

Rhetoric in 2Maccabees

Rhetoric in 2Maccabees:

Challenging God

Edited by

Nicholas Peter Legh Allen
and Pierre J. Jordaan

Cambridge
Scholars
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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations will be employed for all cited scriptural and classical works. For the purposes of consistency and standardisation, all abbreviations of periodicals, series, and lexicons will follow, as closely as possible, a system originally proposed by the SBL Handbook of Style and IATG (Siegfried Schwertner, *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete*, Berlin/New York, 1992). Single references to biblical books are abbreviated according to the SBL Handbook of Style (e.g., Gen 1:7). Verse numbers within a chapter are separated by a comma without a space (e.g. 2Macc 2:3, 5-6).

General

B.C.E. Before the Common Era

C.E. Common Era

HB Hebrew Bible

MS(S) manuscript

NT New Testament

OT Old Testament

Languages, Versions, and Editions of the Biblical Text

Akk Akkadian

Aram Aramaic

GI Greek (Vaticanus)

GII Greek (Sinaiticus)

Gk Greek

Heb Hebrew

Lat	Latin
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
OG	Old Greek
Q	Qumran
T	Targum
Theo	Theodotion
Vulg.	Vulgate

Septuagint

Gen	Genesis
Exod	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Deut	Deuteronomy
Josh	Joshua
Judg	Judges
1-2Sam	1-2Samuel
1-2Kgs	1-2Kings
1-2Chr	1-2Chronicles
P(s)	Psalms
Prov	Proverbs
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Lam	Lamentations

Ezek	Ezekiel
Dan	Daniel
Hag	Haggai
Zech	Zechariah
Mal	Malachi
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon

New Testament

Luke	Luke
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Thess	Thessalonians
Heb	Hebrews
1Tim	1Timothy
2Tim	2Timothy

Deuterocanonical Books

1–3Macc	1–3Maccabees
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon

Books of the Pseudepigrapha

4Macc	4Maccabees
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Dead Sea Scrolls

Dead Sea Scrolls are cited by cave number attached to the letter “Q,” manuscript number or abbreviated name, fragment number (Arabic numerals), column number (Roman numerals), and line number (Arabic numerals).

Ancient Authors

Homer (12th-8th centuries B.C.E.)

Il. *Iliad*

Aeschylus (525/524-456/455 B.C.E.)

Choe. Choephoroi

Aeschines (389-314 B.C.E.)

Ctes. Against Ctesipho

Herodotus (c. 484-c. 425 B.C.E.)

Historíai *Hdt.*

Polybius (c. 208-c. 125 B.C.E.)

Polyb. *Historíai*

Strabo (63/64 B.C.E.-24 C.E.)

Strabo *Geographica*

Titus Livius (64/59 B.C.E.-12/17 C.E.)

Livy *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*

Aulus Cornelius Celsus (c. 25 B.C.E.-c. 50 C.E.)

Celsus *Med.* *De Medicina*

Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.E.-40 C.E.)

Phil. Al. *Leg* *Legatio ad Gaium*

Phil. Al. *Prob.* *Quod omnis probus*

Titus Josephus Flavius (37-c. 100 C.E.)

Ant. *Judean Antiquities*

C.Ap. *Contra Apionem*

War Judean War

Marcus Valerius Martialis (38/41-102/104 C.E.)

Mart. *Epigramma*

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (c. 69-after 122 C.E.)

Dom. Domitianus

Lucius Flavius Arrianus (c. 86/89-c. after 146/160 C.E.)

Arr. *Anab Anabasis*

Appian of Alexandria (c. 95-c. 165 C.E.)

App. *Syr.* The Syrian Wars (*Syriakē*)

Modern Bible Translations

GNTA: Good News Translation with Apocrypha

KJV: King James Version

NAB: New American Bible

NEB: New English Bible

NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint

NIV: New International Version

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version

Journals, Book Series, and Reference Works

AJEC: *Ancient Judaism & Early Christianity*

AJS Review: *Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies*

AncB: Anchor Bible

AOAT: Alter Orient und Altes Testament

ATSAT:	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
AWW:	Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien
BKAT:	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
<i>BHQ:</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta Editio</i>
<i>BibInt:</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation Series</i>
BN NF:	Biblische Notizen: Neue Folge
CBA:	Catholic Bible Association of America
<i>CBQMS:</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series</i>
<i>CdE:</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>CEJL:</i>	<i>Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature</i>
<i>DCLS:</i>	<i>Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies</i>
<i>DCLY:</i>	<i>Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook</i>
FAT:	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FGrHist:	Fragments of the Greek Historians
<i>HR:</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
<i>HSCP:</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
HThKAT:	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HTS:</i>	<i>Hervormde Theologiese Studies (HTS Theological Studies)</i>
ICC:	International Critical Commentary
<i>IG:</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>ISQ:</i>	<i>International Studies Quarterly</i>

<i>JAAR:</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL:</i>	Journal of Biblical Literature
<i>J. Evang. Theol. Soc.:</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJS:</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNSL:</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JSB:</i>	<i>The Jewish Study Bible</i>
<i>JSem</i>	<i>Journal for Semitics</i>
<i>JSHRZ:</i>	<i>Judische Schriften aus hellenistisch-romischer Zeit</i>
<i>JSJSup:</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplements</i>
<i>JSOT:</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
<i>LHBOTS:</i>	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
<i>MSU:</i>	Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
<i>NSKAT:</i>	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testament
<i>OBO:</i>	<i>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalensis</i>
<i>OIGS:</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>OTE:</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
<i>OUP:</i>	Oxford University Press
<i>REJ:</i>	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
<i>SBL:</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBLSCS:</i>	Septuagint and Cognate Studies—SBL Publications
<i>STDJ:</i>	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah</i>

<i>TAD:</i>	<i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt</i>
<i>TZ:</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UBS:	United Bible Societies
UTB:	Uni-Taschenbücher
<i>VT:</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup:	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBG:	Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft
WSAMA:	Walberberger Studien der Albertus-Magnus-Akademie
WUNT:	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW:</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNW:</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Organisations

HSASG	Hungaro-South African Study Group
IOSCS	International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
IOSOT	International Organisation for the Study of the Old Testament
LXXSA	Association for the Study of the Septuagint in South Africa
NRF	National Research Foundation (South Africa)
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (NRF)
SACRIA	Septuagint and Cognate Literature Research Initiative for Africa

INTRODUCTION

RHETORIC IN 2MACCABEES: CHALLENGING GOD:

NICHOLAS PETER LEGH ALLEN
AND PIERRE J. JORDAAN

The Hungaro-South African Study Group

This publication represents the most recent (2017-2019) research outputs of an international study group, consisting mostly of South African, Austrian and Hungarian scholars. The HSASG (Hungaro-South African Study Group) was founded in 2016 as a result of cooperation between the members of SACRIA (Septuagint and Cognate Literature Research Initiative for Africa) (steered by Prof. Nicholas P.L. Allen and Prof. Pierre J. Jordaan) as well as prominent Hungarian scholars, inter alia, Prof. József Zsengellér, the late Prof. Géza Xeravits and Prof. Ibolya Balla. To date, the main focus of the HSASG has been the study of early Jewish literature.

The HSASG held their second international conference at the North-West University (Potchefstroom) in December 2018. The theme for this event was *Deities at War: Rhetoric in 2Maccabees*. The invited key-note speakers were Prof. Friedrich Reiterer and Prof. József Zsengellér. The current book is in essence, the natural development of that conference which focused on the theology of 2Maccabees.

This book is intended for scholars in the fields of Biblical Studies—particularly those interested in the Deuterocanonical books (Apocryphal literature) with special emphasis on the Book of Second Maccabees. 2Maccabees is an important text. It was the first writing to present an opposition between Ἰουδαϊσμός (Judaism/Judeanism) and Ἑλληνισμός

(Hellenism). Indeed according to Himmelfarb, 2Macc presents Hellenism as a new kind of menace to Judaism.¹

This is not the first time that the tenets of a foreign culture were viewed as a danger to traditional Jewish values. However, previously, idolatry had been perceived as the primary threat to the Jewish deity (cf. Lev 19:4; 26:30; Deut 7:5; 29:17; 32:16; 1Kgs 15:12; 16:13,26; 21:26; 2Kgs 11:18; 17:12 etc.) In contrast, 2Macc describes a situation where it would seem that the entire fabric of traditional Jewish religious society was being undermined at every level—a decadent decay, in the minds of the faithful—one that was epitomised and symbolised by the presence of the gymnasium. 2Macc describes what the author perceives to be an immoral attempt to directly challenge the authority of the Jewish deity. In this context, the more orthodox Jewish leadership was concerned by the number of Jews who were in danger of forsaking their traditional beliefs and giving undue preference to aspects of Hellenisation. Thus, the threat may not only have been external but also national. Here, authors, such as Bickerman have emphasised that a situation was evolving where the Jewish people were in internal conflict.² The irony here is that by the time of the writing of 2Macc (after 124 B.C.E?), Judaism had already been greatly Hellenised and the Jewish opponents to Hellenisation were clearly employing Greek rhetorical and literary competencies to combat what for them was supposedly an iniquitous Greek influence.

In this context, Himmelfarb correctly intimates that the author of 2Macc employs rhetorical and literary skills which owe far more to Greek culture than they do to Jewish biblical tradition”.³As Jordaan has quipped: “If you can't beat them, use their tactics against them”.⁴

Research apropos 2Macc has come a long way over the past 120 years. Indeed, this period has been divided by Jordaan (2018) into four “quests”. These quests represent chronological periods wherein certain theological leitmotifs and research methodologies have featured more prominently:

¹ Cf. Martha Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” *Poetics Today*, vol. 19, No. 1, Hellenism and Hebraism Reconsidered: The Poetics of Cultural Influence and Exchange I (Spring, 1998): 19.

² Elias Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees: Studies on the Meaning and Origin of the Maccabean Revolt* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 90.

³Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” 19.

⁴ Pierre J. Jordaan, “A Narrative-Therapeutic Reading of the Martyr Narrative in 2 Maccabees 6 and 7. The Formation of a New Type of Theology,” in *Various Aspects of Worship in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, eds. G.G. Xeravitz, J. Zsengeller & I. Balla (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 192.

The First Quest (1891 to 1949)

This period included scholars such as Otto Böckler⁵, James Moffat⁶, Elias Bickerman⁷. Böckler discusses why 2Macc was marginalised by the Protestant canon.⁸ Nevertheless, his main theological contribution was twofold: Firstly, he acknowledged the importance of the Jerusalem temple⁹ which he saw as the centre of 2Maccabees' theocratic/pragmatic historical approach. Secondly, he saw 2Macc as an orthodox Pharisaic book which stood over and against the Sadducee party.¹⁰ Moffat, like Böckler, also sees 2Macc as Pharisaic. He also noted certain theological ideas, such as the theology of punishment and reward; and the suffering of the martyrs, as an expiation for the sins of the nation. Moffat also noted that the righteous who suffer and die will be raised up in the afterlife.¹¹ Lastly, as has already been alluded to, Bickerman claimed that the religious conflict in 2Macc was not only between Jews and Seleucids but amongst the Jews themselves. In this regard, he sees the clash being between an orthodox group and a reformist group of Jews. Indeed, Bickerman¹² states that theologically, 2Macc belongs to the genre of "pathetic historiography" of the Hellenistic age. He also stated that this genre is "highly rhetorical" and attempted to evoke fear and sympathy in the heart of the reader.

The First Quest sets the agenda of what is to follow for the next hundred years. Throughout the following quests certain key themes were expanded upon. Some commentators would refine these topics and others would, almost certainly add new ones. This brings us to the Second Quest in 2Macc research.

⁵ Otto Böckler, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments: nebst einem Anhang über die Pseudepigraphenliteratur* (München: C.H. Beck, 1891).

⁶ James Moffat, "The Second Book of Maccabees," in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, ed. Robert Henry Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 125-154.

⁷ Elias Bickerman, *Der Got der Makkabäer Untersuchungen über Sinn und Ursprung der makkabäischen Erhebung* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1937).

⁸ Böckler, *Die Apokryphen des Alten Testaments*, passim.

⁹ Böckler, *Die Apokryphen des Alten Testaments*, 93.

¹⁰ Böckler *Die Apokryphen des Alten Testaments*, 93.

¹¹ Moffat, "The Second Book of Maccabees," 131.

¹² Bickerman, *Der Got der Makkabäer*, 95.

The Second Quest (1959 to 1985)

Due to the interlude of the Second World War, this quest only started with the publication of Victor Tcherikover's book, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (1959). Tcherikover expanded on the German word "Erhebung" meaning "revolt" or "revolution", as employed by Bickerman in the title of his 1937 publication.¹³ Tcherikover proposed that at the time, the temple in Jerusalem, was ruled by a pro-Hellenistic high priest. The pro-Hellenistic temple elite marginalised the general population and prohibited them from conducting business. This disenfranchisement was eventually conflated with theological issues. The Temple of the Lord had been polluted by Gentiles and by pagan rites. Tcherikover saw the rebellion in Jerusalem as being led by the general populace. According to him, this uprising spread to the surrounding countryside and was directed against the aristocracy and the temple elite.¹⁴ Tcherikover further states that the Hasidim was the driving force behind this popular revolt. The Hasidim's interpretation of the ancestral law was made redundant by Jason the high priest.¹⁵ The populace took up arms to oppose the Hellenising government and perceived pollution of their temple. In addition, the Hasidim naturally became the popular directors and leaders of the insurrection. This hostility between the opposing parties became increasingly evident and civil war became inevitable. The value of Tcherikover's contribution lies in the fact that he more accurately describes the parties in the revolution and their theological tendencies.

With his contribution to the Second Quest, Doran maintains the supremacy of the Jerusalem Temple and its role in 2Macc.¹⁶ Naturally the temple was protected by its patron deity and his faithful against foreign deities.¹⁷ Thus, Doran propagates a distinct temple-based theology. Furthermore, his literary approach towards 2Macc is important in that he describes a highly emotional and dramatic rhetoric. Doran is thus building upon what Böckler (First Quest) said about the Temple. He also concurs with Bickerman on the rhetorical value of the text.

Bickerman's doctoral student, Goldstein differed from his *Doktorvater* on various aspects of 2Macc. According to Goldstein, the Jewish conflict was not due to internal quarrelling but rather came from outside influences

¹³ Bickerman, *Der Got der Makkabäer*.

¹⁴ Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum: A Temple Book, 1982), 192-193.

¹⁵ c.175-171 B.C.E.

¹⁶ Robert Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees* (Washington: CBA, 1981), 110, 114.

¹⁷ Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 104.

such as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king.¹⁸ Goldstein proffers the interpretation that in 2Macc the Jews hardly borrowed anything from Hellenism and were oppressed by the Seleucids.

To summarise, in the Second Quest, Tchericover attempted to better identify the conflicting religious parties in Jerusalem when it was a Greek *polis*. His thesis proposing that the Jerusalem populace were being deprived of business opportunities as well as the theological side-lining of the Hasidim, was a unique contribution. Doran also acknowledged the importance of the Temple but for another reason. Doran saw the Jerusalem Temple as a space wherein a clash of deities had taken place. Goldstein contradicted Bickerman's notion that there was internal strife between the Jews themselves and underplays a Graeco Roman involvement. This was an issue that would be addressed in the Third Quest.

The Third Quest (1986 to 2012)

The next period looked afresh at the theology of 2Macc. and included the contributions of, inter alia, David deSilva¹⁹, George Nickelsburg²⁰, Daniel Schwartz²¹, and Robert Doran.²² The much neglected Graeco Roman background was finally put on the same level as Jewish texts by Van Henten. Naturally, this had a huge impact when scrutinising 2Macc theologically. This levelling of the playing fields between Graeco Roman and Jewish antecedents, opened the door for demonstrating new (progressive) theological ideas. In addition, Van Henten and Doran valued rhetoric just as highly as Bickerman had in the First Quest. However, Van Henten and Doran followed their own specific rhetorical method that most certainly delivered specific results. Here, it can be seen that Bickerman's plea in the First Quest to treat 2Macc as rhetorical has begun to gain some traction.²³ As Böckler stated in the First Quest, many scholars, for various reasons, have considered the temple as playing a pivotal role. In contradiction, Van Henten only sees the temple as pertaining to the city's patron deity. Again, Doran sees the temple as the distinctive space of the

¹⁸ Jonathan A Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Yale University Press, 1983), 112.

¹⁹ David A. DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha Message Context and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002).

²⁰ George Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 2005).

²¹ Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008).

²² Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

²³ Doran, *2 Maccabees*, passim.

divine warrior. However, Schwartz, seems to view the temple as a mere symbol of God.²⁴ From the Second Quest to the Third Quest the source of the conflict had shifted dramatically from “strife between people” to “strife between a deity and his people” (Van Henten²⁵ and “hypothetical strife between deities” (Doran²⁶ Moreover, deSilva, Nickelsburg and Schwartz saw the Deuteronomistic theological scheme as significant for 2Macc. Van Henten, Schwartz and Doran all emphasised the importance of the narrative critique. However, each of them stressed different aspects of this. This is why Jordaan (2016 commented that narrative critique is a “free for all” when it comes to interpreting 2Macc with a narrative critique.

The Fourth Quest (2012 to Present)

Since 1891, research on 2Macc has gone full circle. Most themes from the First Quest have been addressed. The important outcomes of the first three quests constitute the current “competitive market”. Most themes from the first three quests (1891-2014)) have been addressed and constantly revisited and recycled. In addition, there does not seem to be general consensus concerning, inter alia, the real theological considerations of 2Macc. Rather there seems to be both a majority and minority standpoint concerning a range of unresolved issues.

The question can now be asked: “What is the way forward for theological research on 2Macc?” This brings us to the present fourth quest. This is the time frame from c. 2013 to the present. At the time of writing, since 2013, no full commentary, solely devoted to 2Macc has been published.

For the sake of clarity, the term “fourth quest” pertains to all areas relevant to the theology of 2Macc. What really stands out for the fourth quest are the different and sometimes unique methods that have been used

²⁴ Cf. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 164.

²⁵ Jan Willem van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*, Main Series: Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, vol. 57 (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 297-299; Friedrich Avemarie & Jan Willem van Henten, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 44.

²⁶ Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 44, 198 & 202.

²⁷ Pierre J. Jordaan, “Body, Space and Narrative in 2 Macc 1:1-10a,” in *Body, Psyche and Space in Old Testament Apocryphal Literature: A Conference held at the NWU, Potchefstroom Campus in South Africa 14-17 July 2013*, eds. Pierre J. Jordaan & Helen Efthimiades-Keith (BN NF 168). (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 91.

to arrive at a better understanding of the import of 2Maccabees—methods like narratology, cognitive linguistics and semiotic theory etc.

In this context, perhaps the pioneer of this new movement is Sylvie Honigman²⁸. Building on ideas first intimated by such historians as Weitzman,²⁹ Mendels³⁰ and Hurowitz,³¹ Honigman sought to shed new light on the so-called Antiochus IV persecution in Jerusalem (c. 168 B.C.E.). She does this by re-contextualising Antiochus IV's actions with reference to assumed, predominant, Judaeian literary conventions. What makes her approach unique is that she favours a literary analysis to both 1 and 2Macc. In this regard, she understandably questions the viability of a more positivistic approach. Both books clearly state that the persecution by Antiochus IV was religious in nature—something that Honigman has seriously challenged.³² Assuming, that both authors adhered to identical cultural codes, Honigman treats the discourse in both 1 and 2Macc as “framing narratives”, or “literary codes”. She challenges other scholars as having incorrectly dealt with these texts at face value, naively assuming that they accurately refer to the religious persecution of the Jews. Honigman believes that the authors of 1 and 2Macc portrayed a strictly symbolic universe and never intended to reproduce information that applied to the real world per se.

Janowitz³³ is another recent scholar with a unique perspective. She explores the autonomous value of martyrdom. Her research places the 2Macc 7 martyr narrative in the historical context of the Hasmonean attempt to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Jewish nation. Here, she employs psychoanalytic theories to probe the “unconscious meaning” of the martyr-family narrative.

Finally, the current volume attempts to deal with some of the very latest findings in the context of 2Macc research. In this regard, it covers recent

²⁸ Sylvie Honigman, *Tales of High Priests and Taxes: The Books of the Maccabees and the Judean Rebellion against Antiochos IV* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014).

²⁹ Steven Weitzman, “Plotting Antiochus's Persecution,” *JBL* 123/2 (2004), 219-234.

³⁰ Doron Mendels, “A Note on the Tradition of Antiochus IV's Death,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series* (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 352-356.

³¹ Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in the Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

³² Honigman, *Tales of High Priests and Taxes*, 6.

³³ Naomi Janowitz, *The Family Romance of Martyrdom in Second Maccabees* (London: Routledge, 2017).

research outcomes from 2017 to 2019 and falls squarely into fourth quest research into 2Macc. Certainly, it attempts to represent a spectrum of the most recent theological insights and makes use of the latest methods with particular emphasis on narratology and rhetoric. In this context, the current book features the insights of the following nine scholars:

1. Prof. Dr Nicholas Peter Legh Allen (Professor, School of Ancient Languages and Text Studies, North-West University, South Africa);
2. Dr Aaron Beek (Post-Doctoral fellow: School of Ancient Languages and Text Studies, North-West University, South Africa);
3. Dr Eugene Coetzer (Post-doctoral fellow, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa);
4. Prof. Dr Pierre J. Jordaan (Professor of Greek, North-West University, South Africa);
5. Prof. Dr Gideon R. Kotzé (Research Professor: School of Ancient Languages and Text Studies, North-West University, South Africa);
6. Dr At Lamprecht (Senior Lecturer: Semitic Languages, North-West University, South Africa);
7. Dr Stephanus Phillip Nolte (Research Fellow, North-West University, South Africa);
8. Prof. Dr Friederich Vincenz Reiterer (Professor Emeritus, Old Testament, University of Salzburg, Austria); and
9. Prof. Dr József Zsengellér (Professor of Biblical Theology and Religious History, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Hungary).

The chapters in the book include the following:

Prof. Dr Nicholas Peter Legh Allen (North-West University)

The Epitome of 2Maccabees: The Rhetoric of a New Jewish Theology of Salvation

In the context of 2Maccabees, the assumption is more typically made that the epitome was in effect a mere précis of a now lost five-volume historiographical work written by a Diaspora Jew named Jason of Cyrene. In addition, most commentators posit that the text is composed of largely disparate interpolations and lacks an overall cohesion. However, with reference to a recent thesis by Domazakis, there is now good linguistic evidence (e.g. diction) to show, inter alia, that chapter 7 of 2Macc was *not* an interpolation and the entire book was written by one and the same Jewish author. In addition, he takes delight in showing off his Greek rhetorical

skills and employing Hellenistic rhetorical strategies to embellish the didactic tone of his message. Here, he clearly intends to encourage his audience to adhere faithfully to the Mosaic Law by narrating how their deity has continually defended his Holy Temple in Jerusalem. What also seems to have escaped general notice is that based on the text available to us today, and with no knowledge of the assumed historicity of any of the references in the text, the book of 2Maccabees, with a few possible exceptions, seems to be composed according to a deliberate over-arching structure—one that can be easily visualised. Allen concludes that 2Macc was more likely the creative work of a single inspired author and not merely a mechanical and purposeless “epitomator” —one who unambiguously attempts to present a new theology in a novel and exciting way.

Dr Aaron L. Beek (North-West University)

Penis Envy: Challenging God’s Covenant in the Hellenistic Debates over Epispasm, Circumcision, and the Gymnasium in 2Maccabees

There is a wealth of research on Hellenism and Judaism, but decidedly less so in terms of circumcision and *epispasmos* (the undoing of circumcision). This chapter connects the debates around circumcision, the Jerusalem gymnasium, and military recruitment in Judea to argue that epispasm was practiced to achieve social or financial advancement more than to avoid punishment. Similarly, while there has been a lot of work on the impact of the peace of Apamea in 188 B.C.E. as a potential factor in the Judean revolt, much of that work has focused upon the economic impact of the cash indemnity demanded by the Romans, less upon the other demands of the treaty, which Beek argues here were also important factors for Seleucid decision making in Coele-Syria generally and Judea specifically. In particular, Coele-Syria became considered much more important as a source for soldiers and the Seleucid kings’ demands and offered concessions throughout 1 and 2Maccabees reflect that military recruitment was more important than financial gains.

Dr Eugene Coetzer (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

An Old Fire and a New Idea: The Network of Conceptual Linkages in the Second Prefixed Letter of 2 Maccabees

Prefixed to the narrative of 2Maccabees are two letters. The authorship and dating of these letters and their intercorrelation have been discussed

extensively. The second letter (1:10b-2:18), as is the case with the first, is a call for the Jews in Egypt to celebrate the purification of the Temple. This alone seems like a sufficient explanation for the coupling of these letters with a narrative which has at its core a struggle for the sanctity of the Temple. These letters, however, ask for an investigation that acknowledges key elements such as the mentioning of Moses, Nehemiah and Jeremiah as well as the introduction of the theme of the fire in the Temple. This article focuses on the combined rhetorical strategy behind the incorporation of these elements. Consequently, the content of the second prefixed letter will be discussed on a syntactical and semantic level in order to demonstrate the construct of an overarching authoritative appeal.

Prof. Dr Pierre Johan Jordaan (North-West University)

θεομαχεῖν To Fight Against or Maybe on Behalf of God in the Martyr Narrative of 2Maccabees 7:19 Who is Fighting Whom?

During the past century, conflict has emerged as a primary motif in 2Maccabees research. However, no unity seems to exist between scholars regarding where this conflict truly resides. In this context, the focus of this chapter is on the specific employment of the term θεομαχεῖν as it appears in 2Macc 7:19. Most commentaries and dictionaries simply translate this verb as “to fight against God”. However, the latest commentaries on 2Macc, namely Schwartz (2008) and Doran (2012), warn of the complexity of scrutinising this verb. Indeed, in 2Macc it is not always clear when a particular individual is fighting against the Jewish deity or (consciously/unconsciously) acting on behalf of the Jewish deity. In this regard, the dictionary of Louw & Nida makes a valuable contribution when stating that it is humanly impossible to physically fight against a supernatural concept like God. With this possibility in mind, there may be more to the employment of θεομαχεῖν in 2Maccabees 7:19. Here, by means of a critical analysis of the text, Jordaan proposes that θεομαχεῖν may well indicate conflict between two human groups.

Prof. Dr Gideon R. Kotzé (North-West University)

The “Dirty Deeds” of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Jerusalem and the Rhetorical Purposes of 2Maccabees

2Maccabees is a highly rhetorical historiographical narrative that aims to be both entertaining and edifying to its implied audience. The narrative’s engaging representation of what happened and its matching interpretation of why it happened are tailored to suit its rhetorical purposes. These purposes were, *inter alia*, to persuade the audience to follow the ancestral traditions of Judaism faithfully, and to participate in the new festivals that celebrate God’s protection of the temple in Jerusalem from attacks. To this end, God’s superiority, power, and dominance over human adversaries, his manifestation as ruler, sovereign, and almighty, and the defence of the temple are prominent themes in the narrative. The theme of divine defence of the temple in Jerusalem throws into sharp relief the instance, related in 2Macc 5:11-16, where one of the narrative’s main antagonists, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, desecrates and despoils the sanctuary, after having the city’s population destroyed. The goal of this chapter is to examine only two of the passage’s literary features in order to suggest how they contribute to the narrative’s rhetoric in light of vv. 17-20. The two features are (1) the contrast the passage creates with the ideal situation sketched in 2Macc 3:1-3, and (2) its thematic comparability with descriptions of temple plundering in other early Jewish texts.

Dr At Lamprecht (North-West University)

Containers of Order and Chaos in 2Maccabees 9

This chapter introduces a cognitive semantic approach to the linguistic study of 2Maccabees 9 with important implications for Apocryphal semantic study, Greek lexicography, and Bible interpretation and translation. Traditionally, the semantics of words in the Greek of 2Macc 9 has been interpreted in accordance with comparative, historical-comparative and structural approaches towards language. Consequently, the meanings of several words appear incoherent and arbitrary. This apparent gap between the so-called “discovery procedures” that the Greek linguist should in practice adopt when facing a corpus of data for analysis and the meaning of the words is bridged by applying the cognitive semantic approach to the analyses of certain words in 2Macc 9. This is done in order to support the

hypothesis *firstly*, that the selection of verbs and especially prepositions is conceptually dependent and *secondly*, that words (may) carry non-metaphorical (literal) meanings and metaphorical meanings, and that the linguistic processing of abstract concepts involves activation of experiential systems.

The study finds that the knowledge structures used by the ancient people include image schemas, such as *containers*, and binary structures, such as *order* vs. *chaos*. The analyses of the data show that far from being solely literal, the primitives of spatial words, such as the preposition *êv* / (“in”) (as in: “retreat *in* disorder”, “retreat *in* disgrace”, “*in* his rage”, “carried *in* a horse litter”, “lived *in* sorrow and pain”, etc.) and/or phrases (such as: “Jerusalem, a burying place”, “inner parts” are packed with derived meaning; and that by unpacking these meanings we can shed light on the ancients’ experiences, ideological presuppositions, cultural beliefs and abstract reasoning.

Dr Stephanus Philip Nolte (North-West University)

The Martyr Death of Eleazar in 2Maccabees 6:18-31: A Greimassian Approach

This chapter sets out to investigate the story of Eleazar’s martyr death in 2Maccabees 6:18-31 from a Greimassian perspective. In this regard, no research has been done on the martyr narratives in 2Macc from a semiotic perspective. An attempt is made to exploit the efficiency of Nicole Everaert-Desmedt’s theory (simplifying that of Greimas) for reading narratives, utilising only one aspect of the theory namely the actantial model. Inter alia, the following findings are made: the “characters” were shown to be part of what is called “actants” which comprise a broader category than human beings alone; Eleazar is a one-dimensional actant in the narrative because his status as an honourable, exemplary person is maintained from beginning to end; the actantial analysis shows that many forces are at work, albeit in the background. In this regard, the addresser in the narrative is shown to consist of more than one aspect namely God and the Law, persecution of the Jews, and the motivation to set an example for the youth. Finally, God is shown as a passive actant (*laizzes faire*) who doesn’t intervene on behalf of the subject.

Prof. Dr Friederich Vincenz Reiterer (University of Salzburg)

He Gave His Troops the Watchword: “Divine Victory” (2Macc 13:15)

This chapter is based on research into various theological and philological problem areas, with special emphasis on Deuterocanonical Literature, especially on *Sira* and *Sapientia Salomonis*. 2Macc 13: 1-17 may be viewed as the climax of the book. The biblical author himself names the literary methods for the investigation. Using these methods, we see that this section provides a critical qualification of state power (Antiochus V), the role of the high priesthood (Menelaus), Judas and his attitude, and the role of God’s protection. As a theme for the chapter a quote from 2Macc 13:15 has been chosen: If one has understood the nature and pattern of allusions of the author, then the cited watchword of *Ioudas* is a short version, which already anticipates the result. The chapter focuses on the "historical" and theological topics of the investigated unit. In addition, the literary technique employed by the author—one who obviously masters the Hellenistic rules of poetry—are elucidated. This chapter also explores the possibility that the author of 2Maccabees has intentionally based his work on an external and internal structure. Finding these two structures is the methodological task of this investigation, as it gives the reader clearer access to the intentions of the author. The very words he has selected and employed are to be carefully noted because the author chosen them purposely. In this context, they are a key to discovering the inner structure and open the way for understanding the intention of the author and his message.

Prof. Dr József Zsengellér (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary)

Fate of a Temple: Ruler Contra Deity

Wars in antiquity were waged to conquer major cities that housed temples which served as the abodes of the deity of the soon to be occupied people. These temples were sacked, desecrated or destroyed. The statue of the deity was demolished or carried off to the temple of the deity worshiped by the conquerors. 2Macc presents special issues of these common features which are discussed in this chapter.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE EPITOME OF 2MACCABEES: THE RHETORIC OF A NEW JEWISH THEOLOGY OF SALVATION

NICHOLAS PETER LEGH ALLEN

Introduction

Surely, few would doubt that 2Maccabees is an extremely important book. Certainly, it is a most unique and highly complex work, especially in the context of LXX and apocryphal literature. 2Macc is normally assumed to have been composed directly in Koine Greek sometime in the second or first century B.C.E. by an anonymous Jewish author who is often referred to as the “epitomator”.¹ Based on what is stated in the text (2:23) the assumption might be made that this anonymous epitomator merely produced a précis of a now lost five-volume historiographical work written by a Diaspora Jew named Jason of Cyrene. Regardless, the author of this book compares himself to an encaustic painter who has had the difficult task of decorating key features of a house after the architect has contemplated the “entire structure” (2:29-30). Whereas the primary author (Jason) was more concerned with giving a very detailed account in his work, the so-called epitomator promises to be brief—albeit faithful to the original:

... [T]o go into (the topic), giving an expansive report and occupying oneself with each and every detail are the province of a history’s originator, while the pursuit of brevity of diction, along with an exemption from diligent inquiry into what happened, must be allowed to him who prepares a paraphrase. Here, then, we shall begin the narrative, wrapping up (our

¹ For a discussion on whether the term “author” or “epitomator” is more appropriate cf. Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 17.