

Research Article

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Judith and the Elders of *1 Clement*

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Abstract: While Judith was used with Esther and other books with female protagonists to promote the reign of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra and the activities of female Pharisees, as Tal Ilan has argued, the role of Judith in the historical examples of *1 Clement* presents Judith as needing to seek the permission of the elders of her besieged city in order to go to the enemy camp and behead Holofernes. This article argues that such an interpretive move preserves the authority of Judith in Hasmonean and Pharisaic interpretations.

Keywords: Judith, *1 Clement*, elders

In *1 Clement*, a letter written from the Roman church to the historic Pauline church situated in Corinth in the late first century, we find Judith as the first example of women who “were empowered through the grace of God to fulfill much bravery or manliness” (56:3), though women martyrs previously succeeded in their race of faith “though weak in body” (6:3). Judith is described as “blessed” for endangering herself out of love for her homeland with the result that God put Holofernes into “the hand of a woman” (56:4). The anonymous author’s portrayal resonates with the Second Temple descriptions of Judith as a military leader whose triumph over foreign enemies enabled her to establish civic precedents. As *1 Clement* is the first Christian citation of Judith, her introduction must have some particular meaning. I argue that the citation of Judith in *1 Clement* reiterates the prominence of Judith in Hasmonean-era literary circles during and immediately following the reign of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra. When the author notes that Judith requests of the “presbyters” permission to go to foreigners’ camp (56:5), this does not *necessarily* mean that Judith and women are held in lower regard than the elders of Bethulia or the deposed presbyters that the author from the church of Rome wishes the Corinthian community to reinstate.¹ Judith is a positive example for both men and women in the churches of Corinth, just as Moses a few chapters earlier is.

1 Clement is known for its careful reading of early Jewish and Christian proto-scripture, and women examples feature frequently in the text alongside their male counterparts.² The anonymous author revises the historical survey known from Hebrews 11 to be more favorable to women. The purpose of Clement’s survey is to prove the continuity of God’s promise for those who repent from one generation to the next (7.2). *1 Clement* casts the Corinthians of its time as reliving the factions of the original community, the group to whom Paul had written in 1 Corinthians. In the historical survey, stretching from Abel to Ezekiel, Rahab’s faith and prophecy contrast with Lot’s wife’s lack of concord. Rahab prophesies redemption through the blood of Christ. Later, after the biblical review and in a manner completely disparate from it, the anonymous author of *1 Clement* cites Judith along with Esther as comparable to pagan kings who sacrifice themselves on behalf of their people.

¹ Lehtipuu, “Receive the Widow Judith,” 191.

² Peters, “Rahab, Esther, and Judith,” 94–110; Koet, *Isaiah 60:17 as a Key*, 345–62.

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1 *Clement* has a thoroughgoing use of Jewish traditions. While not overtly affiliated with Judaism or Jewish synagogues, the churches identify with Israelite history.³ Since Paul was a former Pharisee and a foundational figure for this open letter, this self-understanding on the part of the sending Roman and receiving Corinthian churches is perhaps not surprising. The letter avails itself to contemporary Jewish scriptural interpretations – Clement’s didactic expansion of Esther, for instance, resembles that of Josephus.⁴

I will suggest that this structure continues and develops Pharisaic and Hasmonean interpretations of the Judith scroll and positions women as leaders. 3 *Maccabees* recounts a similar military intervention by a man, so Judith’s feat could have seemed realistic, despite the long odds of sneaking into an enemy camp and striking the head of operations. With the precedent of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra taking over rule and forging an alliance with the Pharisees in order to secure her power, a meaning of the Judith scroll in the context of *realpolitik* for her reign was that women could hold political office as effective leaders, not simply that they must retire quickly from public service. For Clement, leaders universally – whether women or not – have the responsibility of sacrificing for the people. This is not simply an action that implies the women or men who deposed the presbyters. The removed presbyters are also an example of Judith’s courage.

1 Judith during Hasmonean Rule

The Hasmonean connection of the Esther and Judith scrolls has long been noted. The translation of Esther into Greek likely preceded the reign of Shelamzion Alexandra by a scant year. The colophon to Greek Esther reads: “In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said that he was a priest and a Levite, and his son Ptolemy brought to Egypt the preceding letter about Purim, which they said was authentic and had been translated by Lysimachus son of Ptolemy, one of the residents of Jerusalem” (NRSV). Based on the names, it may either be dated to 114 BCE or 78-77 BCE, the latter being more accepted. Following Benno Jacob, Moore not implausibly places this during the reign of Ptolemy VIII Soter II.⁵ Elias J. Bickerman, however, has convincingly argued that the Ptolemy here is Ptolemy XII Auletos.⁶ After the second year of the reign of Ptolemy XII Auletos, “the name of Cleopatra follows that of her husband in all public or private documents.” This places the translation of Greek Esther to 78-77 BCE, just one year before Shelamzion Alexandra assumed office.⁷ Originally composed in Hebrew, Judith is widely believed to have been translated into Greek with the reign of Shelamzion Alexandra (76-67 BCE) in mind. Tal Ilan argues that Judith, along with Esther and Susanna, served as propaganda for the Hasmonean queen’s coronation.⁸ Gabriele Boccaccini argues that Judith provided a eulogy for Shelamzion Alexandra.⁹ There is a wide consensus that the events in Judith correspond typologically to some degree to Hasmonean historiography, even among authors such as Samuele Rocca. He attributes the book to disgruntled Sadducees rather than the Pharisees who gained prominence after Queen Shelamzion Alexandra reconciled with her husband’s former enemies upon assuming the throne at his death.¹⁰

Judith may have posed questions of nationality and female leadership for its first audience. Judith was composed later than Esther, which was translated shortly prior to the reign of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra

³ Koet, *Isaiah 60:17 as a Key*, 345–62.

⁴ Hengel, *Septuagint as Christian Scripture*, 115.

⁵ Jacob, “Das Buch Esther bei dem LXX,” 274–80; Moore, “On the Origins of the LXX Additions,” 382–93.

⁶ Bickerman, “The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther,” 339–62.

⁷ Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*, 139; Crawford, “The Additions of Esther,” 970–2; Kottsieper, “Zusätze zu Ester,” *Das Buch Baruch*, 121–4 and 206–7.

⁸ Ilan, *Integrating Women*.

⁹ Boccaccini, “Tigranes the Great,” 55–69.

¹⁰ Rocca, “The Book of Judith,” 85–98.

but was composed much earlier and widely available, as the “Day of Mordecai” in 2 *Maccabees* attests. As Esther and her associated Jewish holiday were already known by the time of Judith’s composition, the question with Judith’s female protagonist is: Is Judith a powerful female leader because the idea of women leaders finds favor among Jewish audiences or because Shelamzion Alexandra finds favor among Jewish audiences? Judith is a widow, and it has seemed to many scholars that this coincidental resemblance to Queen Shelamzion Alexandra is too perfect to be accidental.

That Judith espouses the ideals of the Hasmonean period is a scholarly consensus. It is the particular social location of the book within the Hasmonean period that has been the subject of debate. In 1909, Hughes proclaimed that “an unfavourable light is cast by the book upon the moral (as distinct from ceremonial) standard of Pharisaism.”¹¹ In 1914, Swete thought that the “religious attitude of the author of Judith is that of the devout Pharisee,” writing out of the patriotism inspired by the Maccabean wars.¹² More recently, on the basis of the scroll’s emphasis of the lowly slingers and the lack of a Sadducee cavalry, Rocca has identified the author of Judith as a Sadducee, pointing to Alexander Jannai’s policy of privileging the Pharisees while simultaneously supplanting their armored ranks with Cilician and Pisidian mercenaries in semi-heavy and heavy infantry in the army and Shelamzion Alexandra’s quick expansion of the army.¹³ For Rocca, this Sadducee nonetheless fell into line with the Pharisaic agenda of Shelamzion Alexandra. Tal Ilan firmly associates the composition of the book with other propaganda composed for Shelamzion Alexandra such as Esther and Susanna.¹⁴ Judith is a composite character – comprised of female figures in the Bible such as Yael, Deborah, Esther, and Delilah – who resonates with Shelamzion’s own biography.¹⁵ As Jan Willem van Henten notes, the book evinces such a favorable attitude toward women that a female author for it is not out of the question.¹⁶ Gabriele Boccaccini, meanwhile, situates the book not during the reign of the queen but in its aftermath, positing Judith functioned as a eulogy for the queen. He thinks the work exhibits an “irenic attitude toward all Jews,” which may be an indication that the sectarianism that characterized Judaism so often during the Hellenistic and Roman periods had been abandoned during a time of war or national emergency.¹⁷ Yet, there is also the possibility that Judith is written as a corrective to Esther and the “Day of Mordecai” of 2 *Maccabees*.¹⁸

Scholarship has interpreted Judith’s attempt at continuity with earlier Israelite history through typology in many ways. Despite Judith’s evident narratological interest in the Jewish state of Israel, J. Edgar Bruns suggested that Judith was an account of a fictional heroine written by one of the Elephantine Jews on the historical model of Jael.¹⁹ The threat posed by the growing power of the Egyptian Jews’ neighbors was neutralized, according to Bruns, by transmuting the foreign heroine who slays a national enemy into a truly Jewish heroine who slays a national enemy. As Modrzejewski has most recently posited, the Jewish presence in Egypt may have predated the fall of the Southern Kingdom of Israel and the fifth century date of the historical documents deposited on the island of Elephantine.²⁰ If this is the case, for Bruns, then Judith might be an attempt by Egyptian Jewry to convey the historical continuity of their community through an invented history. It was only at Elephantine that Jewish sacrificial practice continued between 587 BCE and 515 BCE.

¹¹ Hughes, *The Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature*, 86.

¹² Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, 272. As Holophernes was the name of a Cappadocian king, this sets a *terminus a quo* for the composition of Judith in the mid-second century BCE. The reference to Judith in 1 *Clement* establishes a *terminus ad quem*.

¹³ Rocca, “The Book of Judith,” 85–98.

¹⁴ Ilan, *Integrating Women*, 153.

¹⁵ Enslin and Zeitlin, *Judith*, 181; Ilan, *Integrating Women*, 136–7 and 150–1.

¹⁶ van Henten, “Judith as Alternative Leader,” 224–52.

¹⁷ Moore, *Judith*, 80.

¹⁸ Roitman and Shapira, “ספריהודיתכסיפור-בבואה,” Koller, *Esther in Ancient Jewish Thought*, 137.

¹⁹ Bruns, “Judith or Jael?,” 12–4; Bruns, “The Genealogy of Judith,” 19–22.

²⁰ Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 21–6. Jews began moving away from the Elephantine colony to elsewhere in Egypt in the Hellenistic period. See Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 C.E.*, 135.

There is, of course, no strong evidence in the text situating Judith precisely in Egyptian Jewry. Judith's strict observance in independent Israel may have been written as a corrective to Esther's assimilationist Jewishness in Persia.²¹ Yet, unlike Esther, the ironic inversions contained in the Judith scroll work to successfully position Jews in unchallenged authority at the conclusion of the narrative, possibly over Samaria as David Goodblatt has noted.²² The invented history of Judith and its typology of "slaying the monster" have remained of interest to scholars. Judith, as many scholars have observed, exceeds the model of Jael, who merely kills the last man not felled by Barak. Judith must plan, seek permission for, and undertake her mission. When she succeeds, she kills a man who has tried to conquer her sexually. Jael, on the other hand, attacks a fugitive to whom she has offered hospitality. Some medieval interpretations thus claimed that Judith may be more profitably compared to David in his *monomachia* against Goliath. While the narrator in Judith does not see fit to elaborate on Holofernes' physique, Judith secures victory over an army at least as impressive in military terms as Goliath's body is in physiological ones.²³

Moreover, Judith herself is described, like David, as preparing her body for battle. Whereas David prefers to fight in clothes familiar to him, Judith sheds her widow's weeds for more seductive attire: her "dress of joy" from her marriage, a turban, sandals, necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings, and all her jewelry. Presumably able to stay standing under the weight of all of her priceless possessions, she "made herself very beautiful to catch the eyes of the men who saw her" (10:4). According to the vocabulary used for the Greek translation of the LXX, Judith is "beautiful" like Rebecca (Gen. 26:7), Rachel, (Gen. 29:17), Joseph (Gen. 39:6), and the Shulamite (Song of Songs 6:3). The net effect of all these accoutrements is credited for her victory by the hymn sung in her honor at the book's conclusion: "Her sandal ravished his eye, her beauty took his soul prisoner and the scimitar cut through his neck!" (16:9). Philip Esler finds "grim humor here in military language being applied metaphorically to the effect of 'weapons,' which consist of women's clothing and cosmetics, but in a passage that climaxes with the woman so clothed and perfumed using an actual weapon to achieve a very literal result."²⁴ For Esler, this keeps the Judith scroll a "narrative for everyone, of religious faith or none."²⁵

Judith Newman has compared the use of the historical review in Judith with that in Nehemiah and 3 *Maccabees*. Newman argues that the prayer of Judith 9 differs from the vision of Nehemiah 9:5-37, which envisions "the contemporary history of post-exilic Judah as a continuation of the pre-exilic history of Israel."²⁶ In the Judith history, Newman finds a typological construction. When Judith prays for the deliverance of Bethulia, for instance, she invokes the scriptural memory of the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34. The Shechemites become "Everyenemy."²⁷ The scripturalization in Judith 9 takes a typological approach to historical interpretation, casting the Shechemites as the Assyrian army. In 3 *Maccabees* 2:2-20, Newman finds another use of scripture, that of source of moral or immoral exempla. Such exempla are found in Greek rhetorical genre.²⁸

Understanding the Book of Judith as a typological narrative is to be preferred to precisely identifying characters with contemporary historical figures. Like the Shechemites, the Assyrians have no respect for women – Jewish or otherwise – and they must be fought accordingly. Judith's characterization of the sexual politics of Assyria proves prescient when, later in the narrative, she is enjoined to be for Holofernes as one of the Assyrian women in court. The ensuing Israelite attack on the Assyrian camp is justified because the Assyrians oppress *all* women. Jews fight not only to defend themselves; they fight to avenge the wrongs committed against all those oppressed by the Assyrians, including Achior, who does not convert until after

²¹ Koller, *Esther in Ancient Jewish Thought*, 119.

²² Goodblatt, "The Israelites who Reside in Judah," 80–1.

²³ The lack of commentary on the physique of the warrior is unusual not only in comparison with the monomachia between David and Goliath but also in terms of the history of warriors.

²⁴ Esler, *Sex, Wives, and Warriors*, 292.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

²⁶ Newman, *Praying By the Book*, 119.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 202–4.

victory over the Assyrians has been decisively achieved.²⁹ It does not seem possible to unmask Achior, as does Rocca, as being Antipater, being held as a friendly hostage by Aristobulus.³⁰ The scope of Judith's typological imagination defies confinement to a particular set of historical circumstances. As the obviously historically incorrect introduction tells us, the narrative is expected to serve a moralistic purpose; it is not intended to be a historical book.

2 Judith as a political leader

Judith, who is not Holofernes' queen but his temporary consort, can go further than Esther and envision a less patriarchal culture, one based on a God who sides with the Other. In Judith, not only the narrative voice but the character herself is aware of the incongruity of a woman performing such a military conquest with mere "deceit" (9:10–11). Judith does not anticipate reversal of existing gender hierarchies; she foresees a broad redress of extant inequalities, one that would resolve the "ethnic jeopardy" in which Jews find themselves. This makes her a sympathetic character not only to women but men, a point that would be sharpened by Jerome's introduction to the scroll. Her true intentions are prayed silently with her heart, not verbally with her lips.³¹

According to Ilan, a definite trend in the literature popular during the Hasmonean queen's reign was the strong female protagonist who disproved negative stereotypes about women and that this supported the activities of female Pharisees.³² A positive inclination toward female leadership may be found in the examples of both John Hyrcanus the Hasmonean and his son Alexander Yannai, who each nominated his wife as his successor. The Jewish support that Queen Shelamzion Alexandra enjoyed had Ptolemaic parallels in the Egyptian Jewish military's support of Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III (CA 2.49-52; AJ 13.284-287). The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther mentions the date 77-76 BCE, one year before the coronation of Queen Shelamzion in Jerusalem.³³ Certainly, the two events would be linked in collective memory. Formal and ideological similarities between Esther and Judith would have buttressed the connection between female protagonists in Jewish imagined histories and Jewish political life.³⁴

An argument from silence for the Pharisaic and Hasmonean association of Esther and Judith might be made in the absence of both at Qumran. In this, the female figures have company in the figures of Susanna, Aseneth, and the martyred mother of 2 *Maccabees* 7 from near contemporary literature, all of which were associated with the Hasmoneans and not found at Qumran. Tal Ilan has proposed that the reason for their absence is not an accident of preservation but the antipathy of the Qumran sect to the Hasmonean leadership and its Pharisaic supporters. Accordingly, the Esther and Judith scrolls – along with the Danielic addition of Susanna and other scrolls – were excluded.³⁵ Skehan observes that the late date of the festival of Purim increases the likelihood that the absence of Esther at Qumran is intentional.³⁶ Josephus, in the late first century CE, has an extended discussion of Purim and places the rationale for Purim in the story of

²⁹ It has been argued that one of the reasons that Judith was not recognized as a canonical book was the irregularity of Achior's conversion, which lacks a baptism that would have been necessary in the post-Second Temple Period. However, in addition to the ritual requirements for conversion in place during the time of the composition and translation of Judith, it is possible that the missing baptism was also desirable in the story to contrast timorous Achior to triumphant Judith.

³⁰ Rocca, "The Book of Judith," 97.

³¹ van der Horst, "Silent Prayer in Antiquity," 3.

³² Ilan, *Silencing the Queen*, 74.

³³ Bickerman, "The Colophon," 339–62.

³⁴ The stories of Esther and Judith are similar in plot. Both heroines, for instance, are in a post-exilic setting and deal with foreign leaders after purifying for three days. Moreover, both Esther and Judith are linked with the lost tribes of Israel: Judith is from the tribe of Simeon (9:2) and Esther is from the tribe of Benjamin (2:5). On commonalities between Esther and Judith, see Kottsieper, *Esther und Daniel*, 135–6; Berg, *The Book of Esther*, 149–50; Enslin and Zeitlin, *The Book of Judith*, 2.

³⁵ Ilan, *Integrating Women*, 141.

³⁶ Skehan, "The Biblical Scrolls from Qumran," 89.

Esther. Josephus' Mordecai claims that Purim is a time for the Jews to give thanks for having escaped Haman's plot to destroy them (*Ant.* 11.294). This corresponds with Josephus' description of the threefold purpose of Jewish festivals: giving thanks, asking for further benefaction, and building solidarity among Jews who would otherwise not know each other. The sectarians at Qumran appear not to have been participating in this more popular schematization of ritual time, possessing different purity and calendrical interpretations.³⁷

The pointed discussion of gender in Esther and Judith has led Tal Ilan to suggest that the books did not simply serve as Hasmonean imaginary histories but as propaganda for the reign of one very specific Hasmonean, namely Queen Shelamzion Alexandra.³⁸ They need not have been composed or translated for her coronation, though there is only a year between the date on the Greek Colophon to Esther and the coronation.³⁹ It is likely that Queen Shelamzion Alexandra would have been associated with the female protagonists just as Carolingian Empress Judith was compared in both beauty and virtue to Esther and Judith in the early ninth century.⁴⁰ The Pharisees were invested with power by Queen Shelamzion, and her nine year reign was synonymous with Pharisaic rule to historians such as Nicolaus of Damascus and Josephus.⁴¹ Thus, in public imagination, the festival of Purim, Esther (and Judith), the Pharisees, and Queen Shelamzion Alexandra would all have been inextricably intertwined. The intense interest in heroic women was both a way to burnish the image of Jewish agency prior to the recuperation of an independent Jewish political state and a way to promote the current state's dynasty, particularly during the reign of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra.⁴² This would explain why Shelamzion's name appears among the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q322-25), while her associated literature does not.

3 Judith in *1 Clement*

In *1 Clement*, Judith's story appears in truncated form (and without her maid) in what has been delineated as chapter 55. The author claims to be bringing in examples from "the Gentiles," but then proceeds to talk about rulers who have received oracles to accept death during the time of plague to save others, those in the church community who have placed themselves into slavery and prison to ransom others, and Judith and Esther. From the order, it is not clear whether the community considers itself part of the Gentiles or somewhere between the Gentiles and (presumably) Jewish Judith and Esther, and the other examples of the letter certainly come from both Jewish and non-Jewish contexts. All of the examples in chapter 55 are considered examples of those with power voluntarily giving it up, which supports the overall purpose of the letter in convincing the community to relinquish its claim to deposing presbyters so that the removed elders might return to their church posts.

1 Clement 55 emphasizes Judith's success as a woman with typically masculine courage, a description that counteracts chapter 6's apology that women martyrs complete their race of faith in a manner equal to the Apostles Peter and Paul despite being weak in body (but not mind). If Hagner is correct that the author is intentionally reworking the list of unnamed heroes in Hebrews 11 to intentionally include specific women, the author nonetheless goes beyond that in specifically attaching a phrase about the courage of Judith (and Esther) without commenting again upon the cultural idea of women being the weaker sex in the traditional

³⁷ VanderKam (ed.), *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls*.

³⁸ Though Esther is clearly a story, the author seems to want to imbue the narrative with verisimilitude. See Sasson, "Esther," 335; Berlin, "The Book of Esther," 3–14.

³⁹ Bickerman, "The Colophon," 339–62.

⁴⁰ On Carolingian application of biblical texts to political figures, see Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture*, 40–1.

⁴¹ Josephus, *Bell.* 1.111, *Ant.* 13.401; *b. Sota* 22b. See Ilan, "The Attraction of Aristocratic Women," 11–2.

⁴² The accounts in Josephus, *B.J.* 1.107–8 and *A.J.* 13.430–2, vary considerably in their assessment of her reign. The former is positive, the latter negative. See Ilan, *Integrating Women*, 102–3.

understanding of a sexed body with either male or female anatomy.⁴³ Her example along with that of Esther is introduced by the claim at 55.3 that “many women were empowered by the gracious gift of God to fulfill/perform much courage.” Judith’s femininity is expressed for the author in the fact that through Judith’s careful bureaucratic procedure of consulting the town elders and patriotic love “the Lord handed Holofernes over to the hand of a female” (55.5).

The chapter’s epithet for Judith of “blessed” links danger-risking Judith with “blessed” Abraham and a self-sacrificing Isaac and Jacob in 31.2-4.⁴⁴ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob appear after the text’s instruction to find the “ways” that lead to *eulogia* (31.1). Abraham is then called blessed by the same term (31.2), though Judith’s blessed appellation derives from her status as *makarios*. As earlier in the text’s notation of the sacrifice of Abraham’s son in “faith and hospitality” (10.7), it is not clear that Isaac (or, in this case, perhaps Ishmael) is saved. Jacob has a luckier ending in going to Laban “to serve as a slave” in receiving the “twelve scepters” of Israel for his troubles (31.4). Like this triad, Judith is blessed, willing to risk her life, and successful in venturing into uncertain territory. Yet, unusually, Judith manages to combine all three accomplishments in her role as a model for the ecclesial community with a faction that has deposed its presbyters.

Yet, the problem remains that the Judith of *1 Clement* must “seek permission” from the town’s elders before going out and cutting for herself the head of Holofernes. This, of course, could have the effect of amplifying the inscription of a social hierarchy, given that the author might be supporting the literal “elders” as presbyters over against a faction of perhaps younger upstart – Judith here is the one for the job simply because she is the one capable of walking over there; other leaders, both male and female, might be staying home.⁴⁵ As Outi Lehtipuu has noted, the magnitude of this interpretive problem is indeterminate, because we do not know whether Judith’s recognition of civic hierarchy stems “from the fact that the author of *1 Clement* knew a different version of the story.”⁴⁶ Although we know that *1 Clement* could be following novelistic interpretations of Judith as he does with Esther, we also know that the structure of historical exempla forces interpretive choices. For example, *1 Clement* somewhat progressively omits the detail that Judith brings her slave with her on this journey, which is perhaps fitting given that the fate of a woman slave in a besieged city that falls to a conquering army cannot be assumed to be rosy. It also corresponds to an actual military strategy that had the tactical advantage of saving the armies by going to the top of the chain of command.

Prior to the discussion of Judith, the author of *1 Clement* says that “we should bring in examples from the Gentiles” (55.1), marking a departure from the previous examples from Jewish scripture that culminated in Moses (53.2-5) and also the disavowal of schisms (54.2) in favor of “civic duty” (54.4). The author then mentioned many “manly” women, specifically Judith and Esther, leaving it somewhat ambiguous as to whether or not these manly women are to be included in the previous categories of Gentile rulers or the leadership model of Moses in chapter 53.

A comparison of the Moses and Judith of *1 Clement* yields a positive result for Judith’s victory in negotiating with people from her homeland and Holofernes’ camp. The “fasting and humility” of Moses at 53.2 becomes not the “fasting and humility” of Judith but that of Esther on behalf of the “twelve tribes of Israel” (even in a different exile!) at 55.6. Judith is allowed to slip into the enemy camp with neither fasting nor humility referenced, though we do know. With this sleight-of-hand, it appears that *1 Clement* is not seeking to subvert expectations of his audience. Whereas Moses must offer to be erased with his own people who won’t listen to him, Judith has no trouble in convincing her own city presbyters or elders that she is sufficiently trustworthy to go out to the enemy without revealing any strategic information.

⁴³ Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 187.

⁴⁴ Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 94.

⁴⁵ Welborn has recently suggested that women might be financially supporting younger men, but the example of Judith with its elders/presbyters would indicate that this aspect of his thesis about generational conflict at Corinth might be less than certain. Welborn, *The Young against the Old*, 193.

⁴⁶ Lehtipuu, “Receive the Widow Judith,” 191.

The authorial conclusion for Judith's military expedition that would surely have spared many male foot soldiers their lives is that this victory is given to her not by any man's omission to be great but by the Lord (55.5). *1 Clement* describes this as a victory over the whole of Holofernes by a mere part, the hand, of Judith, preserving the threefold phrase from the Book of Judith, appearing in no less significant places than her prayer for success and so potentially signifying the inclusion of her own words.

4 Conclusion

The Judith of *1 Clement* 55 is closely modeled on the Judith of the scriptural Judith scroll, though it departs in the important aspect of Judith's relationship with the elders of Bethulia. While we cannot know whether the church of Rome is invoking a source on Judith similar to its familiarity with an interpretive tradition of Esther found in Josephus, the change makes sense in its overall characterization of all church members, regardless of gender. The example of Judith is followed by an Esther who is on par with Moses in terms of "fasting and humility." This allows Judith to shine as an example of "manly courage," much like the text might have been known since the reign of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra. Judith's self-endangerment provides both a model for the deposed presbyters and the faction at Corinth that deposed them. Her success in winning the approval of her civic elders puts her in a leadership role that exceeds even that of Moses a few chapters earlier, where he must ask to be extinguished along with the Israelites who refuse to heed the will of God.

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