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Daniel O. McClellan

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TEXT-CRITICAL IMPLICATIONS

DANIEL O. MCCLELLAN

Over the years 2 Maccabees has been subjected to all manner of critical analysis. The primary concerns have been related to the date and provenance of the book, its historicity and chronology compared to 1 Maccabees, and its overall form and function.[1] Recently source critics have been at the

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1. The first major work is C. Grimm, "Das zweite, dritte, und vierte Buch der Maccabäer, vierte Lieferung," in *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zu den Apokryphen des Alten Testaments* (ed. O.F. Fritische; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1857). During the mid-19th century, scholarship began to grant preeminence to 1 Maccabees as the more historical (and thus valuable) of the first two Maccabean texts (see I. Abrahams, review of Benedictus Niese, *Kritik der beiden Makkabäerbücher, nebst Beiträgen zur Geschichte der makkabäischen Erhebung*, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 13.3 [April 1903], 509). In the 20th century James Moffat ("The Second Book of Maccabees" [APOT, 1913], 1:125–54), F. M. Abel (*Les Livres des Maccabées* [Paris: J. Gabalda, 1949]), Solomon Zeitlin and Sidney Tedesche (*The Second Book of Maccabees* [New York: Harper & Bros., 1954], John R. Bartlett (*The First and Second Books of the Maccabees* [Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973], Arnaldo Momigliano ("The Second Book of Maccabees," *Classical Philology* 70.2 [April 1975]: 81–88), Christian Habicht (*2. Makkabäerbuch* [JSHRZ 1.3; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1976]), Jonathan Goldstein (*II Maccabees* [Anchor Bible 41A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983]), Robert Doran (*Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees* [The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 12; Washington: Catholic Bible Association of America, 1981]), and Martha Himmelfarb ("Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees," *Poetics Today* 19.1 [Spring 1998]: 19–40) have contributed to the contemporary perspective on 2 Maccabees. Because the letters found in the book of 2 Maccabees provide the best clues for dating, much attention has been given to them. See Christian Habicht, "Royal Documents in Maccabees II," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976): 1–18; David S. Williams, "Recent Research in 2 Maccabees," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2.1 (2003): 69–83; and Victor Parker, "The Letters in II Maccabees: Reflexions on the Book's Composition," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119 (2007): 386–402. Publications focused primarily on 2 Maccabees 7 includes U. Kellermann's *Aufersanden in den Himmel: 2 Makkabäer 7 und die Auferstehung der Märtyrer* (SBS 95; Stuttgart: 1979), Doran's "The Martyr: A Synoptic View of the Mother and Her Seven Sons," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg and John J. Collins; Septuagint and Cognate Studies 12; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980) and Jan Willem van Henten's *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (SupJSJ 57; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

forefront of the academic discussion. In 1975 A. Momigliano argued that the book represents a conglomeration of scattered motifs that betray a rather fragmented composition. Christian Habicht advocated the same position in 1976 and included in his discussion a possible Hebrew provenance for chapter 7. In the same year Jonathan Goldstein posited multiple sources for 2 Maccabees. These arguments have since been met with heavy criticism. Robert Doran and Jan Willem van Henten are most prominent among those who stress the unity of the epitome and the futility of seeking specific sources.[2] While some scholars still question the harmony of the book,[3] to this date, no scholar has undertaken to explain the implications of chapter 7 as an interpolation, or provide a date for it. The current investigation will show that a critical examination of the structure and rhetorical function of the chapter, combined with a number of text-critical considerations, provides considerable evidence for an independent provenance for the chapter. This investigation will also show a much later date for its composition than is currently accepted is to be preferred. Several ideological and textual considerations will contribute to these conclusions.

The Structure of 2 Maccabees 7

While Habicht's study remains the most comprehensive evaluation of the composition of 2 Macc 7, it is primarily atomistic, focusing on individual words and phrases rather than on context and overall style. A brief look at the structure of 2 Macc 7 reveals a surprisingly complex and illuminating chiasm unlike any found elsewhere in the composition. The chiasm runs the length of the entire chapter. The central element is twofold, highlighting resurrection as a recompense for martyrdom, and the value of giving one's life for the laws of the fathers. The two themes are repeated four and five times, respectively, throughout the chapter, and they come together at the climax to provide an antithesis for the third major theme of the chapter: Antiochus' inevitable destruction (which is repeated six times). This chiastic reading supports the

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2. Van Henten states, "Both stories are coherent parts of the larger narrative." He relegates the possibility of an independent origin to a footnote, but claims it precedes the epitome, protecting the unity of the book. See van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 17–18, n. 1. Doran flatly rejects the possibility, stating, "the epitome is a unified piece . . . and not a patchwork quilt of sources. This is not to deny that the epitome shows that information was gained from many quarters. The application of the methods of source-criticism, however, has failed to turn up 'sources' in the technical sense. The epitome, therefore, must be considered as a whole and analysed accordingly" (Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 22–23).

3. Several scholars have recently argued for an independent provenance for 2 Macc 7. See, for example, G. W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10–11; Himmelfarb, "Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees," 31–32; and Shmuel Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrs in the Pagan and Christian World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 36–59.

conclusions of Habicht,[4] Kellerman,[5] and Himmelfarb[6] regarding resurrection as the central theme of the chapter, but it conflicts with Doran.[7] Viewed chiastically, the thesis of the chapter is clear. A willingness to die for the laws of God will catalyze a glorious resurrection.

A – Family threatened with torture for not eating sacrifices (1).
  B – "We are ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of our fathers" (2).
    C – ἔκθυμος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς (3).
     D – God will show compassion on his servants (6).
  B – "We are dying for the sake of his laws" (9).
      E – "The King of the world will raise us up . . . to everlasting life" (9).
      E – The brother hopes to be raised again by God (14).
       F – Antiochus will not be raised to life (14).
       F – God will torment Antiochus and his seed (17).
        G – "We suffer this for our own sake, having sinned against our God" (18).
       F – "Do not think . . . that you will escape unpunished" (19).
        H – The mother bore her sons' deaths because of hope in the Lord (20).
         I – "I do not know how you came into being in my womb" (22).
 B/E – God will, "in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, as you regard not yourselves for the sake of his laws" (23).
         I′ – "I carried you nine months in my womb" (27).
        H′ – The mother exhorts her son to accept death and return to her (29).
       F′ – Antiochus will not "escape the hands of God" (31).
        G′ – The brothers suffer for their own sins (32).
       F′ – Thou hast not escaped the judgment of Almighty God (35).
       F′ – Antiochus will be punished for his pride (36).
      E′ – The brothers are under God's covenant of everlasting life (36).
  B′ – "I offer up my body and my life for our ancestral laws" (37).
   D′ – The brothers appeal to God to show mercy to their nation (37).
   C′ – ἔκθυμος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς (39).
  B′ – "So he died undefiled" (40).
A′ – "Enough has been said about the sacrificial meals and the excessive cruelties" (42).

The narrative is split into two sections, pivoting around the interplay between the mother, Antiochus, and the seventh son in the center of the chapter. The torture and martyrdoms of the first six sons are the focus of the first section, but when the seventh son displays the same resilience as his brothers, Antiochus changes his tactics, pleading first with the mother to talk sense into her child, and then with the boy himself, promising

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4.   Habicht, *2. Makkabäerbuch*, 171–77.

5.   Kellermann, *Auferstanden in den Himmel*, 39.

6.   Himmelfarb, "Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees," 31–32.

7.   "While the speech does include a reference to resurrection (7:36), the thrust of the speech deals with the coming judgment of the king" (Doran, "The Martyr: A Synoptic View of the Mother and Her Seven Sons," 199). The climax of the speech falls on the speech of the last son, who Doran believes stresses the judgment against Antiochus over all else.

him riches and happiness. No specific punishments are mentioned for the seventh son, outside of the somber recognition that he was handled worse than the others.

Several verses from 2 Macc 7 are omitted from our chiasm. Of the 23 verses in the first half of the section, eleven do not appear in the chiasm; and of the 19 verses after the apex of the chiasm, nine do not appear. Some scholars argue that omissions indicate a significant degree of subjectivity in the identification of the chiasm.[8] Several considerations, however, support the "chiasticity" of the chapter. The content is divided in two parts of roughly equal length. In the first half the king uses torture to influence the first six children. Immediately following the mother's speech at the center of the chapter, Antiochus changes methods and attempts to convince the youngest son through bribery and by appealing to his mother. The two halves of the chiasm are almost perfectly balanced (there is a deviation of one element), and the individual elements are approximately the same length. Conceptually, the chiastic elements are generally theological statements while the omissions are narrative.[9] In addition, macrochiasms, which cover sections of text more than a dozen or so verses, are more likely to include nonchiastic elements.[10]

The rhetorical function of the chapter also presents a strong case for chiasticity.[11] The opening and closing verses establish the context of the unit and provide a conclusion. The willingness of the boys to die for the laws of God is repeated five times and frames their hope of resurrection. That hope is repeated four times and itself frames the fate of Antiochus, which serves as the antithesis to the faith of the boys and is repeated six times. The willingness of the boys to die and their faith in everlasting life appear together in the apex of the structure.[12] A chiastic reading establishes the focal point of the chapter.

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8. See M. J. Boda, "Chiasmus in Ubiquity: Symmetrical Mirages in Nehemiah 9," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 71 (September 1996): 57.

9. While the central theological elements of the chapter are arranged chiastically throughout this narrative, the second half of the narrative may include two important doctrines not presented as part of the rhetorical structure. Verse 28 bears an implicit appeal to *creatio ex nihilo*. Also, in vv. 37–38, the seventh son shares the understanding that the death of the seven brothers represents a vicarious sacrifice on the part of the entire nation of Israel: "It stands to me and my brothers to bring an end to the wrath of the Almighty."

10. For a list of "laws" that govern macro-chiasms, see Nils Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formgeschichte* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrikson, 1992), 40–41. Lund lists the propensity for macro-chiasms to mix chiastic and alternating elements.

11. Concerning the evaluation of chiasms, Ian Thomson states, "No matter how careful the inquiry, it is unlikely that absolute certainty will be reached, and most cases will result in a balance of probability" (Ian H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* [JSNTSup 111; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 34).

12. As Craig Blomberg points out in his criteria for identifying chiasms, "The center of the chiasmus, which forms its climax, should be a passage worthy of that position in light of its theological or ethical significance. If its theme were in some way repeated in the first and last passages of the text, as is typical in chiasmus, the proposal would become that much more plausible" (Craig Blomberg, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1–7," *Criswell Theological Review* 4.1 [1989]: 7). The balanced repetition in 2 Macc 7 of the central theme strengthens

Authorship Revisited

A chiastic reading of this chapter provides an interpretive tool, but also gives us an insight into the authorship of the chapter. What becomes immediately evident is that chapter 7 is unique within the book of 2 Maccabees. Chiasms can be found elsewhere in 2 Maccabees, but they rarely extend past a single verse and do not even approach this level of development and intricacy. 2 Macc 4:25 provides an example of the elementary state of the other chiasms in the book:

> A – θυμοὺς
> > B – ὠμοῦ τυράννου
> > B′ – θηρὸς βαρβάρου
> A′ – ὀργάς

> A – the temper
> > B – of a cruel tyrant,
> > B′ – of a wild animal
> A′ – the rage

ὀργάς is moved to the end of the verse to make the chiasm possible. This is typical of the rhetorical devices of 2 Maccabees. Chapter 7, however, is distinct. It has been noted that the prose of chapter 7 seems more rudimentary than that of chapter six.[13] The martyrdoms of the seven sons and of Eleazar (in chapter 6) appear to function in unison within the context of the book, but Eleazar's pericope is far more elaborate and expressive, grammatically. Chapter 7 utilizes basic Greek constructions and is void of the multiplicity of adjectives that lace the Eleazar account. The syntax of the chapter has been called "ungriechisch,"[14] although Doran has pointed out that many of the exceptional words and phrases are not absent from Classical Greek.[15] Doran's error, however, is in dismissing the Semiticisms that are present in the chapter because he believes his argument for the unity of the text already precludes a distinct provenance for the final version of the chapter, rendering the Semiticisms immaterial.[16] He does not feel threatened by Hebrew traditions behind the text, but feels safe in concluding that the book that has come down to us was composed initially and entirely in Greek. We are left to conclude he means to insist that a Hebrew source can be allowed for the sections containing Semiticisms, but cannot be posited for the entire chapter. According to Doran, "the epitome is a unified piece, sepa-

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the case for a chiastic reading. See also Antoninus King Wai Siew, *The War Between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses: A Chiastic Reading of Revelation 11.1–14.5* (JSNTSup 283; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 37–53.

13.   See, for example, Himmelfarb, "Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees," 31–32.

14.   Habicht, *2. Makkabäerbuch*, 233, note for 7:1.

15.   Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 34–39.

16.   Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 35–36. I agree with Habicht that the Greek of the text is distinct from the rest of the book, even if the peculiarities are not exclusively Hebraic. For his discussion of the Semiticisms in 2 Macc 7, see Habicht, *2. Makkabäerbuch*, 171–77, 233.

rate from the prefixed letters and not a patchwork quilt of sources. This is not to deny that information was gained from many quarters. The application of the methods of source-criticism, however, has failed to turn up 'sources' in the technical sense."[17] The strongest support Doran offers for this conclusion is the unity of the text itself, but as will be shown, that unity is not as well supported as has been asserted.

The martyrdoms of Eleazar and the seven sons are often referred to as a turning point within the narrative. Their deaths catalyzed the subsequent victories of Judas and his men.[18] Interestingly enough, when Judas gives his intercessory prayer with his men, he fails to mention the martyrdoms. He cites the blasphemies committed prior to the martyrdoms,[19] but he is silent regarding any subsequent improprieties on the part of the king. If these events were really the impetus for Judas's descent from the mountains and return to battle, he seems rather indifferent to them. Additionally, the text seems to treat the intercessory prayer as the catalyst for the return of God's favor. Immediately following the prayer we are told simply that the Lord's wrath turned to mercy. A brief look at contemporary literature shows intercessory prayers are consistently represented as the event that leads to divine intervention. In 1 Maccabees it is Judas's intercessory prayer alone that restores the Lord's mercy.[20] The situation is same in Daniel 9, 1 Enoch 47, and Baruch 2–5. Throughout the Maccabean period the prayers of the righteous serve to appease the wrath of God. Martyrdom is conspicuously absent as such a catalyst. Thus 2 Maccabees provides its own turning point independent of chapter 7, and the chapter can be excised without handicapping the narrative, contrary to Doran's assertion. The excision of the chapter is further supported by 2 Macc 6:12–17, where the author comforts the reader after having described the brutal improprieties of Antiochus.[21] No explanation or warning accompanies the more grisly deaths of 6:18–7:42, and Judas's prayer in chapter 8 specifically names only those crimes that precede the author's interjection.

It is also instructive to consider the designation of the deaths of the seven sons as expiation for the nation of Israel. In 2 Macc 7:37–38 the youngest brother

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17. Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 22–23.

18. According to Doran, "the persecutions suffered bring about a reversal in the history of the Jews" (Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 54). From van Henten: "The intercessory prayer and the death of the martyrs seem to have resulted in the return of God's mercy" (van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 299).

19. "They besought the Lord to look upon the people who were oppressed by all, and to have pity on the temple which had been profaned by ungodly men, and to have mercy on the city which was being destroyed and about to be leveled to the ground, and to hearken to the blood that cried out to him, and to remember also the lawless destruction of the innocent babies and the blasphemies committed against his name, and to show his hatred of evil" (2 Macc 8:2–4).

20. 1 Macc 3:42–54.

21. "Now I beg those who read this book not to be disheartened by these misfortunes, but to consider that these chastisements were meant not for the ruin but for the correction of our nation. . . . Let these words suffice for recalling this truth. Without further ado we must go on with our story" (2 Macc 6:12–17, NAB).

states, "I, like my brothers, give up my body and life for the laws of our fathers, calling upon God to quickly show mercy to our people, and with afflictions and plagues to cause you to confess that he alone is God, while to me and my brothers it remains to bring an end to the wrath of the Almighty, which has justly fallen on our whole nation." Such a motif is anachronistic in this period and scholarship has been unable to reach a consensus regarding its presence here.[22] We find our earliest Jewish manifestations of martyrdom as expiation in Philo, Taxo, and more clearly in rabbinical Judaism.[23]

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22.   According to van Henten, "The epitomist may have combined Greek and possibly Roman views about atoning death . . . with biblical traditions about Moses and Phinehas, mediators who stopped the Lord's wrath against his unfaithful people. Inspired by non-Jewish traditions, he may have added to the biblical view that it was necessary in an extreme situation for the mediator to sacrifice his or her life in order to bring about atonement" (Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 299). Seeley argues that the deaths in 2 Macc 7 are not representative of a vicarious expiation on behalf of the nation of Israel (Seeley, *Noble Death: Graeco-Roman Martyrology and Paul's Concept of Salvation* [JSOTSup 28; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990], 87–89), despite the youngest brother's hope that their collective sacrifice would bring the mercy of his God upon the entire nation. Seeley points to a similar petition for mercy from Judas in the following chapter (in a context devoid of immediate danger) as an indication that there was nothing singular about the boy's plea. Seeley's error is in his presupposition that the two chapters are univocal. The epitomizer was unconcerned with expiation and instead had Judas pleading for compassion on the part of the Lord. The two prayers come from entirely distinct backgrounds. Frend interprets the martyrdoms as the inspiration for the subsequent Christian developments of resurrection, atonement, and the ideal of martyrdom (W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* [New York: New York University Press, 1967], 34–36). Williams rejects the notion of atonement as it appears in 4 Maccabees. "I find it more appropriate by far to speak of 'effective death' in IV Maccabees" (Sam K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept* [Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975], 179). Williams decides that the land of Israel was purified, but that personal sins are not mentioned. Collectively, however, Williams seems to grant the expiatory nature of the martyrdoms, although he rejects it in 2 Maccabees, partially because chapter 8 seems to present main catalyst for the return of God's protection in Judas's intercessory prayer (Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 85–87), but it is likely that 2 Macc 7 is an interpolation that neglected to account for the turning point already present in the text. Nonetheless, for Williams, martyrdom as collective expiation is found exclusively in 4 Maccabees: "IV Maccabees telescopes this extended event and identifies it as the effect of the martyrs' faithful suffering unto death; it was through their death that God delivered Israel; because of them the land was purified" (Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 196, emphasis in original). Heard isolates seven criteria that define the Maccabean martyr motif: (1) Israel's sin precipitates the wrath of God, (2) cosmic dualism, (3) divine eschatological vengeance, (4) vicarious atonement, (5) suffering as a result of faithfulness, (6) humiliation-exaltation, and (7) eschatological determinism. Armed with this motif he sets out to track the development of the Maccabean martyr ideal through Daniel, Enoch, the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, and the *Assumption of Moses* (Warren J. Heard Jr., *Maccabean Martyr Theology: Its Genesis Antecedents and Significance for the Earliest Soteriological Interpretation of the Death of Jesus* [PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 1989], 34). Heard tentatively identifies these elements in all of the above texts, except for the notion of martyrdom as expiatory. He cautiously posits expiatory qualities in the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, Enoch, and Daniel, but he recognizes the frailty of this argument (Heard, *Maccabean Martyr Theology*, 69, 100–103, 127).

23.   Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 233–36; *Assumption of Moses* 9:1–7. As van Henten points

Prior to the first century ce, willingness to die under the pressure of persecution was generally viewed as a catalyst for divine intervention. Death was actually not the intended outcome, and expiation is naturally precluded. In Dan 3:17, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, facing death, declare, "Behold, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us from your hand, O king." Although they recognize death as a possibility, the author avoids that conclusion, and they are ultimately delivered. Josephus records a similar expectation: "and if we fall into misfortunes, we will bear them, in order to preserve our laws, as knowing that those who expose themselves to dangers have good hope of escaping them, because God will stand on our side."[24] Although Josephus and others record the deaths of numerous people as a result of their fealty to their beliefs, these events are never cast in an efficacious light.[25] 2 Maccabees is devoid of effective death ideology—despite accounts of numerous deaths—and is therefore inconsistent with the ideological context of chapter 7.

Finding a New Date

Several elements combine within our chapter to suggest a much later composition than is generally accepted. Many of these elements relate to the ideology of martyrdom, which is thought by many to have first been developed in 2 Macc 7, and only later adopted by other writers. Scholars have had difficulty,

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out, "from the rabbinic period onwards, martyrdom became defined as the sanctification of the Name of the Lord" (van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 304). From Shepkaru: "These images illustrate the need for legitimizing the Jewish adoption of the Roman idea of human sacrifice. What facilitated the presentation of the seven sons as sacrifices in 4 Maccabees was the mutability of voluntary death in post-Temple Judaism and the crystallization of Diaspora theology" (Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrs*, 57). Shepkaru, however, fails to find the same expiatory qualities in 2 Maccabees. Williams goes so far as to state that, "a theologumenon of vicarious expiatory death was not current in pre-70 a.d. Judaism" (Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 230). Aharon Agud asserts that it is "decidedly an early rabbinic theme" (Aharon Agus, *The Binding of Isaac and Messiah: Law, Martyrdom, and Deliverance in Early Rabbinic Religiosity* [New York: State University of New York Press, 1988], 40). Expiation in Isaiah's suffering servant is a possibility, but the ancient Jewish perspective views the suffering servant as the exiled Israel, a corporate personality. The insertion of "messiah" in the Isaiah Targum has led some to believe the chapter supports the Christian interpretation of the servant as Jesus, but the Targum actually describes the messiah's deliverance of the suffering Israel through prayer. The Jewish interpretation has classically viewed the servant as Israel, although that interpretation may have been developed as an anti-Christian polemic. Irrespective, expiation is not readily evident.

24.   Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.267. As Shepkaru notes, "paradoxically, the option of death was exercised to avoid it" (Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrs*, 49). The possibility of death could not be precluded, but that possibility in no way conflicted with the central thesis that God would deliver those who were willing to die for his laws. In his Jewish War, Josephus does present several examples of Jewish willingness to die as sacrificial, but death is not the final outcome of that pericope. See Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.196–97.

25.   For example, "What effect does the death of the righteous ones have in 1 Maccabees? It appears to have no direct effect at all" (Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 74).

however, fitting the martyrological perspective of the chapter into a second century bce context. Freeing the text from its dependence on the book of 2 Maccabees, however, allows the ideologies to dictate the historical context rather than the other way around.

In 2 Macc 7:12, it is said of one of the dying brothers that, "he regarded his suffering as nothing," which astonished the king and his men. Ascetic responses to martyrdom are not found in the worldview of second century bce Judaism, but, rather, they developed in the first centuries of the Common Era.[26] The type of "noble death" represented in the chapter also presents a problem to a second century bce composition, as the mutilation of the victims conflicts with the Greek ideal, to which the motif is usually attributed. A Roman noble death fits much better with the story.[27] 2 Macc 7, in addition, presents resurrection as a recompense for martyrdom, which is completely absent from Judaism until well into the Christian era. Philo and Josephus fail to recognize resurrection as a specific reward for martyrdom. Josephus makes several allusions to resurrection, but never in the context of martyrdom.[28] As far as can be perceived, resurrection developed in Judaism as a universal condition without ever being viewed as a reward for martyrdom. The first text outside of 2 Macc 7 that intimates such an ideology is Heb 11:35b.[29]

Another anachronistic element is an implicit appeal to *creatio ex nihilo* in defense of the resurrection. We have no indication that resurrection was in need of defense in the second century bce, and the juxtaposition of human birth, the creation of the world, and the resurrection is a uniquely Christian

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26. According to Maureen A. Tilley, "asceticism logically and practically preceded martyrdom. In fact, it made martyrdom possible" (Maureen A. Tilley, "The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59.3 [Autumn 1991]: 475). See also Abraham Gross, *Spirituality and Law: Courting Martyrdom in Christianity and Judaism* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2005), 2–5; and Brent D. Shaw, "Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4.3 (1996): 269–312.

27. Marie-Françoise Baslez explains the mutilation as the introduction of a type of Jewish antithesis to the Greek noble death (Marie-Françoise Baslez, "The Origin of the Martyrdom Images: From the Book of Maccabees to the First Christians," in *The Book of Maccabees: History, Theology, Ideology* [ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér; JSJSup; Leiden: Brill, 2007], 115–18), but she misses the connection with the Roman noble death, which ascribes more glory to the mutilated martyr, provided they endure it stoically (see Carlin A. Barton, "Savage Miracles: The Redemption of Lost Honor in Roman Society and the Sacrament of the Gladiator and the Martyr," *Representations* 45 [Winter 1994]: 56–57).

28. In reference to the suicides at Masada he speaks of resurrection as the reward of those who die via natural means, in contrast to those who take their lives, which action he criticizes (Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.374). See Shmuel Shepkaru, "From after Death to Afterlife: Martyrdom and Its Recompense," *AJS Review* 24.1 (1999): 6–11. See also Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrs*, 59, where it is argued that, in this respect, the martyrdoms of 2 Macc 7 appear prematurely in Hellenistic Judaism. Levenson provides a strong argument for an awareness of the doctrine of resurrection prior to the Hellenistic age, but nothing related to martyrdom (Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006]).

29. See below for a discussion of the relationship of Heb 11:35b to 2 Macc 7.

argument. Celsus and Tatian are the first to make the connection.[30] Prior to that Justin Martyr and Athenagoras defended the resurrection on the grounds that man was created from a single drop of semen,[31] but creation *ex nihilo* had yet to be intimated, as it may be in 2 Macc 7:28.[32]

In 2 Macc 7 there is also a complete absence of any mention of the temple, which is peculiar considering Antiochus' forced consumption of pork (as far as it is attested) occurred within the Jerusalem temple.[33] Within a text designed specifically as temple propaganda, it is odd that the temple setting is omitted. The only other chapter in all of 2 Maccabees that does not mention the

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30.   James N. Hubler, "Creatio ex Nihilo: Matter, Creation, and the Body in Classical and Christian Philosophy through Aquinas" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995), 114–15. The mother in 2 Macc 7 is using the creation and the resurrection parenetically to comfort her son. See also Pastor of Hermas 2:1: "First of all, believe that there is one God who created and finished all things, and made all things out of nothing."

31.   Justin Martyr, *On the Resurrection* 5.7; Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 17.1–2.

32.   This has been a rather controversial section of 2 Maccabees. Since Origen of Alexandria this verse has been championed by various scholars as the earliest explicit manifestation of creatio ex nihilo. See J. C. O'Neill, "How Early is the Doctrine of Creatio Ex Nihilo?" *Journal of Theological Studies* 53.2 (October 2002): 449–65 (although O'Neill has recently advocated a different position); Hans Schwarz, *Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 172; Paul Copan and William Craig, *Creation Out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical and Scientific Exploration* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004), 95–96; Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (JPS Torah Commentary; New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 5; Robin Darling Young, "The 'Woman with the Soul of Abraham': Traditions about the Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs," in *"Women Like This": New Perspective on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Early Judaism and Its Literature 1; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1991), 71. The difficulty lay in the use of the phrase ἐκ μὴ ὄντων (and its equivalents) in early Jewish texts, as the Platonists are known to have described preexistent matter as "not being" (See Jonathan A. Goldstein, "The Origins of the Doctrine of Creation Ex Nihilo," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 35.2 [Autumn 1984]: 127). If the author of 2 Maccabees refers to the Platonic idea then creation ex nihilo is precluded. An early Rabbinic text (*Genesis Rabbah* 1:9) has long been thought to vindicate an early date for the doctrine, but Maren Niehoff has recently shown the text to be a late interpolation. See Maren R. Niehoff, "*Creatio ex Nihilo* Theology in *Genesis Rabbah* in Light of Christian Exegesis," *Harvard Theological Review* 99.1 (2006): 44. Prior to Niehoff's paper, scholarship had dismissed *creatio ex nihilo* in the *Genesis Rabbah* text, much as it does with 2 Macc 7:28. The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* has been postulated in a number of Hebrew Bible verses, the most significant of those being the discussions of Wisdom's preexistence. Prov 8:24 is the best example, describing Wisdom as predating the depths (*tehomōt*). If we interpret the Bible univocally, this would place Wisdom's birth prior to the existence of Genesis's waters of chaos from which the universe was created, but, while the fundamental messages are generally consistent, the Bible was composed by a number of different individuals with a number of different rhetorical objectives in mind. Prov 8:22–31, as a creation hymn, is commonly interpreted as a polemic against the standard creation myths of the ancient Near East. Wisdom's authority supersedes the prevalent Canaanite worldview, and the author points to her antiquity as evidence of this. The need to assail the prevailing myths (in this instance, the role of Tiamat, cognate with *tehōm*) takes priority over the need to accurately represent well-established creation ideologies.

33.   See Théodore Reinach, *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au judaïsme* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1895), 58.

temple is chapter 12, although that chapter describes a military campaign away from Jerusalem and does mention "sin offerings" and "atonement rites" being performed in Jerusalem. Since the text was most likely composed post-70 ce, the martyrdoms may have been composed as a temple sacrifice. Seven brothers represent a perfect sacrifice, and the author of chapter 7 views their deaths as atonement for all of Israel. The author may be providing a proxy in the absence of proper temple ordinances.

Also noteworthy is the use of the phrase "King of the Universe" in 2 Macc 7:9. The phrase does not appear in any Jewish literature until the Christian Era, when the Hebrew word ʿōlām came to connote "universe." In the rabbinic period, melech haʿōlām (King of the Universe) became an important element of Jewish prayer. Goldstein presumes the phrase originated among Greek speaking Jews, as the verse in 2 Maccabees predates the change in meaning of ʿōlām, but no Jewish literature in Greek contains the phrase prior to that change.[34] The phrase τὸν βασιλέα τῶν αἰώνων, from Tob 13:7, 11 (BA), however, preserves a Greek translation of the Hebrew phrase from before the change in meaning. 2 Macc 7:9 preserves the later meaning and indicates a Common Era date of composition.

External evidences also provide a better context for dating the pericope. The story of a parent and seven sons facing death for their fidelity to God's laws is not unique to 2 Maccabees. Five texts share the plotline of 2 Macc 7: *The Assumption of Moses* 1:9, *Jewish Antiquities* 14.429, *b. Gittin* 57b, *Midrash Lamentations* 1:16, and *Pesiqta Rabbati* 43. The story begins in the mid-first century ce with the *Assumption of Moses*, which tells the story of Taxo, a Jewish father who takes his seven sons into a cave to protest Roman oppression, presumably killing his sons and finally himself. Josephus's text expands upon the Taxo narrative by describing the father killing the sons one by one. The rabbinic texts are the first to present the parent as a mother, and the antagonist is Caesar, who attempts to force the family to bow before his statue. It is likely that an oral tradition was in circulation from which these five narratives drew their information.[35] *Pesiq. Rab.*

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34. Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 305. Using the TLG, I was able to find the phrase in Critolaus (Fragment 37a, line 7), from the second century bce, and in Plutarch (*Political Precepts* 15), from the second century ce Origen is the first of the Judeo-Christians to employ the phrase in Greek (*Exhortation to Martyrdom* 24.10), as far as I am able to tell.

35. Robert Doran, "The Martyr," 197–99. 2 Maccabees and *b. Git.* do not record the name of the mother, while *Pesiq. Rab.* calls her Miriam. Generally the anonymous accounts precede those that assign names. Nickelsburg points to the *Assumption of Moses* 9 as a parallel account that may have been influenced by 2 Macc 7 (Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 127–29), but Doran rejects this correlation on the grounds that suicide seems the more likely outcome of the Taxo pericope. While the mother and seven sons are willingly captured, Taxo flees to a cave with his sons and their deaths are not recorded in the text (Doran, "The Martyr," 190, see also note 5). Josephus preserves a similar account (*Jewish War* 1.312–13, *Antiquities* 14.429–30), but the father kills the sons and the mother, throwing them off the precipice at the mouth of the cave, and finally jumping himself. This probably post-dates the *Assumption of Moses*, which itself dates to the Common Era (Johannes Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses: A Critical Edition with Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 93–96, 116–17). This adds further support to the conclusion that this tradition develops much later than the date traditionally assigned to

43 is typologically earlier than 2 Maccabees and *b. Git.* 57b. *Midr. Lam.* 1:16 is a recension of *b. Git.* 57b, and the most developed of the five. 2 Macc 7 fits well into the evolution of this pericope.

The preponderance of evidence favors a date after the destruction of the temple in 70 ce, and before the latter half of the second century ce, when allusions to our story begin to surface. The developed appeal to fidelity in the face of martyrdom points to a composition during a time of widespread persecution. The text draws upon martyrological ideals that developed relatively synchronically within Christianity and Judaism after the destruction of the temple, and the Roman persecutions of the opening decades of the second century ce thus become a likely context. The chapter promises a glorious resurrection for those who suffer death for the laws of God. Such a promise is anachronistic to the second century bce, but fits well into Judaism as it struggled for identity following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple.

Potential Obstacles

Two texts that provide a *terminus ante quem* for 2 Macc 7 are 4 Maccabees and Heb 11:35b, which both show clear indications of borrowing from the chapter in question. We will consider the arguments for the dating of each.

4 Maccabees presents another perspective on Eleazar and the seven sons, and it is a much more developed and rhetorical narrative focused on the philosophical value of martyrdom. Our thesis must be able to comfortably place 4 Maccabees after the composition of 2 Macc 7. While the scholarly consensus regarding the dating of 4 Maccabees has long been thought to be secure in the early first century ce,[36] a new generation of concerns has arisen that has demanded consideration, and support for the traditional view is meeting with considerable resistance.[37]

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2 Macc 7.

36.   Bickerman's argument has long been the standard. He notes the addition of the toponym "Cilicia" in 4 Macc 4:2. He concludes that Cilicia was added during a period in the early first century ce when Syria and Cilicia were thought of as the same province. See Bickerman, "The Date of 4 Maccabees," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History: Part One* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 275–81. See also M. Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees* (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), 95–96; H. Anderson, "Fourth Maccabees," *ABD* 4.453; B. H. Anderson, "4 Maccabees: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James Charlseworth (Garden City, NY: DoubleDay, 1985), 533–34; and David deSilva, *4 Maccabees* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 12–18.

37.   Van Henten prefers a date in the early second century ce (van Henten, "Daiterung und Herkunft des Vierten Makkabäerbuches," *Tradition and Re-interpretation in Jewish and Christian Literature: Essays in honor of Jürgen C. H. Lebram* (ed. J. W. van Henten, et al.; StPB 36; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 139–49; Barclay places the author in the late first century ce See Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan [323 BCE – 117 CE]* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 379. Campbell disagrees with Bickerman's assessment, arguing that the juxtaposition of Cilicia and Syria in 4 Maccabees does not necessarily convey such a meaning. See Douglas A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21–26* (JSNTSup 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 221–24. See also Stephen D. Moore, Janice Capel Anderson, "Taking it Like a Man:

A particularly engaging argument is made by Douglas Campbell, who points to close similarities in syntax and diction between 4 Maccabees and Galen (from the late second century ce).[38] Of considerable interest is the Greek word τροχαντήρας (4 Macc 8:13), which derives from the eminence on the superior body of the femur (English "trochanter"). As Campbell points out, Galen and Sextus Empiricus seem to be the first to utilize the term outside of 4 Maccabees, which they do in its proper medical sense. 4 Maccabees uses the word in reference to a torture device, connoting some kind of joint separating tool. In light of other similarities with Galen, it is not unreasonable to conclude the author of 4 Maccabees borrowed the term from Galen's texts. The word is absent from the texts of earlier physicians, such as Herophilos or Hippocrates.[39] Significant correlation is also found between the Maccabean martyrdoms and those of Christians such as Polycarp, Ignatius, Carpus, Papyius, and Agathonice.[40] A provenance in the late second or early third century ce is not unlikely. The author of 4 Maccabees displays an intimate familiarity with Greek philosophy that points to a well educated Jew, probably living in one of the major Jewish-philosophical centers of the ancient Near East. Antioch becomes a likely place of origin for 4 Maccabees given the sudden appearance of a Maccabean martyr cult there in the fourth century, the mention of their tomb in 4 Macc 17:8, as well as the Antiochan claim to the Maccabean relics.[41] In light of this, 4 Maccabees poses no threat to our thesis.

Masculinity in 4 Maccabees," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117.2 (Summer 1998): 251, note 4.

38.   Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 226.

39.   See "τροχαντήρ" in the TLG. Campbell misses the occurrence of the word in Julius Pollux, also of the late second century ce: "ἡ δὲ περὺ τῇ τοῦ μηροῦ τῶν ὀστῶν ἔκφυσις τροχαντὴρ ὀνομάζεται" (Julius Pollux, *Onomasticon* 2.187.4). The phrase γενναῖος ἀθλητὴς is also first attested in the second century, in the *Martyrium Sanctorum Carpi* 35.2. A striking correlation is Eusebius' account of the martyrdom of Blandina, found in *History of the Church* 5.1.18–19. She is called a "noble athlete," but her torturers are also said to have been "conquered" (cf. 4 Macc 6:10). David deSilva disagrees, stating that, "a closer examination of the words attested elsewhere only in second- and third-century texts reveals, however, that they are mostly compound forms or new grammatical forms of earlier existing words" (David A. deSilva, *4 Maccabees* [Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 17). DeSilva does not seem to be aware of Campbell's work.

40.   Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 227–28. Williams notes similarities between 4 Maccabees, Polycarp, and Ignatius, but he prefers to interpret this as a sign of borrowing on the part of Christianity, rather than the other way around. "The noteworthy similarities and the precise parallels between the Martyrdom of Polycarp and IV Maccabees argue for the probability that the author of the Martyrdom was acquainted with the book of IV Maccabees" (Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 236). Later he refers to the "probability that Ignatius was familiar with IV Maccabees" (Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 236).

41.   This tradition originates with a Syriac martyrology from the mid-fourth century ce (although St. Chrysostom is the first to mention their relics), and is taken up by several other writers over the following centuries (Margaret Shatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," *Vigiliae Christianae* 28.2 [June 1974]: 99–101). Van Henten calls the possibility of a cult of the martyrs in Antioch "dubious," but the question is ultimately left open to further research (Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 79).

In Heb 11:35b the author, speaking of examples of faith, refers to those who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might receive a better resurrection." The reference seems a clear allusion to 2 Macc 7. While the date of Hebrews is generally accepted in the late first or early second century ce, the earliest textual witness we have to this verse, P[46], dates to the late second century ce, well after our proposed date for 2 Maccabees.[42]

The first text to explicitly reference the Maccabean epitome also comes from the end of the second century ce Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromata*, cites, in passing, ἡ τῶν Μακκαβαίνων ἐπιτομή.[43] No mention, however, is made of the chapter 7 characters. After Clement, the Maccabean martyrs surface among Alexandrian writers, appearing later in Antioch and beyond.

Conclusion

The structure and function of 2 Macc 7 adds support to the argument for independent authorship. The peculiarities in the Greek of the chapter have long cast suspicion upon its composition, but its unique structure and its undermining of the rhetorical function of the rest of the book leave no room to insist the chapter be viewed as playing any part in the original composition. Decoupling the chapter from 2 Maccabees exposes several ideologies previously suppressed by the historical framework that long restricted readings of the text. These ideologies allow scholars to reapply critical methodologies to the text to provide a fresh perspective on its composition. Such methodologies lead to the conclusion that our author, rather than providing the catalyst for some of the most important early Christian ideologies, is merely adopting those extant ideals that fit into his worldview. It has long been thought that 2 Macc 7 provided the foundation for the development of Christian beliefs about martyrdom, resurrection, and the doctrine of vicarious expiation; and it accomplished all this without registering so much as a blip on the literary radar. Far more parsimonious is later borrowing on the part of the author of 2 Macc 7 from the milieu of the Judeo-Christian battles for identity and orthodoxy.

We can see in the text a clear treatise on the role of resurrection as an incentive for martyrdom. In the same breath, voluntary death is presented

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42. Evidence exists, as well, that the reference to the Maccabean martyrs is not part of the original version of the text. The asyndeton of vv. 32–38 refers exclusively to the prophets. Many of the references are unambiguous, but early Christian writings show many of the more vague references were understood as explicit allusions to specific prophets. 1 Clement 17:1, for example, refers to Heb 11:37b and attributes the allusion to Elijah, Elisha, and Ezekiel. Origen attributes Heb 11:37 to the prophets on three different occasions (*To Africanus* 9; *Against Celsus* 7.7 and 7.18), although he references a version of Hebrews that contains the interpolation ἐπιράσθησαν. Clearly a reference to seven children and a woman from the Maccabean era is anomalous. Heb 11:35b is also superfluous to the literary unit, as a turning point exists in 11:36 that provides its own conjunction.

43. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.14.97. See also Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrs*, 36; G. W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 10–11.

as a vicarious sacrifice for the entire nation of Israel. Both ideas have clear connections to first and second century ce Christian ideologies, and cannot fit comfortably into second century bce Judaism. The implicit appeal to the creation of the world and the creation of humanity as a defense of the resurrection is also a uniquely second century ce Christian argument, whether or not we grant to the mother the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. The textual and ideological incompatibility of 2 Macc 7 with Jewish literature of the Second Temple Period, the ease with which those elements of the text fit into a second century ce context, and the evolution of the tradition of the parent and seven sons within Jewish texts of the Common Era combine to provide abundant evidence for a late first or early second century ce provenance for the pericope.