

Content

Editors' Foreword	11
Author's Preface	13
Introduction	15
A. Textual Forms and Editorial Stages	16
1. Accounting for the Textual Diversity of Esther in this Commentary	17
2. The Textual Witnesses	17
2.1. The Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT)	17
2.2. Esther at Qumran?	18
2.3. The Majority Greek Text of the LXX	19
2.4. The Minority Greek Text, the Alpha Text (AT)	20
2.5. Flavius Josephus	21
2.6. The Old Latin (OL)	22
2.7. The Vulgate	23
2.8. Other Ancient Versions	24
3. The Work's Editorial Process	24
3.1. The Alpha Text (AT), a Late Revision Dependant upon the LXX and/or the MT	24
3.2. The Alpha Text Reflects a Pre-Masoretic Hebrew Proto-Esther	25
3.3. Narrative Source Divisions	28
3.4. The Additions in the LXX and the AT	29
3.5. The Place of the Old Latin	30
4. Synthesis and the Proposal Defended in the Present Commentary	31
4.1. From Proto-Esther to the Masoretic Text	31
4.2. Emergence of the Two Primary Greek Witnesses (AT and LXX) and the Other Textual Witnesses of Esther	35
B. Historical and Intellectual Context of the Book's Production	38
1. The Persian Era: The Setting of the Action	38
2. The Hellenistic Era: The Context of the Work's Production	38
2.1. Fictive Character of the Narrative	39
2.2. Different Textual Forms	40
2.3. Linguistic Arguments	40
2.4. Knowledge of Biblical Texts	40
2.5. Esther and Hellenistic Literature about Persia	41
2.6. Esther and Maccabean Conflicts	44
2.7. The Context of Proto-Esther's Production	44
2.8. The Context of Production of the Proto-Masoretic Edition of Esther	46
2.9. The Contexts of Production of the Additions and Other Textual Forms of the Work	49
3. Purim's Mysterious Origin	50
C. Literary and Thematic Characteristics Developed in Esther's Masoretic Form	52
1. Organization of the Work	52
2. Novel-Like Characteristics	55

3. Language and Style	56
4. Allusions and References to Other Biblical Texts	58
4.1. Esther, Mordecai, and the Kings of Israel	58
4.2. The Joseph Story and the Book of Esther	59
4.3. Esther and Moses	60
4.4. Daniel	61
4.5. The Book of Esther and the Books of Maccabees and Judith	62
4.6. Conclusions	64
5. Themes	64
5.1. View of the Empire and Relationship with It	64
5.2. Facing a Foreign Empire as a Jew	68
5.3. God's Presence and Absence in the MT	71
D. Literary and Thematic Characteristics of Other Textual Forms of Esther	72
1. Proto-Esther: Structure and Themes	72
2. The Greek Versions: Structure and Themes	74
E. Perspectives on Space and Time	75
1. Spatial Organization of the Palace	75
Schema of Palace Organization	75
2. The Chronological System in the Book of Esther	76
2.1. The Chronological System of the Masoretic Text	76
2.2. The Chronological System in the LXX	78
2.3. Diachronic Implications	79
F. Canonization, Use, and Reception of the Work	79
1. An Authoritative Book	79
1.1. Canonicity in Judaism	80
1.2. Canonicity in Christianity	82
2. A Book for the Festival of Purim	84
3. An Inspiring Book (Esther's Reception)	86
3.1. Esther in Judaism	86
3.2. Esther in Christianity	87
G. How to Use This Commentary on Esther's Masoretic Form	89
Chapter 1. The Fall of Queen Vashti	90
Introduction	90
The Banquets of the Persian King (1:1-9)	90
Notes on Text and Translation	91
Synchronic Analysis	91
Vashti's Refusal (1:10-12)	98
Notes on Text and Translation	98
Synchronic Analysis	98
The Consequences of Vashti's Refusal (1:13-22)	101
Notes on Text and Translation	102
Synchronic Analysis	103
Diachronic Analysis	109
Proto-Esther	110
Proto-Masoretic Editing and the Emergence of the MT	111
The Greek Translations and the Late Modifications of the MT	113
Synthesis	114

Chapter 2. Esther’s Accession and Royal Installation 115

Introduction 115

Esther 2:1-18. Appointment of a New Queen 115

 Notes on Text and Translation 116

 Synchronic Analysis 118

Esther 2:19-23. Events at the Court 131

 Translation 131

 Notes on Text and Translation 132

 Synchronic Analysis 132

Diachronic Analysis 136

 Proto-Esther 136

 Proto-Masoretic Editing and the Emergence of the MT 138

 The Greek Translations and the Late Modifications of the MT 141

Synthesis 142

Chapter 3. Haman’s Plot 143

 Notes on Text and Translation 144

 Synchronic Analysis 144

Diachronic Analysis 159

 Proto-Esther 160

 Proto-Masoretic Editing and the Emergence of the MT 161

 The Greek Translations and the Late Modifications of the MT 164

Synthesis 165

Chapter 4. Mordecai Solicits Esther’s Help 166

 Notes on Text and Translation 167

 Synchronic Analysis 167

Diachronic Analysis 177

 Proto-Esther 178

 Proto-Masoretic Editing and the Emergence of the MT 179

 The Greek Translations and the Late Modifications of the MT 181

Synthesis 182

Chapter 5. Haman’s Honors 183

Introduction 183

Esther’s First Banquet (5:1-8) 184

 Notes on Text and Translation 184

 Synchronic Analysis 185

 Reasons for the Double Invitation to the Banquet 189

Haman at Home with His Friends (5:9-14) 192

 Notes on Text and Translation 192

 Synchronic Analysis 192

Diachronic Analysis 197

 Proto-Esther 197

 Proto-Masoretic Editing and the Emergence of the MT 200

 The Greek Translations and the Late Modifications of the MT 201

Synthesis	202
Chapter 6. Mordecai's Honors	203
Introduction	203
Haman Honors Mordecai (6:1-11)	203
Notes on Text and Translation	204
Synchronic Analysis	205
Haman Returns Home (6:12-14)	211
Notes on Text and Translation	211
Synchronic Analysis	212
Diachronic Analysis	214
Proto-Esther	214
Proto-Masoretic Editing and the Emergence of the MT	218
The Greek Translations and the Late Modifications of the MT	220
Synthesis	220
Chapter 7. The Death of Haman	221
Notes on Text and Translation	221
Synchronic Analysis	222
Diachronic Analysis	230
Proto-Esther	230
Proto-Masoretic Editing and the Emergence of the MT	232
The Greek Translations and the Late Modifications of the MT	234
Synthesis	234
Chapters 8–10. Triumph, Massacre, and Festivities	235
Introduction	235
A Plot Difficult to Unravel (8:1-17)	236
Notes on Text and Translation	237
Synchronic Analysis	238
The War (9:1-19)	253
Notes on Text and Translation	254
Synchronic Analysis	255
The Letters Instituting the Festivals (9:20-32)	267
Notes on Text and Translation	268
Synchronic Analysis	269
The King, Mordecai, the Jews, and the Empire (10:1-3)	281
Notes on Text and Translation	282
Synchronic Analysis	282
Diachronic Analysis. Chapters 8-10	285
Proto-Esther	285
The Original Conclusion of Proto-Esther and Late Sections of the AT	286
Proto-Masoretic Editing and the Emergence of the MT	290
Proto-Masoretic Themes and Formulations	291
Proto-Masoretic Editing of Chapter 8	291
Proto-Masoretic Editing of 9:1-19	293
Proto-Masoretic Editing of 9:20-28	294

Editorial Process and Textual History of 9:29-32	295
Proto-Masoretic Editing of 10:1-3	296
The Greek Translations and the Late Modifications of the MT	297
Corrections to the MT Subsequent to the Translation of the LXX	297
The Outcome of the Greek Translations	298
Synthesis	298

The Additions **299**

Addition A,1-11. Mordecai's Dream	299
Addition A,12-17. The Eunuchs' First Plot	302
Addition B,1-7. The Edict of Annihilation	304
Addition C,1-30. Mordecai's and Esther's Prayers	307
Addition D,1-16. Esther's Arrival before the King	314
Addition E,1-24. The Counter-Edict	317
Addition F,1-10. Interpretation of Mordecai's Dream	322
Addition F,11. The Colophon	325

Bibliography **326**

Esther Texts. Editions and Translations	326
Hebrew	326
Greek (LXX and AT)	326
Old Latin (OL)	326
Vulgate (Vulg.)	326
Peshitta (Pesh. or Syr.)	327
Patristic Literature	327
Bible Translations	327
Mesopotamian and Persian Literature	327
Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Sources	327
Elephantine	327
Megillat Ta'anit	328
Targum Esther I and Targum Esther II (Tg. Esth. I and Tg. Esth. II)	328
Midrash Rabbah (Mid. Rabbah) and Other Midrashic Texts	328
Talmud (Babylonian (b.) and Jerusalem (y.))	328
Greek and Roman Literature	328
Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, Grammars	330
Commentaries on the Book of Esther	330
Articles and Monographs	332

Indexes **344**

Index of Hebrew Words	344
Index of Key Words	345
Index of Biblical Citations	348
Index of Other Ancient Literature	356

Plan of volumes **360**