>104</sup>. In v.17-18 he offers a theological explanation for a time when Israel was distraught and their temple was in ruins. He states, 'As long as they did not sin against their God they prospered, for the God who hates iniquity is with them. But when they departed from the way he had prescribed for them, they were utterly defeated in many battles'. With v.19 he concludes that now they have returned to their

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<sup>104</sup> Moore states, "While Achior's survey of the sacred history of the Jews is general and imprecise, perhaps because it is so brief, his historical account is not in error; or at least it agrees with the broadest outlines of Jewish history as presented in the Hebrew Bible", *Judith* p.161.



God and have once more occupied Jerusalem, the city where their sanctuary is.

As Achior closes his speech he changes his discussion to include Holofernes' point of view. Addressing the general with the deferential term 'my master and lord', he interrupts his own flow of words to include him and so suggests that he is concerned with Holofernes' perspective. With reference to his earlier theological interpretation, Achior proposes that 'if there is any oversight in this people and they sin against their God' and if 'we find out their offense', then the Assyrians will easily be able to defeat them. However, if the Israelites have not sinned, then Achior requests 'let my lord pass them by; for their Lord and God will defend them, and we shall become the laughingstock of the whole world'. Achior believes that the Israelites can not be defeated if they have stayed close to their God, and that this God has the power to defend them. The Assyrians must not risk total humiliation.

Idt. 5:22-24 The people complain against Achior

When Achior had finished saying these things, all the people standing around the tent began to complain; Holofernes' officers and all the inhabitants of the seacoast and Moab insisted that he should be cut to pieces. 23 They said, "We are not afraid of the Israelites; they are a people with no strength or power for making war. 24 Therefore let us go ahead, Lord Holofernes, and your vast army will swallow them up."

After Achior has replied to Holofernes a third participant joins the conversation, and this is 'all the people standing around the tent; Holofernes' officers and all the inhabitants of the seacoast and Moab'.

They speak as one character and because they are around Holofernes' tent it is likely that they are his allies. They are his chosen troops and members of the nations who have voluntarily or otherwise succumbed to him. Their presence foreshadows the content of their speech, which is in direct contrast to Achior's.

Initially they are reported as complaining and as desiring Achior's death<sup>105</sup>, and then they speak directly. They make two claims; firstly, that they are not afraid, and secondly, that the Israelites are not a military nation. They believe Israel to have no military power and so Holofernes and his army can easily overcome them. They have interpreted Achior's speech as a call to be afraid, but they are not. Holofernes' strength is greater than anything the Israelites can muster so in contrast to Achior's long historical recital, they call for immediate action on the basis of Holofernes' superior military position. Their speech greatly increases the narrative tension since it places God and Holofernes directly against one another. Achior urged Holofernes to believe that he was telling the truth, and the people outside are urging Holofernes to attack since he can not lose.

#### Idt. 6:1-9 Holofernes replies

When the disturbance made by the people outside the council had died down, Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, said to Achior in the presence of all the foreign contingents:

2 "Who are you, Achior and you mercenaries of Ephraim, to prophesy among us as you have done today and tell us not to make war against the people of Israel

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<sup>105</sup> The peoples desire for Achior's death is reported indirectly rather than included in their speech. This may be because only Holofernes can determine who lives and who dies since he is the one who has been commissioned by Nebuchadnezzar.

because their God will defend them? What god is there except Nebuchadnezzar? He will send his forces and destroy them from the face of the earth. Their God will not save them; **3** we the king's servants will destroy them as one man. They cannot resist the might of our cavalry. **4** We will overwhelm them: their mountains will be drunk with their blood, and their fields will be full of their dead. Not even their footprints will survive our attack: they will utterly perish. So says King Nebuchadnezzar, lord of the whole earth. For he has spoken; none of his words shall be in vain.

**5** "As for you, Achior, you Ammonite mercenary, you have said these words in a moment of perversity; you shall not see my face again from this day until I take revenge on this race that came out of Egypt. **6** Then at my return the sword of my army and the spear of my servants shall pierce your sides, and you shall fall among their wounded. **7** Now my slaves are going to take you back into the hill country and put you in one of the towns beside the passes. **8** You will not die until you perish along with them. **9** If you really hope in your heart that they will not be taken, then do not look downcast! I have spoken, and none of my words shall fail to come true."

Holofernes began the dialogue and now he finishes it. His words encircle those of Achior and the people outside, which reflects his powerful position. Addressing Achior and his 'mercenaries of Ephraim'<sup>106</sup>, he begins by denying Achior's claims and dismissing his prophet-like behaviour. Achior is not in a position to tell Holofernes

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<sup>106</sup> The precise identity of these allies is unclear and they have not been mentioned in the narrative so far. Enslin and Zeitlin comment "the precise force of this descriptive- one of contempt- is uncertain. Presumably they were mercenaries in the military combine formed by Holofernes against Israel, more specifically against Jerusalem. Does the mention of Ephraim reflect the traditional hostility of the south to the north", *The Book of Judith*, p.93, and similarly Moore writes "If the reading is correct, which is highly debatable, the allusion is vague. It may be a term of contempt, possibly reflecting a Southern bias against the North", *Judith*, p.166.

what to do and his claim that the Israelite God can offer protection is ludicrous. No other gods exist except Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar's armies will destroy the Israelites and their God will be unable to protect them. The Assyrian army will dwarf the Israelites to the might of a single man, and 'We will overwhelm them'. Holofernes continues and uses a similar style of imagery and metaphors to those found in Nebuchadnezzar's commission (2:4-13), which is reflected by his assertion, 'So says King Nebuchadnezzar'. He describes his commander as 'lord of the whole earth' and says 'For he has spoken: none of his words shall be in vain'. For Holofernes, Nebuchadnezzar is all-powerful and his words, which Holofernes has simulated, dictate what is to occur. It is Nebuchadnezzar, and not Achior, who is a prophetic figure. Holofernes' speech closes with the assertion that 'I have spoken, and none of my words shall fail to come true' so Holofernes, as Nebuchadnezzar's envoy, also has great power of speech. This question of whose words are influential is recurrent and the anticipation of whose speech shall prevail continues throughout the plot.

Holofernes' final topic involves the imminent punishment of Achior. Addressing him as 'Achior, you Ammonite mercenary' and describing his speech as 'words in a moment of perversity', Holofernes clearly expresses his contempt for Achior and his opinions. His punishment is to be banishment from Holofernes and death at the hand of his army. He will be sent to the enemy camp so that 'If you really hope in your heart that they will not be taken, then do not look downcast!'. C.A.Moore comments<sup>107</sup>, "Deeply offended by Achior's counsel, Holofernes would nonetheless be "merciful" to him by delivering him into the hands of the very people

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<sup>107</sup> Moore, *Judith*, p.169

Achior had sided with- that later Achior might be killed along with them (vv 7-9)! Clearly, Holofernes had a sense of humour, albeit sarcastic and cruel (v 9)."

This conversation began with Holofernes' questions which are then answered by both Achior and the people standing outside. They each offer different solutions and Holofernes decides to disagree with Achior. The words spoken by the people outside illustrate the position of the majority of Holofernes' army, and it is this position to which Holofernes also adheres. Both the speech of Achior and Holofernes' reply directly influence the progress of the plot, and they also serve as powerful aids for characterization. Achior offers the audience hope by recounting the Israelite theological situation and is characterized as a pious Ammonite. Holofernes, however, is characterized as a man consciously aware of his own power and military position. He has been commissioned by Nebuchadnezzar and he intends to uphold all that he believes his commander holds true. His punishment of Achior which he perceives as certain death, removes the Ammonite from the Assyrian camp and into Bethulia; a move which becomes important for the identification of the dead Holofernes (14:5-6).

**Irony** The whole dialogue contains at least two ironies, both of which are expressed by Holofernes as he replies to Achior. Firstly, Holofernes says to Achior, 'Who are you, Achior and you mercenaries of Ephraim, to prophesy among us as you have done today' and secondly, Holofernes says 'you shall not see my face again from this day until I take revenge'

The first case is quite a complex irony since it is also a double irony. Holofernes' use of the term 'prophesy' to describe Achior's

speech is an instance of covert irony or sarcasm, since Holofernes obviously believes Achior to be wrong. Achior is not in a position to prophesy since no god exists aside from Nebuchadnezzar. However, the narrative dictates that Achior is correct and so has prophesied, and it is Holofernes who is innocent or mistaken. This irony is particularly rich since Holofernes is so innocent that he, himself, uses an irony to convey his misunderstanding.

The second irony also involves Holofernes as alazon but it is considerably more straight forward than the first. Achior does see Holofernes' face again as Holofernes supposes, but it is not on the day that he takes revenge on his enemies. It is Holofernes' face on his severed head that Achior sees (14:6), and this is the day that Holofernes' enemies have taken revenge on him.

#### Idt. 6:18-19 The Israelites in Bethulia cry out to God

Then the people fell down and worshipped God, and cried out;

19 "O Lord God of heaven, see their arrogance, and have pity on our people in their humiliation, and look kindly today on the faces of those who are consecrated to you."

Achior has been retrieved by the Bethulians (6:10-14) and this is their reaction to what he has told them (6:16-17). Until now only the response of all the Israelites in Judea to Holofernes has been given (ch.4), (which included Bethulia's seizure of its mountain passes at Joakim's order), but this speech localizes the Israelite response to the city of Bethulia. The Bethulian response is not dissimilar to the national response, and the use of direct speech to convey their reaction

creates a sense of vividness and draws attention to this named town as opposed to the collective nation. Their words contrast the arrogance of the Assyrians with the humiliation of the Israelites, and request that God 'have pity' or 'look kindly' on this people dedicated to God.

Jdt. 7:4-5 The Israelites in Bethulia see the Assyrian army

When the Israelites saw their vast numbers, they were greatly terrified and said to one another, "They will now strip clean the whole land; neither the high mountains nor the valleys nor the hills will bear their weight." 5 Yet they all seized their weapons, and when they had kindled fires on their towers, they remained on guard all that night.

The Assyrian army has marched into full view of Bethulia (7:1-3) and the Israelites can now see their enemy. Their direct speech expresses their stated fear and they exclaim, 'They will now strip clean the whole land; neither the high mountains nor the valleys nor the hills will bear their weight!'. The sheer quantity or 'vast numbers' of the Assyrians is enough to destroy even the natural landscape, and this is a landscape that has afforded them protection (7:10). However, while their words demonstrate their fear, their actions indicate their courage and instead of surrendering they prepare for war. They are characterized as a brave but fearful people, and as the plot progresses it is their fear, found in these words, which predominates.

**Irony** These words contain two ironies and in both cases the Israelites act as alazon. Firstly, they say 'They will now strip clean the whole land' and from their perspective they are referring to the Assyrians

plundering Israel. However, as the plot unfolds it is the Israelites who will plunder the Assyrians and not vice versa. Secondly, they say 'neither the high mountains nor the valleys nor the hills will bear their weight' and they are envisaging Israel's destruction. As the narrative progresses the mountains will be unable to bear their weight but not because of the might of the Assyrian army, rather because they will not have the opportunity to!

Idt. 7:8-15 The leaders approach Holofernes with a plan

Then all the chieftains of the Edomites and all the leaders of the Moabites and the commanders of the coastland came to him and said, **9** "Listen to what we have to say, my lord, and your army will suffer no losses. **10** This people, the Israelites, do not rely on their spears but on the height of the mountains where they live, for it is not easy to reach the tops of their mountains. **11** Therefore, my lord, do not fight against them in regular formation, and not a man of your army will fall. **12** Remain in your camp, and keep all the men in your forces with you; let your servants take possession of the spring of water that flows from the foot of the mountains, **13** for this is where all the people of Bethulia get their water. So thirst will destroy them, and they will surrender their town. Meanwhile, we and our people will go up to the tops of the nearby mountains and camp there to see that no one gets out of the town. **14** They and their wives and children will waste away with famine, and before the sword reaches them they will be strewn about in the streets where they live. **15** Thus you will pay them back with evil, because they rebelled and did not receive you peaceably."



Having displayed his cavalry before the Israelites, Holofernes 'reconnoitered the approaches to their town, and visited the springs that supplied their water; he seized them and set guards of soldiers over them, and then returned to his army'(7:7). Once he has returned, the leaders of the Edomites, Moabites, and the commanders of the coastland, all come to him with the following proposal. They begin their speech with a request that Holofernes 'listen' to what they 'have to say', which is reminiscent both of Achior's request that Holofernes listen to him (5:5), and of Holofernes' admonition of the importance of words (6:4,9). They politely address him as 'my lord' and then they claim that his army 'will suffer no losses', which is clearly a bid to attract Holofernes' attention by offering him something he desires. They explain that the military prowess of the Israelites lies not with the might of their weapons but with the height of their mountains, and continue to suggest that Holofernes 'do not fight against them in regular formation'. Addressing him as 'my lord' once more, they conclude by repeating their claim that 'not a man of your army will fall'.

Then they propose a plan whereby no soldiers will be lost. They suggest that Holofernes and all his men remain in the Assyrian camp while they, his servants, take possession of the spring at the foot of the mountains. Now Holofernes has already captured this spring (7:7)<sup>108</sup>, so they take their argument further. The spring is the primary water source for the city, and so if the Israelites are denied their water they will die or surrender from thirst. These leaders will survey Bethulia from the other mountain tops and ensure that no one escapes. None of

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<sup>108</sup> Both Enslin and Zeitlin, *The Book of Judith*, p.104 and Moore, *Judith*, p.173 comment that this advice is somewhat obscure considering the spring has already been secured. However, it may be that they are now offering to secure the singular 'spring of water that flows from the foot of the mountain'(12:12) as opposed to the plural 'springs that supplied their water'(12:7).

Holofernes' men will die in combat, rather they will all remain safe in their camp.

Unlike Achior, these leaders were not afforded the opportunity to reply to Holofernes' questions concerning the identity of the Israelites (5:3-4). Achior's reply demonstrated his treachery and the remaining leaders are keen to prove themselves otherwise. The spring has already been captured, but they can take this opportunity to express their willingness to aid Holofernes in his campaign against Israel. Their understanding of the seizure of the spring is that it provides a means for all of Holofernes' army to remain alive, since all the Israelites will die or surrender from thirst, and they are eager to impress their new commander with their military wisdom and skills.

They enforce their proposals with a clever piece of rhetoric which serves to distinguish them from the Israelites and graphically illustrate the results of their plan. By contrasting 'we and our people' with 'They and their wives and children', they dispel any doubts Holofernes might have about their loyalty, and by using 'will waste away with famine, and before the sword reaches them they will be strewn about in the streets where they live', they permit Holofernes to imagine and enjoy the spectacle. Their speech ends with an affirmation of Holofernes' commission from Nebuchadnezzar. Since the Israelites have 'rebelled and did not receive you peaceably', Holofernes will now have his chance to take revenge.

Idt. 7:23-32 The people complain to Uzziah

Then all the people, the young men, the women,  
and the children, gathered around Uzziah and the

rulers of the town and cried out with a loud voice, and said before all the elders, 24 "Let God judge between you and us! You have done us a great injury in not making peace with the Assyrians. 25 For now we have no one to help us; God has sold us into their hands, to be strewn before them in thirst and exhaustion. 26 Now summon them and surrender the whole town as booty to the army of Holofernes and to all his forces. 27 For it would be better for us to be captured by them. We shall indeed become slaves, but our lives will be spared, and we shall not witness our little ones dying before our eyes, and our wives and children drawing their last breath. 28 We call to witness against you heaven and earth and our God, the Lord of our ancestors, who punishes us for our sins and the sins of our ancestors; do today the things that we have described!"

29 Then great and general lamentation arose throughout the assembly, and they cried out to the Lord God with a loud voice. 30 But Uzziah said to them, "Courage, my brothers and sisters! Let us hold out for five days more; by that time the Lord our God will turn his mercy to us again, for he will not forsake us utterly. 31 But if these days pass by, and no help comes for us, I will do as you say."

32 Then he dismissed the people to their various posts, and they went up on the walls and towers of their town. The women and children he sent home. In the town they were in great misery.

Although this appears to be a conversation between 'all the people, the young men, the women, and the children' and 'Uzziah and the rulers of the town', the only speakers are the men of Bethulia and Uzziah. It is the men who speak since they say 'we shall not witness our little ones dying before our eyes, and our wives and children drawing their last breath'. Both these men and Uzziah can be seen to be representative of the whole townspeople and the town rulers

respectively, since neither group offers any other voice concerning this issue.

The besieged Israelites have become thirsty and despondent (7:19-22), and so they approach their leaders. Before the speech begins it is reported that the people 'cried out with a loud voice' and then when they finished speaking 'great and general lamentation arose throughout the assembly, and they cried out to the Lord God with a loud voice'. This repetition serves to convey their deep anguish, and the fact that it encompasses their words, taken in conjunction with the narrator's statement in 7:32 ('In the town they were in great misery'), adds to this emotion. The men open with an appeal for God to act as a judge since Uzziah has chosen the wrong option on their behalf. They believe that God is no longer in a position to help them since they have not surrendered to the Assyrians. They demand that Uzziah 'summon them (the Assyrians) and surrender the whole town' since they would rather be slaves than watch their families die before their very eyes. Returning once more to their situation with respect to God, they call God as a witness against Uzziah and describe God as 'the Lord of our ancestors, who punishes us for our sins and the sins of our ancestors'. They believe that the current situation is a result of their sins and that now God is punishing them, as he has done countless generations before. Their understanding of sin stands beside that of Achior. Achior has told Holofernes that if the Israelites have not sinned then their God will save them; now the Israelites are saying that they have sinned and God can not save them.

Uzziah responds by asking that the people have 'Courage'. They did not say they were afraid but Uzziah easily realizes their anguish. Addressing the whole population with 'my brothers and sisters', which suggests an equality and caring between Uzziah and the people, he asks

that they wait a further five days since 'by that time the Lord our God will turn his mercy to us again, for he will not forsake us utterly'. His reply suggests that he accepts their position that they are liable for punishment, but he also believes that God will be merciful and intervene. It is most likely<sup>109</sup> that he is envisaging rain when he suggests this course of action. Uzziah closes by stating that he will surrender to the Assyrians if 'no help comes', and v.32 depicts the Israelites returning to their tasks and waiting hopelessly for some kind of intervention as Uzziah has suggested. Uzziah's ultimatum intensifies the suspense of the plot which now has only 'five days' in which to resolve itself.

**Irony** The single irony in this dialogue concerns the Israelite perception of sin and punishment. They believe that because they have not surrendered to the Assyrians, then they have sinned. However, the plot hinges on the fact that they have not sinned but are innocent, and so God is able to help them. The contrast between their words and those of Judith which follow, makes their unawareness all the more remarkable.

## Part 2 (chapters. 8-16)

The second part (chapters.8-16) of *Judith* contains more direct speech than the first and certainly more conversation. Judith is

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<sup>109</sup> See Jdt 8:31, Enslin and Zeitlin, The Book of Judith, p.109, and Moore, Judith, p.175.

introduced for the first time and the two leading characters, Judith and Holofernes, meet one another.

Idt. 8:11-36 Judith meets with the town elders and Uzziah replies

Judith is a leading character in this narrative, but she is not introduced until 8:1 and at 8:11 she begins to speak. Her first conversation involves two participants, herself and Uzziah, who both speak twice.

i) Idt. 8:11-27

They came to her, and she said to them,

"Listen to me, rulers of the people of Bethulia! What you have said to the people today is not right; you have even sworn and pronounced this oath between God and you, promising to surrender the town to our enemies unless the Lord turns and helps us within so many days. 12 Who are you to put God to the test today, and to set yourselves up in the place of God in human affairs? 13 You are putting the Lord Almighty to the test, but you will never learn anything! 14 You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart or understand the workings of the human mind; how do you expect to search out God, who made all these things, and find out his mind or comprehend his thought? No, my brothers, do not anger the Lord our God. 15 For if he does not chose to help us within these five days, he has power to protect us within any time he pleases, or even to destroy us in the presence of our enemies. 16 Do not try to bind the purposes of the Lord our God; for God is not like a human being, to be threatened, or like a mere mortal, to be won over by pleading. 17 Therefore,

while we wait for his deliverance, let us call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it pleases him.

18 "For never in our generation, nor in these present days, has there been any tribe or family or people or town of ours that worships gods made with hands, as was done in days gone by. 19 That was why our ancestors were handed over to the sword and to pillage, and so they suffered a great catastrophe before our enemies. 20 But we know no other god but him, and so we hope that he will not disdain us or any of our nation. 21 For if we are captured, all Judea will be captured and our sanctuary will be plundered; and he will make us pay for its desecration with our blood. 22 The slaughter of our kindred and the captivity of the land and the desolation of our inheritance- all this he will bring on our heads among the Gentiles, wherever we serve as slaves; and we shall be an offense and a disgrace in the eyes of those who acquire us. 23 For our slavery will not bring us into favour, but the Lord our God will turn it to dishonour.

24 "Therefore, my brothers, let us set an example for our kindred, for their lives depend upon us, and the sanctuary- both the temple and the altar- rests upon us. 25 In spite of everything let us give thanks to the Lord our God, who is putting us to the test as he did our ancestors. 26 Remember what he did with Abraham, and how he tested Isaac, and what happened to Jacob in Syrian Mesopotamia, while he was tending the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother. 27 For he has not tried us with fire, as he did them, to search their hearts, nor has he taken vengeance on us; but the Lord scourges those who are close to him in order to admonish them."

Shortly after Uzziah's ultimatum (7:30-31), Judith summons the town rulers and they come to her. It is unclear why she does not go to

them, perhaps she is weak from thirst<sup>110</sup>, or from fasting<sup>111</sup>, or this is a sign of her authority. She opens the conversation but does not end it, which suggests an equal standing. Her first words to the rulers are that they 'listen' to her, which is similar to the petitions of both Achior (5:5) and the leaders of the captured nations (7:8-9). Achior and the leaders were attempting to persuade Holofernes to take a particular course of action, and Judith is attempting to persuade the rulers that the course of action they have already taken is wrong. She says 'What you have said to the people today is not right; you have even sworn and pronounced this oath between God and you, promising to surrender the town to our enemies unless the Lord turns and helps us within so many days'.

Judith explains why it is that the rulers have been wrong and have angered God. By citing an ultimatum for the surrender of the town, Uzziah is demanding that God must act within a specified length of time. She argues that since they can not understand human beings even, who are God's creation, then how can they possibly understand how God chooses to act. God is all powerful and can choose to help them or destroy them. Uzziah's ultimatum limits God's actions and the correct response is to 'wait for his deliverance' and 'call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it pleases him'. She continues her theology by linking the present situation with that of past situations. She says, 'For never in our generation, nor in these present days, has there been any tribe or family or people or town of ours that worships gods made with hands, as was done in days gone by'. Such practice was the chief reason for Israel's previous demise and so the people of Bethulia can expect to be treated better. Indeed, they must strive to

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<sup>110</sup> The whole town is thirsty and listless (7:19-22).

<sup>111</sup> As a widow Judith fasted regularly (8:6). Also, since the Israelite men were fasting (4:9) in response to the Assyrians, the women may have been too (4:8-12).



prevent such catastrophe befalling them because if they are captured then the whole nation will be destroyed, including the temple, and the result will be pitiful for them all. Judith graphically describes such an outcome; 'The slaughter of our kindred and the captivity of the land and the desolation of our inheritance- all this he will bring on our heads among the Gentiles, wherever we serve as slaves; and we shall be an offense and a disgrace in the eyes of those who acquire us. For our slavery will not bring us into favour, but the Lord our God will turn it to dishonour.' She is urging that the people turn to God and trust God to act rather than contemplate surrender as Uzziah has suggested.

She begins to close her speech and uses the form of address 'brothers', which demonstrates her closeness to the rulers. Uzziah also used this term when speaking to the Bethulian crowd (7:29) and it strongly suggests the Israelite sense of shared calamity. She repeats the fact of Bethulia's highly strategic position and reminds her audience of their responsibility to the nation, but now begins to encourage them rather than threaten them. They should thank God since they are being tested, not unlike their ancestors. By drawing attention to the past once more, she demonstrates parallels between the Bethulian situation and that of Israel's heroes. She ends her speech with the warming conclusion that 'he has not tried us with fire, as he did them, to search their hearts, nor has he taken vengeance on us; but the Lord scourges those who are close to him in order to admonish them'. Judith has turned Uzziah's threatening and testing of God into God's testing of Bethulia, and since the people have been faithful they should continue to be faithful.

The content of her speech is in direct contrast to that of the men of Bethulia (7:24-28) and of Uzziah (7:30-31). By inference, they both believe that Israel is guilty, but Judith claims otherwise. In

conjunction with Achior's speech (5:5-21), she is implying that Israel will be saved and the Assyrians will be defeated, which defies the trend of the narrative so far. Israel is resisting this powerful army and now it seems they may be able to defeat the Assyrians after all. Judith's speech characterizes her as a woman of vision; she is the only one to have suggested Israel's innocence. Her words negate those of the townspeople and of the rulers, and so she is not afraid to stand alone in her convictions. These traits of visionary or exceptional insight and her lack of fear or her courage, become all the more obvious as the plot continues.

ii) Jdt. 8:28-31

**28** Then Uzziah said to her, "All that you have said was spoken out of a true heart, and there is no one who can deny your words. **29** Today is not the first time your wisdom has been shown, but from the beginning of your life all the people have recognized your understanding, for your heart's disposition is right. **30** But the people were so thirsty that they compelled us to do for them what we have promised, and made us take an oath that we cannot break. **31** Now since you are a God-fearing woman, pray for us, so that the Lord may send us rain to fill our cisterns. Then we will no longer feel faint from thirst."

Uzziah replies on behalf of the rulers to what Judith has said by affirming the truth of her words and acknowledging her status in these matters. Since her 'heart's disposition is right', Judith has always been able to demonstrate a wisdom which has been accepted by the townspeople. Confronted by her speech, he excuses his behaviour and that of his fellow rulers by attempting to blame the people of Bethulia.

It was the thirsty insistence of the people that moved Uzziah to his promise twice repeated, which he is unable to break. This promise is the controlling topic of both Judith's and Uzziah's speeches. He ends his reply by suggesting that Judith 'pray for us, so that the Lord may send us rain to fill our cisterns'. Addressing her as a 'God-fearing woman', he notes her special relationship once again, and expects that his request for her prayer will be met. Just as he tried to control God by setting a limit of five days, so he tries to control Judith by requesting that she pray for rain so that the people will no longer be thirsty. He has not learnt from Judith's words and unlike her, he is unable to envisage any other solution to their problems.

iii) Jdt. 8:32-34

**32** Then Judith said to them, "Listen to me. I am about to do something that will go down through all generations of our descendants. **33** Stand at the town gate tonight so that I may go out with my maid; and within the days after which you have promised to surrender the town to our enemies, the Lord will deliver Israel by my hand. **34** Only, do not try to find out what I am doing; for I will not tell you until I have finished what I am about to do."

Although Uzziah has suggested that Judith pray for rain, she responds by ignoring his advice and informing him of a plan she has already decided upon. Once more she opens her response with the phrase 'Listen to me'(8:11), which directs attention away from Uzziah and towards the words she is about to disclose. She says that her actions will result in a deed which will be remembered 'through all generations of our descendants', which is in accord with her earlier

preoccupation with Israel's heritage, and that Israel will be saved. Uzziah must meet Judith and her maid at the town gate to allow them to leave Bethulia, and Bethulia will be delivered by Judith's 'hand' within the number of days that Uzziah has promised. This is reminiscent of Nebuchadnezzar's claim that he will destroy the nations by his 'hand' (2:12), and so Judith sets herself up in opposition to the Assyrian king. She closes with the petition that Uzziah should not attempt to find out what it is she is about to do since she has no intention of telling him until her plan is complete. Once more her visionary insight and her single-minded courage are readily apparent.

iv) Jdt. 8:35-36

35 Uzziah and the rulers said to her, "Go in peace, and may the LORD God go before you, to take vengeance on our enemies." 36 So they returned from the tent and went to their posts.

In this final response, Uzziah and the rulers accept Judith's plan and offer her safety and success. Although she has given them no details they are resigned to her loyalty and intention, requesting that God precede her.

Jdt. 9:1-14 Judith's prayer

Then Judith prostrated herself, put ashes on her head, and uncovered the sackcloth she was wearing. At the very time when the evening incense was being offered in the house of God in Jerusalem, Judith cried out to the Lord with a loud voice and said,

2 "O Lord God of my ancestor Simeon, to whom you gave a sword to take revenge on those strangers who had torn off a virgin's clothing to defile her, and exposed her thighs to put her to shame, and polluted her womb to disgrace her; for you said, 'It shall not be done'- yet they did it. 3 So you gave up their rulers to be killed, and their bed, which was ashamed of the deceit they had practiced, was stained with blood, and you struck down slaves along with princes, and princes on their thrones. 4 You gave up their wives for booty and their daughters to captivity, and all their booty to be divided among your beloved children who burned with zeal for you and abhorred the pollution of their blood and called on you for help- O God, my God, hear me also- a widow.

5 "For you have done these things and those that went before and those that followed. You have designed the things that are now, and those that are to come. What you had in mind has happened; 6 the things you decided on presented themselves and said, 'Here we are!' For all your ways are prepared in advance, and your judgement is with foreknowledge.

7 "Here now are the Assyrians, a greatly increased force, priding themselves in their horses and riders, boasting in the strength of their foot soldiers, and trusting in shield and spear, in bow and sling. They do not know that you are the Lord who crushes wars; the Lord is your name. 8 Break their strength by your might, and bring down their power in your anger; for they intend to defile your sanctuary, and to pollute the tabernacle where your glorious name resides, and to break off the horns of your altar with the sword. 9 Look at their pride, and send your wrath upon their heads. Give to me, a widow, the strong hand to do what I plan. 10 By the deceit of my lips strike down the slave with the prince and the prince with his servant; crush their arrogance by the hand of a woman.

11 "For your strength does not depend on numbers, nor your might on the powerful. But you are the God of the lowly, helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forsaken, saviour of those without hope. 12 Please, please, God of my father, God of the heritage of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the waters, King of all your creation, hear my prayer! 13 Make my deceitful words bring wound and bruise on those who have planned cruel things against your covenant, and against your sacred house, and against Mount Zion, and against the house your children possess. 14 Let your whole nation and every tribe know and understand that you are God, the God of all power and might, and that there is no other who protects the people of Israel but you alone!"

After Judith has finished speaking to Uzziah and the other town officials, she turns and speaks to God. She has already been characterized as pious (8:8,31) and the manner in which she prays enhances this trait. Not only does she prostrate herself, place ashes on her head, and uncover the sackcloth she is wearing (4:10, 8:5), but she prays 'at the very time when the evening incense was being offered in the house of God in Jerusalem' and uses a loud voice. These five things, and in particular the timing of her prayer<sup>112</sup>, combine to accentuate both her piety and the content of the prayer she is about to offer. She opens with the words 'O Lord God of my ancestor Simeon'<sup>113</sup>, which is not unexpected considering her continued reference to Israel's history. She describes Simeon's destruction of the Shechemites after their rape of Dinah (Gen. 34) and her emphasis is that this was God's

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<sup>112</sup> Enslin and Zeitlin write "the mention of timing is an obvious heightening of the holy significance and import of Judith's act- her prayer arose to God as incense on the holy altar", *The Book of Judith*, pp.121-2

<sup>113</sup> Although Simeon is not mentioned in Judith's introductory genealogy (8:1), assuming that we are meant to accept 8:1 at face value, this may be an accidental oversight. See Moore, *Judith*, pp.179, 191.

work<sup>114</sup>. By using this example of Simeon, and stating herself to be Simeon's descendant with his god and her god being the same, Judith is implying that such a violent act will be her response also. She identifies herself as a widow and begs that 'O God, my God, hear me also-a widow'.

After aligning herself with Simeon and expressing her understanding of God and violence, she expresses her understanding of God and predestination. God is not only aware of the present but is also able to determine the future, since God has 'designed the things that are now, and those that are to come'. With 'here now' she then returns to her present situation involving the Assyrians. Although she describes their army as a powerful military body, she calls upon God to destroy them and draws attention to the Assyrian's ignorance of God's strength. Since the Assyrians intend to 'defile your sanctuary, and to pollute the tabernacle where your glorious name resides, and to break off the horns of your altar with the sword', God should be angry enough to act against this presumptuous nation. Once more identifying herself as a widow, she asks that God give her a 'strong hand' so she can carry out her plan, and for the first time in the narrative she hints at what this plan might involve. She says 'By the deceit of my lips strike down' and 'crush their arrogance by the hand of a woman'<sup>115</sup>. Both the arrogance of the Assyrians and the role of her hand have already been mentioned, but the plan to involve her speech has not.

Closing with more theology, she interprets God as a protector of those who are weak which may include herself as a widow. She addresses God as 'God of my father' and 'God of the heritage of Israel' which illustrate her belief in her connectedness with Simeon, and

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<sup>114</sup> Judith's position contrasts with the author of Gen. 49:5-7, who believed that the action of Simeon was wrong.

<sup>115</sup> It may have been considered a disgrace to be killed by a woman (Judg.9:54).

'Lord of heaven and earth', 'Creator of the waters', and 'King of all your creation' which show her belief in God as all powerful. She refers once more to her plan to use 'deceitful words' against the Assyrians who have determined to destroy Israel, and she ends her speech with 'Let your whole nation and every tribe know and understand that you are God, the God of all power and might, and that there is no other who protects the people of Israel but you alone'. Throughout these closing words, and indeed the whole prayer, she speaks from God's point of view (as she perceives it), and so the whole prayer is a petition for God to act.

Jdt. 10:6-9 Judith and her maid leave Bethulia

Then they went out to the town gate of Bethulia and found Uzziah standing there with the elders of the town, Chabris and Charmis. 7 When they saw her transformed in appearance and dressed differently, they were very greatly astounded at her beauty and said to her, 8 "May the God of our ancestors grant you favour and fulfill your plans, so that the people of Israel may glory and Jerusalem may be exalted." She bowed down to God.

9 Then she said to them, "Order the gate of the town to be opened for me so that I may go out and accomplish the things you have just said to me." So they ordered the young men to open the gate for her, as she requested.

Judith has prepared to leave for the Assyrian camp and as Uzziah and the elders see her they are immediately impressed by her beauty, since she is 'transformed in appearance' and 'dressed differently'. They ask that the 'God of our ancestors' offer her success and that her



plans (the details of which they are unaware) be fulfilled. They trust that her purpose is the safety of Israel and its religion. She replies that they order the gate to be opened for her so she can achieve this task; this is done and she is able to leave.

Idt. 10:11-16 The women encounter an Assyrian patrol

As the women were going straight on through the valley, an Assyrian patrol met her 12 and took her into custody. They asked her, "To what people do you belong, and where are you coming from, and where are going?" She replied, "I am a daughter of the Hebrews, but I am fleeing from them, for they are about to be handed over to you to be devoured. 13 I am on my way to see Holofernes the commander of your army, to give him a true report; I will show him a way by which he can go and capture all the hill country without losing one of his men, captured or slain."

14 When the men heard her words, and observed her face- she was in their eyes marvelously beautiful- they said to her, 15 "You have saved your life by hurrying down to see our lord. Go at once to his tent; some of us will escort you and hand you over to him. 16 When you stand before him, have no fear in your heart, but tell him what you have just said, and he will treat you well."

Judith leaves Bethulia accompanied by her maid, and the maid remains her companion throughout the carrying out of her plan. She becomes a silent observer and is addressed only by Judith (13:3). Although she is never named and never speaks, her role is vital since not only does she occupy an important position within Judith's household (8:10), but she carries Holofernes' head back to Bethulia

(13:9b-10a). The two women are met by an Assyrian patrol and taken into custody. They have travelled 'straight through the valley', and have probably gone through the protective narrow valley of 4:7 and on to the vicinity of the city's water supply (7:3, 7, 17). Enslin and Zeitlin suggest that they followed an established route and that it was their purposeful intention to meet with a patrol<sup>116</sup>. They are later able to return to Bethulia safely without such an encounter by circling around the valley (13:10), but Judith's plan at this stage involves a deliberate meeting with Holofernes. As soon as the patrol meet them they are taken into custody, and thus are instantly regarded as enemies.

The conversation is initiated by the patrol, which is not unexpected since they have taken the women captive, and they ask Judith a series of questions. The three questions are as follows;

- i) what people do you belong to?
- ii) where are you coming from?
- iii) where are you going?

They are questions concerning her ethnicity, information about where her journey began, and information about her destination. She replies by means of adjacency pairs but offers more information than the soldiers require.

In response to the first question Judith describes herself as a 'daughter of the Hebrews'. She is an Israelite and she is one of the people the Assyrians are seeking to destroy. She makes her identity clear and it is this identity which has led her to the present situation. She answers the second question with 'I am fleeing from them' and adds 'for they are about to be handed over to you to be devoured'. She does not mention Bethulia, but continues with 'them' implying the

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<sup>116</sup> Enslin and Zeitlin, The Book of Judith, p.130

Hebrews or Israelites. Since she uses only a pronoun to describe Israel, her emphasis is on the verb 'fleeing' and she continues by explaining why she is doing this. She believes that the Israelites are about to be destroyed by the Assyrians, and it is easy for the patrol to believe her since they agree (5:23-24). Her appearance in the valley supports her claim that she is fleeing. The third question concerns Judith's destination, and she replies by saying that she is going to see Holofernes and includes her reasons why. The Assyrian patrol now know more about her plan than did Uzziah and the Bethulian elders. Judith uses the name 'Holofernes' to address the Assyrian general, which displays her knowledge of the situation, and describes him as 'the commander of your army'. This is a description from the point of view of the patrol. She is going to give Holofernes a true account of the situation and will 'show him a way by which he can go and capture all the hill country without losing one of his men, captured or slain', which is a statement from the general's point of view. It is also very relevant for the patrol since they are the men who will, or will not, be captured or slain. Now Holofernes has already been promised this by the leaders of the Edomites, the Moabites, and of the coastland (7:8-16), and has approved their plan. They suggested that he capture Bethulia's water supply and wait until everyone dies of thirst while they ensure no one escapes, but obviously if it rains then the siege will be prolonged (8:31). Judith is offering the same promise as these leaders, which has already proved favourable, but is not saying how she envisages it being achieved. Perhaps the general and the patrol will not have to wait quite so long yet still be assured of their safety.

The response of the patrol to Judith's answers is remarkable. Although they are able to believe her and accept her as an ally, their change in tone from questioning hostility to extreme helpfulness can

only be explained by v.14. They agree that her plan is important, but it is her face '-she was in their eyes marvelously beautiful-', which encourages them in the belief that Holofernes should be approached immediately. They tell her that she has now saved her life by 'hurrying down to see our lord', where 'hurrying' is a reference to her 'fleeing' and 'our lord' includes Judith's perspective as the patrol see it. Some of the patrol will escort her to Holofernes' tent, and they offer her advice on how to handle her encounter with him. She is not to be afraid and to tell him everything she has said to them, and she will be well treated.

Judith's encounter with the patrol serves to move her rapidly into the presence of Holofernes. The conversation can be summarized as follows:

*patrol* questions directed at Judith regarding ethnicity,  
and information about where her journey began  
and where it will end

*Judith* reply to soldiers concerning ethnicity and  
about her reason for embarking on journey

*Judith* reply to soldiers continues, includes details  
about where her journey will end, the reason why  
that is where she is going, and what the outcome  
will be

(v.14 Although this verse contains no direct speech it is an important part of the conversation since it describes how the soldiers react to Judith, which effects their subsequent speech.)

*patrol* speak to Judith, telling her what the outcome of  
her journey will be and urging her to continue

her travel. They will accompany her and she will reach her destination

*patrol* continue speaking to Judith, reassuring her that when she reaches her destination she is not to be afraid, that she should say exactly what she has said to them, and that the result will be favourable for her

Although the speech of the patrol surrounds Judith's speech, which is not unlike her physical situation, she uses her replies to their questions to persuade them that she is no longer their enemy although she is a Hebrew, and that she is able to help them. She is brave enough to allow the patrol to lead her to Holofernes and although they express doubts about her courage, she is ready to carry out her plan.

**Irony** There are three ironies in this conversation, two of which share a layer of meaning which is generated by the soldiers exclamation 'you have saved your life by hurrying down to see our lord'. From the soldiers perspective, Judith is now safe since all Israelites who have rejected Nebuchadnezzar are under threat from the Assyrians. The two other layers which create these two ironies are as follows:

- i) While Judith's life is now assured, the lives of the Assyrians and of Holofernes ('our lord') are not.
- ii) Judith will only be safe when Holofernes is dead.

Both these layers of meaning oppose the first layer and it is the patrol who are innocent to the irony. Both ironies are intended, covert, fixed, and finite. The outcome of the plot indicates that these ironies are

intended, they are not specified, they remain within the given layers, and they concern the roles of defined characters.

The third irony sets the tone for the following plot. The patrol come to believe that Judith is entirely trustworthy and will give a 'true report' to Holofernes, and they even encourage her not to be afraid. However, it is their initial reaction of suspicion which is more appropriate. Judith's arrival will not be auspicious for the Assyrians but only for the Israelites, and it is Holofernes and not Judith who should be afraid.

Idt. 10:19 Arriving at the Assyrian camp

They marveled at her beauty and admired the Israelites, judging them by her. They said to one another, "Who can despise these people, who have women like this among them? It is not wise to leave one of their men alive, for if we let them go they will be able to beguile the whole world!"

Judith and her maid have been escorted to the Assyrian camp and are taken to Holofernes' tent. As they arrive 'there was great excitement' and 'her arrival was reported from tent to tent'(10:18). The camp marvels at Judith's beauty and judges the rest of the Israelites by her. Although Israel is not a military nation (5:23-24), they can not be dismissed or despised since beautiful women are their asset. The soldiers cry 'It is not wise to leave one of their men alive, for if we let them go they will be able to beguile the whole world'. The Israelite women are so beautiful that, in the eyes of the Assyrian soldiers, the Israelite men are in a position to charm anyone. This is the fifth time that Judith's beauty has been noted (8:7; 10:4, 7, 14) and on the two

previous occasions it also influenced the direct speech of its beholder. Judith's beauty is such that 'she made herself very beautiful, to entice the eyes of all the men who might see her'(10:4), and in this case the soldiers are well aware of its potential.

**Irony** The irony in this speech lies with the comment 'It is not wise to leave one of their men alive, for if we let them go they will be able to beguile the whole world'. The soldiers presume that the Israelite men will be able to use the beauty of the Israelite women to their advantage. However, Judith uses her beauty of her own accord unassisted or uninfluenced by any men and it is with this woman, rather than with 'their men', that the danger lies. The soldiers act as alazon while Judith is eiron.

#### Idt.10:23-11:23 Judith's first encounter with Holofernes

Judith has been characterized as brave, beautiful, pious, and visionary, and Holofernes has been characterized as powerful and obedient to Nebuchadnezzar. These two protagonists now meet for the first time and their characteristic traits are able to interact.

##### i) Idt. 10:23-11:4

**23** When Judith came into the presence of Holofernes and his servants, they all marveled at the beauty of her face. She prostrated herself and did obeisance to him, but his slaves raised her up.

11.1 Then Holofernes said to her, "Take courage, woman, and do not be afraid in your heart, for I have never hurt anyone who chose to serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of all the earth. 2 Even now, if

your people who live in the hill country had not slighted me, I would never have lifted my spear against them. They have brought this on themselves. 3 But now tell me why you have fled from them and have come over to us. In any event, you have come to safety. Take courage! You will live tonight and ever after. 4 No one will hurt you. Rather, all will treat you well, as they do the servants of my lord King Nebuchadnezzar."

This lengthy conversation is not only preceded by a pre-conversational opening (10:23), but is also introduced by an elaborate description of Holofernes. As the guards take Judith to the general's tent, 'Holofernes was resting on his bed under a canopy that was woven with purple and gold, emeralds and other precious stones. When they told him of her, he came to the front of the tent<sup>117</sup>, with silver lamps carried before him'(10:21-22). These verses focus entirely on Holofernes as Judith prepares to meet him. He is relaxed and lying under a canopy, which is a symbol of his wealth. This is the bed on which he dies (13:2) and his canopy will become a war trophy for Judith (16:19). He is told, indirectly, of her arrival and goes to meet her. The indirect speech here means that all attention stays with Holofernes rather than focusing on a particular speaker or set of words. The silver lamps are another indication of his wealth, suggesting that it is now dark, which adds to the atmosphere of the meeting. As he sees Judith, 'Holofernes and his servants, they all marveled at the beauty of her face'. Her visual appearance is immediately striking and this is Holofernes' first impression of her. The conversation begins after the pre-conversational opening of 'she prostrated herself and did obeisance to him', which is not unexpected

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<sup>117</sup> This suggests that the tent had at least two separate compartments, with the outer one used for greeting guests and performing business, and the inner one for more personal requirements such as sleeping.



given Holofernes' position<sup>118</sup>. Judith's prostration is accepted and Holofernes' slaves encourage her to stand up.

Holofernes as the captor initiates the dialogue and addresses Judith as 'woman'. His first impression of her was of her beauty and so this term which reflects her sexuality is not unexpected. He tells her to 'take courage' and to 'not be afraid in your heart', which he repeats again with 'you have come to safety. Take courage'. Not unlike his patrol (10:16), he presupposes that she is afraid and so he reassures her. Judith never says she is afraid and neither does the plot, so she must already possess courage. Holofernes tries to reassure her by saying 'for I have never hurt anyone who chose to serve Nebuchadnezzar'. He must already know that she is here as an ally rather than as an enemy, or he is encouraging her to be so. His understanding of 'hurt' and of people 'who chose to serve Nebuchadnezzar' is however somewhat dubious. Although the people who lived along the seacoast, at Sidon and Tyre, Sur and Ocina, Jamnia, and Azotus and Ascalon, sent messengers to him suing for peace (2:28-3:4), he 'demolished all their shrines and cut down their sacred groves; for he had been commissioned to destroy all the gods of the land, so that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar alone, and that all their dialects and tribes should call upon him as a god'(3:8). Also, when Achior the Ammonite leader approached him with advice, he rejected it and pronounced him a traitor (5:1-6:9). Holofernes continues, saying, 'if your people who live in the hill country had not slighted me, I would never have lifted my spear against them'. He is claiming that he is innocent in this situation and the Israelites are the guilty party, so Judith really should be assured of her safety.

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<sup>118</sup> Examples of this form of address include Ruth meeting Boaz (Ruth 2:10), and Abigail meeting David (1 Sam. 25:23). See also Esther 3:1-6, where Mordecai refuses to do obeisance to Haman.

After these reassurances Holofernes changes the topic in order to ask Judith a question. He changes with 'but now' and enquires 'why have you fled from them and come over to us'. He knows she has left the Israelites or 'them', but does not know why she has approached 'us', the Assyrians. He closes his speech with a repetition of his previous assertions, that she is now safe, she should be brave, no one will hurt her, and she will be well treated as a servant of Nebuchadnezzar.

ii) Jdt.11:5-8

5 Judith answered him, "Accept the words of your slave, and let your servant speak in your presence. I will say nothing false to my lord this night. 6 If you follow out the words of your servant, God will accomplish something through you, and my lord will not fail to achieve his purposes. 7 By the life of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the whole earth, and by the power of him who has sent you to direct every living being! Not only do human beings serve him because of you, but also the animals of the field and the cattle and the birds of the air will live, because of your power, under Nebuchadnezzar and all his house. 8 For we have heard of your wisdom and skill, and it is reported throughout the whole world that you alone are the best in the whole kingdom, the most informed and the most astounding in military strategy.

Judith's entire reply to Holofernes covers fifteen verses. She responds to Holofernes' question 'now tell me why you have fled from them and have come over to us' and introduces herself as 'your slave' and 'your servant'. She is Holofernes' prisoner and is appropriately respectful. She opens her speech with the request that Holofernes 'accept the words of your slave' and let her 'speak in your presence'.

What she is about to say will be significant for Holofernes and he should pay attention. By using the term 'in your presence' she attends to Holofernes' role within the conversation, and intends to engage him with what she is saying. She continues with 'I will say nothing false to my lord tonight', so having already drawn attention to what she is going to say, she adds a declaration of her honesty. Her words will be true. This is not dissimilar to Achior's claim that 'I will tell you the truth'(5:5) and Holofernes' response that 'none of my words shall fail to come true'(6:9). She addresses Holofernes as 'my lord', which he presumes to refer to himself since it concurs with her use of 'your slave' and 'your servant'. It is deliberately ambiguous and she is, in fact, referring to God. Judith then qualifies why it is that Holofernes should listen to her. She says 'if you follow out the words of your servant, God will accomplish something through you, and my lord will not fail to achieve his purposes'. She makes no indication of what this 'something' might involve, but only that it will come about if he listens to her. Once more, the use of 'my lord' is ambiguous and for Holofernes who believes that it refers to himself, 'purposes' can only mean the destruction of his enemies.

Judith now turns to some elaborate flattery. She swears by the life of Nebuchadnezzar, whom she addresses as 'king of the whole earth', and so introduces a sense of grandeur and importance, which she then connects with Holofernes by 'who has sent you to direct every living being'. Holofernes has been commissioned by the powerful Nebuchadnezzar but he has also contributed to that power since all living beings 'serve him (Nebuchadnezzar) because of you (Holofernes)'. Holofernes has power over the life and death of all creatures. However, while she extols his power and position, she is careful not to over-flatter him and does not fail to mention that he is

always under Nebuchadnezzar. She continues with the compliments, but now concentrates on achievement rather than power. She notes Holofernes' widespread fame among both the smaller nations, with 'for we have heard', and throughout the world. It is his wisdom or knowledge and his skill or military strategy, which are so noteworthy. In fact, it is Holofernes 'alone' who possesses these attributes above all others since he is 'the best in the whole kingdom'. Judith began her reply with a petition for Holofernes to listen to her, and then she tells him of his own power and achievement. If he is listening, then surely he will enjoy what he has heard and will want to believe that she 'will say nothing false to my lord tonight'!

iii) Jdt. 11:9-15

9"Now as for Achior's speech in your council, we have heard his words, for the people of Bethulia spared him and he told them all he had said to you. 10 Therefore, lord and master, do not disregard what he said, but keep it in your mind, for it is true. Indeed our nation cannot be punished, nor can the sword prevail against them, unless they sin against their God.

11"But now, in order that my lord may not be defeated and his purpose frustrated, death will fall upon them, for a sin has overtaken them by which they are about to provoke their God to anger when they do what is wrong. 12 Since their food supply is exhausted and their water has almost given out, they have planned to kill their livestock and have determined to use all that God by his laws has forbidden them to eat. 13 They have decided to consume the first fruits of the grain and the tithes of the wine and oil, which they had consecrated and set aside for the priests who minister in the presence of our God in

Jerusalem -things it is not lawful for any of the people even to touch with their hands. 14 Since even the people in Jerusalem have been doing this, they have sent messengers there in order to bring back permission from the council of the elders. 15 When the response reaches them and they act upon it, on that very day they will be handed over to you to be destroyed.

Having flattered Holofernes and urged him to pay attention to her words, Judith takes a risk and changes the topic to Achior and the Israelite situation. She tells Holofernes that she knows about Achior's advice to him, and of course she is also aware of his punishment, but she urges Holofernes to 'not disregard what he said' but to 'keep it in your mind'. Such a request could lead to her death, but she is confident enough to take the risk and pursue her argument. By addressing Holofernes as 'lord and master' she is able to remind him of her regard for him and of his position with respect to her, which encourages him to listen. Achior's words are to be listened to since they were true, not unlike Judith's own words (11:5), and she reminds him of what Achior had said, that 'our nation can not be punished, nor can the sword prevail against them, unless they sin against their God'. Judith's words are dangerous, but by changing her pronouns from 'our nation' to 'against them' and 'their God', she demonstrates her own change of affinity from the Israelites to the Assyrians, which greatly reduces the risk she is taking. She can be confident because she has fled from Bethulia and turned to the Assyrians, whom she intends to help, and she conveys this confidence by her speech.

Having claimed that the Israelites can not be defeated unless they sin, Judith now explains that for Holofernes victory is at hand. She continues to engage him in the conversation even though he may

not like what she is saying, by mentioning what it is that he requires, namely, the destruction of the Israelites. By using 'a sin has overtaken them' in conjunction with 'which they are about to provoke their God to anger when they do what is wrong', she implies both the certainty that a sin will happen and the reality that it has not happened just yet. She reassures Holofernes that he will get what he wants since the Israelites will sin, and so will not be indestructible, but at the same time he will have to wait and trust that they can not be attacked just now. Holofernes has already decided not to attack the Israelites immediately (7:16) but Judith is suggesting that victory could be close<sup>119</sup>. All that is required of Holofernes is that he believe the situation between Israel and God, and Judith helps him by offering a detailed cultic description of life in Israel. Their food and water have nearly all gone and now they have decided to kill their cattle and to 'consume the first fruits of the grain and the tithes of the wine and oil, which they had consecrated and set aside for the priests who minister in the presence of our God in Jerusalem - things it is not lawful for any of the people even to touch with their hands'. By using 'our God' rather than the expected 'their God' she displays her own piety, which is further demonstrated by her obvious knowledge of cultic matters. She colourfully concedes an element of horror and explains that since Jerusalem has already committed this crime, then all Israel will soon follow. Messengers have been sent to seek permission from the Jerusalem elders and as soon as they return and the sins are committed, then Holofernes will be able to destroy them. This is exactly what he desires, and Judith hopes that his desire is strong enough that he will believe her words. We do not know whether the people are really about

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<sup>119</sup> Judith makes no reference to Holofernes' seizure of Bethulia's water supply and to the possibility that rain could prolong his seige of the town. She only encourages him that his victory is certain and will occur shortly.

to do as she says or not, but it is important that Holofernes believes her so she is able to determine when and whether he attacks Bethulia. We do know that Uzziah has offered God an ultimatum and that the Bethulians will shortly surrender if nothing changes (7:30-31).

iv) Jdt. 11:16-19

16"So when I, your slave, learned all this, I fled from them. God has sent me to accomplish with you things that will astonish the whole world wherever people shall hear about them. 17 Your servant is indeed God-fearing and serves the God of heaven night and day. So, my lord, I will remain with you; but every night your servant will go out into the valley and pray to God. He will tell me when they have committed their sins. 18 Then I will come and tell you, so that you may go out with your whole army, and not one of them will be able to withstand you. 19 Then I will lead you through Judea, until you come to Jerusalem; there I will set your throne. You will drive them like sheep that have no shepherd, and no dog will so much as growl at you. For this was told me to give me foreknowledge; it was announced to me, and I was sent to tell you."

Addressing herself as 'your slave' again, Judith continues with her speech. Once she had realized that the Israelites were about to sin, she fled from them, and came over to the Assyrians. Her arrival in their camp was deliberate since 'God has sent me', and she expands her earlier assertion (11:6) that God will accomplish 'something' through Holofernes by stating that God has sent her to do this, and it will 'astonish the whole world'. She reinforces this claim by assuring Holofernes of her piety with 'your servant is indeed God-fearing and serves the God of heaven night and day'. Since she worships God it is

not unlikely that she has been chosen to aid Holofernes and also, since she worships God, she must leave the camp and pray. She makes this request carefully, addressing Holofernes with 'my lord' and 'your servant', and opening with 'I will remain with you'. Judith is still Holofernes' prisoner so to request that she leave the camp is difficult, but she does tell Holofernes why it is necessary. She needs to pray so that God can tell her when the Israelites have sinned. She does not say why she can not remain in the camp and pray as opposed to leaving it, but it is the destruction of the Israelites that Holofernes requires so she tailors her request to fit his desires. It is essential for her that she is able to leave the camp without suspicion so she is able to escape later (13:10). By surrounding the request with the assurances that she 'will remain with you' and 'then I will come and tell you', she is able to paint a picture of what will happen and impresses her loyalty upon the general.

When Judith has told Holofernes that the Israelites have sinned, then he will be able to attack them and they will be destroyed. She describes the event from his point of view, with 'you may go out with your whole army, and not one of them will be able to withstand you'. She envisages what it will be like for him once he has defeated his enemy. She will lead him -and this asserts her own role- through the conquered territory until they reach Jerusalem, and then she will make him king. He will be a ruler seated on a throne, leading the people, and no one will dare to challenge him. Her use of the metaphors 'you will drive them like sheep that have no shepherd' and 'no dog will so much as growl at you', presents a vivid image and offers Holofernes a greater position than he has already. His commission was to subjugate all the people to Nebuchadnezzar and not to himself. Judith closes her speech with the claim 'for this was told me to give me



foreknowledge; it was announced to me, and I was sent to tell you'. Unlike Achior, whose words Holofernes scorned with 'who are you, Achior and you mercenaries of Ephraim, to prophesy among us as you have done today... you have said these words in a moment of perversity'(6:2, 5), Judith's words are prophetic since she was given foreknowledge. She repeats that God has sent her so she can tell Holofernes everything, and so now surely, since he will obtain more than he could have imagined, he must 'accept the words of your slave'.

v) Idt. 11:20-23

20 Her words pleased Holofernes and all his servants. They marveled at her wisdom and said, 21 "No other woman from one end of the earth to the other looks so beautiful or speaks so wisely!" 22 Then Holofernes said to her, " God has done well to send you ahead of the people, to strengthen our hands and bring destruction on those who have despised my lord. 23 You are not only beautiful in appearance, but wise in speech. If you do as you have said, your God shall be my God, and you shall live in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar and be renowned throughout the whole world."

Holofernes and his servants are pleased with what Judith has said which is not surprising. She has flattered him and promised him an easy victory, and told him that God will make him a king and he will be renowned throughout the world. When Holofernes and his servants first met Judith they 'marveled at the beauty of her face'(10:23), but now having heard her words they 'marveled at her wisdom'. This is conveyed by their direct speech as they say 'no other woman from one

end of the earth to the other looks so beautiful or speaks so wisely'.

They have enjoyed both her appearance and her dialogue.

Holofernes then replies by himself and accepts that God has sent Judith to him. God has sent her to the Assyrians to give them strength and to bring about the destruction of the Israelites, who have disobeyed Nebuchadnezzar, and her arrival is auspicious. Holofernes embraces her as an Assyrian ally, and remarks once more on her wisdom. Not only is she obviously visibly impressive, but her words are striking too. He continues and promises her 'if you do as you have said, your God shall be my God, and you shall live in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar'. Previously he had assured her of her safety (11:1-4), but now he offers her a prestigious and comfortable lifestyle, and fame such that she will be 'renowned throughout the whole world'. Not only will she gain her life but she will gain a reward also. He is keen for her God to be his, and since he has been offered so much this is not unexpected. The position of Nebuchadnezzar as a god is not altogether clear (cf 3:8), but what is clear is that Holofernes is very keen to support Judith and her claims.

In this conversation, which is the first meeting of the protagonists, Holofernes speaks twice and Judith only speaks once. 'Holofernes and all his servants' also speak once. The general's words encompass those of Judith but she speaks for longer and includes more topics. This encounter alters the expected plot and serves the further development of both the characters.

Holofernes has captured Bethulia's water supplies and is waiting for the town to die or surrender from thirst. His army is vast and he is confident in his position. The only flaw in his plan is that it may rain and the seige may be prolonged (8:31). After his conversation with

Judith, he believes God will help him and make him a king. Although he was in a good position before, now he is in a better position and his greed aids his belief in her story. Her piety convinces him that she is indeed close to God, and with his personal vanity as an additional persuasive element, he agrees that God will act through him in a way he desires. She promises him the throne of Israel, and although he is loyal to Nebuchadnezzar, his own desires and achievements, which Judith flatters, are able to envisage such a situation. He is hasty so he agrees to a plan which means to attack rather than to wait.

Judith changes Holofernes' expectations by giving him something he desires. She has never met this man, but she is able to flatter him and offer him what he wants. She is brave enough to confirm Achior' s claim that the Israelites can not be defeated unless they sin against God, and tells Holofernes that since she is God-fearing she will be able to tell him when it would be propitious to attack. She envisages that God 'will accomplish something' through Holofernes and is wise enough to lead Holofernes to suppose that this will be favourable for him. The full extent of her plan still remains a secret.

**Irony** This conversation contains several ironies, and in every one Judith acts as eiron while Holofernes is alazon. Firstly, Judith's use of the term 'my lord' is clearly ironic. Every time she uses this she is referring to God, but Holofernes believes she is referring to himself. These two opposing layers of meaning, of which Holofernes is ignorant, are intended, since Judith was introduced as 'she feared God with great devotion' and even speaks of herself as 'God-fearing' and as serving God night and day. The examples within her speech are as follows:

- i) At 11:5 she says 'I will say nothing false to my lord this night' and having described herself as his slave and servant, Holofernes assumes she is speaking about him. However, she is really referring to God and not to the general, since God is her lord and it is to God that she will be truthful.
- ii) Similarly, in 11:6 where she states 'my lord will not fail to achieve his purposes' Holofernes supposes that she means the destruction of his enemies the Israelites, whereas she is really implying the destruction of God's enemies the Assyrians.
- iii) In 11:11 she argues 'in order that my lord may not be defeated and his purpose frustrated'. Holofernes accepts that he is the one who will not be defeated but Judith actually intends this for God.
- iv) Finally, at 11:17 Judith claims 'so, my lord, I will remain with you' which Holofernes interprets as an assurance that she will not try to escape but will help him. Judith's plan though, is to remain faithful to God.

A second irony concerns Judith's promise to Holofernes that 'God will accomplish something through you' and 'God has sent me to accomplish with you things that will astonish the whole world wherever people shall hear about them'. From Holofernes' perspective, or from one layer of meaning, Judith is relating some great victory from which he will prosper. The other layer of meaning, which is Judith's perspective, is that Holofernes will be humiliated and destroyed. Similarly, Holofernes promises Judith that she will be 'renowned throughout the whole world', but his idea of what she will be known for and what she herself anticipates are entirely different. It is not the defeat of the Israelites which will give her fame, but the defeat of an Assyrian general.

A third irony lies with Holofernes' urging Judith to have courage. Twice he repeats the phrase 'take courage', yet there has been no suggestion that Judith is in need of this assurance. It is only later as she is about to decapitate him in his drunken state that she asks 'give me strength today'(13:7), which suggests that she needs courage. While her request is for physical strength, since she is not a seasoned warrior it is not unlikely that she needed emotional help also. By urging Judith to have courage, Holofernes is both encouraging her in her present situation, and encouraging her in her later fateful deed. Holofernes also tells her 'you will live tonight and ever after', assuming that she is fearful for her life and he is able to protect her. It is true that he can protect her from the Assyrian army, but it is also true that it is his life that is in danger and he who needs protection from her. Judith will live safely, but only when Holofernes is dead.

Finally, both 'Holofernes and all his servants' and Holofernes in his closing speech, take note of Judith's wisdom. They state 'no other woman... speaks so wisely' and 'you are... wise in speech'. However, they are unaware of the extent of this gift and suppose that Judith's plan to destroy the Israelites is all her speech offers. Her wisdom has actually enabled her to convince them that she is their ally when in fact she is still their enemy.

#### Idt. 12:1-4 Judith and her food

Then he commanded them to bring her in where his silver dinnerware was kept, and ordered them to set a table for her with some of his own delicacies, and with some of his own wine to drink. 2 But Judith said, "I cannot partake of them, or it will be an offense; but I will have enough with the things I brought with me."

3 Holofernes said to her, "If your supply runs out, where can we get more of the same? For none of your people are here with us." 4 Judith replied, "As surely as you live, my lord, your servant will not use up the supplies I have with me before the Lord carries out by my hand what he has determined."

Holofernes orders for Judith a table laid with some of his own food and wine, but she interrupts the preparations with 'I cannot partake of them'. This is bold since to decline Holofernes' hospitality could be considered offensive, but she has a very good reason. In keeping with her previous arguments she says 'it will be an offense'. C.A. Moore explains<sup>120</sup>, "by scrupulously avoiding any prohibited foods, Judith was confirming for Holofernes the sincerity of her offer. In other words, Holofernes would now believe that Judith felt so strongly about obeying dietary laws that she could actually betray her own people if they ignored such prohibitions (11:12-13)."

Judith then says 'I will have enough with the things I brought with me', which prompts Holofernes' enquiry 'if your supply runs out, where can we get more of the same? For none of your people are here with us'. He understands that while Judith may have enough of her food just now, there will come a time when she requires more and he will be unable to provide it. He accepts that her food is different from his and that its origins are with the Israelites. He describes them as 'your people' but notes that Judith is 'here with us', which both accepts her Hebrew identity and her allegiance to the Assyrians. Judith responds with a claim that her food supply will not run out before God has acted. She has already told Holofernes that the Israelites are about to sin any moment, but now she offers a concrete time period. She has

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<sup>120</sup>Moore, *Judith*, p.218

only a limited supply but it will not be exhausted before the Israelites are defeated. She swears by Holofernes' life that this will be the case, and describes what God will accomplish as 'before the Lord carries out by my hand what he has determined'.

It is clear from Judith's bold interruption of Holofernes' plans, and from Holofernes' reaction, that he has believed her story and she is aware of this. She is not afraid of him and readily makes her demand, which is congruent both with her own character (8:8) and with the character that Holofernes perceives her to be (11:17). She encourages him by allowing him to believe that he will be victorious very shortly.

**Irony** The single irony in this message is similar to the ironies of 11:6,16. These verses contain the phrases 'God will accomplish something through you'(11:6) and 'God has sent me to accomplish with you things that will astonish the whole world wherever people shall hear about them'(11:16). Here in verse 4 Judith replies 'before the Lord carries out by my hand what he has determined'. One layer of meaning suggests that God's purpose will be positive for Holofernes and the other that it will not.

Idt. 12:5b-6 Judith's message to Holofernes

Toward the morning watch she got up 6 and sent this message to Holofernes:"Let my lord now give orders to allow your servant to go out and pray."

It is not unusual for a message to appear in the form of direct speech (3:2-4), but this is a message which has already appeared in a previous speech. At 11:17 Judith told Holofernes that she must leave the

camp and pray, so that she can tell him when the Israelites have sinned and he can successfully attack. The reason for her departure is not given here, but her need to leave the camp is still clear. The reason for the inclusion of this message at this point is that it is 'toward the morning watch' and Judith requires to pray 'now'. Holofernes must order his guards to let her pass at this particular time, and these orders become crucial later as Judith is able to escape by means of her established prayer time (13:10).

Idt. 12:10-14 Preparations for the banquet

Once Judith has become settled in the Assyrian camp, Holofernes decides to invite her to a banquet so he can seduce her.

i) Idt. 12:10-12

On the fourth day Holofernes held a banquet for his personal attendants only, and did not invite any of his officers. 11 He said to Bagoas, the eunuch who had charge of his personal affairs, "Go and persuade the Hebrew woman who is in your care to join us and to eat and drink with us. 12 For it would be a disgrace if we let such a woman go without having intercourse with her. If we do not seduce her, she will laugh at us."

Holofernes only invites his personal attendants to his banquet, and C. A. Moore explains why<sup>121</sup>, "Inasmuch as the purpose of the evening's affair was the seduction of Judith (cf. 12:12), the smaller the number of people present, the better. Besides, surrounded by only his

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<sup>121</sup> Moore, Judith, p.223



personal servants, Holofernes knew that he would appear more impressive than if his dashing fellow officers were also present." He decides not to invite Judith personally, but to send Bagoas 'the eunuch who had charge of his (Holofernes) personal affairs' to 'persuade' Judith to attend the festivities. Bagoas' status as a eunuch is perhaps why he was chosen for this task. Holofernes chooses not to use her name (perhaps he does not know it) but refers to her as 'the Hebrew woman' and as 'such a woman'. The earlier term distinguishes Judith from any other women in the camp, since no other Hebrew women would have been present, and the latter is probably a reference to her considerable qualities of beauty and wisdom. If Judith were not beautiful, then Holofernes would not desire her.

Holofernes continues with 'for it would be a disgrace if we let such a woman go without having intercourse with her. If we do not seduce her, she will laugh at us'. This appears to be his sole reason for the banquet invitation and the extent to which he is prepared to go to achieve these intentions is deliberately ambiguous. His expected disgrace may be strong enough for him to rape her if she disagrees, since the extent of his desire to have 'intercourse' and 'seduce' Judith' is not clear<sup>122</sup>. Anyhow, the ambiguity generated by his statement reminds the reader of Judith's perilous and possibly life-threatening situation. Holofernes is characterized as a lustful man in a position of power, and also as a man keenly aware of social pressures.

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<sup>122</sup> Enslin and Zeitlin translate verse 12 as, 'for lo, we will be put to shame if we let such a woman go without having intercourse with her, because if we do not force her, she will laugh us to scorn.' They comment, 'To read in the thought of "enticing" or "coaxing" is as false to the Greek as it would have been to Holofernes. FORCE HER is surely more accurate than "allure" or "persuade", as is indicated by the concluding WILL LAUGH US TO SCORN', *The Book of Judith*, p.148. Moore, however, translates verse 12 as, 'For we will be disgraced if we let such a woman go without having her, because if we do not make her, she will laugh at us'. He believes that both the ideas of seduction and rape are contained in the Greek, and so his translation of 'make her' is an appropriate rendition, *Judith*, pp.221-224.

ii) Idt. 12:13-14

So Bagoas left the presence of Holofernes, and approached her and said, "Let this pretty girl not hesitate to come to my lord to be honored in his presence, and enjoy drinking wine with us, and to become today like one of the Assyrian women who serve in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar." 14 Judith replied, "Who am I to refuse my lord? Whatever pleases him I will do at once, and it will be a joy to me until the day of my death."

Bagoas follows his commander's instructions and approaches Judith to invite her to the festivities. Unlike his conversation with Holofernes, he speaks once and initiates the dialogue. Judith also speaks once. He begins by addressing her as 'this pretty girl', which draws attention to her sexual attractiveness, and then he suggests that she 'enjoy drinking wine with us'. He omits the 'eat' stipulated by Holofernes and adds the specific 'wine', which is a deliberate change and highlights the narrative role played by the wine. Bagoas includes other details which were not given by Holofernes, suggesting that Judith 'become today like one of the Assyrian women who serve in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar'. It is not entirely clear what this addition proposes, but it is in keeping with the plot to suppose that it is another sexual innuendo<sup>123</sup>.

**Irony** Judith's reply, far from being the second half of an adjacency pair as Bagoas supposes it to be, is an artful display of three ironies. Firstly, she asks 'who am I to refuse my lord?' and Bagoas presumes that

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<sup>123</sup> See Moore, Judith, p.224

since she is in a position of subservience to his master Holofernes, she will do whatever Holofernes desires. However, since Judith's 'my lord' refers to God and not to Bagoas' 'my lord', she is only open to God's will and not to the general's, and these are diametrically opposed. Secondly, she says 'whatever pleases him I will do at once' and Bagoas believes she is talking about sexual intercourse with Holofernes. Judith's perspective though is Holofernes' death and it is his decapitation that she will be doing 'at once'. Thirdly, she claims 'it will be a joy to me until the day of my death' and here she is referring to how the death of Holofernes will affect the rest of her life. She will be famous for her deed and will remain devoted to God. Bagoas' layer of meaning interprets her words as a compliment to Holofernes' sexual prowess. Since he is so powerful, Judith has surely been flattered by his advances and is very happy.

These three ironies acutely distinguish between the expectations of Judith and those of Holofernes, as interpreted by his servant Bagoas. Judith is characterized as able to say one thing which is in accord with Holofernes' expectations, and yet also to say another which is in accord with her own. Her famous wisdom is very clearly displayed here, and it remains for the plot to resolve the tension between these two possible outcomes.

#### Idt. 12:16-18 At the banquet

Then Judith came in and lay down. Holofernes' heart was ravished with her and his passion was aroused, for he had been waiting for an opportunity to seduce her from the day he first saw her. 17 So Holofernes said to her, "Have a drink and be merry with

us!" 18 Judith said, "I will gladly drink, my lord,  
because today is the greatest day in my whole life."

Judith has dressed up (12:15) and arrived at the banquet as Holofernes requested. Holofernes has already told Bagoas of his intention to seduce her (12:12) and so his reaction to her as he sees her is no surprise. He asks that she 'have a drink and be merry with us', and it is obvious that it is by means of alcohol that he intends to seduce her (12:13). The conversation revolves solely around the two protagonists as he speaks first, since he has invited her and intends to seduce her, and she replies. It contains two adjacency pairs, the first to which Judith replies that she will drink gladly, and the second in response to Holofernes' 'be merry', she replies 'today is the greatest day of my whole life'. This is deliberately ironic. Addressing Holofernes as 'my lord', Judith's greatest day is in fact his destruction but Holofernes understands it to be his victory. Judith is clearly very confident in this situation. She is not intimidated by Holofernes' desire to have sex with her even though she does not wish this to happen (13:16), and relentlessly continues with her use of irony.

Idt. 13:4b-5 Judith's prayer at Holofernes' bedside

Then Judith, standing beside his bed, said in her heart, "O Lord God of all might, look in this hour on the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. 5 Now indeed is the time to help your heritage and to carry out my design to destroy the enemies who have risen up against us."

Judith has been left alone in Holofernes' tent with the general, but in his bid to seduce her he has fallen asleep in a drunken stupor (13:2). She chooses to pray to God and although she is reported as saying 'in her heart' rather than out aloud, the prayer is given the form of direct speech. If she had said these words aloud she might have attracted unwanted attention from the Assyrians guards! She asks that God observe 'the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem'. She is going to fulfil her plan to save the Israelites and is asking for God to assist her. She does not say what she intends to do with her hands, but trusts that God knows what is about to happen (9:5-6). Her plan will be accomplished shortly since she asks 'look in this hour', and says 'now indeed is the time to help'. She notes both her own role and the role of God, since it is by 'her design' that Israel, as God's heritage, will be safe.

Idt. 13:7-8 Judith's speech at Holofernes' bedside

She came close to his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and said, "Give me strength today, O Lord God of Israel!" 8 Then she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head.

Judith has finished her prayer at Holofernes' bedside and has picked up his sword which hung above his head (13:6). She now comes 'close to his bed' and takes 'hold of the hair of his head'. The sword in her hand and the words that she speaks prefigure the resolution of her plans, which are that 'she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head'. She asks God for strength just before the decapitation, needing both the physical might to give two blows and the emotional depth to carry out a murder. Her use of 'today' indicates the immediacy of her situation.

This deed surely characterizes her as a person with vision. She has been wise enough to arrive in a situation where she is able to kill her enemy, and she has the motivation and courage to do it. The death of Holofernes is the turning point of the narrative.

Idt. 13:11 Judith and her maid return to Bethulia

From a distance Judith called out to the sentries at the gates, "Open, open the gate! God, our God, is with us, still showing his power in Israel and his strength against our enemies, as he has done today!"

Having left the Assyrian camp, Judith and her maid arrive outside Bethulia. Judith calls out to the guards and informs them that it is she who is returning. Immediately, she demands that the gates be opened and declares that God is with them. She uses two repetitions; the first qualifies 'open' so that it is the gate that is to be opened, and the second qualifies 'God' since it is Israel's or 'our' God who is being extolled. Both the repetitions and the phrase 'as he has done today', create a sense of immediacy and excitement. She states that God is 'still showing his power in Israel and his strength against our enemies', which is a reference to Holofernes' decapitation. The townspeople are unaware of her deed so she tells them that God has been victorious.

Idt. 13:14-14:5 Judith speaks to the people, including Uzziah

Once Judith has entered the town, the people gather around her and a conversation begins. She opens the dialogue and the people respond, then Uzziah replies and the people reply once more, and then

Judith closes. Judith's words encompass those of the people and of Uzziah, and it is her words that direct the plot. Uzziah acts as the religious spokesperson for the town and his words form a centrepiece.

i) Idt.13:14-16

Then she said to them with a loud voice, "Praise God, O praise him! Praise God, who has not withdrawn his mercy from the house of Israel, but has destroyed our enemies by my hand this very night!"

15 Then she pulled the head out of the bag and showed it to them, and said, "See here, the head of Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, and here is the canopy beneath which he lay in his drunken stupor. The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman. 16 As the Lord lives, who has protected me in the way I went, I swear that it was my face that seduced him to his destruction, and that he committed no sin with me, to defile and shame me."

Judith opens the conversation with a call to praise God. Using a loud voice which attracts the attention of the crowd and enables everyone to hear her, she repeats the word 'praise' three times. God has not deserted Israel as the Bethulians supposed (7:25) but has destroyed the Assyrians instead. She mentions that it is by her hand that this has occurred, and it is only as she produces Holofernes' head from her food bag that the crowd begins to understand. She asks them to 'see here' since she has very visual evidence, and having identified the head explains 'the Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman'. Judith has decapitated the enemy general. She continues by informing the people that she and Holofernes did not have intercourse. Although she was close enough to chop off his head, God protected her and 'he committed no sin with me, to defile and shame me'. It was the

beauty of her face only and not of her body that seduced him to his death.

This is the first time that Judith speaks of her amazing beauty herself. Until now only other characters have remarked on or been influenced by it. She says 'I swear that it was my face that seduced him to his destruction', and so indicates that she is fully aware of the effect her appearance has on the men around her. It seems she is making a distinction between herself as a person and her face as a weapon.

ii) Jdt.13:17

17 All the people were greatly astonished. They bowed down and worshiped God, and said with one accord, "Blessed are you our God, who have this day humiliated the enemies of your people."

The people are astonished at the sight of Holofernes' head and Judith's claims. Bowing down and worshipping God, they act and speak unanimously as one character. They praise God and not Judith, and describe God as having humiliated their enemies. Judith has drawn attention to the fact that it was by her hand as a woman that God acted which is humiliating for the Assyrians. The people are characterized by their words as having now been impressed by God's actions, even though they doubted before (7:25).

iii) Jdt.13:18-20

18 Then Uzziah said to her, "O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all other women on earth; and blessed be the Lord God, who created the



heavens and the earth, who has guided you to cut off the head of the leader of our enemies. 19 Your praise will never depart from the hearts of those who remember the power of God. 20 May God grant this to be a perpetual honor to you, and may he reward you with blessings, because you risked your own life when our nation was brought low, and you averted our ruin, walking the straight path before our God." And all the people said, "Amen."

The people have spoken of their gratitude towards God and now Uzziah, the town magistrate, joins them. Unlike the crowd, he chooses to extol Judith also and addresses her as 'daughter'. Judith has been blessed by God such that she is 'above all other women on earth'. Her gender continues to be explicit since it is because she is a woman that the Assyrians have been so humiliated. He praises God as creator, and God who has 'guided you to cut off the head of the leader of our enemies'. Uzziah believes Judith's claims and understands that God has assisted her. As a result, he asks that God grant her good fortune and perpetual remembrance. Whenever God's power is remembered, then Judith will be praised. She risked her life for Israel and saved them, and remained faithful to God throughout since she was 'walking the straight path'. The people respond to Uzziah with 'amen', which signifies their acceptance and agreement with what he has said. They too, believe her words and that God has helped her. Uzziah acts as the religious spokesperson for the whole Bethulian community.

iv) Jdt.14:1-5

14:1 Then Judith said to them, "Listen to me, my friends. Take this head and hang it upon the parapet of

your wall. **2** As soon as day breaks and the sun rises on the earth, each of you take up your weapons, and let every able-bodied man go out of the town; set a captain over them, as if you were going down to the plain against the Assyrian outpost, only do not go down. **3** Then they will seize their arms and go into the camp and rouse the officers of the Assyrian army. They will rush into the tent of Holofernes and will not find him. Then panic will come over them, and they will flee before you. **4** Then you and all who live within the borders of Israel will pursue them and cut them down in their tracks. **5** But before you do all this, bring Achior the Ammonite to me so that he may see and recognize the man who despised the house of Israel and sent him to us as if to his death."

In this final speech event of the conversation Judith who also began the dialogue, ends it by proposing a cunning plan. The Israelites are to trick the Assyrians into fleeing by forcing them to panic. Addressing the crowd as 'friends' she speaks predominantly to the men who are able to fight, and suggests that they hang the general's head on the city wall<sup>124</sup>. Then they should prepare to attack the camp but not actually do so. Their advances will be seen by the Assyrians and they will summon their commander, who will be discovered dead. The Assyrians will then panic and flee, and the Israelites will be able to pursue them and kill them. However before all this is to take place, Achior must be brought to Judith so he can identify the dead general's head. Achior must recognize for all the people that this is the man who 'despised the house of Israel'. Although the people and Uzziah clearly believe Judith's story, she wants Achior to verify it

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<sup>124</sup> The displaying of a head or other body parts, is not unusual for Hebrew narrative. See 1 Sam.17:54; 31:9-10, 2 Kings10:7-8 and also 1 Macc.7:47, 2 Macc.15:35.

precisely. Her plan to use the Israelites as bait to precipitate the downfall of the Assyrians will be a disaster if Holofernes is not indeed dead. The Assyrians will only panic if their commander is no longer with them; if he is there, then they will attack and all Israel will be destroyed. The verification of Holofernes' head by Achior implies that her plan is fail-safe.

This entire conversation celebrates Judith's return and informs the Israelites of her success. They are able to praise God and thank her. Her closing speech gives direction to the plot by anticipating the actions which are about to occur. Achior does come to her, he does identify Holofernes' head, and then the Israelites do destroy the Assyrians using the plan she has suggested. She acts as an authority for the rout of the Israelite enemy, and both Uzziah and the people agree this has been given to her by God.

Idt. 14:6-8 Achior appears before Judith

So they summoned Achior from the house of Uzziah. When he came and saw the head of Holofernes in the hand of one of the men in the assembly of the people, he fell down on his face in a faint. 7 When they raised him up he threw himself at Judith's feet, and did obeisance to her, and said, "Blessed are you in every tent of Judah! In every nation those who hear your name will be alarmed. 8 Now tell me what you have done during these days."

So Judith told him in the presence of the people all that she had done, from the day she left until the moment she began speaking to them.

Achior comes to meet Judith as she requested; he is not part of the crowd that rushed out to see her when she first arrived (13:12-13). When he sees Holofernes' head, he faints and has to be helped to his feet again. As a battle-seasoned warrior this is quite a surprise; it is not the sight of the head itself that has distressed him but the thought of how it was obtained. His direct speech reflects this interpretation. Judith is blessed by God and everyone who hears about her will be afraid. He asks that she recount what has happened since it is her amazing deed which is so terrifying. His request provides an opportunity for the Israelites to learn fully of her exploits, and Judith is reported as responding.

Idt.14:13 The Assyrians ask for Holofernes to be woken

They came to Holofernes' tent and said to the steward in charge of all his personal affairs, "Wake up our lord, for the slaves have been so bold as to come down against us to give battle, to their utter destruction."

Having seen the Israelites preparing to attack, the leaders of the Assyrian soldiers approach their commander. They ask 'the steward in charge of all his (Holofernes) personal affairs', presumably Bagoas (cf 12:11; 14:14), to wake him on their behalf, and their direct speech conveys their sense of an easy victory. Describing the Israelites as 'the slaves', they state that they have been 'bold' and the result will be their 'utter destruction'. The Assyrians are very confident in their ability to win and the irony in their words is acute.

Idt. 14:17-18 Bagoas discovers Holofernes is dead and Judith is missing

Then he went to the tent where Judith had stayed, and when he did not find her, he rushed out to the people and shouted, **18** "The slaves have tricked us! One Hebrew woman has brought disgrace on the house of King Nebuchadnezzar. Look, Holofernes is lying on the ground, and his head is missing!"

Bagoas has discovered Holofernes' body and immediately he 'cried out with a loud voice and wept and groaned and shouted, and tore his clothes'(14:16). He goes to look for Judith but realizes she has left. With a loud voice indicative of his anger and grief, and so all the camp can hear him, he exclaims,'the slaves have tricked us'. Judith is responsible for Holofernes' decapitation and she is no longer an Assyrian ally. She is one of the Israelite 'slaves' so-called by the leaders of the soldiers (14:13). He continues with 'one Hebrew woman has brought disgrace on the house of King Nebuchadnezzar'. It was not an army nor a male assassin, but a woman who has killed Nebuchadnezzar's chosen envoy. It was unexpected that one so powerful should fall like this. The man who 'despised the house of Israel'(14:5) has been murdered by the woman who 'brought disgrace on the house of King Nebuchadnezzar'. The highly visual nature of Holofernes' death is marked by the use of 'look' and the words 'his head is missing'. He is unmistakably dead for all to see. When the captains who had approached Bagoas hear the news, they 'tore their tunics and were greatly dismayed, and their loud cries and shouts rose up throughout the camp'(14:19), and when the rest of the army hear, they panic and flee (15:1-2) just as Judith anticipated.

Idt. 15:8-10 The high priest Joakim and the elders of the Israelites bless Judith

Then the high priest Joakim and the elders of the Israelites who lived in Jerusalem came to witness the good things that the Lord had done for Israel, and to see Judith and to wish her well. **9** When they met her, they all blessed her with one accord and said, "You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the great boast of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation! **10** You have done all this with your own hand; you have done great good to Israel, and God is well pleased with it. May the Almighty Lord bless you forever!" And all the people said, "Amen."

The Assyrians have been destroyed and Joakim the high priest and the Jerusalem elders, come to Bethulia to speak with Judith. They act as one character and the people's response of 'amen' signifies that all Israel is in agreement with their words. They state, 'you are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the great boast of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation'. Their triple reference to Israel is illustrative of Judith's loyalty to her nation and of Israel's gratitude to Judith. She alone, 'with your own hand', has rescued them and 'done great good'. God is pleased and they ask 'may the Almighty Lord bless you forever'. Their direct speech is demonstrative of Israel's understanding that what Judith has done is a good thing and that God has approved, and that now she deserves to be blessed for all time.

Idt. 16:1-17 Judith's song

And Judith said, "Begin a song to my God with tambourines, sing to my Lord with cymbals. Raise to him a new psalm; exalt him, and call upon his name.

**2** For the Lord is a God who crushes wars; he sets up his camp among his people; he delivered me from the hands of my pursuers.

**3** The Assyrian came down from the mountains of the north; he came with myriads of his warriors; their numbers blocked up the wadis, and their cavalry covered the hills.

**4** He boasted that he would burn up my territory, and kill my young men with the sword, and dash my infants to the ground, and seize my children as booty, and take my virgins as spoil.

**5** But the Lord Almighty has foiled them by the hand of a woman.

**6** For their mighty one did not fall by the hands of the young men, nor did the sons of the Titans strike him down, nor did tall giants set upon him; but Judith daughter of Merari with the beauty of her countenance undid him.

**7** For she put away her widow's clothing to exalt the oppressed in Israel. She anointed her face with perfume;

**8** she fastened her hair with a tiara and put on a linen gown to beguile him.

**9** Her sandal ravished his eyes, her beauty captivated his mind, and the sword severed his neck.

**10** The Persians trembled at her boldness, and the Medes were daunted at her daring.

**11** Then my oppressed people shouted; my weak people cried out, and the enemy trembled; they lifted up their voices, and the enemy were turned back.

**12** Sons of slave girls pierced them through and wounded them like the children of fugitives; they perished before the army of my Lord.

**13** I will sing to my God a new song. O Lord, you are great and glorious, wonderful in strength, invincible.

14 Let all your creatures serve you, for you spoke, and they were made. You sent forth your spirit, and it formed them; there is none that can resist your voice.

15 For the mountains shall be shaken to their foundations with the waters; before your glance the rocks shall melt like wax. But to those who fear you, you show mercy.

16 For every sacrifice as a fragrant offering is a small thing, and the fat of all whole burnt offerings to you is a very little thing; but whoever fears the Lord is great forever.

17 Woe to the nations that rise up against my people! The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day of judgement; he will send fire and worms into their flesh; they shall weep in pain forever.

This is the last direct speech of the narrative and it is in the form of a song or liturgical celebration. Judith is depicted as the sole singer of the song, but such an obviously liturgical piece would envisage congregational participation. It very much reflects the concerns of the narrative (v.17 the only exception perhaps<sup>125</sup>), with vv.5-9 containing specific details about Judith's fateful act. Although Moore suggests that vv.2-4 and 11-17 are not exclusively applicable to the Book<sup>126</sup>, Craven and Gardner both claim that the entire song is strongly reminiscent of the plot<sup>127</sup>. Gardner, following her own translation, comments<sup>128</sup>:

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<sup>125</sup> Verse 17 could be an addition since it suggests an other-worldly retribution, which is not implied anywhere else in the plot. However, the use of 'forever' may simply be a rhetorical flourish and since the theme of punishment for sin is included within the narrative, then this verse might not be an addition after all.

<sup>126</sup> Moore, *Judith*, pp.252-257

<sup>127</sup> T. Craven, *Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 1980), pp.105-112 and A.E.Gardner, 'The Song of Praise in Judith 16:2-17(LXX 16:1-17)', *Heythrop Journal*, 29 (1988), pp.413-422

<sup>128</sup> Gardner, 'The Song of Praise', p.414. See also pp.415-417 where she comments on vv.13-17.



"Verse 2 which begins with, 'For God is the Lord who breaks battles' recalls 9:7 where Judith states in prayer 'they (the Assyrians) know not that you are the Lord who breaks battles'. Verse 3, with its description of the immensity of the Assyrian forces, harks back to what is stated over and over again in the narrative (2:5, 7, 15-19; 7:2, 4). Verse 4 is reminiscent of 4:12 where the people pray to God not to allow 'their babies to be abducted or their wives taken as spoil'. Verse 11 recalls 9:11 where Judith in her prayer says 'you are a God of the lowly... protector of the weak', the same vocabulary being used in both the prose and poetry. Verse 12 alludes to 15:5f. where the children of Israel pursued and slaughtered the fleeing enemy."

Dancy has advocated the existence of this song before the narrative itself<sup>129</sup>, which suggests that Judith may have been some kind of folk figure. Also, a number of scholars have indicated parallels between this song and those of Moses and Miriam (Ex.15:1-21)<sup>130</sup>, and also of Deborah (Judges 5:2-31)<sup>131</sup>. It is not unlikely that the author was keen to align Judith with traditional figures from Israelite history, especially since it is in keeping with her character to refer to such role models (cf 9:2-4,12). The content of the song describes both the role played by Judith and the Israelites, and also praises God as all-powerful over nature and as a true judge.

This song is the first time that Judith explicitly states her adventures. She 'put away her widow's clothing' and 'anointed her face with perfume, she fastened her hair with a tiara and put on a linen gown'. She did this so that 'her sandal ravished his eyes' and 'her

<sup>129</sup> J. C. Dancy, The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha: Tobit, Judith, Rest of Esther, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel, and Prayer of Manasseh (Cambridge Bible Commentary, 1972), p.68

<sup>130</sup> See especially P.W. Skehan, 'The Hand of Judith', Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 25(1963), pp.94-110. See also P.Trible, 'Bringing Miriam out of the Shadows', Bible Review, (Feb.1989), pp.14-25,34.

<sup>131</sup> Gardner, 'The Song of Praise', pp.417-422

beauty captivated his mind'. The purpose for her preparation? So that 'the sword severed his neck'. Judith decided on her plan from the outset, before she decided to leave Bethulia, and it is only now as the narrative ends, that she openly tells everyone what she determined.

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Chapter 4: The Influence of Direct Speech on the Plot  
Development and Characterization in the Book of  
Judith

The preceding chapters have shown that the direct speech in the Book of *Judith* does influence the plot development and characterization. This is expected since these are the functions of direct speech in Hebrew literature. The paragraphs below offer a summary of some of the ways in which direct speech influences both the plot development and the characterization in this Book.

The influence of direct speech on plot development

Part 1 (chapters 1-7)

The opening or first direct speech of the plot is Nebuchadnezzar's commissioning of Holofernes (2:4-13). Holofernes' commission is the reason for Judith's actions. Holofernes is told to capture the nations who had refused to assist Nebuchadnezzar and to kill them if they resist; Israel resists and so Judith decapitates Holofernes before he can kill her. This speech anticipates Holofernes' actions against Israel since he is following Nebuchadnezzar's commands, but it does not anticipate Judith's actions against the Assyrians. Alongside Holofernes' commission, Nebuchadnezzar also says that 'what I have spoken I will accomplish by my own hand'. He declares himself as all-powerful by claiming that everything he asks for he will be able to accomplish. In this first speech Nebuchadnezzar

asserts his authority, but as the plot unfolds, his authority as he perceives it, is false. God with Judith is able to defeat him. His declaration here prefigures a tension which will only be resolved later.

The speech of the messengers (2:28-3:5), which is the second direct speech of the narrative, also influences the plot in a very direct way. Since the messengers are unnamed and the exact identity of the people who send them is ambiguous, and Holofernes only receives them indirectly, all the emphasis in the speech is on the content of the words spoken and not on the conversational participants. The messengers sue for peace and urge Holofernes to treat them leniently. These people who send this message act as a paradigm for other nations who may decide to surrender rather than to resist. Although they offer their livelihoods and are asking for peace, Holofernes 'demolished all their shrines and cut down their sacred groves'(3:8). He demands that they worship Nebuchadnezzar as a god. This petition and its results are an example for Israel, and they greatly increase the tension or suspense of the plot. Will Israel surrender and lose the right to worship their God; or will Israel resist and risk death?

Holofernes comes closer to Israel, and as he does the Israelites resist. The general asks the commanders of Moab, Ammon, and the coastland about Israel's military power. His questioning accentuates Israel's position as a nation that is opposing the Assyrians, unlike the Moabites, Ammonites, and the people of the coastland, who have surrendered or been defeated. Holofernes anticipates an explanation of Israel's stance, which is provided by Achior, the commander of the Ammonites, who proposes a reason for Israel's behaviour. By means of a long historical recital Achior explains that if the Israelites are

innocent before their God and have not sinned, then their God will protect them.

Achior's speech changes the expectation of the plot completely. Until now Holofernes has been all-powerful and has devastated many nations, but now Achior is suggesting that this might change. Israel's God may be able to save them; but there are preconditions so the plot is still tense. Have the Israelites sinned or not, and is Achior telling the truth as he claims to be (5:5)? Holofernes replies and rejects Achior's claims. He banishes him from the Assyrian camp and sends him to the Israelites to his death, but in so doing he actually places him in a position where he can later verify Holofernes' death (14:5-6).

So far the narrative has only focused on Israel as a nation, but with the speeches of 6:18-19 and 7:4-5 it changes to concentrate on the Israelite town of Bethulia. Although all of Israel is threatened, Bethulia will be one of the first towns to be attacked. These speeches reveal what is happening in this town; the people are scared but still they are preparing for war. Although Holofernes displays his cavalry before them and is expecting a victory, the Bethulians continue to defend their town. However they also approach Uziah, the town magistrate, and convey their fears (7:23-29). They believe that since they have not surrendered to the Assyrians and so they will die, then they have sinned against God and God can not help them. Their fears can be compared with the words of Achior, who said that if the Israelites had not sinned then God would save them. The Israelites believe they have sinned, so who will save them now? The tension in the plot is increasing, and it increases even more with Uziah's reply. Uziah promises that if God does not act on Bethulia's behalf within five days, then they will surrender. The plot has now only five days in which to resolve itself favourably for the Israelites, or otherwise.

Part 2 (chapters.8-16)

After Uzziah has declared a five day ultimatum, Judith speaks for the first time. Her words act as a contrast to those of the Bethulians and Uzziah. Unlike the Bethulians she does not believe the Israelites have sinned and God will not help them, and she strongly disagrees with Uzziah's promise. In agreement with Achior's speech (5:5-21), she implies that Israel can be saved and that the Assyrians can be defeated. Her words and those of Achior, are directly against all that the narrative has anticipated so far.

At 8:32-34 Judith explains that she has a plan. She does not reveal what it is, but only that 'I am about to do something that will go down through all generations of our descendants'. By urging them to 'listen' to her and by claiming that she will deliver Israel by her 'hand', she acts in direct opposition to Nebuchadnezzar, who claimed that his words and his hand, or deeds, were the most powerful. In her prayer (9:1-14) she hints at what this plan might involve with 'by the deceit of my lips strike down' and 'crush their arrogance by the hand of a woman'. She leaves Bethulia by requesting that the gates be opened for her (10:9) and Uzziah wishes her well (10:6-8). Before she goes he is astonished by her beauty, and his reaction prefigures the reactions of both the Assyrian soldiers and of Holofernes as they meet her for the first time.

Once Judith and her maid have left Bethulia they encounter an Assyrian patrol, which is deliberate since Judith wishes to meet with Holofernes. The questions the patrol ask her are important for the development of the plot, since in answering them Judith is able to persuade the soldiers that she is their ally. She is no longer an

Israelite woman in a besieged city, but an Assyrian ally with an important message for general Holofernes. Her encounter with them serves to move her rapidly into Holofernes' presence, and as she arrives at the Assyrian camp, the soldiers remark on her beauty (10:19). Their comment contrasts with the fears expressed by the Bethulians earlier. While the Bethulians are fearful of Holofernes' battle plans, the Assyrians worry that since Judith is so beautiful, then the Israelites might charm them all into defeat. This is the third speech in which Judith's amazing beauty has been noted.

Judith now meets Holofernes for the first time, and he initiates the conversation as expected. He reassures her of her safety and asks her why she has fled from the Israelites. His question invites her to explain herself, and she takes full advantage of his invitation. By means of flattery she convinces him that he will be victorious if only he pays attention to what she tells him. She agrees with Achior's claim that the Israelites can not be defeated unless they sin, but reassures Holofernes that they are about to sin at any moment and that she will be able to tell him when this has happened. By means of this argument she assures Holofernes of her loyalty to him, but also ensures some time for herself in the Assyrian camp, so she can prepare for the rest of her plan. Unlike the commanders of the nations who spoke to Holofernes earlier (7:8-15), and who also offered Holofernes a certain victory, Judith offers him victory within a specified period of time. With her speech of 12:1-4 she offers Holofernes a time limit of the time it takes her to eat all her specially prepared food. Her message to him at 12:5b-6 guarantees that she will be able to leave the camp and pray at a specific hour. This is essential for her later escape (13:10).

Now that Judith is remaining in the camp and because she is so beautiful, Holofernes decides to seduce her and he makes his intentions

clear in his speech to Bagoas (12:10-12). Bagoas approaches Judith and she agrees to come to Holofernes' specially prepared banquet. This conversation is important for the plot since it brings the two protagonists together alone. Holofernes speaks to Judith and encourages her to 'have a drink and be merry with us'(12:17) which she does, but he drinks too much and passes out. At this point Judith prays to God asking for strength, and then chops Holofernes' head off. By means of her previously agreed prayer time, she is able to return safely to Bethulia.

As she arrives at the town she calls out for the gates to be opened and declares that God has been victorious. She then becomes involved in a conversation with the people and Uzziah, who praise both God and her. This conversation conveys to the Bethulians her gory deed and prepares for their destruction of the enemy. She explains how they will destroy the Assyrians now that Holofernes is dead, and what she says will happen, does, unlike the words of Nebuchadnezzar. Her words are directing the plot. By means of direct speech the Assyrians discover Holofernes' decapitated body (14:13, 17-18) and Bagoas cries 'one Hebrew woman has brought disgrace on the house of King Nebuchadnezzar. Look, Holofernes is lying on the ground, and his head is missing!' The Assyrians soon panic and flee as Judith predicted, and the Israelites pursue them. After the Israelites have returned, Judith meets with Joakim, the high priest, and his direct speech to her affirms her as loyal to her nation, and as blessed by God. The narrative ends with Judith's song (16:1-17), where Judith herself speaks of her deeds.



## The influence of direct speech on characterization

### King Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar is the first character to speak, and he only speaks once. He claims he is all-powerful and is a god (cf 3:8), and whatever he says will come about. This one and only speech is enough to convey his sense of his own power, and its appearance as the first in the narrative supports his importance. However this claim to power challenges Judith to respond, and as the plot is resolved Nebuchadnezzar's self-imposed grandeur is proved to be false. His envoy Holofernes, is defeated by both Judith and God, and although Nebuchadnezzar himself is untouched, his ability to control all is obviously nonexistent.

### General Holofernes

General Holofernes is Nebuchadnezzar's envoy and he speaks for the first time at 5:1-4. The Israelites are resisting his approach and he asks the commanders of Moab, Ammon, and the coastland for advice, which characterizes him as a shrewd soldier. These commanders will know more about the Israelite military situation than he does, and so their advice may help him in his attack. However he addresses these commanders as 'you Canaanites', a term which reflects his ignorance of their history and identity. He may be an astute military leader, but he knows little of Israel and its surrounding cultures.

Holofernes' questions are answered by Achior, the leader of the Ammonites, who advises him that Israel will be protected by Israel's God. The people standing around scoff at his claims and say that they

are not afraid of this nation, and Holofernes decides to side with popular opinion. He rejects Achior's prophecy and advocates the greatness of the Assyrian army instead. Using a style of speech similar to Nebuchadnezzar, he asserts 'what god is there except Nebuchadnezzar?'(6:2). Holofernes believes Nebuchadnezzar is all-powerful and that he himself can easily fulfil the commission allocated to him.

Holofernes does not speak again until Judith arrives at the Assyrian camp, and it is in these conversations with her that more of his character is revealed. He is still an astute soldier and is still unaware of Israelite customs, but he is not so loyal to Nebuchadnezzar and he does not see Nebuchadnezzar as all-powerful. When Judith begins to flatter Holofernes and offers him a throne in Israel, Holofernes does not reject her and suggest that she praise Nebuchadnezzar instead. When she tells him that God has chosen to help him, he does not say 'what god is there except Nebuchadnezzar' as he did to Achior (6:2). Instead he accepts her words of praise and does not deny her promise that God will accomplish something through him.

His ignorance of Israelite culture and his ignorance generally, is also characterized further throughout these conversations with Judith. Holofernes fails to realize that Judith is not really promising to help him at all. By means of ironies he is convinced, wrongly, that she is his ally. He does not know enough about Israelite culture to understand that, because she is God-fearing, she would never act as an ally to someone wanting to destroy Israel. She is very beautiful and he finds her attractive enough to want to have sex with her, and he supposes quite possibly that she wants the same, but he is unaware that her devotion to God will not permit this. Although he accepts she is

pious, and also that she is wise, he does not realize the full extent of what this means.

#### Achior, the Ammonite leader

Achior speaks for the first time at 5:5-21 as he replies to Holofernes' request concerning the military strength of the Israelites. He offers a long historical recital of Israelite history, and concludes that the Israelites can not be defeated unless they have sinned against their God. His advice to Holofernes contrasts strongly with the general's expectations, and so Achior is characterized as both brave and God-fearing. Although he urges Holofernes to listen to him and is concerned for the possible humiliation of the Assyrians, the general disregards his claim and treats him as a traitor. Achior's strong belief in the power of the Israelite God means he can be considered pious in a way similar to Judith.

Achior speaks once more at 14:7-8 where he praises Judith and says 'in every nation those who hear your name will be alarmed'. Although he is a soldier, when he sees Holofernes' severed head he faints, and so he is amazed at what Judith has achieved. He requests that she tell him all that has happened to her, and so he enables all the Bethulian people to hear the full details of her exploits.

#### Uzziah, the town magistrate

Uzziah is the town magistrate and speaks on behalf of the rulers when the people approach them for help at 7:23-29. The people are understandably anxious about their situation, and Uzziah offers them reassurance by saying that he will surrender after five more days if

God does not intervene. By God's intervention he is probably envisaging rain. When Judith complains that this ultimatum is wrong, he neither agrees nor disagrees, but only suggests that she pray for rain. Although he accepts that she has 'spoken out of a true heart'(8:28) and that 'today is not the first time your wisdom has been shown'(8:29), he can not envisage that she is planning something else, and can only suggest that she pray for the rain he is anticipating. On two later occasions he wishes her well for her plans (cf 8:35; 10:8), but he does not understand what she is about to do. He is characterized as caring since he is concerned for the people's anxieties, but also as predictable and non-visionary.

When Judith returns from the Assyrian camp and displays Holofernes' head, Uzziah speaks once more (13:18-20) and this time he has understood what she has done! He says 'you are blessed by the Most High God above all other women on earth; and blessed be the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who has guided you to cut off the head of the leader of our enemies.' He praises both Judith and God, acting as a religious spokesperson for the whole Bethulian community. His character can be contrasted with those of both Judith and Achior. Although all three characters are pious, the community accept Uzziah as their religious spokesperson, but both Judith and Achior appear more ready than Uzziah is to believe that God can act in any way God chooses.

### Judith

The narrative introduces Judith with 'she was beautiful in appearance, and was lovely to behold'(8:7) and 'no one spoke ill of her, for she feared God with great devotion'(8:8). These characteristics

become more apparent with her speeches, but these speeches also reveal other traits. She speaks first (8:11-27) in response to Uzziah's five day ultimatum, where she disagrees with what he has proposed. It is her understanding of God or her theology, which causes her to disagree. She is not afraid to stand alone in her convictions and to go against popular opinion. She does not believe the Israelites are guilty and that God will not help them, and so is characterized as strong-minded and as visionary. At 8:32-34 she explains that she has a plan which she will keep secret, and will save all Israel. Where Uzziah has suggested praying for rain, Judith is suggesting a daring exploit.

She decides to pray (9:1-14) before she leaves to carry out her plan and this supports her piety or God-fearing nature. She discloses her plan to God with 'by the deceit of my lips strike down the slave with the prince and the prince with his servant; crush their arrogance by the hand of a woman', and implies that her ancestor Simeon's response of violence will be her response too. She connects herself with Israel's heritage and praises God as all-powerful. Once she has left the town she meets with an Assyrian patrol, and courageously begins to put her plan into action. In order to kill Holofernes she needs to meet with him, and the way to do this is to offer him something he wants. She offers the patrol both the possibility of a successful military plan and displays her beautiful face. They believe she is their ally and offer to take her to Holofernes.

When she arrives at the Assyrian camp, Holofernes greets her. He urges her to have 'courage', as did the patrol, but it appears she already possesses it. Speaking from Holofernes' point of view, she flatters him, tells him that God has chosen to help him, and discloses a strong military plan. Although she has never met this man, she is able to judge what it is he desires and offers it to him. She uses both lies and

ironies to convince him that she can give him what he wants. She is very brave in his presence and even agrees with Achior's claims for which Achior had been punished.

Judith impresses Holofernes with her cultic knowledge, and this continues with her next speech. By refusing to dine at his table (12:1-2), she assures him that her piety is so strong that she would turn against her own nation. Similarly, when she sends a message to Holofernes requesting that she be allowed to go out and pray (12:5b-6), she is not only ensuring an escape route for herself, but is also impressing her devotion to God upon Holofernes. She has told him that God will tell her when Holofernes can attack the Israelites and be successful, so it is essential that he believes this is possible.

The two protagonists next meet when Holofernes invites Judith to a banquet. Bagoas' invitation and Judith's reply both hint that Holofernes' desire to have sex with her will be met. She is not afraid, and continues to use irony as a means of conveying both what she truly intends and what Holofernes would like her to intend. Once Holofernes has passed out, she prays to God once more and asks for strength, and then chops off the general's head. Her motivation to deliver Israel and her belief that God is with her are so strong that she is able to murder. Both her bravery and her visionary insight are very apparent here. She returns to Bethulia and disclosing her triumph, reveals a plan to destroy the Assyrians completely. Her military skill is obvious. She assures the Bethulians that she has not had sex with the general and has therefore always remained close to God. All the people including Joakim the high priest, agree that what she has done is good and God has shown her favour. Her song (16:1-17) at the end of the narrative, reflects her own understanding of what she has achieved.

Judith's visionary character and bravery enabled her to enter the Assyrian camp, and to rescue Israel. She believed God supported her and was not afraid even when Holofernes was expressing strong sexual desires towards her, which she might not have been able to control. It was necessary for the two of them to be alone so that she could kill him, and that she had enough time to escape undetected. She used her beauty as a weapon so that Holofernes would want to be alone with her; and she used her wit to persuade him that she could give him all the power he desired. Unlike Uzziah, praying for rain was not how she saw Israel being saved.

The twenty-six direct speeches in *Judith* all influence the plot development and characterization in the Book in some way. Some speeches are more influential than others, directing the plot more forcefully or strongly characterizing a participant. Each speech contributes to a fuller understanding of the narrative as a whole.

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