

THE INTENTION, GENRE, DATING AND PROVENANCE OF 2 AND 4 MACCABEES

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ABSTRACT

There is a relationship between 2 and 4 Maccabees. The author of 4 Maccabees clearly made use of 2 Maccabees. There are also differences between these writings. These differences pertain to inter alia genre, intention and provenance. Suitable criteria need to be formulated to address this issue. In order to determine the provenance of these individual books, this paper analyses internal (linguistic) and external (historical) criteria.

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

The problem

Each of the Maccabean books has a different composition and content. According to Tilly (2005:18), 3 Maccabees “das seinem Inhalt nach nicht im Zusammenhang mit der Geschichte der Makkabäer steht. Als Ätiologie eines jährlichen Diasporafestes erzählt es die von Gott bewirkte wunderbare Errettung der alexandrinischen Juden vor ihrer Ermordung auf Betreiben des ptolemäischen Königs.” Thus it could be deemed a liturgical text. 4 Maccabees, on the other hand, belongs to philosophical literature. Goldstein (1983:4) writes about 1 and 2 Maccabees: “First Maccabees and the original of which Second Maccabees is an abridgement were written in close succession as *propaganda* (my italics – JC) after decades of controversy”. Thus, according to him, 2 Maccabees is a propagandistic text.

As is well known, there is a relationship between 2 and 4 Maccabees (Tilly 2005:17). The author of 4 Maccabees made use of 2 Maccabees. Hence the

Maccabean martyrs known from 2 Maccabees are the main characters in 4 Maccabees (Van Henten 1979:58). There are also pertinent differences between these books, which pertain to intention, genre, authorship and provenance. This paper will endeavour to contribute towards the discussion on these issues.

Background

Jan Willem van Henten (1997) has provided the most exhaustive literary and historical analysis of these books. The commentaries on 1 and 2 Maccabees by Goldstein (1976, 1983) have also proved helpful. It surely is incorrect to refer to *the* Maccabean books. But what should be understood under this rubric? Goldstein (1983:4) has specific views on the relationship between 1 and 2 Maccabees: “These two books present sharply different accounts; indeed we shall find that their authors were bitter opponents. The webs of doctrinal subtleties, of charge and countercharge, which characterize the polemics of monotheistic sects against the rivals they call ‘heretics’ – these webs give rise to the most complicated puzzles in the history of literature.” He also indicated that these books made use of different sources.

4 Maccabees made use of 2 Maccabees as said already. The question is which version of 2 Maccabees? In this regard Van Henten (1997:5) makes the following enlightening statement: “the original reports of the deaths of Eleazar as well as the mother and her sons and Razis have undergone considerable adaptations and that the descriptions of these heroes’ death, in their present form, should primarily be viewed as a kind of Jewish self-interpretation by the groups that will have been responsible for the composition of 2 and 4 Maccabees”.

The current analysis has historical implications, which is a rather complicated research area. 4 Maccabees, for example, has been described as representing an ideology of martyrdom with some historical basis. This paper will not focus on historical issues, which naturally does not mean that historical issues should be avoided. In fact, historical questions will be formulated regarding the date and provenance of 2 and 4 Maccabees. Another issue that will be addressed is the groupings of people who represented the Jewish identity embodied in 2 and 4

Maccabees. However, the focus will be on the two collections as they are found in their final form.

Methodological issues

Textual basis

2 Maccabees

The eclectic text of Hanhart (1976 (1959)) is the text used in this paper. My quotations are taken from the NETS translation by Schaper (2007).

4 Maccabees

This book has not yet been prepared in the Göttingen series; however, it has been allocated to Rob Hiebert, who has made some preliminary studies (Hiebert 2012). Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century) and codex Alexandrinus (fifth century) are the primary textual witnesses to 4 Maccabees. Another important codex, Vaticanus, does not include 4 Maccabees, nor any of the Maccabean books for that matter. For the sake of the textual criticism of 4 Macc, codex Venetus (ninth century) and a Syriac translation are important textual witnesses. The critical text in the Göttingen edition by Rob Hiebert will be the subject of future research. For the purposes of this paper, the edition by Rahlfs must suffice. My quotations are taken from the NETS translation by Stephen Westerholm (2007).

Criteria

To be sure, applicable criteria need to be formulated in order to address historical issues, inter alia, the provenance of the Septuagint. There are basically three sets of criteria: first, linguistic ones and more specifically lexically-based criteria; secondly, arguments from content analysis that provide insight into the context in which any given unit came to be written; thirdly, one can also compare external data in order to determine the provenance of a specific book (Cook and Van der Kooij 2012:22).

RELEVANT ASPECTS

Intention

2 Maccabees

Each of the Maccabean books has a different intention, which is partly, at least, the result of contextual considerations. The focus in this part of the paper is on 2 Macc 2:19–15:39, which can be described as dealing with Greek tyranny, persecution of Jews, and the subsequent successful war of liberation (Van Henten 1997:19). 2 Maccabees 2:19–15:39 presents itself as a summary of a historical work composed by Jason of Cyrene consisting of five separate books (2 Macc 2:19–23). It describes the Jewish response to the devastating actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.E.) against the nation. It should be remembered that 2 Macc 3–15 does not offer a detailed account, but rather a readable and useful short history intended to revive the memory of the past (Van Henten 1997:21–22).

The essence of this intention is captured in 2 Macc 2:19–21: “The story of Ioudas Maccabaios and his brothers and the purification of the greatest temple and the dedication of the altar²⁰ and further the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator²¹ and the appearances that came from the heaven to those that behaved themselves manfully for Judaism so that though few in number they seized the whole land and pursued the barbarian hordes²² and regained possession of the temple ...”

The antithetical/propagandistic intent of this statement is clear. Goldstein (1983:16) has an interesting interpretation of this propaganda. According to him, it would appear that the author aimed his book at those many Jews for whom the facts of history seemed to prove that God had not accepted the second temple as holy. According to them, the atrocities of Antiochus IV demonstrate this rejection. The temple and the holy city fell under the power of the wicked Hasmonean high priests and princes. Hence the author of 2 Maccabees interprets the victories of Judas Maccabaeus and the subsequent cleansing of the temple as evidence that the temple at Jerusalem was the holiest in the world. Thus our writer’s message to the Jews is one of hope, but also of stern admonition (Goldstein 1983:13). According to this interpretation, the intention of 2 Maccabees is one of propaganda.

4 Maccabees¹

According to Van Henten (1997:58), this is the oldest Jewish text which is devoted to martyrdom in its entirety. The fourth book of Maccabees can be described as conveying an ideology of martyrdom (De Silva 2006:18). Again Goldstein (1983:26) has an interesting, if speculative, view. According to him, between 18 and 55 C.E. a Greek-speaking Jew, the author of Fourth Maccabees, took the abridged history (2 Macc) as his source for a philosophical sermon.

This treatise was probably written in Asia Minor, perhaps in Antioch, and it addressed Diaspora Jews. There is consensus that the story is not based on historical fact and that the Seleucid, Antiochus Epiphanes, is used as a scapegoat in order to demonstrate “that the Jewish way of life is capable not only of holding its own against Gentile criticism, but of besting Greco-Roman philosophers in their own quest to embody their own ideals of virtue and self-mastery” (De Silva 2006:XI). In order to realise this intention, the “author” deals with many *topoi*, a prominent one being metaphors. These are agricultural, military and athletic (17:11–16) metaphors in particular.

Genre

2 Maccabees

Martyr texts can belong to several genres. 2 Maccabees is a combination of festal letters and a history of liberation, as a response to the deadly actions of Antiochus Epiphanes (Van Henten 1997:18). We find in 2 Maccabees the combination of a history which culminates in the founding of two feasts and references to one of these feasts in the festal letters at the beginning of the work. Goldstein (1983:26) provides an interesting explanation for the presence of episodes 1 and 2 at the beginning of Second Maccabees. According to him, at some time after 78/7 B.C.E. someone wished to provide the Jews of Egypt with a scroll with narrative and festal letters for the Feast of Dedication like the Scroll of Esther for the Purim feast and analogous to 3 Maccabees for the Egyptian Jews’ own festival of deliverance. By prefixing episodes

¹ See Cook (2014:279–298).

1 and 2, which by then were being circulated together, to the abridged history, he accomplished his purpose. Hence 2 Maccabees may be a liturgical text.

4 Maccabees

Genre

Scholars have made numerous suggestions for the genre of 4 Maccabees: diatribe (Norden and Deismann); encomium (Norden, Dupont-Sommer and Hadas); thesis (Stowers); *epitaphios logos* (Lebram); sermons or a combination of generic types, as suggested by Van Henten (1997:63–67). Clearly there is an awareness that the author made use of epideictic rhetoric with a variety of sub-species (De Silva 2006:XXVIII). The oration is formulated as a philosophical discourse in the first three chapters. The author, moreover, makes use of an encomium when praising the martyrs. The Jewish inclination of 4 Maccabees has led some scholars to see it as a synagogue sermon (Freudenthal). Da Silva (2006:XXII) is correctly not convinced by these suggestions. He finds evidence that 4 Maccabees conforms to protreptic literature (Da Silva 2006:XXII). What is evident is that this oration was composed to be delivered at a specific occasion. The reference in 1:10 to “the present occasion” has been interpreted as the anniversary of the martyrdoms it describes (Dupont-Sommer 1939:67–73; Hadas 1953:103–105; Amir 1971:662). I agree with De Silva (2006:XXV) that the praise of the martyrs has less to do with their dying and more with their nobility and goodness, which are the fruits of the torah.

In the final analysis one could argue that 4 Maccabees is also a liturgical text.

Author, date and provenance of 2 Maccabees

There is consensus that this book is of Judean origin (Van Henten 1997:50). According to Van Henten (1997:50), the *terminus a quo* is December 124 B.C.E., since the first festal letter dates the feast of Sukkoth to the month of Chisley in the 188th year (2 Macc 1:9). A *terminus ante quem* is difficult to determine and, according to Van Henten (1997:51), there are varying opinions ranging from 124 B.C.E. to the first half of the first century C.E. Bickerman (1933:234) dates 2

Maccabees to circa 60 B.C.E. Van Henten (1997:51) mentions many reasons why 2 Maccabees should be dated before 63 B.C.E., Pompeius's intervention in Palestine. For one thing, the Romans are mentioned in 2 Macc 4:11, 8:10, 36, 11:34–38, which is an indication of the high regard they had for the Romans. Van Henten (1997:51) is of the opinion that if this book were construed between 124 and 65 B.C.E., the beginning of this era would be the most likely.

The next question to be addressed is which Jewish group could have been responsible for the composition of 2 Maccabees (Van Henten 1997:53). There are some hints in the text. 2 Macc 12:43 has a direct reference to the resurrection; it reads “In doing this he (Ioudas) acted very well and honourably, taking account of the resurrection”. The doctrine of the resurrection is a useful criterion for purposes of localising an ancient writing. In a book written in conjunction with Arie van der Kooij, I argued that the Old Greek of Job was translated by a person who was pro-Sadduceanism, since he was apprehensive of the resurrection. The only reference to the resurrection in OGJob is found in Job 42:17a (Cook and Van der Kooij 2012:250):

VERSE 17a

17aa. γέγραπται δὲ αὐτὸν πάλιν ἀναστήσεσθαι μεθ' ὧν ὁ κύριος ἀνίστησιν

17aa. And it is written that he will rise again with those the Lord raises up.

The addition of LXX Job, 17(a) is the only example of a direct reference to the concept of resurrection in the LXX version of Job. Even though the manuscript evidence seem to indicate that this stich could be taken as the OG, it is highly improbable that the translator of Job was indeed responsible for this addition. It is probably the result of a later reviser, whose intention it was to undercut the notion in Job that there is no resurrection. I have argued that this scribe was most probably an anti-Sadducean, who, as is well-known, did not believe in the resurrection (Cook and Van der Kooij 2012:255).

Again Goldstein (1983:13) has pertinent views in this regard. According to him, the author of 1 Maccabees did not believe in the resurrection (Goldstein 1983:17). The author of 2 Maccabees, on the contrary, insists that Judas himself believed in the resurrection of the dead (2 Macc 12:43–45).

It therefore seems evident that this author was not one of the Sadduceans. The direct reference to the resurrection (2 Macc 7:9) makes it highly unlikely. It is also improbable that this person belonged to the Essenes, who were too secluded and had no influence in Jerusalem. The only option that remains is Jerusalem in Hasmonean circles, namely the Hasideans. Clear indications that this could be the case are, first, the prominent role of the *torat Moshe*, including the *torat el peh* (the unwritten law) and secondly, the central position of the temple.

A closer look at internal criteria could shed light on this issue. According to Van Henten (1997:21), the vocabulary and style of 2 Maccabees most closely resemble those of the Septuagint books, those *de novo* books, which were originally written in Greek, such as Wisdom and 4 Maccabees. There are also significant correspondences with the Letter of Aristeas. Mugler (1931:421–423) lists *hapax legomena* and frequent application of compound verbs, adverbs and participles, which are characteristics of 2 Maccabees. Characteristic of the style of the book are its prolixity and overstatement, features of what some scholars call “tragic history” (Van Henten 1997:21). Van Henten (1997:40f.) dealt with the following words:

- σκηνοπηγία, word for festival of the Tabernacles in Deut 16:16; 31:10; 1 Esdras 5:51; Zach. 14:16, 18, 19; 1 Macc 10:21; 2 Macc 1:9 and 18.

According to Van Henten (1997:45), several significant similarities in the vocabulary of 2 Macc 1:1–2:18 and 2:19–15:39, excepting 1:1–6, confirm the unity of both sections.

- καθαρίζω in 1 Macc 4:36, 41 and 43, 13:47 and 50; 2 Macc 2:18, 10:3 and 7, 14:36; 4 Macc 1:11 and 17:21, as well as καθαρισμός in 2 Macc 1:18, 36; 2 Macc 2:16, 19 and 10:5; 4 Macc 7:6.
- σωτηρία appears many times in the LXX and in 1 Macc 3:6, 4:25, 5:62; 2 Macc 3:29, 30, 7:25, 11:6, 12:25, 13:3, 14:3; 3 Macc 6:13, 33, 36, 7:16, 22; 4 Macc 15:2, 8 and 27.

It stands to reason that this issue needs to be researched in detail.

4 MACCABEES

Author, date and provenance

It is difficult to determine who the author of the anonymous 4 Maccabees was. The only references to an author are by Eusebius (*History* 3.10.6) and Jerome (*De viris illustribus* 13; *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* 2.6), who both attribute 4 Maccabees to Josephus (De Silva 2006:XI). Many arguments have been formulated against this assumption, such as linguistic considerations (De Silva 2006:XII). However, the weightiest, in my opinion, are arguments based on content. It remains difficult to accept that the accommodating Josephus, who praised the memory of Joseph ben Tobias for bringing “the Jewish people from poverty and a state of weakness to more splendid opportunities of life” (*A.J.* 12.4.10 §224), could be the same person who evidently abhorred Hellenisation. It is, therefore, to be understood that scholars have decided to reconstruct a profile rather than attempt to ascertain an actual author. This person was clearly steeped in Greek culture and, in De Silva’s (2006:XII) words, “in Greek compositional skills and cultural fluency”. Stowers (2000:845) demonstrated that 4 Maccabees contains no Semitisms, but many neologisms. The author of 4 Maccabees must have had formal training in the art of Greek rhetoric. These aspects could lead to the conclusion that Greek was in fact his mother tongue! However, that he was also well acquainted with Judaism is clear from his love of the torah. There is a comparable example in the translator of LXX Proverbs. I have demonstrated that the person responsible for this Old Greek version in fact had great competence in the application of the Greek language. However, I detected an anti-Hellenistic tendency as far as the Greek ideas are concerned (Cook and Van der Kooij 2012:162).

The author’s formulation of the chapters as a philosophical treatise is striking. There can be no doubt that this person was Hellenised, at least as far as the external form of the treatise is concerned. As is the case with the Septuagint version of Proverbs, there seems to be some reluctance in the author to agree with the Greek content. In De Silva’s words, “the author’s philosophy is the way of life and the values taught by the torah, and his point of reference is always the Jewish Scriptures” (De Silva 2006:XII). One significant difference between 4 Maccabees and LXX

Proverbs is that the latter is a translation of a biblical book. The predominant correspondence between the two authors is their competence in the Greek language.

There are some indications that the author of 4 Maccabees was a conservative, orthodox Jew. This comes to the fore in the way he deals with metaphors.

Agricultural metaphors

4 Macc 1:28–29

²⁸¶ καθάπερ οὖν δυεῖν τοῦ σώματος καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς φυτῶν ὄντων ἡδονῆς τε καὶ πόνου πολλαὶ τούτων τῶν φυτῶν εἰσιν παραφυάδες

Just as pleasure and pain are two plants growing from the body and the soul, so there are many offshoots of these plants.

²⁹ ὦν ἐκάστην ὁ παγγέωργος λογισμὸς περικαθαίρων καὶ ἀποκινίζων καὶ περιπλέκων καὶ ἐπάρδων καὶ πάντα τρόπον μεταχέων ἐξημεροῖ τὰς τῶν ἡθῶν καὶ παθῶν ὕλας

By weeding, pruning, tying up, watering and in every way irrigating each of these, reason, the master cultivator, tames the jungles of habits and passions.

Chapter 1 commences with an announcement of the topic, namely “to discuss an eminently philosophical subject – whether pious reason is absolute master of the passions” (NETS). Various issues are addressed in this introductory passage. These include prudence, justice, courage, endurance, sound judgement, wisdom, etc. A central concept is “disposition” (διάθεσις), which appears eight times in LXX, but just this once in 4 Maccabees. This concept can be evaluated from various perspectives. De Silva (2006:89) detects Aristotelian influence, namely the three dispositions at work in each person. One leads to excess, the second to a defect and the last to virtue. De Silva (2006:89) correctly remarks that the author of 4 Maccabees did not deem pleasure an evil in itself, but only of being able to become evil. I find some correspondence with Jewish thought in this regard, namely the concept of good and evil inclinations, the so-called *יצר הרע* / *יצר הטוב*. I will deal with this issue below.

Other typical Jewish ideas are the restraining impact of the torah on the pursuit of pleasure in 1:31–2:6. The role of the *torat Moshe* is predominant in the whole of 4 Maccabees, especially in Chapter 2.

The concept of the master gardener (πανγέωργος) (reason) (this lexeme does not appear in the LXX) can also be interpreted from a classical Greek, Greco-Roman or

Jewish (Hellenistic-Jewish) perspective. On the one hand, Plutarch uses agricultural imagery in order to explain the task of reason: to “lop off the wild growth and to clip away excessive luxuriance” (*Virt. mor.* 12 [*Mor.* 451C]). De Silva (2006:91) also refers to Stoic philosophers, who “use agricultural metaphors to combat the Peripatetic doctrine of passions” (Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 4.26.57).

On the other hand, Philo refers to Noah’s work as a farmer: “like a good farmer, the virtuous man eradicates in the wild wood all the mischievous young saplings which have been planted by the passions or by the vices ...” (*Det.* 105; cf. also *Leg.* 1.47)(De Silva 2006:89).

The author of 4 Maccabees refers to a variety of cultivation techniques in order to explain the pruning activities concerning the passions of man in this first passage. Verse 29 is instructive in this regard: “By weeding, pruning, tying up, watering and in every way irrigating each of these, reason, the master cultivator, tames the jungles of habits and passions.” This issue is extended in the second passage to be discussed.

4 Macc 2:21–23

²¹ ὀπηνίκα γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατεσκεύασεν τὰ πάθη αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ἥθη περιεφύτευσεν

²² ἡνίκα δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων τὸν ἱερόν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν διὰ τῶν αἰσθητηρίων ἐνεθρόνισεν

²³ καὶ τούτῳ νόμον ἔδωκεν καθ’ ὃν πολιτευόμενος βασιλεύσει βασιλείαν σώφρονα τε καὶ δικαίαν καὶ ἀγαθὴν καὶ ἀνδρείαν

Now when God fashioned human beings, he planted in them passions and habits, but at the same time he enthroned the mind among the senses as a sacred governor (τὸν ἱερόν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν) over them all, and to this mind he gave the law (νόμος). The one who adopts a way of life in accordance with it will rule a kingdom that is temperate, just, good and courageous.

The agricultural metaphor is reminiscent of the creation passage in Gen 2:7–9. A crucial concept in this regard in the Hebrew is רָצַץ as found in verse 7. As is well known, verse 19 has the same verb, but with one *yod*, used in connection with the animals. This gave rise to the Jewish concept of the dual inclinations in man. The origin of this doctrine is complex and De Silva (2006:103) thinks this passage has

nothing to do with the *יצר הטוב / הרע יצר*. I am not convinced about this. There are corresponding concepts in the Septuagint, of which LXX Prov 2:11 and 17 are significant passages in this regard (Cook and Van der Kooij 2012:109–113). Verse 11 contains the combination, *βουλή καλή* (good counsel) and verse 17, its counterpart, *βουλή κακή* (bad counsel). The first acts as a depiction of the good realm and the second of the bad realm.

LXX Prov 2:11

¹¹ βουλή καλή φυλάξει σε ἔννοια δὲ ὁσία τηρήσει σε

LXX Prov 2:17

¹⁷ υἱέ μή σε καταλάβῃ κακή βουλή ἢ ἀπολείπουσα διδασκαλίαν νεότητος καὶ διαθήκην θείαν ἐπιλεησμένη

The term *βουλή* refers to a significant concept. It occurs frequently in the LXX and 18 times in Proverbs. In most of the instances in Proverbs it is related to *יָעַר*. *Διάνοια* is also used frequently in the LXX, but only in Prov 2:10; 4:4; 9:10; 13:15 and 27:19. In three cases it is related to *לָב*. Whereas *διάνοια* is situated, so to speak, inside man, in the passage under discussion, *βουλή* is directly related to wisdom. Wisdom enters the *διάνοια* and this leads to good counsel that will save one from the bad way. Wisdom in turn comes from the outside and is obtained by studying the Law and teaching (see verse 6). The other side of the coin, the lexeme *יצר*, is also significant, albeit problematic. It appears 44 times in the Hebrew Bible as a verb – in most cases by far in the book of Isaiah – and 9 times as a noun. Neither the verb nor the noun appears in Proverbs and it should not be retroverted into 2:17. In Gen 6:5 and 8:21 in the Hebrew it concerns the ideas and plans of humans and it stated that the *יצר* of man is evil. The LXX translated these passages relatively freely; in Gen 6:5 the passage *יצר מַחְשְׁבַת* is rendered by means of the verb *διανοέομαι* and in 8:21 the phrase *יצר לֵב הָאָדָם רַע מְנַעֲרֵי* by means of the phrase *ἔγκειται ἡ διάνοια τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπιμελῶς ἐπὶ τὰ πονηρά*.

The combination *יצר מַחְשְׁבַת* also occurs in 1 Chron 29:18, where the Greek equivalent is *ἐν διανοίᾳ καρδίας λαοῦ σου*. The noun *διάνοια* in turn is also a loaded term. It occurs in Prov 2:10 (*לָב*); 4:4 (*לָב*); 9:10 (*בינה*); 13:15 (-) and 27:19 (*לָב*). It seems to be the place where thinking takes place and ideas are generated.

To return to the addition in verse 17, I have argued that bad counsel in this context

is indeed a metaphor for foreign wisdom, namely Hellenism. In this regard, I follow Hengel (1973:281), who states: “Darauf könnte die Tatsache hinweisen, dass das in Prv. 1-9 häufig auftauchende fremde Weib (2, 16ff; c. 5; 6, 24ff; c. 7) und wohl auch die »Frau Torheit« schon in der Septuaginta von Prv. 2, 16-18 (διδασκαλίαν νεότητος V. 17) sinnbildlich auf die »fremde Weisheit« gedeutet wurden”. He also thinks that Clemens Alexandrinus and the wisdom fragments from Qumran cave 4 follow a similar “sinnbildlichen Deutung” (Hengel 1973:281). Although Hengel is not clear about what this strange wisdom is, I argue that it refers to the Hellenism of the day.

I have also argued that the conservative Jewish translator is interpreting in this verse. It is clear that he did not intend to avoid the sexual issues inherent in the Hebrew – in Chapter 7 a corresponding phrase is translated literally. I have taken this interpretation of *κακή βουλή*, as stated already, to be a reference to foreign wisdom in the sense of non-Israelite/un-Jewish wisdom (Cook 1994:465). In this regard, I find that the view put forward by Yee (1980), who has argued for a literary interpretation of the various speeches, the seductive words of the strange woman, on the one hand, and those of the father, on the other hand, opens up interesting perspectives on the understanding of this figure. According to her, and Aletti (1976:27) for that matter, it is not literal things, such as the physical body of the woman, that are dangerous, but rather her words, her speeches. Hence, I have argued that also in the LXX it is not the *הַיָּהוּוֹת הַפְּשָׁעִים* herself that is dangerous, but her words, or rather her bad words, bad counsel (Cook 1994:465).

There are additional markers of the ideological position of the translator. These are located in the second and third additions in the LXX of verse 17: *ἡ ἀπολείπουσα διδασκαλίαν νεότητος καὶ διαθήκην θεῖαν ἐπιλεησμένη*. First, here is a reference to wisdom, namely the teaching of the youth. *Διδασκαλία* occurs only in wisdom literature; here, in Sir 24:33; 39:8 and Isa 29:13. *הַיָּהוּוֹת* is a loaded term and can be interpreted differently. HAL translates it as “Jugendfreund” in accordance with Ps 55:14 and Prov 2:17. This lexeme also has a second semantic field, namely “chief, leader”. None of these nuances, however, is intended by the translator and therefore *διδασκαλία* must be taken as an interpretation. Secondly, it (teaching) is clearly

related to wisdom and should probably be understood in the light of the next stich. The phrase διαθήκην θεΐαν is a relatively literal rendering of the Hebrew, but it does not contain the pronominal suffix. It refers to the divine² covenant, which is forgotten by the strange woman. This phrase represents an important link with the Law. The context of this passage provides the key to the interpretation of this phrase. The strange woman has left the good counsel of her youth behind in order to follow bad counsel. She has forgotten the divine covenant. The reason for this development is that the strange woman is influenced by wisdom, in this case strange/alien wisdom, the Hellenism of the day.

In the light of this discussion I would be less adamant than De Silva that we do not have a reference to the Jewish concept of the יצר הרע / יצר הטוב. I hear the resonance of these Jewish concepts in 4 Macc 2:22. God planted both the passions (πάθη) and the inclinations (or character traits, ἤθη) in human beings. The fact that two different concepts are used in 4 Macc, (πάθος, οὐς, τό passion), which appears in Hdt, LXX, Philo, Josephus, and ἤθη (inclinations, character traits) (ἥθος, οὐς, τό custom, usage, habit), which appears in Hes, Hdt, LXX, Philo *Spec. Leg.* ἤθη χρηστά (good habits), is naturally problematic and has to be addressed.

A closer look at these lexemes is in order. Πάθος appears 67 times in the LXX, in all the instances (65 times), excepting Job 30:31 and Prov 25:20, in 4 Macc. It is used mostly (21 times) in Chapter 1, namely in verses 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30 and 35. Of these occurrences, verse 25 is the most instructive; it reads “in pleasure there exists a malevolent disposition” (κακοήθης διάθεσις). The adjective κακοήθης occurs only in 4 Macc 1:25 and 2:16 (for the temperate mind λογισμός repels all these malicious passions). As stated already, the noun διάθεσις appears ten times in LXX, once in 4 Macc. This reference to an evil disposition sounds very much like the יצר הרע.

Πάθος is also used in Chapter 2, namely in verse 3: desire of his passions; verse 6: to overcome the desires; verse 7: master of the passions; verse 9: reason overcomes the passions; verse 15: more aggressive passions; verse 16: malicious passions; verse

² The adjective θεΐος occurs in Aristobulus and the *Letter of Aristeas* too.

18: of the passions; verse 21: planted in them passions and habits; and verse 24: master of the passions.

The lexeme ἥθος is used only in Sir prol 27 and Sir 20:26: for a lying person's character is dishonour and his shame is constantly with him; as well as 4 Macc 1:29: tames the jungles of habits and passions; 2:7: unless reason is clearly master of the passions; and 21: passions and habits; 5:24: we overcome all pleasures and desires; and 13:27: virtuous habits.

If my arguments hold water, it would mean that these concepts were already in use by the second century B.C.E. (Cook 2006). I date LXX Prov to circa 150 B.C.E., in Jerusalem, after the Antiochian revolt (Cook and Van der Kooij 2012:172).

It is also a question whether these passions were deemed to be bad in themselves, as seen by the Stoics. The concept of the יצרִים has as background that each person is able to do good or bad. The choice of action lies in the hands of each person. As stated earlier, I hear the resonance of these Jewish concepts in 4 Macc 2:22. God planted both the passions (πάθη) and the inclinations (or character traits, ἤθη) within human beings. I find myself in agreement with De Silva (2006:103): “God planted inclinations or character traits in the human being along with the passions which, like the passions, can be cultivated for good or perverted for evil, depending on the possessor's cultivation of the same.” However, I fail to understand why he is unwilling to relate this to the concepts of the good and bad inclinations.

It is not immediately clear if the Septuagint acts as basis for this interpretation. Whereas the LXX uses πλάσσω in both verses in Gen 2, as rendering for יצר, 4 Maccabees talks about planting περιφύτεύω. This interpretation in fact makes it an agricultural metaphor! It is significant that the term φύτεύω is used in LXX Gen 2 in connection with *paradeisos*! I think the context of this passage in 4 Maccabees holds the key to our understanding of this issue.

The Law of Moses plays a crucial role in Chapter 2. The first reference is found in verse 8: “As soon, indeed, as one adopts a way of life in accordance with the law, even though a lover of money, one overpowers one's own bent (τις ἢ βιάζεται τὸν αὐτοῦ τρόπον)”. Exodus 22 is probably the background to this

passage.

Other aspects of the law are subsequently mentioned: even if one is stingy, one is overcome by the law through reason ... that reason overcomes the passions; law overcomes even affection for parents; it prevails over love for one's wife, holds sway over love for one's children, friends, and prevails even over enmity (4 Macc 2:9–14). The author then balances the law with reason (λογισμός): “reason overcomes even the more aggressive passions: love of power, vainglory, boasting, arrogance and envy” (4 Macc 2:15).

This balancing act seems to point to Jewish-Hellenistic thought and I deliberately use Jewish as the first term, in order to place the emphasis on the Jewish dimension. The determinative factor is found in verse 23: “and to this mind he gave the law”. Reason on its own is not enough for the author; reason/mind (λογισμός) needs the *torat Moshe*.

In the final analysis it is clear to me that the author in fact made use of Hellenistic ideas, such as the role of mind/reason, but these are put into perspective by Jewish thought, the *torat Moshe* (see LXX Prov). This would appeal to a Hellenised person, who could for that matter have been a Hasmonean as demonstrated above.

Date and provenance

Again, it is rather difficult to determine when and where this treatise came to be. Attractive possibilities have been suggested. But some theoretical reflection is needed first. The problem remains that there is no reference to a specific author nor to a specific location. Internal considerations reveal some hints. The author clearly utilised 2 Maccabees, which naturally implies that he was writing at a later date. Van Henten (1997:50–53) suggested a date between 124 B.C.E. and 63 B.C.E. This could be an indication of a possible *terminus a quo*. The issue of anti-Judaic persecutions has been offered as a possible option for the dating, with the persecutions during the reign of Caligula in Alexandria, or the Diaspora revolts of 115–117 as examples. De Silva (2006:XV) is correct in rejecting these suggestions. The treatise (oration) after all promotes a general Judaic way of life rather than a response to specific dangerous

events in history. Again the torah plays a central role in this regard.

Attempts have been made to determine whether the temple was still functioning in Jerusalem at the time of writing (De Silva 2006:XV). Chapter 4:18–20 has been interpreted as such: “So the king turned over to him both the highpriesthood and the leadership of the nation. Jason changed the nation’s way of life and altered its form of government in complete transgression of the law, so that he not only constructed a gymnasium on the very citadel of our homeland but also abolished the temple service.” It must be conceded that this sounds as if the temple is still in operation, as was indeed argued by Bickerman (1976:278). However, the temple is mentioned far less in 4 Maccabees than in 2 Maccabees, which – according to De Silva (2006:XV), Collins (1983:187) and Van Henten (1997:77) – has to do with the author’s interest in the Jews in the Diaspora. According to De Silva (2006:XV), the *terminus ad quem* is the apparent influence that 4 Maccabees had on some Christian writings of the second century C.E.

Other external data are helpful. The difference between the description of governor Apollonius’s jurisdiction from “Coeloesyria and Phoenicia” in 2 Macc 3:5 to “Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia” in 4 Maccabees is significant. De Silva (2006:XV) mentions that the latter three regions functioned under one administrator from 19–72 C.E.

Linguistic and stylistic criteria should also be considered. Greek words such as νομικός instead of γραμματεὺς in 2 Macc 6:18 (Hadas 1953:169) and θρησκεία as a term for religion in 4 Macc 5:7 and 13 (Bickerman 1976:277) seem to place the work in the early part of the second century C.E. (De Silva 2006:XV). Breitenstein (1978:177–78) made exhaustive analyses of the vocabulary of 4 Macc. On the basis of that study he opted for a date from the late first century to the early second century C.E. Interesting are his findings regarding the application of *hapax legomena* and neologisms. As I indicated in my research on LXX Proverbs (Cook and Van der Kooij 2012:95–102), this is a sure sign of a creative author, even though it is a problematic criterion for dating purposes (De Silva 2006:XV).

According to Van Henten (1997:58), 4 Maccabees is unusual for the Septuagint

because more than a quarter of its vocabulary does not occur in its other books. In addition, the book shares only about ten percent of its vocabulary with the so-called apocryphal/deuterocanonical books of the Septuagint.

Finally, the style and philosophical eclecticism of the treatise resemble the so-called “Second Sophistic” movement which, according to Dupont-Sommer (1939:75–86), is a pointer to the late first and early second century C.E. However, it is true that such eclecticism was in vogue during the whole of the first century (Renehan 1972:227).

Van Henten (1997:77) also opted for a later date. Interesting is his view on the “spiritualizing” of the notion of the “land of the Jews” and Jewish political institutions. The author speaks fervently about Judaea in 1:11, 17:21 and in 4:5 and 20. Van Henten (1997:77) is also aware of the author’s conservative political views. Two further aspects mentioned by Van Henten (1997:77) are significant: the correspondence between 4 Maccabees and the apostolic fathers, and the relationship between 4 Maccabees and the NT.

I agree with De Silva that the latter part of the dating range 19–72 C.E. could be accepted. This leaves ample time “for 4 Maccabees to inculcate an ideology of martyrdom that could feed the early-second century” (2006:XVII).

As to the provenance, there seems to be a consensus that 4 Maccabees originated in the Diaspora (Van Henten 1997:78). In this regard scholars have focused on Alexandria as a possible place of origin. There are naturally many examples of texts from Alexandria, such as Philo of Alexandria, the Letter of Aristeas and the Pentateuchal versions of the Septuagint. De Silva (2006:XVII) has highlighted some problems in this regard. Firstly, the author of 4 Maccabees does not use allegorical exegesis. Secondly, Alexandria was not the only centre of Jewish learning – Jerusalem was a comparable place of learning.³ This applies to any other major Western Mediterranean city where a Jewish orator could have learned about Greco-Roman debates and argumentation techniques (2006:XVIII).

According to De Silva (2006:XVIII), Syrian Antioch had a large Jewish

³ Hengel (1973:130). See also Cook and Van der Kooij (2012:165).

community and can very well qualify as possible place of origin. There was a great interest in Jewish martyrs here and, according to Dupont-Sommer (1939:67–68), Christians even revered Jewish martyrs as saints. Schatkin (1974:103) suggested that a Jewish synagogue was built over the relics in Antioch.

Be that as it may, according to De Silva (2006:XVIII), internal evidence seems to point to a provenance in the area between Asia Minor and Syrian Antioch. According to Norden (1923:1.416–20) and Breitenstein (1978:179), the style of the work has much in common with the “Asiatic” style. In the final analysis Van Henten (1997:80) suggested “that the discourse originated in a city of Asia Minor around 100 CE or a short time later”. Two arguments seem to be decisive to him.

1) A shift in references concerning the Seleucid rulers in 4 Maccabees compared to parallel material in 2 Maccabees.

2) The vocabulary of the fictitious epitaph in 4 Macc 17:8–10, which shows correspondence to terminology of Jewish and non-Jewish inscriptions from Asia Minor.

It is not possible to come to any final conclusions concerning the provenance of 4 Maccabees, at least not within the limited scope of this paper. Nevertheless, a strong case can be made for a city of Asia Minor. What is beyond dispute is that the author was a Jew, who addressed Jews, calling them “Israelites”, “children descended from the seed of Abraham” (18:1). These listeners were also loyal to the *torat Moshe*. On the other hand, these Jews were clearly appreciative of the culture of the Greco-Roman world. According to De Silva (2006:XV), the implied audience of 4 Maccabees were “the ‘ideal’ recipients of his defense and promotion of the Jewish way of life in all its peculiarities and particularities as a ‘philosophy’ that achieves and even outstrips the ethical goals and ideals articulated within Greco-Roman philosophical discourse”. The audience consisted of Hellenised Jews.

CONCLUSION

Goldstein (1983:19) holds the following view on the identification of groups in early

Judaism: “The combination of doctrines upheld in the abridged history cannot be made to fit the viewpoint of any Jewish group known to us. This fact need not imply that the author was an isolated thinker in his time. Rather, it probably reflects our ignorance of the opinions which were circulating then among Jews.” Hopefully this paper has contributed towards the identification of such groups. It seems to me that the translator of LXX Proverbs came from a similar scribal school, or tradition, as the author of 4 Maccabees.

In the final analysis, this paper has demonstrated that 2 and 4 Maccabees differ dramatically as far as authorship and provenance are concerned. These differences are, *inter alia*, the result of contextual factors.

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