# Jerome's notes to the additions to Esther

Jerome (c. AD 347–420)

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[by Kevin P. Edgecomb] I mentioned the Additions to the Book of Esther in the post Jerome's Prologue to Esther, above (well, below, actually). These additions are usually found in translations of the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonicals, and are designated as follows, with citations for the the Hebrew text of Esther interspersed where it occurs in italics: Addition A: Vulgate 11.2-12.6 Hebrew 1.1-2.18 Addition B: Vulgate 13.1-7 Hebrew 3.14-4.17 Addition C: Vulgate 13.8-18; 14.1-19 Addition D: Vulgate 15.4-19 (often renumbered in other versions as 15.1-16; Vulgate 15.1-3 is not generally translated in such collections) Hebrew 5.3-8.12 Addition E: Vulgate 16.1-24 Hebrew 8.13-10.3 Addition F: Vulgate 10.4-13; 11.1 In the Septuagint, the text is essentially as described above, with the additions interspersed with the rest of the book (see the NRSV Apocrypha Esther for this in translation). But St Jerome, in his new Latin edition of Esther, moved all the additions to the end of the book. And since it was the Vulgate Bible which was the first one to have both chapter and verse numbers, we're stuck with the peculiar numbering due to that dislocation. One of the interesting things I noticed in looking at these is that there are a few notes that St Jerome had written in these Addition chapters. I'm translating them and posting them here just for fun. I use the Addition A-F convention noted above to show the placement of the notes.

Before Addition A: This was also the beginning in the common edition, which is found neither in the Hebrew nor among any other translations. After Addition A: Up to here is the proem. Before Addition B: These which follow are set in the place where it is written in the scroll "and they plundered their goods" or "their substance," which we find only in the common edition. After Addition B: Up to here is the text of the letter. Before C: These which follow I have found written after the place where it is read "and hurrying, Mordechai did everything which Esther had commanded him," yet they are not found in the Hebrew and are not found inside any other translations. Before 15.1: These also I found added to the common edition. Before D: And also these too, which are below. Before E: The text of the letter of King Artaxerxes, which he sent on behalf of the Jews to all the provinces of his kingdom, which also is not itself found in the Hebrew scroll. Before F: Those things which are found in the Hebrew I have expressed with complete accuracy. And these things which follow I have found written in the common edition in which are contained the language and

letters of the Greeks, and sometimes after the end of the book this chapter is found, which, according to our custom, we annotate with an obelus, that is, a spit.

Something that might not be immediately obvious is that the section "Before F" just above is actually a tripartite note. First, it comprises a conclusion to St Jerome's translation of the Hebrew Book of Esther: "Those things which are found in the Hebrew I have expressed with complete accuracy." Second is an introduction to all the additions, which by his arrangement follow just after this point: "And these things which follow I have found written in the common edition in which are contained the language and letters of the Greeks." And third comes the introduction to the immediately following chapter, which is the conclusion of the book in the Septuagint: "and sometimes after the end of the book this chapter is found, which, according to our custom, we annotate with an obelus, that is, a spit."

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