
LION IMAGERY IN 1 MACCABEES 3:4

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ABSTRACT

A very interesting case of lion imagery appears in 1 Macc 3:4. In this verse, the poet compares Judas Maccabee to a lion and a roaring cub. These similes merit closer investigation as part of the narrator's characterisation of Judas as one of the narrative's main protagonists and as unique examples of lion images in early Jewish literature. This study undertakes such an investigation and concludes that the lion images communicate the fearsomeness of Judas, his power to dominate his enemies and to protect his people. They make a small contribution to the narrator's portrayal of Judas in 1 Macc 3:1–26 as a mighty warrior whose military feats against his enemies are in service of his people and win him great renown.

INTRODUCTION

The lion is a prevalent and polyvalent symbol in the ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible writings and other early Jewish literature (Strawn 2007:42–61; 2005). It appears in various literary genres and contexts in connection with different referents and communicates a variety of meanings.¹ The ancient Near Eastern sources present the lion as a fearsome and dangerous wild animal. The danger and fearsomeness of lions is based on the two primary aspects of these animals that are communicated by the

¹ For overviews of the appearance of animals, including lions, in Hittite, Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature, as well as writings from the Levant, see Borowski (2002:289–306); Collins (2002:237–250); Foster (2002:271–288); and Teeter (2002:251–270). The lion is also one of the most common motifs in ancient Near Eastern art and is found, for example, in reliefs, sculpture, ivory work, seals, scarabs, weights, bowls, vases and various instruments. Cf. Cornelius (1989:53–54). Regarding lions in Persian (Achaemenid) art (reliefs, statues, seals and coins), see, for example, Briant (2002:218, 230–232 [illus. 29a], 606 [illus. 50a, d], 607–608, 714–715 [illus. 61a–d, f]); and Root (2002:198–203).

lion imagery, namely, their power and the threat they pose to other creatures (including humans). In Egyptian, Hittite, neo-Assyrian and Persian literature and art, the lion is closely associated with the king and serves as part of the royal ideology (cf. Arbuckle 2012:216–218; Strawn 2005:153–181; Janowski & Neumann-Gorsolke 1993:108–111). On the one hand, the power and dominance of the lion make it an ideal symbolic animal for kings and their authority. In Egypt, especially, lions are depicted by the side of the pharaoh or attacking the same enemies whom the pharaoh is portrayed as smiting (cf. Keel 1990:43 illus. 18; 1980:76 illus. 103; Cornelius 1989:58–59). Such depictions invite the audience to draw a comparison between the pharaoh and the lion. The king can also be described as or represented by a lion.² On the other hand, lions are used as symbols of enemies and representatives of the wild, chaotic, counter-human world that is opposed to and threatens the ordered, cultural realm of human civilisation. The king has the duty of protecting his land against these inimical forces and, therefore, they are often portrayed as fighting and defeating human enemies and hunting and killing lions. Scenes of war are also paralleled with hunting scenes.³ The hunting of lions by neo-Assyrian kings was a religious act, performed on divine command,⁴ and demonstrated the king's dominance over the

² For example, pharaoh Ramesses III (1186–1155 B.C.E.) is called or compared to a lion (*rw* and *m3i*) in several of the inscriptions at Medinet Habu. For relevant texts, see Kitchen (1983:13, 16, 17, 22, 26, 29, 31, 32, 37, 44, 45, 58, 60, 70).

³ Cf. Keel (1990:29–55 illustrations 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27; 1980:259; 1978:76–81 illus. 9; table Ib); Cornelius (1989:55–58). The connection between war and hunting is illustrated well on an ivory panel from the royal palace at Ugarit. On the panel there are adjacent plates that show the Ugaritic king blinding an enemy with his sword, and soldiers with bows and sickle swords. These plates are flanked by a plate that depicts the king hunting a lion and one that shows the king carrying a lion in his arms (cf. Cornelius & Niehr 2004:60, 61 illustrations 101a and 102a). Another good example is the scene of Ramesses III hunting lions in his chariot at Medinet Habu (exterior north wall). In the bottom register of this scene, divisions of armed soldiers are shown marching from right to left (Epigraphic Survey 1930: plate 35).

⁴ In an inscription (RIMAP 2 A.0.87.1 column vi lines 76–81), Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.E.) claims that “By the command of the god Ninurta, who loves me, I killed on foot 120 lions with my wildly outstanding assault. In addition, 800 lions I felled from my light chariot” (*i-na si-qir^d nin-urta ra-'i-mi-ia 2 šu-ši UR.MAḤ.MEŠ i-na lib-bi-ia ek-di i-na qit-ru-ub mi-it-lu-ti-ia i-na ĠİR.MEŠ-ia lu a-duk ù 8 ME UR.MAḤ.MEŠ i-na ĠIŠ.GIGIR-ia i-na pat-tu-te ú-šem-qit*). According to an inscription of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.E.) from Kalḫu (RIMAP 2 A.0.101.30 lines 84–86), the gods Ninurta and Nergal bestowed on

powers of chaos and his ability to keep these forces at bay.⁵ The capture of wild animals such as lions also communicated that the king could maintain order in his realm.

The writings that form part of the Hebrew Bible apply lion images metaphorically to four referents: the self or the righteous, the enemy or the wicked, the monarch or the mighty one, and the deity (Strawn 2007:42; 2005:46–65). In all these cases, the lion images signify power, threat and fearsomeness (cf. Strawn 2005:66; Deist 2000:129–130). These were the characteristics of lions that would have been “uppermost in people’s minds” (Strawn 2005:66). Nevertheless, in contrast to other ancient Near Eastern sources, the writings of the Hebrew Bible do not identify Israelite or Judean kings with lions or compare them to these animals in positive settings. These texts also do not describe the military activities of the kings positively with lion imagery (Strawn 2005:236; Borowski 2002:301; Janowski & Neumann-Gorsolke 1993:109).

The early Jewish literature of the Second Temple period mention lions in connection with negative attitudes and deeds, evil people and various entities (e.g., sin, Satan and the tongue). Lions are also tools of divine punishment in a few passages, while other texts depict kings and messiahs as lions. Daniel in the lions’ den and power over or like lions are also recurring themes in these writings (cf. Strawn 2007:43–60). 1 Maccabees is one of the early Jewish texts that contain such lion imagery. In 1 Macc 3:4, Judas Maccabee is compared to a lion and a roaring cub.⁶

him the beasts of the field and commanded him to go hunting (^dMAŠ u ^dIGI.DU šá SANGA-ti i-ra-mu MÁŠ.ANŠE EDIN ú-šat-li-mu-ni-ma e-peš ba-’u-ú-ri iq-bu-ni). He subsequently killed, *inter alia*, 450 “strong lions” (4 ME 50 UR.MAḤ.MEŠ KAL.MEŠ a-duk).

⁵ In this regard, Riede (2002:236) remarks in connection with Egyptian and Mesopotamian kings: “Die Jagd dieser Könige auf die als feindlich empfundene Tierwelt, vor allem der Kampf gegen den König der Tiere, den Löwen, hatte zudem einen rituellen Charakter: Sie sollte einerseits die chaotischen Kräfte, die die Ordnung der Welt gefährdeten und die sich in den wilden Tieren verdichteten, abwehren, sie verlieh andererseits dem König Eigenschaften, die ihm bei der Kriegsführung zugute kamen und die ihm dabei halfen, feindliche Herrscher zu besiegen.”

⁶ Although Judas is not explicitly identified as the subject of the third-person singular verbs and personal pronouns in 1 Macc 3:3–9, the narrative portions in which the poem is embedded introduce and characterise Judas as the main protagonist in this part of the narrative. The literary context of the poem therefore invites the reader to understand Judas as the subject of the poem.

This lion imagery is part of a poem (1 Macc 3:3–9) that eulogises Judas’ deeds and accomplishments⁷ and contributes to the characterisation of Judas in the larger narrative context of 1 Macc 3:1–26.⁸ The lion similes in 1 Macc 3:4 merit closer examination to establish how they fit into the characterisation of Judas Maccabee in the poem of 1 Macc 3:3–9 and its narrative context. Given that the lion similes in this passage were not used in a cultural vacuum, it would also be of interest to determine how unique they are when compared to the lion imagery in other early Jewish literature. In this regard, the uniqueness of the lion similes in 1 Macc 3:4 can be better understood when they are compared to similar lion images in 1 Maccabees’ literary predecessors in the Hebrew Bible and their Greek translations, as well as those in the contemporary Jewish writings. This study presents an examination of the lion similes in 1 Macc 3:4 with these goals in mind.

The examination focuses on the Old Greek text of 1 Maccabees.⁹ Scholars generally agree that the Greek version of 1 Maccabees is a “fairly literal translation into Septuagintal Greek from the original Hebrew” (Bartlett 1998:17).¹⁰ Unfortunately, textual representatives of 1 Maccabees’ Hebrew *Vorlage* have not survived. In spite of the “literal” nature of the Greek version’s translation technique, the lack of Hebrew manuscripts complicates text-critical work on 1 Maccabees, because it makes any comparative analyses of the Hebrew and Greek versions impossible. It also affects historical-critical studies that seek to identify the different

⁷ In a recent historical-critical study on 1 Maccabees, Borchardt (2012:74) notes that vv. 3–9 of 1 Macc 3 are formally different from the surrounding narrative prose. He identifies these verses as a poetic passage and labels it a *Preisgedicht*. Cf. also Van Henten (1996:199–206).

⁸ 1 Macc 3:1 forms the beginning of a new narrative unit with changes of subject (Judas assumes the role of main actor in the following narrated events) and time (Judas takes the place of Mattathias after the latter’s death). Verses 25–26 mark the end of the episodes that relate Judas’ initial military victories. They summarise the effects of these victories: Judas and his brothers were feared by the nations around them and his reputation even reached the king, while “every nation” discussed his battles. 1 Macc 3:27 introduces a new episode with a shift in focus on Antiochus’ reaction after he heard about Judas.

⁹ The study makes use of the Göttingen edition of 1 Maccabees’ Greek text that was prepared by Kappler (1967).

¹⁰ Cf. also Tilly (2011:1353, 1355); Goldstein (1976:14). On the Semitic character of the Greek translation, see the summary provided by Zervos (2007:478–479).

layers of the composition and its diachronic development into its existing shape,¹¹ as well as attempts to use 1 Maccabees as a resource to reconstruct the history of Judaea in the second century B.C.E. This study neither assumes that 1 Maccabees in its Old Greek form represents an originally unified composition (which would rule out historical-critical analyses) nor that it cannot serve as a possible source of historical information on the early second century B.C.E. (provided that it is critically examined). Its point of departure, however, is that the Old Greek text of 1 Maccabees can be appreciated as a narrative with episodes, plotline and characterisations irrespective of its value as a source of “accurate” historical information or its proximity to the “original” shape of the Hebrew composition. Accordingly, the study treats the Greek translation as an example of ancient historiography which presents a narrative account of events in Judaea from the appearance of Antiochus IV Epiphanes as “king of the Greeks” (1 Macc 1:10) to the death of the last of Mattathias’ sons, Simon (1 Macc 16:16), and the inception of the reign of John Hyrcanus.¹²

For the purposes of the examination of the lion similes in 1 Macc 3:4, the study first investigates the characterisation of Judas Maccabee in the Greek text of 1 Macc 3:1–26. This characterisation consists of the (biographical) information that the implied narrator supplies about Judas, the narrator’s remarks on Judas’ deeds and words (and the effects thereof on the narrated events), as well as the deeds, words and intentions of Judas’ enemies. This investigation aims to shed light on the larger literary context in which the lion similes of 1 Macc 3:4 can be interpreted as

¹¹ The fact that textual representatives of 1 Maccabees’ Hebrew *Vorlage* are not available to scholars has important implications for historical-critical investigations. Without manuscripts that represent the Hebrew *Vorlage*, it is difficult to ascertain whether the identified small- or large-scale additions to the supposed original form were part of the Greek translation’s parent text or were introduced by the translator. Borchardt (2012:53), for example, is of the opinion that all additions were part of the Hebrew text from which the Greek translation was made. Future historical-critical studies on 1 Maccabees, however, cannot simply assume that purported secondary material was all part of the Greek translation’s *Vorlage*.

¹² On examples of ancient historiography among early Jewish writings, see Attridge (1986:311–343). According to some scholars, the author of 1 Maccabees modelled his work on the historiographical writings that would later be included in the Hebrew Bible (Attridge 1986:311; Goldstein 1976:14).

contributors to the characterisation of Judas. Subsequently, the study briefly focuses on passages in the writings of the Hebrew Bible, their Septuagint counterparts and other early Jewish literature where lion images are positively applied to the violent actions of non-royal human individuals. Although the limits of this study rule out detailed analyses of these passages, an examination of their lion images can reveal how unique the similes in 1 Macc 3:4 are in comparison to them. In this way the study hopes to present a fresh understanding of the lion similes in 1 Macc 3:4 as part of the narrative's characterisation of Judas Maccabee (as represented by the Greek translation) and as a unique example of lion imagery in early Jewish literature.

CHARACTERISATION OF JUDAS IN 1 MACC 3:3–9 AND THE SURROUNDING VERSES

1 Macc 3:1–2, 10–26

The poem of 1 Macc 3:3–9 forms part of the narrator's account in vv. 1–26 of how Judas succeeded his father, Mattathias, as leader of the resistance against the command of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This royal command amounted to an abrogation of the ancestral laws of Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah and a command to follow "precepts foreign to the land" (*νομίμων ἀλλοτρίων τῆς γῆς*; 1 Macc 1:44).¹³ Given that the narrator devotes a great deal of his narrative to the exploits of Judas, the poem and the account of Judas' initial victories in vv. 10–26 are important as an introduction to one of the narrative's main protagonists. In addition to the poem and the narrator's other comments about Judas and his deeds, the audience is also informed about the character of Judas by what the commander of the Syrian army,

¹³ On the ancestral laws, see the remarks of Doran (2011:426–432). According to 1 Macc 1:43–64, the ancestral laws which Antiochus's command "outlawed" included sabbath and festival observances, the offering of various sacrifices at the temple, circumcision and dietary regulations. The "foreign precepts" such as the sacrifices to idols apparently had the goal of making all the peoples in the kingdom "to be as one people" (*εἶναι πάντας εἰς λαὸν ἓνα*; 1 Macc 1:41). Scholars continue to debate the reasons that motivated Antiochus' command. For different views, see Doran (2011:423–433); Scurlock (2000:125–161); Gruen (1993:238–264); Goldstein (1976:104–160); Hengel (1973:503–554); Tcherikover (1959:175–203); and Bickermann (1937:126–133).

Seron, says in 1 Macc 3:14 and Judas' own speech in 1 Macc 3:18–22.

The narrator introduces the poem by noting in vv. 1–2 that Judas took the place of his father and that his brothers, as well as those who joined Mattathias' resistance, helped him. This is in keeping with Mattathias' wishes which the narrator quotes in 1 Macc 2:66:

καὶ Ἰουδᾶς Μακκαβαῖος ἰσχυρὸς δυνάμει ἐκ νεότητος αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς ἔσται ὑμῖν
ἄρχων στρατιᾶς καὶ πολεμήσει πόλεμον λαῶν

And Ioudas Makkabaios has been strong in power since his youth. He shall be commander of the army and shall fight the war of the peoples. (NETS)

In the opening verse of Chapter 3, the narrator also repeats the information from 1 Macc 2:4 that Judas was called Μακκαβαῖος. Scholars relate this nickname to the Hebrew word *חֲמָטָה* or its Aramaic equivalent *חַמְטָה* (cf. Tilly 2011:1357; Schäfer 1983:63; Schürer 1973:158). Both words mean “hammer” (HALOT 625; BDB 666; Jastrow 2005:829).¹⁴ As a form of characterisation, such a nickname can conjure up the image of one who is instrumental in effecting change through force.¹⁵

The two episodes that follow the poem, the battle against Apollonius (1 Macc 3:10–12) and the battle against Seron (1 Macc 3:13–26) demonstrate the appropriateness of Judas' nickname. The narrator says of Judas that “he went out to meet” (ἐξῆλθεν [Ἰουδᾶς] εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῶ) his two foes (vv. 11, 16). This might be a way to communicate the narrator's point of view that Judas did not play the role of the aggressor in the two conflicts (cf. Bickermann 1937:28–29). According to the narrator, it was Apollonius (v. 10) and Seron (vv. 13–15) who started the hostilities. Of course, Judas decisively defeats both of them. Whereas the narrator claims that Seron and his company were “smashed before him” (συνετρίβη ... ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ; v. 23), he creates the impression that Judas struck and killed Apollonius himself (cf. v. 11). He adds that

¹⁴ According to Deist (2000:213), *חַמְטָה* was the hammer smiths used to mould iron by pounding the hot metal on an anvil (cf. e.g., Isa 44:12), while gold and silver were hammered into plates with another hammer, *שֵׁטֶף*. The latter was also used for stone dressing.

¹⁵ Regarding different explanations of the nickname, see Schürer (1973:158 n. 49).

Judas took Apollonius' sword (*μάχαιρα*) and “fought with it all his days” (*ἦν πολεμῶν ἐν αὐτῇ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας*). This is reminiscent of David who received the sword of Goliath from Ahimelech, the priest of Nob (1 Sam 21:10–11). Both David and Judas took possession of the sword of the enemies whom they defeated in their first recorded military victory in defence of Israel.

Moreover, the narrator makes Judas utter words that recall a statement made by Jonathan, the friend of David. Judas' speech, in which he dispels the fears of his companions who are concerned about their small number and their weakened state (v. 17), reassures them that victory comes from heaven and is not obtained through the strength in an army's numbers (vv. 18–22). The theology implied by this speech is similar to that expressed by Jonathan in 1 Sam 14:6/1 Kgdms 14:6 (Goldstein 1976:247; McCarter 1980:239):

1 Macc 3:18

καὶ οὐκ ἔστι διαφορὰ ἐναντίον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ σώζειν ἐν πολλοῖς ἢ ἐν ὀλίγοις

And it makes no difference before heaven to save by many or by a few. (NETS)

1 Kgdms 14:6¹⁶

ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν τῷ κυρίῳ συνεχόμενον σώζειν ἐν πολλοῖς ἢ ἐν ὀλίγοις

... for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few. (NETS)

The theology of a divine warrior who personally fights for his people and grants them victory in spite of seemingly insurmountable odds (cf. v. 22) is interesting in the mouth of Judas.¹⁷ It shows him in a pious light and does not contrast with the

¹⁶ The Greek text is quoted from the edition of Rahlfs (2006:525). The wording of the Masoretic text (MT), as represented by Codex Leningradensis, reads as follows: *כִּי אֵין לַיהוָה מַעְצוֹר לְהוֹשִׁיעַ בְּרַב אִו בְּמַעַט*.

¹⁷ Scholars draw attention to the fact that in 1 Maccabees, God is nowhere said to be directly involved with the events that unfold (cf. Schürer 1986:180; von Rad 1969:84; Bickermann 1937:27–28). Von Rad (1969:84) suggests that the “historian” of 1 Maccabees was more interested in glorifying the Jewish people than in the description of God's acts in history. The “divine warrior”-theology is nevertheless expressed in Judas' speeches and prayers before battles (cf. 1 Macc 4:9, 30; 7:40). 1 Macc 4:30 is especially noteworthy in connection with 1 Macc 3:18, seeing as Judas here explicitly refers to God's deliverance of the camp of the Philistines into the hands of Jonathan. Judas' subsequent victories confirm the theology of his speeches and prayers. Interestingly, the narrator makes sure to omit any

narrator's emphasis on Judas' military prowess and achievements in the preceding verses. The narrator portrays Judas and his brothers as the divinely chosen, powerful, yet pious, vehicles of Israel's salvation from their arrogant enemies (cf. 1 Macc 5:62).

Judas' victory over Seron elicited fear of him and his brothers from the nations all around, according to 1 Macc 3:25. Verse 26 claims that every nation was discussing the battles of Judas at length and that his reputation reached the king himself. This is not only an important note regarding the widespread fame of Judas, even among his enemies, but also shows that Seron's plans and expectations were thwarted. The narrator tells his audience in v. 14 how Seron decided to make war on Judas and those with him who disregard the royal commands. He thought that by defeating Judas he would secure for himself a reputation and glory in the kingdom. His plans were, however, doomed to failure and after his large army's defeat at the hands of Judas' small company, it was Judas' reputation that grew in the kingdom.

Although the narrator ends his introduction of Judas as a main protagonist in vv. 25–26 with this note on his fearsomeness and fame, he also makes it clear that Judas' battles were not fought for his own sake. His actions benefitted the people of Israel. Verse 2 observes that Judas, his brothers and those people who joined Mattathias' cause fought the wars for Israel with gladness (*ἐπολέμουν τὸν πόλεμον Ἰσραηλ μετ' εὐφροσύνης*). In this regard, vv. 10 and 15 state that Apollonius gathered a large force from Samaria with the purpose of making war against Israel (*τοῦ πολεμῆσαι πρὸς τὸν Ἰσραηλ*) and that Seron wanted to take revenge on the descendants of Israel (*ποιῆσαι τὴν ἐκδίκησιν ἐν υἱοῖς Ἰσραηλ*). Furthermore, in Judas' speech (vv. 20–21), he declares that he and his men fight not only for their own lives, but also for the lives of their families and for their laws.

These brief remarks on the characterisation of Judas Maccabee in 1 Macc 3:1–2, 10–26 show that the narrator focuses on this protagonist's military actions against the enemies of his people, his selfless motives, as well as his widespread fame. These themes are also found in the poem of 1 Macc 3:3–9.

mention of this theology in his account of the battle against Bacchides in which Judas loses his life (cf. 1 Macc 9:7–18).

1 Macc 3:3–9

The Greek text of 1 Macc 3:3–9 in the Göttingen edition reads as follows:¹⁸

καὶ ἐπλάτυνε δόξαν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ καὶ
ἐνεδύσατο θώρακα ὡς γίγας καὶ
συνεζώσατο τὰ σκεύη τὰ πολεμικὰ αὐτοῦ
καὶ πολέμους συνεστήσατο σκεπάζων
παρεμβολὴν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ
καὶ ὡμοιώθη λέοντι ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ καὶ
ὡς σκύμνος ἐρευγόμενος εἰς θήραν.
καὶ ἐδίωξεν ἀνόμους ἐξερευνῶν καὶ τοὺς
ταράσσοντας τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἐφλόγισε.
καὶ συνεστάλησαν οἱ ἄνομοι ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου
αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάντες οἱ ἐργάται τῆς ἀνομίας
συνεταράχθησαν, καὶ εὐοδῶθη σωτηρία ἐν
χειρὶ αὐτοῦ.
καὶ ἐπίκρανε βασιλεῖς πολλοὺς καὶ εὐφρανε
τὸν Ιακωβ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἕως τοῦ
αἰῶνος τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτοῦ εἰς εὐλογίαν.
καὶ διήλθεν ἐν πόλεσιν Ἰούδα καὶ
ἐξωλέθρευσεν ἀσεβεῖς ἐξ αὐτῆς καὶ
ἀπέστρεψεν ὄργην ἀπὸ Ἰσραηλ καὶ
ὠνομάσθη ἕως ἐσχάτου γῆς

And he spread glory to his people and put on a breastplate like a giant and strapped on his war instruments. And he conducted battles, protecting the camp by the sword.

And he resembled a lion in his works and was like a whirl roaring in the hunt.

And seeking out the lawless, he persecuted them and burned up those who disturbed his people.

And the lawless drew back for fear of him, and all the workers of lawlessness were disturbed, and salvation was successful by his hand.

And he caused bitterness to many kings, and gladness to Iakob by his works, and his memory will be a blessing forever.

And he went through the cities of Iouda and annihilated the impious from it and turned away wrath from Israel. And his name was known to the ends of the earth.

(NETS)

¹⁸ The last clause of v. 9, καὶ συνήγαγεν ἀπολλυμένους, is left out of consideration in the analysis. In view of the similar wording at the beginning of v. 10, καὶ συνήγαγεν Ἀπολλώνιος, it might be a doublet, but without a manuscript of the Hebrew parent text, it is impossible to confirm whether it is a translational doublet or a faithful translation of a double reading in the *Vorlage*. The reading is found in both the Syriac and Latin translations of 1 Macc 3:9. With regard to the Peshitta, the text of 1 Macc 1:1–14:25 represented by the seventh century manuscript, Codex Ambrosianus, exhibits a revision of the Syriac wording in accordance with a Greek text (Penna, Bakker & Jenner 2013:v). In their recent edition of the Syriac text of 1 Maccabees, Penna, Bakker and Jenner print the version preserved by MS Add. 14.446 of the British Library as the base text. At 1 Macc 3:9, the reading in question is ܠܗܘܘܢ ܡܫܘܒܝܢ (“gathering the scattered”) in this manuscript and ܠܗܘܘܢ ܠܘܘܝܢ (“gathering the lost”) in Codex Ambrosianus (Penna, Bakker & Jenner 2013:20, 21). The reading in the Latin text of Weber’s edition of the Vulgate (2007:1439) is *et congregavit pereuntes* (“and he gathered the ones who were perishing”).

The main clauses in v. 3 can be read as a chiasm (abb'a' pattern). The clause *καὶ ἐπλάτυνεν δόξαν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ* (a) corresponds with *καὶ πολέμους συνεστήσατο σκεπάζων παρεμβολὴν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ* (a') and *καὶ ἐνεδύσατο θώρακα ὡς γίγας* (b) corresponds with *καὶ συνεζώσατο τὰ σκεύη τὰ πολεμικὰ αὐτοῦ* (b'). On this interpretation, Judas is pictured as a mighty warrior outfitted in his military apparel and the glory he increased for his people pertains to the battles he conducted in protection of the camp. Verse 5 portrays Judas on the offensive, actively hunting down and persecuting the lawless¹⁹ and burning those who disturbed his people. Both v. 3 and v. 5 maintain that the violence that Judas perpetrated was for the benefit of his people. Verses 6–9 continue this theme: Judas succeeded in delivering his people, he brought joy to Jacob and his deeds diverted wrath from Israel. The verses also add all the workers of lawlessness, many kings and the impious to the list of Judas' enemies, whom he disturbed, embittered and utterly destroyed. Moreover, in hyperbolic language, the verses relate the effects of Judas' actions, namely, that the lawless cowered in fear of him, that his memory will be an eternal blessing and that his reputation reached to the ends of the earth.

When, in the two parallel clauses of v. 4, the poet likens Judas in his deeds to a lion and compares him to a lion's cub that roars at its prey,²⁰ the rhetorical thrust of these lion images is tied up with the characterisation of Judas in the rest of the poem. This characterisation finds expression in themes which also appear in 1 Macc 3:1–2, 10–26 (Judas' military prowess as mighty warrior and vanquisher of his enemies, his

¹⁹ The references to the lawless and workers of lawlessness as enemies of Judas (vv. 5, 6) are significant. The audience is reminded of Mattathias' deathbed speech in which he encourages his sons to be zealous for the law (*ζηλώσατε τῷ νόμῳ*; 1 Macc 2:50) and to be strong in the law, because they will be glorified by it (*ισχύσατε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ δοξασθήσεσθε*; 1 Macc 2:64). By identifying the lawless and workers of lawlessness as some of Judas' enemies and by mentioning the eternal and widespread fame of Judas, the poem can be interpreted to imply that Judas obeyed his father's command and that he won the reward Mattathias promised.

²⁰ The question concerning the origin of the lion imagery in 1 Macc 3:4 is a complicated one. It is possible that the poet adapted the rhetorical questions in the bicolon of Amos 3:4: *דָּבַר לַיְהוָה אֵין לוֹ הִיָּתָן בְּפִיר קוֹלוֹ מִמְּעֻנְתּוֹ בְּלִתִּי אִם-לִכְדֹּד* ("Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Does a young lion bellow unless he has caught something?"). I thank Prof. Michael Tilly for drawing my attention to this possibility.

beneficial actions towards Israel and his fearsomeness and fame). The similes in 1 Macc 3:4 definitely evoke the power and threat of lions and, in this way, communicate the fearsomeness of Judas. The references to roaring and prey in the second clause of v. 4 call to mind the threatening nature of lions as predators and their ability to overpower, kill and devour other animals and humans. This links up well with the description of Judas as a mighty warrior and his violent deeds in the rest of the poem. The first clause of v. 4 claims that, in his deeds (*ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ*), Judas resembled a lion. These lion-like deeds can also be understood from the surrounding verses as violent, military actions. He supposedly performed these deeds to protect his people and, according to v. 7, he brought joy to Jacob with his deeds (*ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ*). The lion similes of 1 Macc 3:4 therefore serve as part of a positive depiction of Judas' famous feats of arms against enemies in service of his people. They convey the renowned fearsomeness of Judas as a mighty warrior, the threat he posed to his enemies (the lawless, wicked and many kings) and his power to overcome them, as well as to protect and save his people.

In order to gain a better perspective on the uniqueness of these similes as examples of lion imagery in early Jewish literature, it is imperative to consider passages in the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and other early Jewish writings where lion images are used to shine a positive light on the military exploits of non-royal human individuals and, subsequently, to determine how the similes in 1 Macc 3:4 compare with the lion images in these passages.

POSITIVE DEPICTIONS OF NON-ROYAL INDIVIDUALS' VIOLENT ACTIONS WITH LION IMAGERY

There are, possibly, only a few passages in the writings of the Hebrew Bible, their equivalents in the Septuagint and early Jewish literature in which non-royal human individuals and their violent actions are positively described with lion imagery. Jacob's blessing of Judah in Gen 49:8–10 and Moses' blessing of Gad and Dan in Deut 33:20, 22 are possible candidates in the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint, although there are difficulties in these texts that defy easy solutions and hamper consensus in

scholars' interpretation of the Hebrew and Greek wordings.

Gen 49:8–10 (emended MT wording)

יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה יוֹדוּךָ אֶחָיִךְ יָדְךָ בְּעַרְףְּ אֹיְבֶיךָ
 יִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְךָ בְּנֵי אָבִיךָ: גּוֹר אַרְיֵה יְהוּדָה מִטְרָף
 בְּנֵי עֲלִית כָּרַע רֶבֶץ בְּאַרְיֵה וּכְלָבִיא מִי יִקְיָמוּנוּ:
 לֹא־יִסּוּר שֹׁבֵט מִיְהוּדָה וּמַחֲקֵק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו עַד
 כִּי־יָבֹא שִׁי לָהּ וְלוֹ יִקְהַת עַמִּים:

As for you, Judah, your brothers praise you; your hand is on the neck of your enemies; and the sons of your father bow down to you. Judah is a lion's cub; from prey, my son, you go up; he stoops, he crouches like a lion and like a lioness; who will rouse him? A sceptre will not depart from Judah and a ruler's staff from between his feet, until his tribute²² comes; and to him belongs the obedience of nations.

LXX Gen 49:8–10²¹

Ἰούδα, σὲ αἰνέσαισαν οἱ ἀδελφοί σου· αἱ
 χεῖρές σου ἐπὶ νώτου τῶν ἐχθρῶν σου·
 προσκυνήσουσίν σε οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς σου.
 σκύμνος λέοντος Ἰούδα· ἐκ βλαστοῦ, υἱέ
 μου, ἀνέβης· ἀναπασῶν ἐκοιμήθης ὡς λέων
 καὶ ὡς σκύμνος· τίς ἐγερεῖ αὐτόν; οὐκ
 ἐκλείψει ἄρχων ἐξ Ἰούδα καὶ ἡγούμενος ἐκ
 τῶν μηρῶν αὐτοῦ, ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ τὰ
 ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, καὶ αὐτὸς προσδοκία
 ἐθνῶν.

Ioudas, may your brothers praise you; your hands be on the back of your enemies; your father's sons shall do obeisance to you. A lion's whelp you are, Ioudas; from a shoot, my son, you went up. When you reclined, you slept like a lion and like a whelp. Who will rouse him? A ruler shall not be wanting from Ioudas and a leader from his thighs until the things stored up for him come, and he is the expectation of nations. (NETS)

The metaphor in the first bicolon of the Hebrew text of Gen 49:9 equates Judah with a lion cub that stands up from prey (cf. Tov 2014:461). This image has the predatory

²¹ The text of LXX Gen 49:8–10 is quoted from the Göttingen edition prepared by Wevers (1974:459–460).

²² The reading in the MT, *שִׁילָה*, is generally considered to be problematic. For an overview of the interpretations and emendations of this reading, see de Hoop (1999:122–139). This study accepts the suggestion that the original reading is *שִׁי לָהּ*, i.e., the noun *שִׁי*, “tribute, gift” and the prepositional phrase *לָהּ*, “belonging to him”. The form of the third-person masculine singular suffix in this prepositional phrase is also found in Hebrew inscriptions (Gogel 1998:155–156, 159). Cf. also the forms *עִירָה*, “his foal” and *סוּתָה*, “his garment” in MT Gen 49:11.

nature of lions in view and denotes the power and dominance of lions over what has been hunted and killed. Whereas the metaphor refers to a cub that moves upward, the similes in the second bicolon of the verse compare Judah to a lion and lioness that assume a low body position. The rhetorical question *מִי יִקְרַמְנֵנוּ* works on the assumption that no one would dare to provoke a crouching lion or lioness, because they pose an imminent threat.²³ The lion metaphor and similes in v. 9, which communicate power, dominance and threat, can be brought into connection with the image of defeated enemies seized by the back of the neck in the middle verse-line of the tricolon in v. 8.²⁴ This is undoubtedly a military image that denotes Judah's power and control over his adversaries.²⁵ Therefore, in this passage, the lion imagery helps to portray Judah positively as a mighty, dominant and threatening conqueror of his enemies.²⁶ Verse 10, however, refers to the trappings (*מַחְקָק* and *שֶׁבֶט*) and tribute (*שִׁי* and *עַמִּים*)

²³ Cf. the reclining lions on Aramean, northern Israelite and Phoenician seals, as well as the ivory ones from Samaria that formed part of furniture (a bed or throne). The mouths of these reclining lions are open. They roar and bare their teeth. This communicates their threatening nature and, in the case of the lions that formed part of furniture, their power to guard and protect the occupant of the furniture (Strawn 2005:414 illus. 3.145, 464 illus. 4.182, 4.184, 4.186; Keel & Uehlinger 1998:188, 189, 190 illus. 204).

²⁴ Cf. a bulla from Samaria that pictures a warrior with a raised weapon in one hand holding a defeated enemy by the back of the neck with the other hand. The hands of the enemy are tied behind his back. The inscription reads *lsr*, "to the leader/commander" (Schmitt 2001:110, 113 illus. 90).

²⁵ Cf. 1QM Col. 12 line 11 (תן ידכה בעורף אויביכה) and Col. 19 line 3 (תן ידכה בעורף אויביך). In these passages, the image of a hand on the neck of enemies is followed by one of a foot on the backs of slain foes (ורגלכה על במותי חלל). These images are part of a list of directives that call on the deity to perform military actions: קומה גבור שבה שביכה איש כבוד ושול שללכה עושי חיל תן ידכה בעורף אויביכה ורגלכה על במותי חלל מחץ גוים צריכה וחרבכה תואכל בשר אשמה ("Rise up, O Hero. Take captives, O Glorious One. Take Your plunder, O You who do valiantly. Lay Your hand upon the neck of Your enemies, and Your foot upon the backs of the slain. Crush the nations, Your adversaries, and may Your sword devour guilty flesh"). The Hebrew text is quoted from the edition of Duhaime (1995:120) and the translation from Wise, Abegg and Cook (2005:159). Whereas the clause *תן ידכה בעורף אויביכה* uses the same image as the one in Jacob's blessing of Judah in Gen 49:8, it is noteworthy that *ורגלכה על במותי חלל* is similar (but not identical) to Isaac's blessing of Judah in *Jub.* 31:18: "May the LORD give you might and strength to *tread upon* all who hate you" (Wintermute 2011:115 [italics added]).

²⁶ Cf. the comments of Westermann (1982:259–260) and von Rad (1953:371) who interpret the lion image in Gen 49:9 as laudatory.

associated with kings and this casts Judah in the role of royalty.

LXX Gen 49:8–10 retains the threatening tenor of the lion images in the wording of v. 9b, but where the Hebrew text refers to prey (יָרֵט), the Greek version has the translation equivalent ἐκ βλαστοῦ. Accordingly, in the Greek translation of v. 9a, Jacob says that Judah went up “from a branch”. Tov (2014:461) argues that the translator misunderstood the Hebrew text and was influenced by the Aramaic word כְּפָרֵט, “branch”. Other scholars, however, see in the botanic image of βλαστός a reminder of or potential connection with the “shoot” imagery in Isa 11:1 (Horbury 2006:109; Rösel 2006:157; Harl 1994:308). This opens the possibility that the rendering has messianic connotations (Prestel & Schorch 2011:253). The next verse has also been associated with messianic expectations (Horbury 2006:109; Rösel 2006:158–160; Wevers 1993:826), although some scholars remain sceptical about this and argue against the understanding that LXX Gen 49:10 has a future royal messiah in view (cf. e.g., van der Kooij 2014:501–504; Collins 2006:135–141; Sollamo 2006:368–370). The interpretive translations of שבט and מקק with ἄρχων and ἡγούμενος, as well as the renderings of יסור and מבין רגליו with ἐκλείψει and ἐκ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτοῦ, leave no doubt that the blessing in LXX Gen 49:10a has to do with an unending line of rulers/leaders among the descendants of Judah. However, the subordinate clause ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ and the final verbless clause of the verse, καὶ αὐτὸς προσδοκία ἐθνῶν, have yielded different interpretations from scholars. Opinions are divided over the meaning of τὰ ἀποκείμενα (the translation equivalent of the difficult Hebrew form שִׁלְיָ)²⁷ and προσδοκία (the rendering of יִקְהָ),²⁸ as well as

²⁷ The Greek rendering reflects an understanding of the Hebrew form as the relative pronoun *ש* followed by a prepositional phrase, *הַלְּ*, “that which belongs to him” (van der Kooij 2014:496). The Peshitta translation, *ܘܫܝܠܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܘܨܝܢ ܗܘܢܝܢ* (“until he to whom it belongs come”) reflects a similar interpretation of *שִׁלְיָ*. (cf. Lund 2012:558). The Targums of Genesis (Onqelos, Neofiti, Fragment-Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan) present messianic interpretations of *שִׁלְיָ* (cf. Fitzmyer 2007:154–155), while the Vulgate refers to a person that will be sent in the future: *donec veniat qui mittendus est* (cf. Weber 2007:74). On the different understandings of τὰ ἀποκείμενα in LXX Gen 49:10, see van der Kooij (2014:497–498); Prestel & Schorch (2011:252); Rösel (2006:159); Horbury (2006:109); Wevers (1993:826).

²⁸ According to some scholars, the translation equivalent *προσδοκία* implies that the Greek

over the identities of the referents of the third-person singular pronouns and ἐθνῶν.²⁹ Although the interpretation of ἐκ βλαστοῦ in LXX Gen 49:9 and the wording of v. 10 will probably continue to be a source of contention among scholars, it seems clear that the lion metaphor and similes applied to Judah in v. 9 are flanked by an image of Judah's power over his enemies (his hands are on a vulnerable part of their bodies, their backs) and a promise that there will ever be a ruler among Judah's offspring. Judah's power over his enemies, which wins him the praise and reverence of his brothers, and his role as progenitor of future rulers associate Judah with leadership and portray him as a force to be reckoned with. The threatening lion imagery in LXX Gen 49:9 also allude to this.

MT Deut 33:20³⁰

וְלֵגַד אָמַר בְּרוּךְ מְרַחֵב יָד בְּלִבְיָא שְׂכֵן וְטָרַף
יְרוּעַ אֶת-קַדְקֹדַי:

And concerning Gad, he said: "Blessed is

LXX Deut 33:20³¹

Καὶ τῷ Γὰδ εἶπεν Εὐλογημένος
ἐμπλατύνων Γὰδ· ὡς λέων ἀνεπαύσατο,
συντριψας βραχίονα καὶ ἄρχοντα.

And to Gad he said: Blessed be the one

translator derived יקה from the root קה (Tov 2014:461; van der Kooij 2014:496). Interestingly, the renderings of the verse's final clause in the Peshitta, *כלה נפשה יתקו* ("the nations will expect him"), and the Vulgate, *et ipse erit expectatio gentium* ("and he will be the expectation of nations") are similar to the reading in the Septuagint. These similarities in the ancient translations can either be attributed to the translators who independently arrived at the same interpretation of the Hebrew word, or to the influence of the Greek reading on the other translations. It is also possible that these translations' Hebrew *Vorlagen* shared a reading that differed from its counterpart in the MT. In the opinion of Collins (2006:140), the Greek text presupposes a different Hebrew reading (יהוה יתקו עמם), but he also maintains that we cannot be sure whether this reading was in the translator's *Vorlage*. With the exception of the translation equivalent in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, יתימסן ("[the people] will pine away" [cf. Maher 1992:159]), the renderings of יקה in the Targums of Genesis express obedience or subservience: ישתמען (Targum Onqelos; cf. Sperber 1959:85); ישתעבדן (Targum Neofiti and the Fragment-Targums [MS Vatican Ebr 440]; cf. Díez Macho 1968:331; Klein 1980:158).

²⁹ The referents of the pronouns are understood as either Judah or a future leader, while ἐθνῶν is interpreted as a reference to the nations in general or to the people of Israel.

³⁰ These are the wordings of MT Deut 33:20 and 22 as represented by Codex Leningradensis (cf. McCarthy 2007:102).

³¹ For the texts of LXX Deut 33:20 and 22, I use the Göttingen edition of Wevers (1977:369, 370).

the one who enlarges Gad;³² like a lioness he dwells and tears an arm as well as a scalp”.

MT Deut 33:22

וּלְדָן אָמַר דָּן גּוֹר אַרְיָה זֶנֶק מִזֶּה־בֶּשֶׂן:

And concerning Dan, he said: “Dan is a lion’s cub that leaps forth from Bashan”.³³

who expands Gad! He rested like a lion, having broken arm and ruler. (NETS)

LXX Deut 33:22

Καὶ τῷ Δὰν εἶπεν Δὰν σκύμνος λέοντος, καὶ ἐκπηδήσεται ἐκ τοῦ Βασαν.

And to Dan he said: Dan is a lion’s whelp, and he shall leap forth from Basan. (NETS)

In MT Deut 33:20, טַרְף זְרוּעַ אֶף־קִדְקֵד, can be interpreted as an attack on the symbol of a person’s ability to act violently, the arm, and on the most valued body part, the head, which can also refer to a person as a whole (cf. Schroer & Staubli 1998:93, 194; Wolff 1974:108). Gad is therefore compared to a lioness in its habitat that attacks people. The lion image in the Greek translation appears to be slightly different from the one in the MT. The simile in the LXX version of the verse, calls to mind the image of a lion resting after a kill. The adverbial clause observes that the subject of the main clause crushed limb and leader. The rendering of קִדְקֵד with ἄρχων is unique (Wevers 1995:551), but βραχίων might here be an inspired choice as translation equivalent for זְרוּעַ. The rendering not only faithfully captures the literal meaning of the Hebrew word, but, in view of ἄρχοντα, the second object of the participle, βραχίονα can also be understood metonymically as “power”. On this interpretation of the somewhat obscure Greek translation of Deut 33:20 (cf. den Hertog 2011:600), Gad, or “the one who enlarges Gad”,³⁴ rested like a lion after he annihilated both the power and person of an unnamed ruler.

Concerning MT Deut 33:22, the verb זֶנֶק is a *hapax legomenon*. This raises questions about its precise meaning and whether the cognate languages or ancient translations can assist in elucidating the verb (cf. Tigay 1996:410–411). The

³² Cross & Freedman (1975:118) argue in favour of emending the MT wording מְרִחֵב into מְרַחֵב or מְרַחְבֵי, “the broad land(s) [of Gad]”. Cf. also Craigie (1976:400).

³³ Cross & Freedman (1975:119) suggest that זֶנֶק should here be understood in light of the Ugaritic word, *bn*, “serpent”. Cf. also Craigie (1976:401).

³⁴ This is presumably a reference to God (Wevers 1995:550).

equivalent in the Greek translation, ἐκπηδήσεται, interprets it as a rushing movement. If “to leap forth” is the correct understanding of the *pi’el* form קָזַץ in v. 22 (cf. HALOT, 276; BDB, 276; Jenni 1968:245–246), the verbs in the Hebrew and Greek texts signify a sudden, aggressive, attacking action.

Although the depictions of Gad and Dan in the MT and LXX versions of Deut 33:20 and 22 can be construed as positive and the lion images are violent, the references to the two individual ancestors are definitely synecdoche of the respective tribes. The same is true of Judah in Gen 49:8–10. Consequently, these texts do not simply describe the violent deeds of individuals with lion images.

As far as early Jewish writings are concerned that are excluded from the Hebrew Bible,³⁵ 2 Macc 11:11 describes the attack on the forces of Lysias by Judas Maccabee and his followers, led by their “heavenly ally” (τὸν ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ σύμμαχον), as lion-like (λεοντηδόν).³⁶ The comparison with a lion indicates the fearlessness, boldness and power with which they joined the battle. The purported success of the attack means that the narrator uses the lion image in a positive sense. However, the lion image in this passage is not like the one in 1 Macc 3:4, because it is applied to a group and not specifically to Judas Maccabee or another individual.

Among the Dead Sea scrolls, 4QpHos^b (4Q167) supposedly contains a positive lion image that is applied to the violent actions of a non-royal, non-messianic individual. The broken text of 4QpHos^b fragment 2 lines 2–3 reads as follows:³⁷

[... כפיר החרון בִּי אֲנוּכִי כִשְׁ[חל]

כֹּהֵן האחרון אשר ישלח ידו להכות באפרים

... the Young Lion of Wrath, because I am like a l[ion ...]

The Last Priest who will stretch out his hand to smite Ephraim

כִּי אֲנוּכִי כִשְׁ[חל] are the opening words of Hos 5:14. The words in line 3 form part of the

³⁵ Cf. Strawn (2007:43–61) for a complete overview of the relevant passages in early Jewish writings that feature lion imagery.

³⁶ The Greek text is quoted from the Göttingen edition of 2 Maccabees edited by Kappler & Hanhart (1976:94).

³⁷ The transcription is based on the photographs used for the plates in the DJD edition (Allegro 1968). See also Allegro (1968:33); and Horgan (2002:120).

pesher interpretation on this verse. The phrase *יד שלח* here undoubtedly denotes a purposeful, violent action in view of the infinitive construct *להכות*. If the wording of the first colon of Hos 5:14 is restored in accordance with the MT (*כִּי אֲנוּכִי בְשֵׁן חַל* (*לְאַפְרַיִם*), it seems that the *pesher* text applies the first-person speaker's self-comparison with a lion in relation to Ephraim to the attack of the figure called "the Last Priest" on someone referred to as "Ephraim". In the Qumran scrolls, "Ephraim" is a designation for the general Jewish population who were not members of the sect and for their opponents, the Pharisees, in particular (Berrin 2004:110–116). According to 4QpHos^b, "the Last Priest" attacks these opponents of the Qumran movement and, therefore, Strawn (2007:60) notes that the priest could be viewed in a positive light in this passage (cf. also Horgan 2002:121 n. 4). This is debatable, however, especially if *כֹּהֵן הָאֲחֵרוֹן* is associated with *כַּפִּיר הַחֵרוֹן*. Such an association is plausible in view of the proximity of the two epithets in the surviving text on the fragment and the similarity between the *nomina recta* of the respective status construct phrases, *אֲחֵרוֹן* and *חֵרוֹן* (cf. Berrin 2004:106).³⁸ Concerning the meaning of these epithets, one of them, *כַּפִּיר הַחֵרוֹן*, also appears in another *pesher* text, 4QpNah, which is in a better state of preservation than 4QpHos^b. Assuming that *כַּפִּיר הַחֵרוֹן* and *כֹּהֵן הָאֲחֵרוֹן* refer to the same person, the meaning of the former in the context of the *Nahum Pesher* can be used to elucidate the two epithets in 4QpHos^b.

In 4QpNah, "the Young Lion of Wrath" hangs men alive (*כַּפִּיר הַחֵרוֹן ... אֲשֶׁר יִתְּלֶה*) (*אֲנָשִׁים חַיִּים*; fragments 3–4 column I lines 5 and 7).³⁹ This means that he crucified them, a practice that was considered to be foreign to Jewish tradition (Baumgarten 1972:481). In this regard, Josephus relates an incident in which the Hasmonaean monarch, Alexander Jannaeus, crucified his Jewish adversaries (*Ant.* 13 §377–383; *War* 1 §92–98). After the Seleucid king, Demetrius III Eucærus, invaded Judaea on the invitation of the Jews who opposed Alexander, he won a victory over Alexander, but promptly withdrew from the country, because he suffered heavy losses and a

³⁸ Given that the literary context in which these epithets are used cannot be reconstructed with certainty owing to the fragmentary nature of 4QpHos^b, the association of *כֹּהֵן הָאֲחֵרוֹן* and *כַּפִּיר הַחֵרוֹן* remains uncertain.

³⁹ The text is quoted from the edition of Allegro (1968:38). Cf. also Berrin (2014:438).

number of his Jewish supporters defected back to Alexander. The battles between the Hasmonaean king and his Jewish opponents continued unabated after Demetrius retired from the scene. According to Josephus, Alexander laid siege to the most powerful of his enemies, sacked the city in which they were hiding and dragged them to Jerusalem. He proceeded to crucify about eight hundred of them while he feasted with his concubines (*Ant.* 13 §380; *War* 1 §97). On the basis of this incident, as well as the mention of Demetrius, a king of Greece (דמי[טרוס מלך יון]), who sought to enter Jerusalem at the behest of “the Seekers-after-Smooth-Things” in 4QpNah fragment 3–4 column I line 2, scholars identify the Young Lion of Wrath in *Pesher Nahum* with Alexander Jannaeus (Xeravits 2007:212; Berrin 2004:104–109).⁴⁰ Seeing as the Qumran movement was hostile towards the Hasmonaeans and Alexander Jannaeus’ crucifixion of “the Seekers-after-Smooth-Things” seem to be condemned in 4QpNah, כפיר החרון is a negative designation in this text (cf. Xeravits 2007:211–212; Berrin 2004:105; Baumgarten 1972:480). Furthermore, in 4QpNah fragment 3–4 column II line 2, the epithet אפרים is placed in apposition to דורשי החלקות. The *Nahum Pesher* therefore equates “the Seekers-after-Smooth-Things” with “Ephraim”. This implies that the people who are referred to as “Ephraim” (i.e., the Pharisees) are the victims of the violent actions perpetrated by both “the Young Lion of Wrath” in 4QpNah and “the Last Priest” in 4QpHos^b. This provides another basis for the possible association of כֹּהֵן האחרון and כפיר החרון in *Pesher Hosea*^b. On this interpretation of the epithets in the two *pescharim*, the attack of “the Last Priest” on “Ephraim”, which is connected with the comparison to a lion in Hos 5:14, is not viewed positively in 4QpHos^b, despite the fact that “Ephraim” is a name used by the Qumran authors for their opponents. The use of a lion simile in this text is, therefore, different from the ones in 1 Macc 3:4 which form part of a positive characterisation of Judas Maccabee and his violent deeds against his enemies.

The passages in the Hebrew Bible and other early Jewish literature where lion images are employed to describe non-royal individuals’ (military) attacks on others are

⁴⁰ “The Seeker-after-Smooth-Things” (דורשי החלקות) is a well-known epithet in the Qumran scrolls. It refers to the Pharisees (Berrin 2004:91–99; VanderKam 2003:465–477; Schiffmann 1993:279–290).

open to more than one interpretation. Like the similes in 1 Macc 3:4, the images in these passages can be understood in terms of the power, threat and fearsomeness of lions. Nevertheless, these images are not comparable to the similes in 1 Macc 3:4 insofar as the latter contribute to the characterisation of a non-royal warrior who battles enemies for the sake of his people and, in doing so, wins fame for himself. In the light of this, it would seem that the lion imagery in the 1 Maccabees passage is unique when compared to relevant passages in the Hebrew Bible, their Greek counterparts in the Septuagint, and other early Jewish literature.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the lion similes in 1 Macc 3:4 as part of the characterisation of Judas Maccabee in the poem of 1 Macc 3:3–9 and its narrative context. In order to arrive at a better understanding of the lion images, the study first focused on the larger literary context of the poem, 1 Macc 3:1–2, 10–26, where Judas is introduced as the main protagonist of the narrated events. It investigated the information the implied narrator supplies about Judas, what the narrator reports him doing and saying, as well as the actions and words of his enemies. This investigation revealed that the narrator seems to emphasise the military prowess and piety of Judas (in the vein of David and Jonathan). His initial military successes brought him widespread fame and elicited fear in his enemies, but the narrator leaves no doubt about Judas' unselfish motives. According to his account, Judas' feats of arms were performed to protect Israel. These themes can also be found in the poem of 1 Macc 3:3–9 to which the lion similes in v. 4 make a small, but interesting contribution.

The study then shifted its focus to the cultural context of the lion similes in 1 Macc 3:4 (as represented by its literary predecessors and contemporary writings) in order to determine if they are unique. The investigation showed that there are possibly only a few passages in the writings of the Hebrew Bible and their Greek equivalents, as well as in early Jewish literature, where the violent/military actions of non-royal human individuals are positively described by lion imagery. None of the lion images in these

texts are similar to the similes in 1 Macc 3:4. Therefore, these similes appear to be unique examples of lion imagery in early Jewish writings. Be that as it may, like other ancient Near Eastern lion images, the similes in 1 Macc 3:4 work rhetorically with the power and threat of lions and thereby communicate the fearsomeness of the person with whom lions are compared.

With these perspectives, the study shed light on the lion imagery in the Greek text of 1 Macc 3:4 and its contribution to the narrative's characterisation of Judas Maccabee. Whether the poem of 1 Macc 3:3–9 was originally part of the composition or added later and how the characterisation in the poem and its narrative context can be used to write a biography of the “historical Judas” are topics for further research.

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