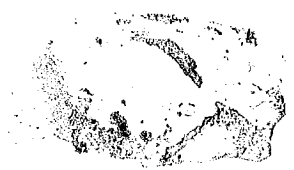


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The Book
of
Esther

David Marx.



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Preface

The contents of this thesis, devoted to the favorite one of the five Megilloth, claims originality for the arrangement of the facts gathered concerning the book of Esther.

The writer's intention is to show that an investigation of the book itself as well as of the literature written concerning it has been made, and his endeavor is to give a scientific treatment of the subject-matter.

As brevity is demanded in such a presentation, much that would call for expansion in a more thorough treatise is merely indicated

Here.

The principle sources consulted
in preparing this work are:

The Book of Esther, The Septuagint Translation
The Vulgate, Josephus' "Antiquities"
Herodotus, Encyclopaedia Britannica
Stitzig's "Gesch. des Volk Israel"
Kraetz "Monatschrift für Gesch. u. Wissensch.
schaft Judenthums".

Beauregard on the "Book of Esther"

Reuss Gesch. des Alten Testament

Grimm Concerning 1779

Kuenen "Relig. of Israel" & "Das Buch Est"

Wise's "Promises" & "2nd Commonwealth"

Dr. J. S. Block on Curium.

The Contents

Chapter I. 1-2 Tells who Ahasuerus is, the extent of his domain and the capital of his empire. 3-4 describe the festival of 180 days duration, which the king and his favorites celebrate. The wealth of the king is displayed. 5-8. The people are feasted. The account of the celebration. 9. Vashti, the queen, entertains the women of the royal house. 10-12 She refuses to appear in public at the king's command. 13-22 Acting upon the advice of Memucan, one of the "Seven Princes" the king deposes Vashti and makes proclamation that every man shall be ruler in his own house.

Chap. II 1-4 At the suggestion of his friends the King appoints officers to assemble all the beautiful virgins in the kingdom at Shushan so that he can choose his queen from them. 5-7. Mordecai and Esther's genealogy is given. v 8-11. Esther is taken to Shushan, finds favor in the eyes of the keeper of the harem, but does not disclose her nationality. 12-14 The customs of the harem are set forth. 15-20. Esther appears before the King and is chosen queen. A feast follows. 21-23. Mordecai discovers a conspiracy to kill the King. He reports the matter to Esther and the principals are

largest.

Chap III. 1-2. Haman is made Prime-Minister; all save Mordecai bow before him. 3-6 The King's servants chide Mordecai for this and report the matter to the Minister who determines to extirpate the Jews. v7. The lot is cast for the date of destruction. 8-15 Haman asks permission of the King and his request is granted to slay the Jews.

On the 13th day of Nisan, the edict is sent forth by King that on the 13th day of Adar a general attack on the Jews take place.

IV 1-9 Mordecai and the Jews don sack-cloth and ashes. This is reported

to Esther who sends Hatach to learn
the cause. Mordecai informs her and
sends a copy of the edict, requesting
that she plead for her people. 10-11.
She informs him of the custom of
"being touched by the golden scepter" 12-14
Mordecai replies that if she refuse
then help will come from elsewhere.
15-17. Esther decrees a fast for the Jews.
Chap V 1-5 Esther seeks the King and
asks that he and Haman dine with her
that day. 6-8. They do so and she requests
a repetition of the favor. 9-13 Haman goes
home delighted at the honor shown him
but enraged at Mordecai 14 Influenced
by his wife Haman constructs a gallows

for Mordecai

VI. 1-12. The king unable to sleep learns from the Chronicles that Mordecai had saved his life. He desires to honor the Jew and asks advice of Haman, who - not knowing that Mordecai is to be honored - tells the king to place his regal garments on the happy man & cause the royal charges to carry him through the city. This is done under the guidance of Haman. 12-14 Haman returns home despondent and is summoned to Esther's banquet.

VII. 1-6. Esther earnestly requested by the king to ask a favor pleads for her life and for her people, mentioning Haman as the cause of all trouble. 7-10 The king in

anger leaves the room. Returning he becomes
enraged at the position of Haman and orders
him to execution. Chapter VIII 1-2 Haman's
house and position at court are surrendered
to Mordecai. 3-12. Ahasuerus at the wish of
Esther promulgates through Mordecai the decree
that the Jews defend themselves. 13-17 The
edict goes forth and the Jews celebrate the event.
IX 1-8. On the 13th of Adar, the Jews aided
by the servants of the king smite their
enemies. 9-10. Haman's sons are mentioned
by name. 11-19. At the request of Esther the
Jews in Shushan slaughter their enemies
also on the 14th of Adar and hang
Haman's sons. The Jews in the provinces
celebrate the 14th in joy. Those in

Shushan, the 15th. 20-28 At the request
of Mordecai, the Jews dedicate the 14th + 15th
days of Adar for rejoicing for themselves
and posterity. 29-32 The days of fasting
and lamentation are set aside.

X 1-3 Mordecai is established as Prime-
Minister

Is the Book Historical?

The Book of Esther probably more so than any other book of the Bible is a puzzle to the student. Is it an exposition of actual happenings or is it the fanciful production of a creative mind? The writer evidently intends to give it an historical character by the explicitness with which he mentions the names of all the persons of rank at the court of this potent sovereign.

With due precision and exactness the author endeavors to place the story before the reader as a page from history. But is he successful? His minutely detailed account gives no evidence of a true historical knowledge of the

scenes portrayed. True, he is not an ordinary story-teller, he is a narrator but far from being an historian.

Improbabilities and impossibilities present themselves on all sides and they, more than aught else, argue weightily against ascribing historical value to the book. In behalf of the book as historical this can be said:

The customs of the Persians, are described so thoroughly and vividly that we can hardly prevent ourselves from believing that we are dealing with actual occurrences at the Persian court. For the sake of expediting the work, let

in examining the customs and events,
as they occur in the narrative, chapter
by chapter.

Chapter I v 4-9. The grandeur here mentioned
does not overrate the costly luxuriance of
the Persian court nor does it exaggerate
the prodigiousness of the king's decisions of
displaying "the riches of his glorious
kingdom." Costly couches, exquisite hangings
"fastened to silver rings and pillars of marble,"
golden drinking vessels; were to be found in
the houses of the nobles.

v. 3. probably refers to the private banquets
given to the intimate friends of royalty
in the rooms of the palace, in contra-
distinction to the feast mentioned

in v. 5 which in strict conformity to Persian custom was held in the park adjoining the palace.*

v 7-8 if the testimony of Herodotus is to be held as valuable, do not magnify the fondness of the Persians for wine.²

On great occasions the king presided at the feast, discoursing and drinking with his subjects, condescending to recognize his guests as human beings.

N 10-12. At the head of the seraglio was the queen, the titled "wife" of the monarch. She was of noble birth, was privileged to wear royal garments and a crown, but on no condition, was she to be seen by any mortal save

* Seven Ancient Monarchies vol II chap III

2. Herod. IX. 10.

her lord and those unfortunates connected with the harem. To submit herself to the gaze of others meant death for them as well as for herself. Only later, after Xorvis' time was she permitted to appear in public. The other inmates of the gynaeceum were at times commanded to be present at feasts to dance and sing for the amusement of the guests. Hence Bashti, in refusing to appear, did so to protect her title as "Queen"

v. 14-16. The seven Princes (Hw. III. 84. 118) were next to the King in rank. They had the privilege of speaking to him at all times. They advised him, recommended

important measures and entered his presence unannounced. Their judgment was held in high esteem by the monarch. These seven princes dated their power from Darius I.

Ch. II 1.5 The manner, mentioned here, of replenishing the harem by sending to all parts of the empire for beautiful women was the usual one in vogue in Persia. D. S. Pseudo-Smerdis fearing that he might be discovered and betrayed, passed a law forbidding the women to leave the harem under pain of death (D. S. 522). The extreme fondness of the Oriental peoples for serpents and oases justifies the language used

in v. 12.

v. 21. Presents a picture of an occurrence the counterpart of which was so often happening in Persia. The history of Xerxes' time and of the following years is pregnant with conspiracies of the servants against the king.

Chapter III. v. 2. Every subject was in duty bound to bow his knee or incline his body in token of reverence before the king and the nobles. v. 10 resembles closely the story of Joseph and Pharaoh (Genesis XL v. 42.) the same terms being used.

v. XVII The Persian King rarely found pleasure in study and as a rule knew not how to sign his name

hence he made use of a signet-ring, which was entrusted to the person who held the honorable office of signet-keeper. All official documents were stamped with this ring.*

Chap. IV. 16. Darius made a decree that no one could approach the king. Later the law was changed and the seven princes were excluded from this restriction but not so the queen. Esther must therefore be forgiven her breach of law in entering the royal presence unsummoned by the king himself. He pardons the intrusion and holds out the golden scepter which Xenophon (*Cyrop.* VIII. 7. § 13) mentions as always in the hand of the ruler.

* Herod. III. 128. also cylinder of Darius.

I. 114 Persian history furnishes a few examples which show the influence ^{which} at times, the wife exercised over her master.

v. 11. Haman in telling of his fortune considers himself blessed in having a great number of sons. This is in strict conformity with the ancient belief for confirmation of which see Job chap I

II. 18f. No higher honor could be bestowed upon a man than the permission to wear the royal garments. To do so without the permission of the king means death; hence the choice of Haman (Plut. Vit. Artax (I))

VII. 8 For the mode of punishment see Herod. 3. 125. 159. Curtius 6. 4. 22. men were led to death with covered heads.

VIII. 10. It is never the king writing or signing*

Not only is our author acquainted with the rules of the court but he is, as it were, an eye-witness of all that transpires. I. 10. 14. 16.

II 3-6. 5. 14. 15. 21. III 1. IV 5. 13 V 10sq.

VI 13sq. VII 9. IX 7-9. X. 2

At a casual glance this seems to be a most convincing and conclusive argument for the historical character of the book. But not so. Already in the first chapter of the story (v. 4) our credence is shaken, when we read of a six-month-feast, and when we reach v. 22 "that every man shall bear rule in his own house" we compare

* see note on Chap III. v. 12. p.

ourselves with the question "What does it mean?" In Chap II v10+21 How can Mordecai who is not a noble pit, in the gate of the king? and stranger still, the king contrary to all Persian custom, takes a wife not of the nobility of the land. The author seems to recognize this mistake and hence gives her lineage from Saul (II.5).

II. 10.11+II 29.20 are parallel passages. Does not the author anticipate events when he causes Esther to be so punctilious in concealing her nationality, and makes Ahasuerus so exacting in his charge to Haman, relative to the honor to be shown Mordecai? II. 10.

If Mordecai ~~was~~ carried away at the time of the captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, and if (as is later shown) Xerxes be the King Ahasuerus, Mordecai is at the time of the story about 130 yrs of age; and even allowing that Esther is his junior by some few years, she is still too old to meet the language used in II. 17.

The proclamation is issued eleven months before the execution thereof. Why did the Jews not flee? and later when the eventful day did arrive how could the Persians permit themselves to be slaughtered by a handful of Jews? We might ignore Chapter II v. 7 which presupposes that

Mordecai was well informed on all that concerned the private audiences of the king, but can we do the same with II. 16 + I. 1-2 which tell of Esther's having fasted ~~three~~^{two} days and appearing "favorable" on the third day. Stranger by far and more improbable is the possibility of Esther's concealing her identity after she was queen, especially as Mordecai asked daily after her welfare and he was known to be a Jew (II. 1 + 4-17). Surely Haman must have been cognizant of this fact (I. 12-13) but he does not mention it, neither does he, when confronted by Esther's charge plead that he was unacquainted with her origin, nor

does he urge that she is speaking
against the decree of her sovereign

Esther might have caused his
execution after the 1st banquet, why
then did she delay? To permit the
king in the meantime to pass a
sleepless night; to hear the chronicles;
and to discover that Mordecai had
not received his reward: and to
humiliate Haman by imposing on
him the task of honoring his mortal
enemy. All this, — but especially that
Haman might be hanged on the
gallows he had built for the Jew.
Mordecai (not to mention the im-
probability of a gallows seventy-five

feet high. VII 9. I. 14.

Despite the fact that Mordecai belongs to the accursed race, he is honored (VI) although the decree condemning all the Jews, still holds good against him.

The praise bestowed upon the Jews in VI. 13 is without motive and could better have been omitted. Had Haman's friends thought as the story says, why did they not change his plans.

Does not III 4 state that Mordecai is a Jew and yet although Haman is well acquainted with this fact his friends (VI. 13) have not been informed of it sooner.

The second edict is as peculiar

as the first. The Jews are commanded not only to defend themselves but also "to destroy, to slay and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women and to take the spoil of them for a prey" VIII. v. 11

IX. 16 reads "but they laid not their hands on the prey" hence they disobeyed the royal edict and were guilty, but the king does not punish them.

Another weighty consideration presents itself. How could any king, however ruthless, command a foreign detested element, the Jews, to kill his own faithful subjects thereby lessening his

own power? And even should a king
 so command, does reason warrant the
 statement that out of fear of one
 man, Mordecai, 75000 men willingly
surrender their life instead of
 defending themselves and putting to flight
 an inferior enemy? Esther, not content
 with the slaughter of 500 men in
 Shushan asks for permission to devote the
 next day to butchery and having received her
 request commands that more blood flow.
 Purim is spoken of as derived from 715
 a lot. There is no such word, as yet, found
 in the Persian language; but aside from
 this, if we accept the word and its
 derivation, rather meaning, we must grant

that Haman made known the date of the intended destruction, a year before and that the Jews called a festival by a name, meaningless to most of them.

The Persian names - whether real or invented - are nowhere else to be found and justify the assumption that most of them are forged after Persian patterns. No connection obtains between Esther and Amestris, the wife of Xerxes (see following chapter)

§ 2. is no doubt an imitation of the Chronicles of the Kings. These various internal proofs speak strongly against the book as an historical work.

Other proof also argues in this line

External evidence is deduced from the fact that no Persian literature or for that no post-Hebrew literature makes mention of an influential Jew named Mordecai or of his beautiful cousin, the Queen. Surely had such events as mentioned in our book transpired, they must have been recorded elsewhere also; but as far as is known, Persian history is silent on this subject; hence we are led to decide, governed by this fact as well as by the numerous contradictions which fill the pages of the book, by the improbabilities and impossibilities that continually confront us, no less than by the silence

of contemporaneous history) that the Book of Esther is not historical, but is a fiction, a novel written with a definite purpose, which will be discussed later.

Are the Characters Historical

By refusing to consider the book in the light of an historical work, it by no means follows that we must necessarily consider the characters mentioned therein as creatures of an imaginative mind.

The question naturally arises, "How are they to be regarded? Are they living realities of flesh and bone, or mere phantasms of the writer's active brain?"

The opening chapter, almost in its first words, takes pains to inform the reader that the events narrated occurred during the reign of a certain king, Ahasuerus by name — he who ruled from India to Ethiopia over

one hundred and twenty-seven sources

Exactness and precision in narration are carefully observed by the writer to prevent any misunderstanding on the part of the reader as to the person concerned. The author evidently is desirous of drawing a real, historical character.

To what race does this mighty potentate belong? The 3rd verse answers this question and the 19th verse supports the thought that he is a Persian and not a Median ruler, and consequently the book must refer to a time when the Persians were in the ascendancy. Moreover the Median empire never

in its best days covered such an extensive territory as is mentioned. (II. 1.) nor did it ever extend over the coasts & the islands. Whenever the book makes mention of the empire the word מֶדֶי precedes פֶּרְס (I. 3. 14. 16. 19. II. 2.) which is contrary to Daniel II. 6. 12. 15.

The customs court regulations and usages are characteristic of the Persian land.

Thus far we have attempted to show that the king, whether real or imaginary was a Persian ruler. Now the endeavor shall be to find out what king of Persia could correspond to the Ahasuerus of the Bible.

That the ruler lived after Cyrus, the fact is easily deduced from Chap IV. 5 Shushan was founded by that monarch, and the palace mentioned here was begun in his time although not completed until the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon (404 B.C.) who made the city the capital of his empire.

Josephus speaks of Ahasuerus as Artaxerxes, the Septuagint does the same.

One opinion* based somewhat on the LXX the Apocryphal Esther and Josephus is to the effect that the Artaxerxes mentioned in them as well as in the Syriac version refers to Darius

* Weiss II Com. pp 30-32

Ochus (self-styled Artaxerxes) 359 B.C. But
 this theory fails to account for the
 time that elapsed between the third
 year when Vashti was deprived of
 the crown and the seventh when
 Esther is chosen as queen. True
 Darius Ochus was hostile to the Hebrews
 because they had aided the Phoenicians
 to revolt; and the decree against the
 Jews (Est. III. 13) might have been the result
 of his hatred but then how are we
 to account for the sudden change from
 destructive thoughts to not only sparing
 the lives of the Jews but also permitting
 them to play their enemies and
 take the spoil. Political enemies are

not treated so kindly.

Who then is the Ahasuerus of the Bible? It could not have been Cambyses for he reigned but a short time and Esther III. 7 speaks of the twelfth year of his rule. Only since the time of Darius could the lands extending from India to Ethiopia be considered Persian territory. He took the greater part of these countries and made them obedient to his sway. In all probability it is Xerxes the son of Darius. Count reasons have led to this opinion.

On philological grounds, we can say that the Cuneiform writing which (transcribed) writes Xerxes Xhschjarscha

is of mighty consideration for the name
Abasimus found in our book, corresponds
to Khochjarscha.

2) Xerxes rule extended over the provinces
and the islands mention (est. I. 1). He
fought against Egypt and placed the
yoke on it; he was the mightiest
and most wealthy of the kings and
at his court such a scene as
mentioned in the 1st Chapter of Esther
might easily have taken place.

3) Previous to his setting forth for Greece
(Herod. 7. 144) He assembled his generals
and commanders and entertained
them while he discussed the intended
invasion of Greece. This feast was

celebrated in the third year of his reign (as Est. I. 3). In that year he deposed Vashiti, and although the maidens were assembled, he did not select his queen until the seventh year of his reign (II. 16) Why such an interval of time? Because between the preparation for the invasion of Greece and the return of the expedition (461 B.C.) exactly ^{two} four years had elapsed.

4 The character of Xerxes is the character of Ahasuerus. There is the same rage, cruelty, passion, fickleness and despotic temperament; the same utter disregard for aught but self. No better picture could be drawn of the Persian

rules than those set forth by the author of Esther. We can well say that the King presented in the book is an historical character. But can we say the same of the other personages mentioned in the story.

In Chap. IV. 5, we have a genealogy to show the noble descent of Esther and Mordecai. They are members of the house of Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin and date their ancestry from Qisach. Is this by chance or is it done intentionally? I think there is good reason for tracing the lineage of Esther. She is to be the enemy of Haman, the Agagite and must therefore

be of the tribe of Benjamin because (I Sam. IX. 3) Saul, also a son of Qisch, the Benjaminite was commanded to exterminate the Amalekites, whose king at that time was Agag. She is also a descendant of Shimei (II Sam XVI. 5) who was so near a relative of Saul that he threw stones at David. Apart from this, the names Qisch and Shimei were well known to his readers and hence were of interest.

If Esther be an historical person, she and Anestris are the same for history mentions but one wife of Xerxes, hence how are we to account for Vashti who could not (if our Persian history accounts are valid),

Have existed. Esther therefore is not identical with Auestria and can not be assigned any position as an historical character. She may be fashioned after Auestria of whom Herodotus (VII. 34f 35f) speaks in most glowing terms.

Haman is called "the Agagite" and this surname is not purposeless.

Agag, the king of the Amalekites (I Sam 8. 33) is the arch-enemy of Israel and therefore Haman inherits the name of that king.

Josephus calls him an Amalekite and the Septuagint influenced by the hatred against Antiochus Epiphanes calls him Macedonian. The story shows how

the command given by Samuel to Saul (1 Sam XV.3) is at last fulfilled, when not only Haman but also his entire household are killed by the order of Esther.

Starting from the premise before advanced, Vashti and Esther are myths, fancies of a creative brain for Xerxes had but one "wife", Amestris, and her name corresponds neither to Esther, the royal consort, nor to Hadassah, the Hebrew maiden. Haman, also, is not an historical character. Mordecai loses all value, historically, if we consider him one of the exiles carried away with Jeconiah into captivity.

The author overlooked the fact that Mordecai's age would prove a hindrance to the story, in the desire to state (indirectly it is true) that Mordecai was wealthy and influential (II. 6) for those Jews who went into exile with Jeconiah were of the nobility, while those that did so after the fall of Jerusalem were impoverished by the ravages of the enemy.

II. 6. נִשְׁחָז can not grammatically refer to Qisch as Clericus takes it in his desire to give value to the story on chronological grounds; nor do I think it means, as others would have it that the intention is to say that

Mordecai did not go with Jeconiah but was a member of the family that did. The only character that lends any weight to the view that the book is historical is Ahasuerus and his name no doubt was taken to give stability & support to the story. From the foregoing, we are of the opinion, that the characters mentioned in the Esther story are invented with the exception of Ahasuerus whose life corresponds so closely with that of Xerxes, the son of Darius.

The texts.

Besides the story as reported in the Hebrew Bible there are the Septuagint Version, The Vulgate, an account recorded by Josephus, in all of which minor differences are found. Besides these versions there is the Syrian, which is a translation of the Hebrew, and the Targum Sheri, consisting of a number of Midrashim.

I shall here set forth the differences which seemed to me most striking in the various texts.

Josephus in a purely narrative manner of an agreeable story-teller does not confine himself to a translation of the latter-story. He does not speak of Ahacurus

but at the very beginning of his account (Ant. XI II. 1) says: "After the death of Xerxes the Kingdom came to be transferred to his son Cyrus whom the Greeks called Artaxerxes." The remainder of the story differs but little from the Hebrew Version, save that Josephus (Ant. XI II. 4.) mentions Barnabazus, a eunuch who reports to Mordecai the conspiracy against the King and (XI. II 7.) Acrathus is spoken of as the messenger sent by Esther. Hatach is not mentioned. Josephus neither gives the names of the chamberlains, nor the seven wise men, except Memucan, nor does he know Esther by the name Hadassah. He is not concerned with her ancestry and seems

to be ignorant of their names.

The Vulgata in II. 7. 15 also VIII. 1. speaks of Esther as the niece of Mordecai. We find the following language used in this connection. "Qui fuit nutritivus filiae fratris sui Edissae." "Quo Esther filia Abobail fratris Mardochei." III. 7 in connection with the meaning of ^{חַד} (Latin equivalent Phur) says it is a Hebrew word and III. 15 instead of reading "And the city Shushan was perplexed" has a more sensible account, "And all the Jews who were in the city were in tears." IX 26 differs widely in meaning from the Hebrew text. "Et cuncta quae gesta sunt, epistolae, id est, libri Lujus volumine continentur" and in IX 29 instead of "to confirm this second letter of Purim" we find Esther

and Mordecai writing a second letter (secundam Epistolam.) v. 32 reads "and all things which are contained in the history of this book, which is called Esther" the suitable object of "they undertook to observe" of v. 31. Besides these there are a few other differences in Text mostly in the IX Chapter. The story does not end with the 4th verse of Chapter IX. There are in addition 10 verses to this chapter and five chapters containing (1) a dream of Mordecai (2) a repetition of Mordecai's and Esther's lineage (3) The conspiracy against the King. (4) The copy of the King's edict concerning the destruction of the Jews. (5) Mordecai's prayer (6) Esther's prayer. (7) A scene

representing Esther's appearing, unsummoned,
before the king (8) Artaxerxes revokes
his decree and makes Purim a Persian
national festival (XVI. 22.)

It is noteworthy that up to X. 4. the
king is called Ahasuerus, and in the
remaining verses, Artaxerxes. The latter
section of the book from X. 4. to the end
is from the Greek version LXX and
hence the change in the king's name.

The LXX contains some changes worthy
of attention and hence I shall mention
a few. Chap I v. 1. The king is styled Artaxerxes
and throughout the entire book he is
known by this name. I. v. 5 states the
reason for the celebration "ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἐξομολογήσιν
τοῦ ἁγίου" ^{τῆς χάριτος}

αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ γάμου". CI v.1 makes no mention
 of Ethiopia - v.10. The names of the chamberlains
 are respectively Hama, Bagan, Harra
 Barazi, Zatholtha, Abataga and Tharaba.
 v.13. The king speaks to his friends and tells them
 to do according to the law." N.14. does not
 speak of the seven princes but gives the
 names of three chiefs of the Persians &
 Medes, Arkesaios, Samathanos and
 Maliseas. Chapter II.6 ignores Jeconiah, the
 king of Judah - v.7. Esther is the daughter
 of Aminadab the uncle of Mordecai.
 The correspondent for "Hadassah" is not
 found in the LXX. Chap II.4 substitutes
 Taē for Shaashgām. v.6 - mentions ^{not} the
 tenth month but the (δεκάτω) twelfth

that is Adar instead of Tiveth. III. 19. wisely omits "when the virgins were gathered together the second time and v. 20 introduces Est. Esther has been commanded by Mordecai
 Φοβεῖο δαὶ τὸν Δεῖον.

Wherever Haman's name is mentioned he is called either Μακεδών or Βουζάνος, foaster
 Chap III
 v. 7. Nissan is not spoken of.

IV 5 substitutes Ἀχπαδαν for Hatach and
 V 10 Ζωάπα for Jorak. IV. v. 6 is omitted likewise the first + second verses of Chap V 6^b, and in Chap IX 1^a 2^a + 5. Chap VI. 6 does not state the thought of Haman to himself
 VI. 13 mentions Est. VII. 9 Βουζανος instead of Charbonah. VIII. 9. the first, of Nissan not the third month Sivan as in Hebrew text.

IX 7-9 The names of Haman's sons do not correspond to those in the Hebrew. The Septuagint also has the additional book of the Apocrypha - "the Book of Esther." It places first in the story, what in the Vulgate is Chap. II. v. 2 + continues with the story in order ending however with Chap. I. v. 4-13. Hieronymus is said to have made a translation very early + a very old Latin version is now lost. From the differences in text and especially in proper names we derive ^{to} suppositions. (1) The writers carelessly copied from the same, i.e. one original book, ~~and~~ (2) there were more than one account of the Esther story.

The Book - Time - Author

Already in Talmudic times the value of this book was questioned. Amongst the people it is true, Esther was the favorite Megillah. Indeed it was so popular that already in the first century B.C. additions were made to it.

Whether it would have maintained its position had it not been taken into the Canon is an open question. As it is, there were two sides amongst the Rabbis of old and yet none dared give Esther a very high standing.

In the Talmud (Meg 7^a) an effort is made to find for it a Pentateuchal basis but in vain. Rabbi Judah is reported as saying in the name of Rabbi Samuel

אסתר אינה מטמאה את הידים

"Esther is not holy" but Rabbi Shmuel is
not of such a free opinion, he says
נאמרה לקרות ולא נאמרה ליכתב

Esther is not holy as regards reading but it is
as regards copying. Melito, Bishop of Sardis
would not place it amongst the Holy
Writings* and other church dignitaries
regard it in the light they do Judith, Sirach
etc. Luther was unwilling that it ^{should} "come"
into the Canon. Amongst the Jews, however,
the book has always had a strong claim,
and it still continues to hold its high
place, because Israel in the time
of persecution derived consolation and
comfort from it, and in times of peace

*Eusebius Kirchengesch 1.26

found pleasure in thinking that the
"Gov. of Israel neither slumbers nor
sleeps."

The Talmud Baba. B. 15^a attributes it to
the men of the Synod. Rabbi Eliezer, Akibah
and Me'ir (Meg. 1) express the view that
it is inspired, that

(אמר) אסתר ברוך הקודש נאמר

Others again refute this R. Joshua + R. Samuel
said that it was written by the holy spirit.

From internal evidence from IX 21. 23. 26
Clement Alexandrinus & the Ezra say that Mordecai
wrote it, while Augustine maintains that
Ezra was the scribe. In all probabilities
it was written by some one who had been
in Persia and who there became acquainted

with the habits and customs.

Despite the conflicting views regarding the author, the majority of critics have not hesitated to place the book amongst the late books of the Bible and they have done this influenced by many reasons.

- 1) The style and peculiarities of expression argue strongly in favor of a late authorship.
- 2) The disrespect shown the Persian aristocracy I. 1. 13^d/14. IV 11 VIII. 8^b would not have been tolerated in the days when the decrees of these mighty potentates were supreme, heartless and cruel.
- 3) There is no mention of the Prophets,

the consoling of Israel in time of trouble and oppression. The author of the Apocryphal Book of Esther, keenly awake to this utter disregard of the N'vium causes Mordecai to have a prophetic dream.

4/ None of the late books of the Bible or Apocrypha make any mention of Esther. Jesus b. Sirach in the Chapter XLV - I in which the names of all the pious and prominent men of Israel even down to Simon the Just ^{440 A.D.} are mentioned contains no word about Mordecai or Esther. Tobit Chap I 21 makes mention of an Achicamus of the tribe of Naphtali (v. 1) who was cup-bearer and signet-keeper of King

Esarhaddon and in XIV 10 speaks of Haman
whom this Achischarus brought up, but there
is no similarity in the character. We can
as well argue that the Haman and
Abasuerus (Achischarus) of this story suggested
the names in Esther as that the names in
Esther did those in Tobit.

5/ The II Bk of Maccabees XV 36. speaks of
a Mardocheus' day, celebrated the day following
Nicanor's day, Adar 13th but II Maccabees was
written late, also after the Maccabean wars
and as II Mac. II 23 tells us, the story of
the book of the Maccabees is taken from
the writings of Jason of Cyrene. Josephus,
himself must have considered Esther of late
origin as it is the last event of the

Old Testament which he mentions and immediately in the next section he speaks of other concerns.

6) The use of words found only in later literature as well as the foreign words.

The evidence so far given has been to prove that the book is a late one. Exactly at what time the book was written has always been, and is yet still a question of debate.

The Apocryphal statement II. 1 "In the 4th year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dosithens and Ptolemy his son bought this epistle of Phurim which they said was the same & that Symmachus, the son of Ptolemy that was in Jerusalem had interpreted it."

Has led some critics to the conclusion that the Phurai, which was an Egyptian festival was brought from Jerusalem. If we maintain this, we must accept the entire letter as authentic. The Apocry. Book will serve them to make the book interesting to the Hellenist party. Those who hold this view, as well as some few others claim that the book was written (at the time Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Persia), with the purpose of inciting the Jews to revolt. If so, then it is strange that the people should not have been called on in the name of God.

Keil thinks the book still older and says it was written in the time of

Darius Notus; and Rawlinson thinks this too late a date and says the author lived during the time of Antiochus I. Ewald, Schütz and others refer it to the 1st Esraean period. Block & Isaeus to the Maccabean era. There is not an intling of Hellenism so strong in Palestine (175-163) in the book, consequently it could hardly have been written during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Neither is it an attack on Hellenism. It seems impossible to ascribe it to the men who made the rebellion against Antiochus on political grounds, for the national pride of the people had not yet been stirred up. The rise of the Maccabees and their success aroused the country.

The Book of Daniel written by a member of the Chasidim called forth the Jews to battle for their cause. It was very easy after Chanucha had been instituted in commemoration of the return of the Jews to the house of God — and not improbable for a Jew who had lived in the Orient to come to Palestine and through the aid of his cleverly told tale make the Purim-fest (celebrated in Persia) known to his intimate friends and with their aid give it a national character.

In order to accomplish this, he placed it on the day following the overthrow of Nicanor, the bitter opponents of the Jews. Antiochus has been defeated and it was

a small matter - this downfall of Haman.
 We are not justified in saying that the
 book was a resultant of impious times. The
 author wrote as he did, not out of disrespect
 but because he was a nationalist and
 in his intense hatred for the foes of
 his people his revenge knew no bounds.
 While the author of Daniel looked for
 salvation to God, and in his pure belief
 felt confident that without any effort
 on his part save the strict fulfilment of
 the ceremonial and dietary laws, he
 would be protected and prosper, the writer
 of Esther, probably convinced that men must
 also struggle for liberty and become self-
 reliant, avoided the mention of God's name.

and placing all trust in the leader
(Esther + Mordecai) secure salvation for
themselves while their enemy lies in the
dust. It would indeed seem strange
if Est's name would be found on the
same page as that of the queen who
in unforgiving wrath, not only orders the
sons of Haman to be gibbeted after they
are dead; but even has the command
executed. Mordecai refuses to bend the
knee before Haman, unwilling to recognize
a superior in his people's deadly enemy. His
stubbornness, when we consider the story, is
not due to religious zeal but is the outgrowth
of patriotic pride. The dietary laws &
the injunctions against intermarriage

are overlooked in the eagerness and zeal to show how the intense national spirit that pervades the souls of the hero and heroine is productive of the best results and saves the people from destruction. The putting on of sack cloth and ashes without even saying a prayer seems to me more of an outward show of sorrow than a beseeching of God to turn aside the base decree of the king.

Purim

The earliest mention of Purim is found in II Mac. 15.36 where Mardocheus day is mentioned. The I Mac. VII 39-50 knew nothing of this Purim-fest for when it then speaks of Nicanor's day and defeat, it does not as is done in II Es 36. mention the 14th day of Adar. Josephus (Ant. XII 10.5) Josephus (3.22) Meg. Tan 12 are acquainted with the Nicanor day which late in Salomonic times lost its former significance and became the Feast of Esther. This fast rose out of a feeling of thanks to God who had thus miraculously saved his people on the day destined for their destruction. The Salomonic attack great importance to Purim. Yoma 29 speaks of it as

היום הזה

"A remembrance of the last of the miracles"
The institution of Purim-day, a new festival
like all festivals whose origin is shrouded
in mystery is laid at the door of the
Sanhedrin which alone was held authorita-
tive in determining so great an event as
introducing a new festival. (Baby Meg 2a)

א"כ"ה תקבינהו

"The men of the great Synod decree that it
be celebrated" In the course of time, Nicanor
day, which has no doubt for a few years
been celebrated lost its hold on the people,
even as to day, the victories of the
Revolution are not celebrated. Purim, because
of the story connected with it, became more
and more in favor with the people and

stood forth prominently, even causing the day preceding it, to lose all precedence and value as a holiday and converting the 13th of Adar into a fast of Esther.

As Purim was connected with no Temple ceremony and no special mode of observance, it easily survived the destruction of the Temple and in the course of time, worked its way into the home and became a real holiday. It did not spring into favor at once but it gradually became recognized and was finally established through usage and attained note as a people's festival.

As to the meaning of Purim and its origin, various views are held. Cassell says

that it was celebrated as a memorial of the freeing the Jews in the Persian Empire. First says it had originally a different meaning. It was the spring festival of the Persians. Hitzig thinks it was the New Year festival of the Persians, celebrated in spring and adopted by the Israelites.

De Sagarde says that Purim is derived from the Persian celebration with banquet, held on the last five days of Aban, including the 5 joining intercalary days (consequently the last ten days of the year) in honor of the dead. This festival in Persian was called F (f) ordis (y) an, in Greek Πορσιαν (menander) The Jews adopted this festival.

and made the Book of Esther the legend by means of which they gave an historical basis to the festival. De Lagarde was brought to this view by the fact that in some of the LXX manuscripts $\phi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\delta\alpha\alpha$ and $\phi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\mu\alpha\alpha$ are found. $\phi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\delta\alpha\alpha$ equals $\alpha\tau\tau\eta\delta$ which is the Fordigan festival.

Bertran opposes this view with the following argument. The Fordigan was a feast festival and as feasting was usually an accompaniment of a worship rather than a religious festival amongst the Persians, the change of names of the feast — a mutilation of the one name (δ in $\phi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\delta\alpha\alpha$ written for $\alpha + \mu$ in $\phi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\mu\alpha\alpha$ = $\alpha\tau\tau\eta\delta$ and in $\alpha\epsilon$

much as there are analogous festivals in the post-exilic period e.g. Nicanor's Day + Chanuka the derivation from the Persian festival does not permit itself to be considered as valid. Bertham thinks that the book has as its basis an historical basis accounting for the festival.

Zimmerman views the festival in a different light than does Lagarde. His derivation of the festival has naught in common with that of the person mentioned above.

In Arabic, says Zimmerman it is called ^{نور} and the form is interchangeable with ^{نور}

One can not be separated from X7775

"a meal" see Syriac ܡܝܠܐ. This syriac word meaning also a meal is connected with ܡܝܠܐ. Then the origin of the word is from ܡܝܠܐ and taken at a time when it was spoken as ܡܝܠܐ. This explanation of De Lagarde falls through when a Semitic origin + Etymology presents itself in Assyrian the root ܡܝܠܐ in Pal has the meaning "to gather". So the noun ܡܝܠܐ (S.S. ܡܝܠܐ) used in the sense of "body" or "totality" is serviceable. He says that the Aramaic "meal" is nothing more or less than the Assyrian ܡܝܠܐ gathering used in a special sense. Similar case Latin Coena (Xorvܐ) convivium and the German Mahl (Mal an assembly).

According to this Purim is an assembly at which is eating and drinking. Lagarde is wrong in connecting Pur and furdigān as the Etymology is not the same. Beside says Gummert it is a different sort of celebration.

Purim has not its origin in the Persian festival but in a Babylonian celebration, the new year celebration in the first of Nisan called Zagmukku or Akitu. This festival is mentioned in the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar and his followers. It was held in honor of Marduk-Merodach, the prime god of Babylon. On this day special sacrifices were offered to Marduk & Nebo

The picture of Nabo was brought from the Temple of Ezida at Borsippa to the Temple of Esagil in Babylon. But the most important part of the festival was the gathering of the gods under the presidency of Marduk, when lots were cast for the fortune of the king and the land.

This god-assemblage for casting lots took place in one of the rooms of the Esagil Temple called Daku "lovely room".

This casting of lots, Daku took place in a larger room called Ušūgina ub = fortune-telling room; ugin = Assyrian Puḫru = gathering. Hence Purim is a derived name and comes to have

reference to Purim in an indirect way.

The very fact that two such philological solutions explain in entirely different ways the origin of Purim admonishes that we be careful in advancing any theory regarding the origin of Purim, and until modern research firmly establishes the origin we must continue to observe a holiday the exact origin of which is shrouded in obscurity, rendered more dense by the lapse of time.

Style and Composition

Peculiar as Esther is in content, sentence structure and mystifying explanation of the origin of Purim, the style adopted by the author in telling the tale conforms in peculiarity to the book itself.

The Biblical terseness and exactness of sentence structure is lacking. An air of ease and freedom pervades the entire work. The author converses with the reader. He is gossipy. He discards the style of the other books which make statements neither baseworthy or blameable and gives us indirectly his opinion, expanding and enlarging to its present size a story that could very easily have been told in a much

smaller compass.

1) At the very beginning in order to remove all doubt for the mind as to who Abasurmus is, he introduces skillfully an explanatory אֲנִי . Likewise for the sake of exactness and precision he makes use of pronoun (3rd person) either

הוּא or הִיא in II 7. 16 III 7. VIII. 9. 12. IX 1.

Similarly Having introduced the story with וַיְהִי בִּימֵי in the next verse says

בִּימֵי חָדָשׁ ; and to render a mistake

as to the time of the story an impossibility, the 3rd verse tells us

בְּשָׁנָה שְׁלֹשׁ . Whenever opportunity permits

he enlarges his 1st statement by means of a clause, either in apposition or

in explanation. Thus I. 4 שִׁמְיוֹנִים וּמֵאֵת יוֹם
 also in I. 7. וְכָלִים מְכֻלִּים וְאֵל, and I. 13 כִּי כִן דִּבֶּר הַמֶּלֶךְ,
 I 20 כִּי רַבָּה הָיָא; and the gratuitous
לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד קֶטֶן. see also II 18 + IX 1 + 4.

2) After a complete account of Esther's
 lineage in II. 7., v. 15 is burdened with a
 useless repetition of the facts and v. 19
 is hard to account for. In ~~II~~ IX, v. 13 is indeed
 peculiar coming as it does after the
 events related in v. 10. We notice a
 peculiar grouping of words in combinations
 of three in I. 4 וְעַשְׂרָה כְּבוֹד מְלָכֹתָיו and

רֵאִי פְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ also in v. 14 יָקָר תַּפְאֶרֶת גְּדוֹלָתוֹ
 The expression found in I 5 + 20 (also in Chm)
לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד קֶטֶן is the reverse of that

found in Dan. in II Kings 20.2 + Jer. 42.6.

3/ The infinitive is used where for the most part Biblical writers employ the Past and Future tenses. The entire style is peculiar because of this promiscuous use of the infinitive which gives an affected ease. See. I. 7. 17 Inf for Imperfect

II. 3. Infinitive Abs. VII. 7. for 3rd person plural

IV. 2. 9. VI. 4. 9. VII & VIII 2. 13 IX. 1. 6. 11

14. 16 Infinitive absolute

4/ There are many words which are found to the best of our knowledge only in Esther

I. 6. VII. 1. חרר + חרר white and fine linen

I. 6. כרסם (Sanskrit karpāsa cotton) ἄπαξ. fine, white cloth

I. 6. יָהֵט precious marble. Kunchi. arab. بلخس from

יהט an unused root) also an ἄπαξ

I. 6. דָּרָדָר ἄπαξ precious stone or pearl. Arab. Dama

I.5. הָיָה in Est. with הָ 7.7.48 in construct state only here.

I.8 סָחֶרֶת* black marble used for tessellated pavements
(סְחֹרְתָא syr)

I.15 קֶאֱקֵר abstract (syr. form) also 2.20 & 9.32.

III.7. סִיר Persian word found only in Esth. Persian parchment

IV.7. פֶּרֶשָׁה found here, meaning an accurate declaration
יִשְׁע only in syriac. syriac + chalt. 6!114

IV.11. שִׁרְבִיט the inserted י proves it to be late.

V.14. הַצֵּלָה this form found only here; in (Dan 5:22)

VIII.10. הָאֲחֵשְׁתָּרִים* mules. Persian estates from old Persian
form ekhshatar.

VIII.10. הָרַקְכִּים* a mare from רָקַק an unweave
arabic root "to be slender around the waist"

15. תִּכְרִיךְ a mantle (סָרָק syriac to surround)

IX.26. מִקְוֵה in the plural is not found in the
other books of the Bible.

* ἀπας

5/ There are many words found only in the later books of the Bible

I.1. **הבירה** (Persian term a fortress. Is either always with **יר**. It is found likewise in Neh I.1 meaning a fortress, in Chron I.29, a palace and in Dan 8.2

I.2. **הפרת קים** - Sansc. *parthama kṛtos* the nobles among the Persians. Found Est 1.3: 6.9 Dan 1.3

קדינה first appears I Kings {¹⁵ 4} {²⁰ 14} also Eccl. + Lam.

3. **יקר** I Sam 3.1. Ps. Prov. Job. Ezek etc.

4. **גבית** only found in construct state. Est 1.5: 7.7

Song of Songs 6.11. also form **גבית** Est 7.8 (syngamos)

5. **בין** *byōos* hien Chron. I+II Est + Ezra.

6. **שש** marble Chron. I. 29.2.

7. **ארגמן** purple. Sansc. *rāsamān* (raja rā)

8. **אראמי** aramaic also in Dan 4.6.

8. **דד** Persian Daden. Deut 33.2. Ezra + Daniel.

- I. 11 כתר first mentioned כתר I King 7.26
- I 20 פתגם Persian pedana, a word. cc. 8.11 Dan & Ezra.
- I 16 ידע late
- I. 22 שור (in Heb. foll. by an 69) In Targum it is found in Isa. 32.1 & Prov 6.16
- II. 12. תר found also Ich 17.17. Cant. I.10.11.
- III 5 ידע is late in this sense Prov. 11.24
- III. 8 פדס dispensed Ps. 141:89:147. Jer 3.13 Job
- 8 שור followed by 2 meaning to equal. see 7.4. Prov. 3.15:8;11 Job 33. Prov. 26 Is 40 II Sam 22 In Genesis 14.17 it refers to a valley
- 9 (חנצ) from an unrooted root Arab & Chal. חנצ to hide Ezek. 27.24 it means chests also Ezra 7.20:5.17:6.1
- 12 תפוחות Persian park nobles. Neh. 5.14 & 18 Dan VI 8. II K. 18.24 II Chron 9.14. Ezra. Isa. 74.1
- אחשדרפנים Dan (17) 3.2.27 VI. 2+3 Prk = King
- דבן deban = custodian of the king's hall.
14. פתשגן Ezra 4:11.23 5:6 7:11
- חמ here & in 2 Ch. 26.21 חמ is very late

IV. 11. פני-קית interior Ich. 28.11 I Kings 6.27 Ezekiel 40.13

in Exodus פני-קית is front & in Num. 33-9 meaning
the wall of a house.

I זרע (זרעו) to shake syn. Chald. & Hebrew. see 1. 23

Isaiah 2.7. (Desert in Dan 5.19) Jer II Chron 29.8. ²⁸19

3 זרעו rather 28 Ezra 7.6

VI 4. רח' צונה (רח' צו) Ezek. 8.5. ~~8~~ 17.31. Ich. 26.29. Neh 11.16

I Kings VI. 29.30

12 נדחף thrust to hasten II Chron. 26.20

12 חפץ cover II Sam 15.30 Jer 14.4 II Chron 3.5.7.8.9

Isaiah 4.5 & Psalm 68.14

VII. 4. אבל But if like syriac (bes) but if see 6.6 est 7.4

4 נזק (נזק Dan 6.3) in form Ez IV. 13.15.22. This form only here.

VIII. 6 איככה low איככה Cant 5.8. See est 9.26 ככה

I 18 רעות late this Hashem + Pith

IX 18. זרע spoil, fry II Chron 14.13.26. 14 Ezr IX.7.

Neh. 3:36 Dan 11.24 33 תרע

IX. 26 אגרת chald. אגרתא Ezra 4:8.11 I. 6

26 תקף strength, pow. Dan 11.17. תקף verb. - is

found in Job. In Ecc 4.12 it means to assail

Some few words have a changed meaning
have changed ~~throughout~~ in form.

בזיון is late in its use as a noun.

II. 70 has a different meaning than in earlier

writings. II. 177 meaning to decree is a
late use of the word, the same can be said
of בלל (I. 14) which here means to hasten.

see chom. II. 35. 21 & Ecc 5.1. VII 9. Prov 20.29.

I. 19. הנחה This is the only place when it means
"free from tax" root נהח.

II. 9 איוס and שנה are late in this sense.

IV. 14. רוח In Gen 32 means a space, here
it means "relaxation from distress"

There is some peculiar phraseology and
characteristic use of forms also to be noted.

I ידע' העתים, is found only here.

II. 1. שך חקת " " " " היה is omitted

at the beginning of Chapter II v. 3.

I. 17. להבזית stiph. only here. II 20 contains a peculiar
use of the participle.

III. 2 לכ like אקר (Gen 21. 15) IV. 4 נתתה לכל

the pass. reduplicated for the sake of giving stress

IV. 16 הרג followed by ב instead of acc. הרג

is passive in the entire book of Esther.

The phrases II. 9 נשא חסד, (15) נשאת חן (7) נשא

חן are distinctively unique and found
in none of the other books. As the book
is laid in Persian the characters afford
a special study and an unsatisfactory one.

אחשורש = אחש = kasha = kasya (Pers. kash) = King. In Cuneiform
it is written Kakhyanaka, this seems to be for شجر نیا
that is lion-king; by prefixing prosthetic & the final
famest Akhashwerak.

ישת (Persian) a beautiful woman.

מרהוקן (Old Persian met-hum(w)an) aram = true Lence faithful

בדקא perhaps Persian diw! liagata (spade)

חרבוכא an aso-driven; בדקא a gardener(?)

אבגתא (Sansk. Bagadatta, baga fortune, "given by fortune")

דתר perhaps star; Persian an eagle.

כרשנא spoiling of war (Sansk. Krishna = black)

שחר sita a star; אדקתא (?)

תרשע precious stone. מרסנא = worthy: (Sansk. māsha worthy and zend. na = a man)

הגא from says Benfey āgā a eunuch.

מרדכי (Marduk) Jupiter. מרדכי (Marduk) Jupiter.

or "a little man" or "workshop of man"

יָאִיר Gen 10.3 whom God enlightens.

הַדָּסָה myth: אֶסְתֵּר pers. citand. star, fortune.

שַׁעֲשַׁד servant of the beautiful. אֲבִי-יָדָיו father of strength nu. 3.35. I Chm 5.14. חֶסֶד gift of fortune. חֶסֶד severe, austere, dark.

In Persian Louām illustrious. In Sanscr. Lōman

mercury. חֶרֶב וְכֶסֶד gold. חֶרֶב truth. חֶרֶב

an ass-driver. פֶּרֶשׁ נִדְתָּא given faith to light.

חֶרֶב פֶּרֶשׁ נִדְתָּא Loose bullock. אֶסְתֵּר (?) דִּלְפֹּן

strong. פֶּרֶשׁ נִדְתָּא אֶרֶץ אֲדֻיָּא

strong. אֶרֶץ אֲדֻיָּא like a lion. אֶרֶץ אֲדֻיָּא

אֶרֶץ אֲדֻיָּא = pers. white.

According to Michaelis from IX 17 to the end of the book the style and grammar are different from that of the preceding chapters.

either the same expressions (rarely found elsewhere) are repeated in these few verses, or if this be not so, then there is found a shortening of the verb. e.g. IX 27 + 28. But why Michaelis places the line of separation where he does, I can not tell. The sense of the tale does not warrant it and the forms that seem peculiar, are not to be found in either verses 17 or 18. The peculiar form + use of *iz* is also to be seen in IX.1 and III.12

I think the proper place to place the line when saying that the latter part of Esther was written by a different author, is at IX, 19. The story could well have concluded here as what follows is repetition, mere statements of facts without any of those

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personality common in the preceding verses.
The language here only differs from what
precedes both in construction & style. Events
are narrated in clear unvarnished language
many constructions are peculiar to this
section and there is also a use of
dying out word forms not found in the
other parts of Esther. 2.9 ^{דגד}* 21. 27. 29. 31. 32

בגד . v. 24 ^{דגד} probably poetical form from
old testament. 910 (24). From IX. 20 ~~start~~ the

end of chapter serves to confuse rather than
to elucidate. The contradictions between

IX 24 39. and the account given in
another part of the book is worthy of note
and of great importance pointing very
clearly to another Purim-book. For how

* also Ezra. 13. 6. Ps 119. 26 Ruth 4. 7

else are we to explain these different versions of Haman's decree and the salvation of the Jews. Are not verses 24 + 25 a telling in a few words all that happened to Haman? His punishment is again stated. These two verses depend on v. 23. "If the text be correct then מָדָעַי (25) refers to Esther," says one objector "and there are no grounds for a second Purim Book." If the story be true as related in IX 12-18 then IX 21 belongs to another author. IX 29 stands in opposition to v 26 consequently 26 can not refer to the Book of Esther and v. 20 can not mean that Mordecai wrote the book. This demand of Mordecai stands in opposition to 15-19 and this

is especially marked in v. 28.

IX 20-28 differs from IX. 19. in regard to the celebration of the days. as does 20-28.

The second letter (29) sets forth a knowledge of (26) showing a similarity of foundation and comprehension to exist between these ones. That either would have been complete without the useless repetition found in IX. 20-32 is evident. Moreover on closer examination it seems that IX. 20-32 contains two separate accounts of the festival. The 1st from IX 20-28 and the second 29-32. So there is a strong presumption that these two sections are from a then existing writing and were ingrafted here as the work

suitable place for the insertion, to
give emphasis to the Purim day and
to make prominent the main characters.
Hence we conclude that the Book
as now presented to us is not
the gift of one author's pen, but, is
a tale told by two or more, giving
account of a story which was at
the time of the writing of the book,
well known.

Purpose of the Book

Every writing that makes claim to any consideration must have some definite purpose in view. It is as much the duty of the author to explicitly state the subject matter which he treats as it is the reader's duty to ferret out the purpose.

Therefore in discussing our book of esoteric we are in duty bound to set forth the aim and purpose as they display themselves to one who has given more than a mere reading to the text.

The story is excellently told, despite its inductiveness and the irrational actions of the character of prominence, sets forth a well-defined reason for its claim on

our attention. In the guise of a narrative, the author has concealed, to a certain extent, the main cause that actuated him in writing the composition as presented to us. Having enchanted the reader with a glowing account of the Persian court and the reward meted out to the wicked, he ventures, but not until near the end of his tale, to say Ex. 19 "----- Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwell in unwall'd towns made the 14th of Adar, a day of gladness and feasting etc."

Here then is the purpose that moved the writer and prompted him to tell the history of Mordecai and Esther

He laid before him a festival, observed
and celebrated in the lands outside of
Palestine by the Jews, a festival that was
a truly people's festival, a day of gladness
and rejoicing, without temple ceremony or
priest. Already in Palestine, perhaps it
was beginning to find a foothold and
in order to popularize the festival
there and make it a thoroughly
Jewish holiday, the Esther-Mordechai tale
was invented. The account as presented
to us, points strongly to a knowledge of
the festival, existing when the book was
~~celeb~~ written. The IX chap. which, after
having fully accounted for the festival and
its origin, could have appropriately ended

at the 19th verse, instead of so doing, continues to tell of the days of the festival and the cause thereof. (in IX 20-23) And not content with this repetition, the story is again told 25-26; and finally 29-32 informs us that this letter of Purim is confirmed.

In my humble opinion, from the several well known versions of Purim outside of Palestine, these repetitions were taken and inserted in the IX chap. to add strength to the story by emphasizing the decree of Mordecai and Esther, as well as the will of the Jewish People in the empire that all Jews take upon themselves and their children the celebration of the day (v. 27) No matter what inconsistencies there

be, no matter whether we prove interpolation or not, the intention of the book is not affected by it. It still remains the same, the desire of impressing on the Jews the necessity of celebrating a festival in which such prominent co-religionists had taken such active part.

But besides this desire of arousing the people to a general celebration, another necessity equally as great confronted the author, namely to account for the peculiar name of the festival זמן , a name not known to the Hebrews, without meaning to the majority of the people. Hence is so skillfully and cleverly interwoven the tale of the casting of the זמן לפני III. 7 .

which attempts not only to state the meaning
 of the word, but also to give the circumstances
 which gave the name (so foreign) to a Jewish
 festival. Of necessity, a Jewish character
 had to be attributed to it, for the Palestinian
 Jews, however, liberal-minded no doubt had
 examples which the Jews, denationalized by
 dwelling amongst strangers for so long
 a time did not countenance, a proof
 of which we have from the ד'ג'יט fest.
 which was Persian and yet adopted and
 made a day of rejoicing and feasting.
 All these inner facts concerning the
 true origin of the festival, the author
 carefully conceals. He urges upon the
 people the necessity of adopting ד'ג'יט

because commanded to do so by descendants
of Saul's house. Moreover considering the
time when, as stated in a previous chapter,
the book was written, and the party spirit
of the author, we discern a lurking attempt
to show that patriotism and the love
for Israel are not dependant on ceremonial
& dietary laws. And perhaps, without over-
estimating the purpose of the book or
reading into it what is not there, we may
say that its purpose is to teach that however
dark the hour, however imperiled Israel may
be, the enemy will succumb at last and
the Jew triumph over his fallen foe.