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Personification of empire and Israel and the role of appearance and speech in the Judith story

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This article analyses how the Assyrian Empire and Israel in the Book of Judith are configured through the personification of both: the Assyrian empire is personified by King Nabouchodonosor and his commander Holofernes and the Israelite or Jewish nation is personified by Judith. In her encounter with Holofernes, Judith manages to seduce and mislead Holofernes by her appearance and use of words, which ultimately leads to the defeat of the Assyrian army. The applied methodology builds on narratology concerning space and characterisation and theories of space. It includes a semantic analysis of the key word πρόσωπον ('face', 'presence', 'person').

Contribution: The article demonstrates that personification and appearance are important features of the Judith story.

Keywords: Judith; Holofernes; personification; appearance; empire; words; God.

Introduction

The heroine Judith basically brings about the defeat of the Assyrian empire on her own, although she receives some help from her maidservant, and her fellow-Israelites actually put the Assyrians to flight. The salient point leading to the defeat is, of course, Judith's decapitation of the enemy commander Holofernes. Judith is able to eliminate Holofernes by seducing him with her words and her appearance. Judith's appearance is crucial for her seduction, but the appearance of her opponent is important as well and characterises him as a pampered person (with Schmitz 2010; see the section Appearance below). As we will see, Judith represents the Israelite or Jewish nation and Holofernes represents the Assyrian empire, although there is another level of the conflict in the story in which Nabouchodonosor opposes God because he aims to enforce his religion on everybody (Jdt 3:8, see the section Personification of empire below). God and Nabouchodonosor, however, remain largely passive in the story; the actual conflict takes place between Judith and Holofernes, who personifies the empire.

The Judith story underlies a view that a nation or state can be personified by somebody. The personification of the state by identifying it with its leader is a modern phenomenon, as is obvious from the famous French quote 'the state: that's me' (*l'état, c'est moi*). The French King Louis XIV allegedly expressed this statement on 13 April 1655 before members of parliament in Paris.¹ The quote is probably not historical, but it highlights the point I intend to make in this article. Empire in Judith is personified empire, and that is why personal appearance is so important. As a matter of fact, the personification of the state in Judith may already reflect Hellenistic representations of the ruler in Ptolemaic Egypt and the Seleucid empire as well as Judah.² The ruler personifies the state in these representations, as Hölbl (1994) aptly observes:

While the pharaoh operates as an independently acting entity next to a collective group of Egyptian priests, the Ptolemaic Basileus personifies the principle of the state on his own like his Seleucid colleague. (p. 83)³

Paul Kosmin refers to similar views while discussing Hellenistic ideologies of rulership, but he also criticises them (Kosmin 2014):

1. See <https://www.historia.fr/ki-ka-di/%C2%AB-%C3%A9tat-cest-moi-%C2%BB-louis-xiv-1655>.

2. See the honorary decree in 1 Maccabees 14 (Van Henten 2007).

3. 'Während dem ptolemäischen Pharaos das Kollektiv der ägyptischen Priester als rechtlich selbständig handelnde Grösse gegenübertritt (...), verkörpert der ptolemäische Basileus wie sein seleukidischer Kollege das Prinzip des Staates allein in seiner Person'.

Note: Special Collection: Septuagint and Textual Studies, sub-edited by Johann Cook (Stellenbosch University).

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Numerous historians have asserted that the Seleucid empire was not in fact territorial but a 'personal monarchy', according to which the state, unnamed, was made up of a set of institutions – king, court, and army – without a strong spatial attachment and in which royal legitimacy was based in certain unmoored kingly practices, primarily warfare and benefaction. The Seleucid kings, the argument continues, retained ambitions to universal rule and so refused to admit territorial borders. (p. 4)

Kosmin (2014:4) rightly argues that the richness of the Seleucid territory as landscape, experience, spectacle and aspiration needs to be taken into account, as well as 'the basic physicality of Seleucid power and the territorial commitment of its rulers'.

My analysis of the role of appearance in Judith will not focus on territory and material culture but on the representation of the empire and the Israelites by persons in a text, taking a narratological perspective (ed. De Jong 2012; eds. De Temmerman & Van Emde Boas 2018; Ryan 2009). A spatial aspect is relevant also because appearance and personification are presented through a spatial lens in Judith. Henri Lefebvre's notion of conceived space as part of the conceptual triad developed in his monograph *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre 1974 [1991]) may therefore be helpful for my discussion. Conceived space concerns space as reflected or imagined in one's mind, and the bodies of the protagonists in Judith can be seen as a form of personified conceived space. In the remaining sections of this contribution, I will successively discuss the personification of the Assyrian empire, the importance of appearance and Judith's use of appearance and speech in her seduction and murder of Holofernes.

Personification of empire

A survey of all the actions of the Assyrian empire in chapters 1 and 2 immediately shows that the king is the leading actor. King Nabouchodonosor not only represents the empire, but also takes the decisions and the initiative to act:

- 1:7–11: call for support by Nabouchodonosor to Persia and nations in the West.
- 1:12: Nabouchodonosor swears to punish these nations.
- 1:13–16: Nabouchodonosor defeats Arphaxad in his 17th year.
- 2:7–11: Nabouchodonosor aims to subject the nations.
- 2:14–27: Holofernes starts to execute what Nabouchodonosor commanded.

The personification of the empire in chapters 1–2 is, among other things, apparent from Nabouchodonosor's call for support to Persia and the nations in the West (1:7–11) and his response to the rejection of this call (Jdt 1):

11 And all the inhabitants throughout all the land had contempt for the word of Nabouchodonosor, king of the Assyrians, and did not join with him for the war, **for they did not fear him** (ὄκ ἐφοβήθησαν αὐτόν); rather, in their eyes **he was but one man** (ὡς ἀνὴρ εἶς), and they sent back his messengers empty-handed and shamefaced.⁴

4. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Judith derive from Cameron Boyd-Taylor's translation for NETS (see ed. Pietersma 2014).

12 And Nabouchodonosor became violently angry at all this land and swore by his throne and by his kingdom **that he would punish** the entire region of Cilicia and the Damascene and Syria and **that he would dispatch with his sword** all the inhabitants of the land of Moab and the sons of Ammon and all Judea and all those in Egypt, until one comes to the region of the two seas. [*bold added*] (vv. 11–12)

These two passages contrast each other, but both highlight that the empire is represented by one man, Nabouchodonosor, as the phrases in bold show. They also show that honour and shame are important categories for the representation of empire, with success as a crucial factor (Bernhardt 2017:166–216; Gehrke 2013; ed. Matthews, Benjamin & Camp 1996 concerning Antiochus IV). Nabouchodonosor is unsuccessful and shamed by the treatment of his messengers. He will be shamed later on through the shaming of Holofernes by Judith. He himself shames Arphaxad in the 17th year of his reign with the capture and looting of Ecbatana (1:13–16): 'its honor he [Nabouchodonosor] turned to its shame' (1:14). The first passage also contrasts Nabouchodonosor with God through the phrase 'for they did not fear him (ὄκ ἐφοβήθησαν αὐτόν)', which echoes biblical phrases highlighting the fear of God (e.g. Pr 1:7; also Jdt 8:8, Schmitz & Engel 2014:83–84).

The conflict between Nabouchodonosor and the Israelites follows upon the command to destroy all sanctuaries and worship Nabouchodonosor alone in 3:8. This goes beyond the command as given to Holofernes by Nabouchodonosor in chapter 2:

And he [*Holofernes*] razed all the territory [τὰ ὄρια αὐτῶν NETS: *all their temples*]⁵ and cut down their groves.⁶ Indeed, he had been appointed to root out all the gods of the land, that every nation and every tongue should serve Nabouchodonosor and him alone (ὅπως αὐτῷ μόνῳ τῷ Ναβουχοδονοσορ λατρεύωσι)⁷ and that their every tribe should invoke him as a god. (Jdt 3:8)

The sanctuaries of the subjected nations are destroyed, which is as an encompassing measure unique in the ancient world (Schmitz and Engel 2014:129). Yet it matches, to a certain extent, the transformation of the Jerusalem temple cult as described in Daniel 11 and 1 and 2 Maccabees. Judith 3:8 also expresses the divine aspirations of Nabouchodonosor, which triggers associations with this king as depicted in Daniel 3 (Schmitz & Engel 2014:130), as well as with the presentation of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 1 and 2 Maccabees.⁸ The passage implies a monotheistic claim for Nabouchodonosor, which is without parallel for a king in ancient history⁹ and creates an antithesis between him and

5. NETS = Cameron Boyd-Taylor gives no argument for this translation, but the combination with '[sacred] groves [τὰ ἄλση]' renders it probable. Tony Craven (Craven 1983:77 n. 30; 80–81 n. 33) proposed to read τὰ ἱερά on the basis of the Syriac version, which may result from Holofernes plundering the temples according to 4:1, Gera:2013:163. The word ἄλσος is in the LXX usually the translation of Ashera.

6. See Judith 4:1–2, 13; 5:18–19; 8:21.

7. The verb λατρεύω occurs only once in Judith (Schmitz & Engel 2014:129–130).

8. 1 Maccabees 1; 2 Maccabees 5:11–7:42; 9:1–18.

9. It may echo perhaps the attempts of Pharaoh Echnaton in the second millennium BCE to set up a monotheistic cult.

God.¹⁰ The clash between Nabouchodonosor and God is made explicit in Holofernes' speech to Achior in 6:

'And who are you, Achior and the mercenaries of Ephraim, to prophesy amongst us as you have done today and to tell us not to wage war against the race of Israel, because their God will shield them? And who is god if not Nabouchodonosor? This very one will dispatch his might and wipe them from the face of the earth [ἐξολοθρευθεὶς αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς]. And their God will not rescue them ...' (v. 2)

Holofernes's words are put into action in his campaign against the Israelites (Jdt 7:1–7, 16–18), for which he has an alliance with all other nations (7:1).¹¹ This implies that the conflict between Nabouchodonosor and God is fought out on another level in which Holofernes and Judith are the main protagonists. As the story unfolds, Nabouchodonosor and God become or remain passive, and the focus is foremost on the interaction between Holofernes and Judith.

Appearance

That the fate of the Assyrian empire depends on personal presence and appearance is apparent from statements in Judith that include the key word πρόσωπον 'face', 'presence', 'person' (Eynikel, Hauspie & Lust 1992–1996:2.406–407).¹² In addition, Takamitsu Muraoka points out that πρόσωπον can indicate the focal point of personal contact and express the inner feelings and attitude of someone (Muraoka 2009: 600–602 s.v. 1 and 7). Under the influence of the Hebrew word פָּנָיִם, it can also be a constituent of compound prepositions like κατὰ πρόσωπόν 'personally' and κατὰ πρόσωπόν τινος 'in the presence of someone'. In Judith, most occurrences of πρόσωπον refer to a place meaning 'surface' or 'area (facing something)'¹³ or to a person or a deity.¹⁴ References to Nabouchodonosor, Holofernes, Judith and the God of Israel abound.¹⁵ The use of the key word πρόσωπον highlights the personal involvement of Holofernes in the conflict with the Israelites. According to Judith 2, he is sent out 'from the presence of' Nabouchodonosor:

This is what the Great King, Lord of all the earth, says: 'Behold, you [Holofernes] shall go forth from my presence [ἐξέλεύσῃ ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου μου] and you shall take with you men who rely on their

10.The clash between Nabouchodonosor and God is apparent from vocabulary referring to the earth, to heaven and earth and to God as παντοκράτωρ (4:13; 8:13; 15:10; 16:6, 17). Nabouchodonosor identifies himself as 'the Great King (ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας; 2:5; also 3:2) and the Lord of all the earth (ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς)'. In 11:1, 7 he is the king of the entire earth (βασιλεὺς Ναβουχοδονοσορ πάσης τῆς γῆς). Judith calls God, in her prayer in 9:12, master of the heavens and earth (δέσποτα τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς), creator of the waters, king of all your creation (βασιλεὺ πάσης κτίσεώς σου), hear you my entreaty ... (cf. 13:18). Nabouchodonosor claims that he is the king of the entire earth, but God is the king of heaven and earth. (See 9:14: God is the God of all power and strength; 13:18: God created the heavens and the earth [cf. 16:14]).

11.Holofernes's huge army is highlighted in 7:2.

12.About speech in ancient Greek narrative, see Bakker and De Jong (2022). This section and the next build on Van Henten (2015).

13.Muraoka (2009:600–602 s.v. 2 and 4). Judith 1:7; 2:7, 19, 21, 23, 25; 3:9; 4:6, 11; 5:10; 6:2; 7:4, 18; 16:20.

14.Judith 1:11; 2:5, 14; 3:2, 3; 4:2, 11, 13; 5:8, 12, 16; 6:4, 5, 9, 19; 7:6, 15; 8:15; 10:7, 12, 13 (twice), 14, 15, and 23 (thrice); 11:5, 11, 13, 16, 21; 12:12, 13 (twice); 13:1, 16; 14:3, 6, 7; 15:2; 16:7, 15. The word is once used in the absolute (13:4).

15.Nabouchodonosor 2:5, 14; 3:2–3; 6:4; Holofernes 4:2; 6:5; 7:15; 10:13, 15, 23; 11:5; 12:13; 13:1; Judith 10:7, 14, 23; 11:21; 12:16; 14:7; 16:7; God. Cf. Jdt 9:1: 'Now Judith fell face down (ἐπὶ πρόσωπον) ...'; 10:23: 'falling face forward', also referring to Judith.

strength, as many as one hundred and twenty thousand infantry and a troop of horse with twelve thousand riders...' (v. 5)

Holofernes is the one who will subject the rebellious Israelites, as the sons of Esau, Moab and the leaders of the coast in Judith 7:8–15 point out:

... And you [Holofernes] will pay them back a painful repayment, because they [the Israelites] broke out in rebellion and did not meet your face [οὐκ ἀπήνησαν τῷ προσώπῳ σου] in peace. (v. 15)

The role of appearance in the encounters of Judith and Holofernes is highlighted by Judith herself in the story, when she explains in 13:16 to her fellow-Bethulians how she managed to eliminate Holofernes: 'my face (τὸ πρόσωπόν μου) deceived him ...' (also 16:6). Judith was able to defeat the protagonist of the Assyrian empire by seducing him with her appearance and her words, more precisely by the expectations evoked by her appearance and her words (for the words, see the next section). Seduction is a manipulation of the other that builds on the other's expectations, and stereotypical performance is one of the ways to feed those expectations. This process implies that seduction is an intricate interplay of appearance, words and deeds that can be seen as a power game or even a contest (Baudrillard 1979:144; Van Henten 2015). The story highlights Judith's beautiful appearance and her words as powerful instruments of seduction.

The way Judith stages herself as a seductress when she prepares for her mission and dresses up (10:1–4) makes the narratees understand why Holofernes and his soldiers were stunned about her appearance (10:3–4), although the narrator never tells us about the actual looks of Judith (Brenner-Idan 2015).¹⁶ She removes her sackcloth (see 8:5), takes a bath and anoints her entire body with precious fragrant oil. Then she fixes her hair and puts a tiara on her head (10:3).¹⁷ She also puts on the festive dress which she used to wear when her husband was still alive (10:3).¹⁸ This detail suggests that she was active again as a sexual partner (Levine 1995:209). Next the focus is on Judith's limbs, most of which are adorned by jewellery: feet (sandals and anklets), arms (bracelets), and fingers and ears (rings, 10:4). The jewellery items appeal to the eye as well as the ear. Their jingling implies that sound also plays a role in the seduction of Holofernes (Bach 1997:203; Day 2001:84). The narrator highlights the aim of Judith's metamorphosis: 'she made herself up provocatively for the charming [εἰς ἀπάτησιν] of the eyes of men, all who would cast eyes upon her' (10:4). This emphasises the importance of her appearance.¹⁹ The noun ἀπάτησις in this comment probably points to seduction as the related verb does in 12:16.²⁰ The radical change of Judith's looks is

16.About the multiplicity of the options to interpret the female body in Judith, see Wright and Edwards (2015:40–44).

17.The vocabulary echoes LXX Isaiah 3:18–20, Rakeh (2003:278–282).

18.See also Judith 16:22.

19.This also invites the readers to visualise Judith's attire.

20.Muraoka (2009:65–66 s.v. ἀπατάω 1a). Rakeh (2003:209–215). The verb also has the connotation of deceit, see Judith's reference to the punishment of the Schemites for the rape of Dinah in Judith 9:2–3, Spicq (1978:1.116–18) and Thiessen (2018).

confirmed when she and her servant leave Bethulia (10:6–10) and the elders at the gate are amazed at her beauty: ‘... now when they saw her and her face was altered (τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῆς) and her dress changed, they were completely and utterly astounded by her beauty ...’ (10:7).²¹

Judith’s attempt is mirrored by Holofernes’ intentions, whose ultimate goal is to seduce Judith to sleep with him (12:1–13:2; esp. 12:16). Holofernes is obviously the second most powerful man among the Assyrians, but the story characterises him as a weak, naive and pampered person (Schmitz 2009). The detailedness of the description of the moments before Judith actually meets Holofernes (10:18–22) characterises both protagonists. The fact that all the guards and servants of Holofernes come outside in order to accompany Judith going inside, while all the soldiers are standing around her (10:20), depicts her as a royal figure. Next the narrator focuses on Holofernes, who at that moment is the only man in the camp who is still lying on his bed (10:21). The description of the location where he sleeps characterises him as a very wealthy person but also as an effeminate man: ‘And Olophernes was resting on his bed in the mosquito netting [ἐν τῷ κωνωπίῳ],²² which was of purple and gold and emerald and costly stones interwoven’ (10:21; Schmitz 2010). Holofernes’ soldiers are naive as well: they fall immediately for Judith’s beauty and words (10:14–19).

Appearance and words

Judith’s use of her beauty and her manipulation of the enemy with words (Van Henten 2015) are highlighted already in Judith’s encounter with Holofernes’ soldiers. When she runs into them, she explains her purpose to them as follows:

[A]nd I [Judith] am entering in to the presence [εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον] of Olophernes field marshal of your force in order to relate words of truth, and before his presence [πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ] I will point out the path on which he shall go and seize all the highlands, and of his men not a single body or breath of life shall be lost’. (Jdt 10:13)

The double use of *πρόσωπον* in the phrases ‘in the presence of’ and ‘before his presence’ in this verse suggest that it was essential for Judith to meet Holofernes in person. The soldiers escort her to Holofernes’ tent (10:15) and when Judith actually meets Holofernes, the combination of personal appearance and speech as Judith’s tools of seduction is once again highlighted in Judith’s (11) words addressed to the commander:

[A]nd Ioudith said to him [Holofernes]: ‘Accept the words of your slave, and let your girl speak to your face [κατὰ πρόσωπόν σου], and I will not report falsehood to my lord in this night ...’ (v. 5)

When Judith meets Holofernes, a give-and-take in words starts (10:23–12:15). Judith first makes her appearance and pays her respect to the commander. Her beauty has an immediate impact on all present:

21. For Judith’s beauty, see also 8:7; 10:3–4, 14, 19, 23; 16:6–9; Rakel (2003:202–227).

22. See 13:9, 15; 16:19.

Now when Ioudith came before the face [κατὰ πρόσωπόν σου] of him and of his attendants, they were all awestruck by the beauty of her face, and falling face forward, she did obeisance to him, and his slaves raised her up. (Jdt 10:23)

Holofernes tries to put Judith at ease by saying that she will stay alive if she is willing to serve King Nabouchodonosor (11:1–4). Judith convinces Holofernes with her words (Schmitz 2004:318–350) that she will do as he says. She outlines a brilliant strategy for defeating the Jews for him, which consists of ambiguous statements and plain lies (11:5–19). She teases Holofernes as the second man of the empire (11:8). Holofernes and his servants are completely seduced by Judith’s appearance and words (11:20–23). They admire her wisdom (11:20) and even state: ‘In beauty of face [ἐν καλῷ προσώπῳ] and sagacity of words [συνέσει λόγων] there is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other’ (11:21; cf. 10:19). Holofernes’ announcement for Judith in 11:23 is a fair prediction from the perspective of the end of the story, and at the same time it is short-sighted and ironic in the light of Nabouchodonosor’s command in 3:8 (above):

‘And now, you are charming in your appearance [ἀστεία ... ἐν τῷ εἶδει] and virtuous in your words [ἀγαθὴ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου], for, if you do as you have said, your God shall be my God,²³ and you shall be seated in the house of King Nabouchodonosor, and you shall be famous more than the entire earth’. (Jdt 11:23)

Only Nabouchodonosor could arrange this highly honourable position for Judith (Schmitz & Engel 2014:342).

Holofernes’ strategy to seduce Judith is also based on the effect of appearance. He first tries to impress her with a prestigious meal (12:1–5). He orders to bring her to the place where his dinnerware is kept (12:1). The references to silver dinnerware (see also 10:21), spread out food and Holofernes’ own wine (12:1) indicate that he intends to seduce Judith by inviting her to participate in his luxurious lifestyle, which implies prestige and magnanimity for him (Van den Eijnde 2018; Vössing 2004).

Holofernes’ second step concerns setting up the drinking bout that leads to his death (12:10–13:10). Judith is the only invited guest, and obviously she dresses up and beautifies herself for this event (12:15). Appearance is key once again. This time the narrator’s description focuses on the setting at the beginning of the banquet. He highlights Judith’s position in the tent, right in front of Holofernes (12:15), on the lambskins that Bagoas had given her. The lambskins suggest to Holofernes that Judith would behave according to his plan (Gera 2013:385). The servant’s act of putting the skins in Holofernes’ tent foregrounds Judith’s entrance, told in the next verse. She makes a stunning appearance, as Holofernes’ reaction to her entrance shows. At this moment the narrator reveals Holofernes’ intentions:

And Ioudith entered and reclined, and Olophernes’ heart was beside itself for her, and his spirit reeled, and he was filled with a violent lust to lie with her. And he had been watching for a time

23. See Ruth 1:16.

to seduce her [ἀπατήσαι αὐτήν]²⁴ from the day he saw her. (Jdt 12:16)

From Holofernes' point of view, everything is seeming to happen as planned. Any signal given by Judith indicates that she will behave as he wished she would. This is also implied by the subsequent exchange of words, which focuses euphemistically on eating and drinking (12:17–20).

Holofernes becomes the victim of his own strategy to seduce Judith, drinking himself into a stupor. The description of Holofernes stretched out on his bed and being dead drunk (13:2; cf. 13:15) is comical: Holofernes is where he wanted to be, but incapable of executing his plan. His bed is foregrounded in the description (13:2, 4, 6, 7) and signals that the male protagonist is over and done with (cf. 8:3 and 9:3). Judith's prayer already highlighted that the bed is also the location of justified punishment for foreign males who dare to rape Israelite women (9:3). The return of Judith and her maid to Bethulia leads once again to the shaming of Holofernes (13:11–20). The story highlights for the last time the importance of Judith's appearance, this time without mentioning her words as the second tool of seduction (similarly 16:6–9 in the song of praise for Judith). After her return, Judith displays the head of Holofernes and ridicules him:

And producing the head from the bag, she displayed it and said to them: 'Behold, the head of Olophernes, field marshal of the army of Assour, and behold, the mosquito netting in which he was lying in his drunkenness, and the Lord struck him by the hand of a female. And the Lord lives, who preserved me in my way in which I went, that **my face** [πρόσωπόν] **deceived him** for his destruction and that he caused no transgression with me for defilement and shame'. (Jdt 13:15–16; bold added)

Holofernes' head is to be hung from the wall (14:1; cf. 14:11 and 2 Macc 15:33–35). The shaming of Holofernes is taken up again in the praise for Judith (16:6), which forms an *inclusio* with the first occurrence of the motif of honour and shame in connection with Nabouchodonosor's plans (1:11, above).

Conclusion

My analysis of the references to the Assyrian empire and the role of Judith in defeating this empire implies that personification is an important feature of the story. Both the Assyrian empire and the Israelite or Jewish nation act through representatives, Nabouchodonosor, Holofernes and Judith, respectively. Their personal involvement is apparent from the frequent use of the word πρόσωπον ('face', 'presence', 'person'; e.g. 2:5; 7:15; 10:7, 13, 23; 11:5; 13:16; 16:6). The story highlights both the appearance of these protagonists and the role of speech when they encounter each other (Jdt: 10:4; 11:5, 20–23; 13:16; 16:6; Holofernes 10:21; 12:1–5; 12:10–13:2; cf. 1:7–12 about Nabouchodonosor). With the help of her appearance and her words, Judith manages to seduce Holofernes with his soldiers and eliminates and shames the main protagonist of the empire in this way.

24. See footnote 21.

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Author's contributions

J.W.v.H. is the sole author of this research article.

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