

Dying for God and the Ancestral Laws: Jewish Identity Formulation through the Martyrdom Episodes in the Second Maccabees

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Introduction

In the Second Temple period and beyond, the Jewish self-definition underwent a transformation in the wider context of the Greco-Roman world. The diversity of texts during this period exhibits not only an opposition to but also an appropriation and assimilation of “the Other” in terms of the texts’ self-understanding and their rhetorical strategies. The texts of Hellenistic Judaism creatively shaped Judaism in the Second Temple period. Focusing on the relationship between identity formulation and textuality, this paper explores how the narrative text of 2 Maccabees attempts to construct Jewish identity, and especially how identity formulation and maintenance are described and constructed in the martyrdom of Eleazar (2 Macc 6:18–32) and that of the seven sons and their mother (7:1–42).

1. The Second Maccabees as a Constructed Text¹

Scholarly consensus holds that 2 Maccabees’ composition (formation) had

1 The four books are known as “Maccabees” in the Septuagint (LXX), which we may

a multi-staged development, with its final stage being a reworking of the epitomist.² Along with the date and provenance of the book,³ historical criticism has

call ‘the Maccabean Corpus.’ The Fifth Maccabees (which was probably originally in Hebrew and lost) is extant in Arabic and in Syriac. Cf. Henry Cotton, *Five Books of Maccabees* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1832): xxx–xxxiv. Although the Hebrew Bible includes none of these books, 1 and 2 Maccabees are accepted as the deuterocanonical books in the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, and Coptic Churches. Moreover, Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox Canons include both 3 and 4 Maccabees. Protestant Churches deem all the Maccabean Corpus *Apocrypha*. Sometimes, however, 3 and 4 Maccabees are categorized as *pseudepigraphas* (“falsely superscribed” in Greek). The definition and classification of the Old Testament *pseudepigrapha* is devised by scholars. Charlesworth and his team are the forerunners who endeavored to clarify the definition and categorization of these books; however, the boundary between Apocrypha and pseudepigraphas is not clearly drawn.

Regarding 1 and 2 Maccabees, 2 Macc was probably written in Greek, whereas 1 Macc was originally in Hebrew (which is not extant) and translated into Greek. 2 Maccabees, however, is not a sequel to 1 Macc, although 2 Macc covers approximately the same events and period of time (=1 Macc 1:10–7:50). Further, 2 Macc 2:23–28 articulates that it is an abridgement of a five-volume work by the author, Jason of Cyrene, about whom we know nothing except his name, and this five-volume work is no longer extant. Thus, the author of 2 Macc is called the “epitomist” (or the “abridger”). Many scholars postulate that, in terms of historicity, 2 Macc is less trustworthy than 1 Macc, but this view is questioned by contemporary scholars. Cf. John J. Collins, *Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees; with Excursus on the Apocalyptic Genre*, OTM 15 (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazer, Ins., 1981), 263–264; Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 14–16; Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 41B (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 3–5;

- 2 Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 41 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 545–557; Klaus D. Schunck, *Die Quellen des I. und II. Makkabäerbuches* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1954), 99. Cf. David S. Williams, “Recent Research in 2 Maccabees,” *CBR* 2.1 (2003, 69–83).
- 3 The majority of scholars date 2 Macc between 124 BCE and 63 BCE (Pompey’s invasion to Jerusalem), with its composition probably taking place in a Diaspora locale

focused on the chronological issues of 1 and 2 Maccabees,⁴ historical sources,⁵ and the relationship between the letters (2 Macc 1:1–9; 1:10–2:18) and the epitome.⁶ Recent scholarship features the structure of the epitome (i.e., the narrative section and the epilogue; cf. Table 1).⁷ Yet, the literary aspects of 2 Macc have not been fully explored: to my knowledge, Himmelfarb provides the first such

(e.g., Alexandria). Cf. Goldstein, *II Maccabees*; H. Attridge, “2 Maccabees,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. M. E. Stone, CRINT (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); J. R. Bartlett, *The First and Second Books of the Maccabees*, Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); C. Habicht, “2 Makkabäerbuch,” *JSHRZ* 1.3 (1976, 165–285); Collins, *Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees*; W. Dommershausen, *1 Makkabäer [und] 2 Makkabäer* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1985); Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, CEJL (Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008); Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*.

- 4 Bartlett, *The First and Second Books of the Maccabees*, 45–49.
- 5 Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 90–103; idem, *II Maccabees*, 37–41; Schunck, *Die Quellen des I. und II. Makkabäerbuches*, 116–126; J. G. Bunge, *Untersuchungen zum Zweiten Makkabäerbuch: Quellenkritische, literarische, chronologische, und historische Untersuchungen zum 2. Makkabäerbuch als Quelle Syrisch-palästinensischer Geschichte im 2. Jh. V. Chr.* (diss. phil. Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1971), 206–263. See also footnote 22.
- 6 Elias Bickermann, “Ein jüdischer Festbrief vom Jahre 124 v. Chr. (II Macc. 1: 1–9),” *ZNW* 32 (1933, 233–253); idem, “Makkabäerbücher (I. und II.),” in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 14 (Munich: A. Druckenmüller, 1980), 779–797; V. Parker, “The Letters in II Maccabees: Reflections on the Book’s Composition,” *ZAW* 119 (2007, 386–402); Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 1–3; J. Sievers, *The Hasmoneans and Their Supporters: From Mattathias and the Death of John Hyrcanus I* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 4ff.
- 7 George E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 118; Robert Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees*, CBQMS 12 (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association, 1981), 47–76; idem, *2 Maccabees*, 11–13; Jan Willen van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (Leiden/New York/ Köln: Brill, 1997), 25–26.

study, focusing on the book's rhetorical strategies and characterization.⁸ Despite current scholarly attention to martyrdom narrative, surprisingly few studies have taken up the martyrdom narrative in 2 Macc; the study of Doran and van Henten remain the landmark in this area.⁹

1.1. Narrative Structure of The Second Maccabees

The Second Maccabees is a type of historiography, but it is characterized as *pathetic* history with its own ideological perspectives on the events; the epitomist “strove to entertain his reader by playing

Narrative Structure of 2 Macc

- (1) the introductory letters (1:1–2:18)
- (2) the preface (2:19–32)
- (3) the narrative section (3:1–14: 46)
- (4) the epilogue (15: 37–39)

strongly upon the emotions [Gk. *pathos*], with vivid portrayals of atrocities and heroism and rhetoric.”¹⁰ The epitomist comments and articulates his perspectives on this work in the preface (2:19–32) and the epilogue (15:37–39).¹¹ Furthermore, 2 Macc has a number of *reflective passages* — that is, “short interludes in which the events which have just been recounted are summarized and interpreted

8 Martha Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” *Poetics Today* 19 (1998), 19–40. Recent commentaries examine 2 Maccabees’ literal aspect. Cf. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*; Doran, *2 Maccabees*.

9 Doran, *Temple Propaganda*; van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People*. Van Henten refers to a “dislike” among Jewish scholars/readers of martyrs and martyrdom in the post-Shoah world, especially along with Christian interests in Maccabean martyrs; “Many Jewish readers have developed a dislike for the reports of these noble deaths, since associations with the horrible and unnumbered deaths of Jews during the Second World War are obvious.” Cf. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People*, 2.

10 Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 41A (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 34.

11 Collins, *Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees*, 259–260; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 118.

from a religious or moral point of view” (3:1; 4:16–17, 26, 38, 42; 5:10, 17–20; 6:12–17, 31; 7:42; 15:32–33).¹² These passages reveal Deuteronomic theology.¹³ Scholars agree that these reflective passages demonstrate the epitomist’s ideological perspectives on the events, through which he tries to promote certain values and identity formulations.¹⁴ The epitomist himself calls the narrative section of 2 Macc 3–14 διήγησις (2:32; 6:17; cf. ιστορίας διήγησις, 2:24, 30, 32[x2]);

12 van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People*, 25; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 118.

13 George E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 118; Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (2008), 20–21; van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 23–36. With regard to the structure of 2 Maccabees, there is little consensus on the structure of the narrative section; however, many scholars point out that 2 Macc has a repeated narrative pattern. According to George E. Nickelsburg, 2 Macc follows the Deuteronomistic pattern as follows: (1) *blessing*: the priesthood of Onias (3:1–40), (2) *sin*: the innovations of Jason and Menelaus (4:1–5:10), (3) *punishment*: the persecution by Antiochus IV (5:11–6:17), (4) *the turning point*: the martyrdoms and the people’s prayer (6:18–8:4), (5) *judgment and salvation*: God brings about victory for the People. On the other hand, grounded in Daniel Schwartz’s four divisions of the narrative body (Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, xx), Robert Doran postulates a different pattern — namely, “challenge to the deity, battle, victory of the deity, celebration concerning the temple” (Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 7), which is certainly pervasive in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., the Exodus story). Cf. Frank M. Cross, “The Divine Warrior in Israel’s Early Cult,” in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966, 11–30); Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); Paul D. Hanson, “Jewish Apocalyptic against Its Near Eastern Environment,” *RB* 78 (1971, 31–58); idem, *Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

14 For the relationship between text and identity-formulation, see the following: Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Greco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 27–61; eadem, *Image and Reality: the Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986); eadem, *Neither Jew Nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*, second edition (London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016).

he is aware of the distinction between the body of the narrative (abridgement of Jason's work) and his reflective passages.¹⁵ In this sense, the reflective passages are extradiegetic, to which the internal level of narrative (= *diēgēsis*) subordinates.¹⁶ Thus, the epitomist is not simply trying to describe history — “a written account of certain events.”¹⁷ Van Henten claims that the epitomist “did not focus on an accurate reproduction of the events, but on the significance of these crucial events of the past for contemporary Jewish politics, religion, morality and self-understanding”¹⁸; he also presents other examples of this type of “historical narrative.”¹⁹ The epitomist is trying to present an ideological construct for identity-formulation through his abridgement text.

The martyrdom episodes in 2 Macc are located in the middle of the book. 1 Macc has no such episodes.²⁰ The epitomist carefully inlays these episodes in his abridgement. In this sense, the martyrdom episodes play an important role in the epitomist's rhetorical strategy. Therefore, with these martyrdom episodes, along with the preface, epilogue, and the reflective passages, the epitomist reconstructs Jason's five-volume work and constructs an ideological text for the formulation of Jewish identity. Given that, some scholars question whether the designation of

15 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 285.

16 Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (New York: Methuen, 1983), 91. Cf. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. J. E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 216–220; Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. C. van Boheeven (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1985), 135.

17 Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 20.

18 Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 25. The bracket () is mine.

19 E.g., Polybius 1.1.2; 1.4.11; Cicero, *De Orat.* 1.46. 202; Seneca, *Quaest. Nat.* 3. ; Josephus, *Antiq.* 14:2–3; Lucian, *Hist. Constr.* 13; 39; 42; 61; 63, et al. Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 25, footnote 25. Also, Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 79; idem, *2 Maccabees*, 8; Collins, *Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees*, 263–264.

20 1 Macc 2:19–38 could be comparable to the martyrdom episodes. See the argument below.

“the epitomist” (the abridger) is appropriate for this writer.²¹

The Second Maccabees recounts three martyrdom episodes; the martyrdom of Eleazar (6:18–31), the martyrdom of the seven sons and their mother (7:1–42), and the suicidal martyrdom of Razis (14:37–46). Scholarly opinions in historical criticism concur that the martyrdom episodes in 6:18–31 and 7 derive from one or two independent sources.²² Nickelsburg discusses the development of the traditions of 2 Macc 7, proposing two possible sources for this episode — Test. Mos. 9 (the death of Taxo and his seven sons) and 1 Macc 2:15–28, 49–68.²³ Both texts also exhibit a Deuteronomic scheme, interpreting Deut 32.²⁴ Just like

21 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 20–21; van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 20.

22 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 119–121; idem, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity*, expanded edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Divinity School, 2007), 124–130; Christian Habicht, “Royal Documents in Maccabees II,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976, 1–18); Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 20–24; Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 17–18; Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 50–51.

Van Henten recapitulates the reasons for this scholarly view: (1) both episodes appear in 4 Macc, (2) the episode of 2 Macc 7 is also taken up in rabbinic literature (e.g., *b. Git.* 57b), (3) theological differences between 2 Macc 6:18–7:42 — such as the concept of atonement and (arguably) the usage of Ἐβραῖοι vis-à-vis Ἰουδαῖοι, (4) the prominence of the law in 6:18–7:42, (5) the lack of focus on the temple in 6:18–7:42, (6) 2 Macc 5:27 (a reference to Judas Maccabeus) and 6:11 naturally link to 8:1, and (7) a relatively poor Greek style in 7 (compared with other sections) as well as its Semiticism. Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 17–18. Cf. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (2008), 19; Collins, *Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees*, 260. Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 41A (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 49. The usage of Ἐβραῖοι is more conspicuous in 4 Macc.

23 Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity*, 124–130.

24 “This sinlessness of Taxo and his sons as well as their trust in the Lord at the eschatological hour clearly mark them as the ‘Remnant of Israel’ (cf. Zeph. 3:12–13), that is, as the few who by their steadfastness to the covenant uphold it, thereby ensuring the

the death of innocent Taxo and his seven sons, the death of these innocent people in 2 Macc (cf. 7:40)²⁵ is framed by a Deuteronomic scheme and employed as a catalyst for the change of God's attitude toward the Jewish people.²⁶

Regardless of the original sources of these episodes, scholars unanimously agree that the martyrdom episodes in 6:18–7:42 are the centerpiece of 2 Maccabees' entire narrative, and that they mark the turning point of the narrative.²⁷ "Martyrs, rather than soldiers, are the real heroes of the book, and the long central section of the book, Chapter 6–7, dedicated to martyrs, provides the turning point; after those scenes, and because of the blood of those martyrs (7:38; 8:3–4), *everything changes*."²⁸

In 2 Macc 6:12–17, right before the martyrdom episode of Eleazar, the

continuation of God's mercy and the fulfilment of his promises to the patriarchs with regard to Israel (cf. As. Mos. 12:12). Moreover, it is Taxo's innocence and his morally impeccable descent that give his suffering the atoning effect that the exaltation of 'Israel' in 10:8–10 implies." Johannes Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses: A Critical Edition with Commentary* (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1993), 223.

- 25 2 Macc 7:40, καὶ οὗτος οὖν καθαρὸς μετήλλαξεν παντελῶς ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ πεποιθώς.
- 26 2 Macc also illustrates other small episodes of the innocent victims who died for their piety: two women who circumcised their babies (6:10) and people who gathered in the cave and observed the Sabbath day (6:11).
- 27 Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 27; Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 20–23; Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 12; idem, *Temple Propaganda*, 20; Collins, *Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees*, 260.
- 28 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 50. Italic is mine. Cf. Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 57; Collins, 314; Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 303. While Schwartz highlights the martyrs are "the real heroes," I would rather think that the heroes are (1) Onias III, (2) the martyrs, and (3) Judas Maccabeus. Onias III is depicted as the last legitimate and ideal high priest, sharply contrasted with Jason and Menelaus (5:15, "a traitor both to the laws and his country"). The narrative formulates an *inclusio* by Onias III (3:1 and 15:12) and Jeremiah (2:1–8 and 15:13–15); these figures (the high priest and the prophet) guarantee the holiness of the Jerusalem Temple. Also, 2 Macc focuses on Judas Maccabeus only, with no reference to Mattathias, which may suggest an anti-Hasmonean perspective. Judas is illustrated as the soldier and characterized as the leader of Hasideans (14:6), which qualifies him as being pious regarding the laws.

epitomist elucidates his hermeneutical perspective on the martyrdom episodes as follows:

Παρακαλῶς οὖν τοὺς ἐντυγ- χάνοντας τῆδε τῆ βίβλω μὴ συσ- τέλλεσθαι διὰ τὰς συμφοράς, λο- γίζεσθαι δὲ τὰς τιμωρίας μὴ πρὸς ὄλεθρον, ἀλλὰ πρὸς παιδείαν τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν εἶναι	Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline (to educate) our people.
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(6:12)

Clearly, the passage demonstrates a deuteronomic understanding: unfaithfulness to God and the ancestral laws results in punishments (τὰς τιμωρίας). Second Maccabees 8:5 also enhances this shift (“the wrath of the Lord has turned into mercy,” τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἔλεον τραπέισης). The last martyr’s prayer is heard (7:38); after the death of martyrs, God acts, helps, and fights for the Jewish people (9:5; 10:29; 11:8, 10; 12:11, 16; 13:14, 17).

1.2. Identity Formulation in the Second Maccabees: Dying for God and the Ancestral Laws

In this narrative framework, 2 Maccabees delineates the struggle of the Jewish people to survive the oppression of the foreign tyrant who tried to destroy Jewish identity. This Jewish identity — being a Ἰουδαῖος²⁹ — is tied up with

29 Ἰουδαῖος: **1 Macc** [36] 2:23; 4:2; 8:20, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31; 10:23, 25, 29, 33, 34, 36; 11:30, 33, 47, 49, 50, 51; 12:3, 6, 21, 36, 42; 14: 20, 22, 33, 34, 37, 40, 41, 47; 15:1, 2, 17; **2 Macc** [54] 1:1 [x2], 7, 10; 3:32; 4:11, 35, 36; 5:23, 25; 6:1, 6, 8; 8:10, 11, 32, 34, 36; 9:4, 7, 15, 17, 18, 19; 10:8, 12, 14, 15, 24, 29; 11:2, 15, 24, 27, 31, 34; 12:1, 3, 8, 17, 30, 40; 13:9, 18, 19, 23; 14:5, 6, 14, 37, 39; 15:2, 12; **3 Macc** [27] 1:3, 8; 2:28;

the Jerusalem Temple, faithfulness to the ancestral laws, and the covenant with the God. Famously, Robert Doran postulates that 2 Maccabees is “temple propaganda.”³⁰ The entire narrative of 2 Macc is certainly “Temple-oriented,”³¹ and this narrative underlines the significance of the Temple, as well as of Jerusalem. However, 2 Macc 5:19–20 clarifies that the Jewish people are of central importance.³² John J. Collins articulates this point: “As in 1 Maccabees, the Jewish

3:3, 27, 29; 4:2, 17, 21; 5:2, 3, 6, 13, 18, 20, 25, 31, 35, 38, 42, 48; 6:17, 18; 6:30; 7:3, 6, 10; 4 Macc [1] 5:7.

However, Ἑβραῖος (Hebrew) is used in the martyrdom episode (2 Macc 7:31; also, in 11:13; 15:37). As shown above, based on this evidence, scholars argue for the source theory of the martyrdom episodes (See note 14 above). This self-designation is more conspicuous in 4 Maccabees (4:11; 5:2; 8:2; 9:6, 18; 17:9). The exception is 4 Macc 5:7, where Antiochus calls the Jewish people Ἰουδαῖοι, which reveals the perspective of and designation to the Jewish people by “the Other.”

Furthermore, there have been substantial disputes about the proper translation of Ἰουδαῖος. In this paper, however, I prefer the translations “Jew” and “Jewish,” not “Judean,” because some passages indicate a ‘religious’ overtone — while it is anachronistic to refer to ‘religion’ in late antiquity; it points to “ethnicity” — rather than a ‘geographical’ overtone (for example, Antiochus IV became a Jew through his conversion [2 Macc 9:17]). It also involves an issue of English translation. Cf. Steve Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 457–512; Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Judaism and Jewishness,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 513–514.

30 Doran, *Temple Propaganda*. His thesis is based on a structural analysis that divides 2 Macc into three major divisions: 3:1–40 (the repulse of Heliodorus), 4:1–10:9 (the profanation of the Temple and its renewal), and 10:10–15:36 (the defense of the Temple). 2 Macc is structured as a series of attacks on the Temple. Moreover, the introductory letters consolidate the importance of the Temple, and 15:37 concludes that “ever since the city was taken over by the Hebrews it has been their hands.”

31 Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 111.

32 2 Macc 5:19–20, ¹⁹ ἀλλ’ οὐ διὰ τὸν τόπον τὸ ἔθνος, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ἔθνος τὸν τόπον ὁ κύριος ἐξελέξατο. ²⁰ διόπερ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ τόπος συμμετασχῶν τῶν τοῦ ἔθνους δυσπετημάτων γενομένων ὑστερον εὐεργετημάτων ἐκοινώνησεν, καὶ ὁ καταλειφθεὶς ἐν

people is of prime importance. The temple is a symbol of the covenant. It shares in the misfortune and glories of the people. The destiny of the people ... is bound up with the covenant, and the people's fidelity to the law."³³

The central issue in the persecution is the ancestral laws, as opposed to the newly imposed laws. The Second Maccabees 6:1–11 details the adoption of the new ways, Ἑλληνισμός, as the cause of “the onslaught of evil” (6:3). However, “Hellenism is not evil in itself; rather, it is bad for Jews because it leads them astray from their proper way of life.”³⁴ Three aspects of this way of life are particularly prominent in 2 Macc — that is, (1) Sabbath observance (6:6, 11), (2) circumcision (6:10), and (3) Kosher regulations (6:7).³⁵ Yet, the martyrdom narrative features (3) — food.

The Second Maccabees innovated a new term, Ἰουδαϊσμός (‘Judaism’).³⁶

τῆ τοῦ παντοκράτορος ὀργῆ πάλιν ἐν τῆ τοῦ μεγάλου δεσπότη καταλλαγῆ μετὰ πάσης δόξης ἐπανορθώθη.

But the Lord did not choose the people on account of the place (=the Temple), but the place on account of the people. Therefore, the place itself, having shared in the disasters that befell the people, later shared also the benefactions, and that which was abandoned in the wrath of the Almighty, was once more restored with all glory when the great Sovereign was reconciled.

33 Collins, *Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees*, 264.

34 Martha Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” *Poetics Today* 19 (1998): 27.

35 Robert Doran, “The Persecution of Judeans by Antiochus IV: The Significance of ‘Ancestral Laws’,” in *The “Other” in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins*, ed. Daniel C. Harlow et al. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 432; John J. Collins, *The Invention of Judaism: Torah and Jewish Identity from Deuteronomy to Paul* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 15–17.

36 Ἰουδαϊσμός: 2 Macc [3] 2:21 (in the preface; for the description of “to those who fought bravely for Judaism” [τοῖς ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἰουδαϊμοῦ φιλοτιμίως ἀνδραγαθήσασιν]); 8:1 (for the description of Judas Maccabeus); 14:38 (for the description of Razis); 4 Macc [1] 4:26// Ἑλληνισμός: 2 Macc 4:13.

Ἰουδαϊσμός is used vis-à-vis ἀλοφυλισμός (‘foreign ways’ 4:13; 6:24), the latter being paired with Ἑλληνισμός (‘Hellenism’/ ‘Greek manners’[Goldstein]) in 4:13, although the adjective Ἑλληνικός appears more often (4:10, 15; 6:9; 11:24; 13:2). Some scholars contend that 2 Macc never juxtaposes Judaism with Hellenism;³⁷ however, this term had no earlier reference, and 2 Macc probably coined this term with a new connotation — “the Jewish way.”³⁸ In 4:15, “ancestral honors” (τὰς πατρώους τιμὰς) is an antipode to “Greek glory” (τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς δόξας). Taking into consideration the same suffix structure (-ισμος [-ism]), Ἰουδαϊσμός forms an antithesis with Ἑλληνισμός in 2 Macc.³⁹ Hellenism is a new threat to Jewish identity.

Both 1 and 2 Maccabees reiterate their being a “Ἰουδαῖος.” As a constructed text, 2 Macc functions to mark identity; simultaneously, the rhetorical assertion of “the self” (the One) exerts the denial of “the non-self” (the Other).⁴⁰ 1 Macc

37 Eric S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, *Hellenistic Culture and Society* 30(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 3–4; Y. Amir, *Studien zum antiken Judentum*, BEATAJ 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1985), 101–113.

38 Goldstein points out that the term Ἑλληνισμός, although it was “used earlier to mean ‘use of a pure Greek style or idiom’ . . . , but this (2 Macc 4:13) is the earliest known occurrence of the word in the extended sense of ‘Greek culture,’ as in the modern term ‘Hellenism.’” (230). Also, this word was a Greek invention during the Persian War (492–449 BCE) and meant “to be loyal to the Greek cause” as an antithesis to “Medism” (Μηδισμός), which means to be loyal to the Persian cause. Goldstein also presumes that the epitomist was familiar with this antithetical use of the term, Ἑλληνισμός. Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 230.

39 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 173, 224; Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 67; Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 192, 230; Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” 27–28; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1–2.

40 Lieu, *Neither Jew Nor Greek*, 209. “All identity is, . . . , about exclusion; the erection of boundaries against ‘the other,’ and so at the same time the labelling, the rhetorical construction of, the other” (209).

employs a relatively simple binary opposition of the Jew and the non-Jew; for 1 Maccabees, non-Jews are straightforwardly “evil” (1 Macc 1:9–10), and thus, *the Other*. For 2 Maccabees, however, it is not that simple.

The First Maccabee’s binary opposition involves Jews and non-Jews, or good people and evil people, which is somewhat similar to Bickerman’s classic dichotomy between Israel and the nations. For 1 Macc, it is impossible to be a Jew and evil, or a non-Jew and good. Contrastingly, in 2 Macc, “these two pairs of criteria should yield four types of people (good Jews and bad Jews, good non-Jews and bad non-Jews),”⁴¹ and there are crossings of the four types. Simply put, in 2 Macc, *the Other* is Hellenizers (=bad Jews), whereas in 1 Macc Hellenizers are described in positive terms (1 Macc 1:11; 1:42–42). On the other hand, 2 Macc presents non-Jews as neutral or basically positive (1 Macc 1:11; 1:41–42); they can be either good or evil. In most cases, however, it is a villainous Jew who causes the evilness of the non-Jews to the fellow Jews, and “[t]his general exculpation of Gentiles conforms to a major theme of 2 Maccabees and one totally absent from 1 Maccabees, namely the explanation of general Jewish suffering as a result of general Jewish sinfulness, God having used the Gentiles as the rod of his anger.”⁴³

41 Schwartz, “The Other in 1 and 2 Maccabees,” 33.

42 The institutionalized Hellenization because of “the impious/abominable” Jason [4:13, 19]; the profanement of the Temple by Antiochus through the aid of Menelaus “the traitor” [5:15], et al. In 2 Macc, even a non-Jew can become a Ἰουδαῖος through *conversion* (e.g., Antiochus IV, 2 Macc 9:17; προς δὲ τούτοις καὶ Ἰουδαῖον ἔσεσθαι καὶ πάντα τόπον οἰκητὸν ἐπελεύσεσθαι καταγγέλλοντα τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κράτος). In this sense, 2 Macc demonstrates that being a Jew is not necessarily a result of one’s birth (ethnicity) but, more importantly, a result of one’s commitment and adherence to Judaism (even Antiochus!).

43 Daniel R. Schwartz, “The Other in 1 and 2 Maccabees,” in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and Guy G. Stroumsa (Cambridge/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 33.

1 Macc		2 Macc	
non-Jews the Nations	Jews Israel	good non-Jews**	good Jews
		bad non-Jews	bad Jews** (Hellenizers)

** 1 Maccabees does not have these possibilities

In 2 Macc, what makes a Ἰουδαῖος is one's adherence to Ἰουδαϊσμός — the Jewish ways. Reverence to God and the strict observance of the ancestral/fatherly laws (πάτριαι νόμοι)⁴⁴ constitute this Jewish way; these two features are the two sides of the coin whose inscription (ἐικόν) is Ἰουδαῖος.

Thus, εὐσεβής (pious) which expresses the attitude of faithfulness to God and the ancestral laws is presented as a crucial virtue in 2 Macc. “The adjective εὐσεβής expresses the principal virtue in 2 Maccabees and would have been applicable to all persons described positively in the book.”⁴⁵

In fact, both 1 and 2 Maccabees give prime importance to the defense of Jewish identity, and thus, they both underline total devotion to the ancestral laws. However, 1 Macc has one exception for this application. After the tragic massacre of the innocent people on the Sabbath day (1 Macc 2:19–38), Mattathias and his comrade decided to fight on the Sabbath day (1 Macc 2:41).⁴⁶ The Second

44 This term, *πάτριαι νόμοι*, is a typical Greek term: “every city had its own *πάτριαι νόμοι*, and every reader of Greek knew how reprehensible it was to violate or suppress them.” Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 275. Yet, here lies a seemingly contradictory *hybridity* to express their ancestral laws in Hellenistic political language. Cf. Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” 19–40.

45 Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 55. In 2 Macc, Onias III is an epitome of εὐσεβεία, being contrasted with Jason. See the adjectives used to illustrate the villains of the narrative: “impious” (ἀσεβής, 4:13 [Jason]; 8:2; 10:10); “abominable” (μιαρός, 4:19 [Jason]; 5:16 [Antiochus]; 7:34; 9:13; 15:32 [Nicanor]); “unholy” (ἀνόσιος, 7:34; 8:32).

46 1 Macc 2:41, Πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, ὃς ἐὰν ἔλθῃ ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς εἰς πόλεμον τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων, πολεμήσομεν κατέναντι αὐτοῦ

Maccabees, however, does not admit this exception; rather, 2 Macc insists on full obedience to the law *under any circumstances*. Thus, the martyrdom episodes are inevitable consequences of their piety.

2. The Martyrdom Episodes in the Second Maccabees

The martyrdom episodes focus on the Kosher regulations. The speech of each martyr encapsulates a theological perspective on one's death, revealing what each martyr envisions with respect to death. H.A. Fischel observes that the words or vision of a martyr before his/her death present the gist of his/her theological point.⁴⁷

2.1. The Martyrdom of Eleazar (2 Macc 6:18–31)

In the narrative, the death of Eleazar serves as an exemplary model for the young martyrs to follow. The term *ὑπόδειγμα* is repeated (6:28, 31). Eleazar himself, being an elderly and prominent scribe (6:18), determined to set an example for the young people (6:28).⁴⁸ The epitomist underscores that Eleazar's paradigmatic death is "an example of nobility and a memorial of virtue, not only to the youth but also to the multitude of his people" (6:31).⁴⁹ Indeed, the follow-

Let us fight against him, if anyone comes to attack us on the Sabbath day.

47 H.A. Fischel, "Martyr and Prophet (A Study of Jewish Literature)," *JQR* 37 (1947, 265–280). Cf. Jan Willen van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 26–27.

48 2 Macc 6:28, τοῖς δὲ νέοις ὑπόδειγμα γενναῖον καταλελοιπῶς εἰς τὸ προθύμως καὶ γενναίως ὑπὲρ τῶν σεμνῶν καὶ ἀγίων νόμων ἀπευθανατίζειν. τοσαῦτα δὲ εἰπὼν ἐπὶ τὸ τύμπανον εὐθέως ἦλθεν.

49 2 Macc 6:31, καὶ ... οὐ μόνον τοῖς νέοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς πλείστοις τοῦ ἔθνους τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θάνατον ὑπόδειγμα γενναιότητος καὶ μνημόσυνον ἀρετῆς καταλιπὼν.

ing episode of the martyrdom in 7:1–41 “focuses on youth and on a woman and thus allows Jews of all ages and both sexes to share in martyrdom.”⁵⁰

... μᾶλλον δὲ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ θεο-	...yet rather, of [worthy of] the
κτίστου νομοθεσίας ἀκολούθως	holy and divine-established legis-
ἀπεφίηνατο ταχέως λέγων προπέμ-	lation, accordingly, he declared im-
πειν εἰς τὸν ᾄδην	mediately to send (him) to Hades.
(6:23)	

Eleazar, refusing the swine flesh (non-Kosher food, cf. Lev 11:2–8; 17:10–12),⁵¹ prefers “death in good reputation” (v.19, τὸν μετ’ εὐκλείας θάνατον) and to die for “the holy and divine-established legislation” (v.23, τῆς ἁγίας καὶ θεοκτίστου νομοθεσίας). In 6:31, Eleazar is depicted as an “example of nobility” (ὑπόδειγμα γενναϊότητος). The Second Maccabees evinces the characteristic usage of γενναῖος and its cognate words.⁵² The book employs γενναῖος to delineate “courage in the face of force, whether of tortures or an opposing army.”⁵³ Himmelfarb observes that these derivatives in 2 Macc represent an ap-

50 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 298.

51 However, 2 Macc emphasizes that Eleazar refused not simply to consume the swine flesh but *to pretend* (ὑποκριθῆναι) to consume it (2 Macc 6:21, 24. cf. 4 Macc 6:15, 17). This passage harks back to 2 Macc 5:25, where the Mysarch Apollonius “pretended to be peaceful” in Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, and massacred the multitude treacherously. In terms of moral virtue, “simple-mindedness” is underlined. Cf. δῖψυχος, Jas 1:8; 4:8; Hermas Comm IX, 1:6.

52 Cf. ‘noble’; 6:28; 7:21; 12:42; ‘nobly’; 6:28; 7:5 [the mother and sons], 11; 8:16 [Judas]; 13:14; 14:31, 43; 15:17), and εὐγενῶς. (‘noble-bornly’; 14:42 [Razis]. Razis is also described as “prefer(ing) to die noble-bornly” and “of noble birth.” Cf. 2 Macc 14:42: εὐγενῶς θέλων ἀποθανεῖν ἢ περ τοῖς ἀλιτηρίοις ὑποχείριος γενέσθαι καὶ τῆς ἰδίας εὐγενείας ἀναξίως ὑβρισθῆναι.

53 Martha Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” *Poetics Today* 19 (1998): 34.

propriation of Greek values.⁵⁴ In fact, a “Noble death” is a popular *topos* in classic Greek literature — its well-known example is Socrates, as is well represented in Eleazar’s case.⁵⁵ Although Eleazar’s case is not exactly a trial scene, his last words invoke God as his witness — God being the foundation of truth (Τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ τὴν ἁγίαν γνῶσιν ἔχοντι). Himmelfarb points out the irony of 2 Maccabees; “despite its claim of opposition between Judaism and Hellenism, 2 Maccabees embodies a far more complex relationship between the two cultures in which the defining features of Hellenism undergo a transformation that makes them central aspect of Hellenism.”⁵⁶

In Jewish tradition, Hades (ᾠδης) — the LXX translation of *Sheol* (שְׁאוֹל) — is the underworld, where the deceased people become “shadowy existence” (Gen 37:35; 1 Kings 2:6; Ps 88:10–12; Job 3:13–19; 17:16).⁵⁷ In this context, Deut 32:22 [LXX] may be indicated. Jewish literature in the Second Temple period describes *Sheol* as the land of shadow and oblivion (Cf. 1 Enoch 102:6–8, 11; 2 Bar 10:6–12:4; Prov 7:27), which is more or less similar to the Greek tradition of Hades. Sometimes, *Sheol* refers to a chamber of the dead until judgment (2 Bar 36:11). The Jewish character of Hades is its relation to judgment and postmortem punishment. The Second Maccabees 6:23 gives the impression that Eleazar shares the postmortem worldview shared by the Jewish people, although the last words of Eleazar, the focal point of the narrative, brings about a new perspective.

Τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ τὴν ἁγίαν γνῶσιν ἔχοντι φανερόν ἐστιν ὅτι δυνάμενος ἀπολυθῆναι τοῦ θανάτου	To the Lord who possesses holy knowledge, it is clear that, though I could have been released from
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54 Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” 33–35.

55 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 290; Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 154. Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” 19–40.

56 Himmelfarb, “Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees,” 35.

57 Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 172; Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 178, 307 (cf. Tob 13:2).

σκληρὰς ὑποφέρω κατὰ τὸ σῶμα	death, I endure these severe suffer-
ἀλγηδόνας μαστιγούμενος, κατὰ	ings in my body, but suffer them
ψυχὴν δὲ ἡδέως διὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ φό-	gladly in soul because of the fear
βον ταῦτα πάσχω	of him.
(6:30)	

In Doran’s interpretation, this phrase points to immortality in the light of Wis 3:1–4. Yet, it would be an overstatement, although he rightly suggests that Eleazar’s speech indicates a more Hellenistic view of postmortem reality.⁵⁸ Certainly, 2 Macc uses the term “body and soul” (σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴ), which is a typical Greek usage. This expression is conspicuous in 2 Macc, especially in the context of martyrdom and faithfulness to the ancestral laws (6:30; 7:37; 14:38; 15:30). Through this juxtaposition, however, 2 Macc features the unity between σῶμα and ψυχὴ (cf. 3:16);⁵⁹ thus, 2 Macc differs from Wisdom of Solomon (cf. Wis 9:15), which assumes “*sōma sēma*” (cf. Plato, *Crat.* 400c; *Phaedo* 62b).

Although Eleazar refers to some kind of afterlife, his martyrdom lacks a reference to resurrection or immortality; he died for “for the revered and holy laws” (v.28, ὑπὲρ τῶν σεμνῶν καὶ ἁγίων νόμων). And here lies the gravity of his “noble death;” it is and should be independent from the hope of an afterlife. Eleazar’s death points to the crucial point of human dignity — namely, human

58 Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 154–155. “Whereas earlier Eleazar had been ready to be escorted to Hades, to the shadowy underworld, the introduction of the body-soul distinction seems to reflect a worldview akin to that of Wis 3:1–4: The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. ... For though in the sight of men, they were punished, their hope is full of immortality.” Eleazar’s distinction between body and soul thus looks forward to the possibility of a future life.”

59 2 Macc 3:16, ἦν δὲ ὀρώντα τὴν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως ἰδέαν τιτρώσκεσθαι τὴν διάνοιαν· ἡ γὰρ ὄψις καὶ τὸ τῆς χροᾶς παρηλλαγμένον ἐνέφαινε τὴν κατὰ ψυχὴν ἀγωνίαν· (it pierced the mind to see the high priest’s face, for his appearance and the changes of coloration revealed the distress of soul).

will and the freedom to choose what to believe in and stand for at the cost of one's life, and the inability of anyone to violate this commitment or coerce one to believe or do otherwise. Again, Greek ἀρετή (excellence, virtue) is evidently an undercurrent of his pious attitude.

2.2. The Martyrdom of the Seven Sons and their Mother (2 Macc 7:1–42)

The speech of each martyr is summarized below:

the martyr	theological point(s)
the first son	ready to die; reference to Deut 32:36, 43
the second son	hope of resurrection
the third son	hope of resurrection of body
the fourth son	hope of resurrection; no resurrection to Antiochus
the fifth son	no resurrection to Antiochus
the sixth son	death because of the Jewish people
the mother	God the Creator; resurrection as God's recreation
the seventh son	summary of the major theological points

2.2.1. The First Son

At the onset of their trial, the first son — as their spokesman (προήγορος; 7:2, 4) — informs Antiochus that they are “ready to die rather than to transgress the ancestral laws” (7:2, ἔτοιμοι γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν ἔσμεν ἢ παραβαίνειν τοὺς πατρῴους νόμους). The first son's statement summarizes their attitude and expresses their determination to follow the model of Eleazar (6:19), thus proving that his death was not in vain.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Schwartz points out that “ready to die” is a typically Diasporan stance: “we are ready to die, not to fight.” Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 301.

Ὁ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐφορᾷ καὶ ταῖς ἀληθείαις ἐφ' ἡμῖν παρακαλεῖται, καθάπερ διὰ τῆς κατὰ πρόσωπον ἀντιμαρτυρούσης ῥῆθης διεσάφισεν Μωσῆς λέγων Καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ παρακληθήσεται.⁶¹ The Lord God watches over us and is in truth becoming comfort with us, as Moses said clearly in the song which faces to face bears witness against us, saying, “And he will encourage his servants.”

Second Maccabees 7:6 — “an opening bracket for the chapter”⁶² — quotes Deut 32:36 [LXX]. The repetition of the motif that “God watches over us” is repeated in 2 Macc (cf. ἐφορώ, 1:27; 7:6, 35; 8:2; 9:5; 12:22; 15:2)⁶³ The first son’s statement refers to Deut 31:19 [LXX],⁶⁴ calling for God as their witness, as God himself promised through Moses (Deut 31:18–21). Their martyrdoms are indicated in Deut 32:43 [LXX],⁶⁵ which evokes God’s vengeance. In fact, 7:33 responds to 7:6, where the seventh son declares that “if for the sake of punishment and

61 The meaning of παρακαλεῖται (translated from פָּרַחַח < פָּחַח) is rather difficult to grasp in this context. Its English translations also vary: “reconciles” (Schwartz), “have compassion” (Collins), “be relent” (Goldstein). However, this verb functions to reinforce their determination to die (cf. 7:6).

62 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 22.

63 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 205.

64 Deut 31:19, καὶ νῦν γράψατε τὰ ῥήματα τῆς ῥῆθης ταύτης καὶ διδάξετε αὐτὴν τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐμβαλεῖτε αὐτὴν εἰς τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν, ἵνα γένηται μοι ἡ ῥῆθὴ αὕτη εἰς μαρτύριον ἐν υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ. (Now, therefore, write this song, and teach it to the Israelites; put it in their mouths, so that this song may be a witness for me against the Israelites.)

65 Deut 32:43, ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται, καὶ ἐκδικήσει καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἀνταποδώσει, καὶ ἐκκαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ. (For he will avenge the blood of his children, and take avengement on his adversaries; he will repay those who hate him, and cleanse the land for his people).

edification our living Lord briefly became angry, He will again be reconciled with his own servants” (7:33).

2.2.2. The Second Son

After the tortured death of the first son, Antiochus asks the second son if he would eat swine flesh (7:7). “But, answering in the ancestral language (ἀποκριθεις τῇ πατρίῳ φωνῇ), he said forth ‘No!’” (7:8). Here, the Hebrew language is clearly a sign of defiance.

ἐν ἐσχάτῃ δὲ πνοῇ γενόμενος	But in his last breath, he said, “You,
εἶπεν Σὺ μὲν, ἀλάστωρ, ἐκ τοῦ	Avenger, free us from the present
παρόντος ἡμᾶς ζῆν ἀπολύεις, ὁ δὲ	life, but the King of the cosmos
τοῦ κόσμου βασιλεὺς ἀποθανόν-	will raise us up to an everlasting
τας ἡμᾶς ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτοῦ νόμων	revivification of life, since we have
εις αἰώνιον ἀναβίωσιν ζῶντος ἡμᾶς	died for his laws
ἀναστήσει (7:9)	

The use of ἀπολύω goes back to 6:22 and 30, but with a reversal. Eleazar’s friends attempt to free him from death, but Eleazar refuses to be freed from death (ἀπολυθῆ τοῦ θανάτου [v.22], ἀπολυθῆναι τοῦ θανάτου [v.30]). Now, the second son asserts that Antiochus, the king of the earth, frees them from their present life (ἐκ τοῦ παρόντος ... ζῆν), but that “the King of the cosmos”⁶⁶

66 This term κόσμος (the universe/ the world) is a typical Greek. In the Hellenistic period, the Greek term κόσμος infiltrated Jewish thought, interacting with the Jewish term **עוֹלָם**, (which is translated mostly to αἰών in LXX) and giving this term a more spatial connotation. By the first century CE, **עוֹלָם/αἰών** came to mean “the universe,” along with κόσμος. Cf. H. D. Preuss, “**עוֹלָם**,” in *TDOT* vol. X, ed. G. J. Botterweck et al., trans. D. W. Stott (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 530ff; E. Jenni, “Das Wort ‘ōlam im AT,” *ZAW* 64 (1952, 197–248); (1953, 1–35). Hermann Sasse, “αἰών, αἰώνιος” in *TDNT* vol. I [8th edition], ed. Gerhard Kittel,

will bring them “to an everlasting of life” (εις αἰώνιον ἀναβίωσιν ζωῆς). The Second Maccabees underscores heaven (οὐρανός; cf. “God of Heaven”), and the martyr narrative takes on cosmic proportions, envisioning the universality of the Israelite God — and simultaneously, enabling a-topological access to God.⁶⁷ In the backdrop of the implied antithesis between the cosmos/heaven and the earth, the hendiadys body and soul is transformed into a cosmological and soteriological dichotomy — this present life and the life to come. The martyrs also juxtapose their future vindication with Antiochus’ punishment (2 Macc 7:9, 16–17, 19, 31, 34–37), thus converting their earthly trial scene into the cosmic and eschatological divine judgment.

His speech introduces “resurrection” in 2 Macc, an event to which other brothers and the mother also testify (7:11, 14, 23, 29, 36). The verb ἀνίστημι is used 11 times in the Maccabean Corpus, yet only 2 Macc witnesses the reference to “rise up” as a postmortem existence; the noun ἀνάστασις occurs only in 2 Macc, notwithstanding.⁶⁸ Scholars agree on the influence of Dan 12:2 (LXX) here, which refers back to Is 26:14, 19; 66:24 (cf. Wis 3:3–4).⁶⁹ However, ἀναβίωσις implies a difference from Dan 12:2 in terms of resurrection. First, while Daniel pictures the exaltation of the righteous as “astral beings” (Dan 12:3), 2 Macc emphasizes the bodily resurrection. Seeing ἀναβίωσις (‘come to life again’ [Perkins] ἀναβιώσκεσθαι) in Plato’s work (*Phaedo* 71e–72d),

trans. Geoffrey W. Bromby (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), 197–209; T. Holz, “ἀτών,” in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. H. B. G. Schneider (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 531.

67 “heaven” (οὐρανός): 2 Macc 2:10, 18, 21; 3:15, 20, 34, (39); 7:11, 28; 8:20; 9:4, 20; 10:29; 11:10; 14:34; 15:3, 4, 8, 21, 23, 34. “cosmos” (κόσμος): 2 Macc 7:9, 23; 8:18; 12:15; 13:14.

68 ἀνίστημι: 1 Macc [11] 2:1, 38; 3:1, 43; 9:8, 31, 44; 13:14; 14:41; 16:15; 2 Macc [4] 7:9, 14; 12:44; (14:33); 3 Macc [1] 2:27. There is no reference in 4 Macc. ἀνάστασις: 2 Macc [2 out of 6] 7:14; 12:43.

69 Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 306.

PHEME PERKINS points out that “2 Macc 7:9 combines resurrection, eternal life, and resuscitation.”⁷⁰ In this “redundant” and “inelegant” phrase,⁷¹ especially with ἀναβίωσις, 2 Macc unmistakably speaks about the resurrection of the body.⁷² Second, Daniel arguably assumes the resurrection of all people (universal resurrection) at the end time, but 2 Macc seems to presume “only the resurrection of the martyrs”⁷³ (cf. 7:36). On the second point, however, the paucity of evidence (in both Daniel and 2 Macc) leaves obscure what kind of resurrection they are really dictating, and what kind of “end time” and “divine judgment” they envision.

2.2.3. The Third Son

The third son also envisages a world beyond this world.

Μετὰ δὲ τοῦτον ὁ τρίτος ἐνεπαί- ζετο καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν αἰτηθεὶς ταχέως προέβαλεν καὶ τὰς χεῖρας εὐθαρσῶς προέτεινε καὶ γενναίως εὔπεν Ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ταῦτα κέκτημαι καὶ διὰ τοὺς αὐτοῦ νόμους ὑπερορῶ ταῦτα καὶ παρ’ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα πάλιν ἐλπίζω κομίσασθαι. (7:10–11)	After this one, the third was being mocked, and when the tongue was demanded, he immediately stuck it out, and courageously stretched forth his hands, and said nobly, “I acquired these from the heaven and I look beyond (ignore) these on ac- count of his laws, and hoping to receive these again from him.
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Οὐρανός is an epithet for God.⁷⁴ His statement indicates God in the heaven

70 PHEME PERKINS, *Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), 38.

71 GOLDSTEIN, *II Maccabees*, 307.

72 NICKELSBURG, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity*, 209.

73 VAN HENTEN, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 173.

(cf. 3:39, ὁ τὴν κατοικίαν ἐπουράνιον ἔχων). “God of Heaven” is characteristic to 2 Macc (2:21; 3:15, 20, 34, 39; 8:20; 9:4, 20; 10:29; 11:10; 14:34; 15:3–4, 8, 21–24).⁷⁵ The martyrdom narrative reconstructs the worldview, by transforming their trial and suffering into the cosmological/mythological dimension, expanding the arena of conflict vertically into heaven and the divine sphere and thus reassuring transcendence of life and divine victory over the world. The notion of resurrection is strongly bound to “hope” (ἐλπίζω, ἐλπίς, cf. v.11, 14, 20);⁷⁶ which postulates a *future* resurrection. The Second Maccabees describes the retrieval of the third son’s lost body (or bodily parts) along with the resurrection. Through hope, the martyrs’ brutal death is connected to a form of life that transcends death. It is this hope that gives them the freedom required to respond to the demand for adherence to the ancestral laws.

The Second Maccabees exhibits “the most extreme form of resurrection.”⁷⁷ The words of the martyrs repeatedly emphasize the physicality of resurrection (2 Macc 7:9, 14; especially, Razis’ words in 14:46).⁷⁸ The persistent dreadful descriptions of bodily torture are counterbalanced by this bodily resurrection.

74 Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 306.

75 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 47.

76 In contrast with 7:34 (ἀδήλοις ἐλπίσιν). However, Antiochus at his death wrote in a letter to the Jewish people, “I have my hope in heaven” (εἰς οὐρανὸν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχων, 9:20).

77 Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 307. Compare with 4 Macc which has no notion of the resurrection (as shown in footnote 56; no reference to ἀνίστημι or ἀνάστασις. The Fourth Maccabees presumes the immortality of the soul (4 Macc 7:3; 9:22; 14:5–6; 16:13; 17:12), eternal life (15:3), and the immediate exaltation (assumption) of the martyrs (9:22; 13:17; 16:25; 17:18–19). For the usage of “immortality”: ἀθανάτο: 4 Macc 7:3; 14:6; 18:23 (Wis 1:15; Sir 17:30); ἀθανασία: 4 Macc 14:5; 16:13 (Wis 3:4; 4:1; 8:13, 17; 15:3); ἀφθαρσία: 4 Macc 9:22; 17:12 (Wis 2:23; 6:18, 19).

78 2 Macc 14:46; ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸν δεσπότην τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ταῦτα αὐτῷ πάλιν ἀποδοῦναι τόνδε τὸν τρόπον μετήλλαξεν (calling upon the lord of life and spirit to give them [=intestines, τὰ ἔντερα] back to him again).

2.2.4. The Fourth Son

καὶ γενόμενος πρὸς τὸ τελευτᾶν	and getting to die, he said in this
οὕτως ἔφη Αἰρετὸν μεταλλάσ-	way, “It is desirable to pass away
σοντας ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπων τὰς ὑπὸ τοῦ	from among men to look forward
θεοῦ προσδοκᾶν ἐλπίδας πάλιν	the hope (given) by God, (namely)
ἀναστήσεσθαι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ· σοὶ	to be raised up again by him. But
μὲν γὰρ ἀνάστασις εἰς ζωὴν οὐκ	for you there will be no resurrec-
ἔσται (7:14)	tion to life!

The verb μεταλλάσσω (to pass away) is used in relation to all the martyrs in the narrative (7:7, 13, 14, 40; also, 6:31 [Eleazar]; 14:46 [Razis]).⁷⁹ Only here is the verb followed by ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπων, meaning “those who already departed” (=the martyrs).⁸⁰ Contrastingly, those who “passed away from life” (μεταλλάξαντος τὸν βίον; 4:7; 5:5) are just finishing their life (ὁ βίος; in the case of Antiochus and Ptolemy *aka* Macron in 9:28; 10:13). “That is, the martyrs depart from among men alone, but they go on living — as opposed to others, especially the wicked, for whom death is the end of life.”⁸¹ Thus, his last words rightfully declare that Antiochus has no resurrection to life. **The fifth son** also reinforces the same point, underscoring the punishment of Antiochus and even his descendants (7:17).⁸²

79 Other examples include the following: 1 Esdr 1:29; Esth 2:7, 20; 2 Macc 4:7, 37; 5:5. This verb has a Hellenistic background. Cf. C. Spique, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire* vol. II, OBO 22/1–3 (Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions universitaires, and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), II–553.

80 Cf. Wis 3:3–4.

81 Schwartz, 2 *Maccabees*, 303.

82 7:17, σὺ δὲ καρτέρει καὶ θεώρει τὸ μεγαλεῖον αὐτοῦ κράτος, ὡς σὲ καὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου βασανιεῖ.

2.2.5. The Sixth Son

The sixth son declares, “— for we are suffering these things on our own account, having sinned against our own God” (7:18, ἡμεῖς γὰρ δι’ ἑαυτοὺς ταῦτα πάσχομεν ἀμαρτόντες εἰς τὸν ἑαυτῶν θεόν). The notable repetition of “our own” makes it clear that 2 Macc presumes “general Jewish suffering as a result of general Jewish sinfulness.”⁸³ The book’s theology is conspicuously Deuteromonic. As mentioned above, 2 Macc constructs the Hellenizers (bad Jews) as *the Other*. Antiochus’ superficial success over the Jewish people demonstrates that he was an instrument of God sent to punish them. However, Antiochus is also “fighting against God” (7:19); thus, he will be punished for his arrogance (cf. 7:34, 36; ὑπερηφανία).

2.2.6. The Mother

Finally, the mother’s speech, especially 7:22–23, recapitulates 2 Maccabees’ basic tenets — its theological and cosmological propositions.

Οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἐφάνητε κοιλίαν, οὐδὲ ἐγὼ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ζωὴν ὑμῖν ἐχαρισάμην, καὶ τὴν ἐκάστου στοιχείωσιν οὐκ ἐγὼ διερρύθμισα· τοιγαροῦν ὁ τοῦ κόσμου κτίστης ὁ πλάσας ἄνθρωπου γένεσιν καὶ πάντων ἐξευρῶν γένεσιν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ζωὴν ὑμῖν πάλιν ἀποδίδωσιν μετ’ ἐλέους, ὡς νῦν ὑπερορᾶτε ἑαυτοὺς διὰ τοὺς	I do not know how you appeared in my womb, nor was it I who gave you breath and life; or it was not I who arranged the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the cosmos, who shaped the be- ginning of humankind and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give both breath and life back to you again, since you now look beyond (ignore) yourselves
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83 Schwartz, “The Other in 1 and 2 Maccabees,” 33.

αὐτοῦ νόμους.
(7:22–23)

for the sake of his laws.

She envisions “the Creator of the cosmos.” Together with her ensuing speech (especially, v.28, οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεός),⁸⁴ she asserts that the Creator who created everything in the cosmos can surely *create it again* — pointing to her assurance of God’s Re-creation. The resurrection and the vindication of the righteous people in 2 Macc presume the Creation and Recreation by God the Creator.⁸⁵ Creation as a salvific motif refers back to the Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 43:1–2, 6–7; 44:1–2, 24; 46:3–4),⁸⁶ whose creative redemption is not only eschatological but also universal, envisioning the redemption in a cosmic dimension.⁸⁷ Given the vindication of the righteous (through resurrection) and the eternal punishment of the wicked, the cosmic dimension points to an incipient “cosmic dualism.” The retribution is placed in a cosmic context.⁸⁸

84 2 Macc 7:28, ἀξιῶ σε, τέκνον, ἀναβλέψαντα εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα ἰδόντα γινώσκειν ὅτι οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεός, καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος οὕτω γίνεται. Christian writers since Origen deemed these passages “the first unequivocal statement in scripture of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*.” Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 307. Cf. Origen, *Commentarius in Johannem*, i, 17. 103, *De principiis*, ii, 1.5. However, it is difficult from this text to predicate that the author presumed it.

85 Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 175. Cf. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity*, 135–136.

86 Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity*, 135–136.

87 Carrol Stuhlmüller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 235.

88 While 2 Maccabees does not use apocalyptic terminologies, it describes the angelic figures (supernatural powers) who assist in Judas’s fighting, postmortem life, and the future resurrection of the dead. Taking into consideration the contemporaneous Jewish apocalyptic literature (Daniel and Enoch), 2 Macc at least shares a similar cosmic worldview.

Τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ζωὴν underscores that human existence fundamentally depends upon God’s work of Creation — in the juxtaposition between the mother (who gave birth to her sons in a physical sense; cf. the repetition of “not I”) and God the Creator (who created them in a metaphysical/ontological sense). The same expression is repeated in 7:23 and 14:46 (in reverse form), which are possibly grounded in Gen 2:7 [LXX],⁸⁹ emphasizing that humans are beings created by God’s imbuing breath (also, Gen 6:17; 7:15 πνεῦμα ζωῆς; 7:22 πνόην ζωῆς. Cf. Wis 15:11 πνεῦμα ζωτικόν). The verb πλάσσω, derived from Hebrew נָסַף, supports it (Gen 2:7, 8, 15). The repetition of γένεσις reiterates that God is the Creator of humankind (ἀνθρώπου) and all things (πάντων), thus guaranteeing God’s capacity for Re-creation (Cf. 7:28b, 29c).

The Second Maccabees buttresses God’s Creational power through a pair of philosophical terms; στοιχείον, which points to a component or elementary part of matter (Cf. Gal 4:3, 9; Plato, *Tim.* 48b; *Theaet.* 201e; Aristotle, *Metaph.* 998a 28; 1059b 3, et al.) and διεppύθμισα (“literally means ‘arrange in rhythm or proportion’”⁹⁰; Aristotle, *de Caelo*, 3.8. 306b 22–29).

The mother encourages her last son “to look up” (ἀναβλέπω; Schwartz [raise up your eyes]) and see the world beyond, even though they are obliged to suffer for a while (βραχύν, 7:36) in this world. Her upward-looking eyes meet God’s gaze upon his people. Together with ὑπεροπῶ (7:11, 23 [Schwartz: “to look beyond”]), the mother’s instruction raises the viewpoint of the martyrdom episodes high above to heaven (cf. Acts 7:55–56). The Second Maccabees formulates “otherworldliness” as the martyrs’ true *topos* (2 Macc 3:39, cf. Phil 3:20); thus, the last son declares that they are τοὺς οὐρανίους παῖδας (“children of heaven,” 7:34).

Doran makes an intriguing comment on the absence of the father in this

89 However, Gen 2:7 (LXX) is not τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ζωὴν, but πνοὴν ζωῆς that constitutes ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

90 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 310.

anonymous martyred family:⁹¹

Their anonymity makes them not so much individuals as representatives of the underdog before the oppressor. ... Even more interesting is that no mention is made of her husband, the boys' father. However, the adjective *πάτριος* substantive for the father, *πατήρ*, is found throughout their story: the ancestral/fatherly voice is used (7:8, 21, 27); they do not transgress the ancestral/fatherly laws (7:2, 24, 37). This emphasis on “fatherly” and the absence of a human father leads me to suggest that the story is a contest about who is the father of the children. ... God is thus the true father of the children.

The martyrs die for the ancestral laws (*patris nomoi*), proving they are the children of God and thus asserting their true identity — being a Jew means being a child of this *familia Dei*.

The martyrs prove themselves to be “pious” (εὐσεβής). In Greco-Roman society, piety was a social virtue. “Piety and dutifulness are closely related values, as one sees in the frequent use of the epithet *pious* to describe the hero of the Aeneid, who is dependable, faithful and dutiful with regard to the requirement of family, country and divinities.”⁹²

Jews in the Greco-Roman world had a long history of demonstrating their “piety.” Although this group of terms, including “pious” (εὐσεβής) and “God-fearing” (θεοσεβής), was originally “alien to the biblical revelation,”⁹³ it denotes true and authentic worship of God (religion) in contrast to pagan superstition.⁹⁴

91 Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 166.

92 David A. deSilva, *4 Maccabees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 82.

93 Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?*, 68.

94 G. Betram, θεοσεβής, θεοσεβεία, TDNT III, 124. Cf. Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?* ,

Jews were caricatured for their obstinate observance of the ethnic way of life prescribed in their ancestral laws: Jews are characterized as “hostile,” “antagonistic,” and “different”— a well-attested critique of Jews (cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 34.1–4; 40. 3.4; Tacitus, *Historiae* 5.5; Juvenal, *Satirae* 14.100–104; cf. Josephus, *Apion* 2.121, 258) — and thus, as a potential menace to the social stability and unity of the government where they reside. Hellenistic Jewish literature demonstrates “the theme of ethnic hostility legitimated by religious claims”— the cultural/ethnic antagonism of the Greco-Roman society toward Jews (cf. Esth B [LXX] 13:4–5; 3 Macc 3:1–7).⁹⁵

From the Gentiles’ perspective, “atheism” (ἀσέβεια, impiety)⁹⁶ — Jews’ devotion to only One God — is the most distinctive and negative marker of Jewish identity. Against ethno-cultural antagonism, the literature of the Hellenistic Jews endeavor to underline their “piety.” The Fourth Maccabees, for instance, dem-

68. The LXX has 34 examples of εὐσεβή”, and 7 examples of θεοσεβής.

εὐσεβή”: Jdt 8:31; 2 Macc 1:19; 12:45; 4 Macc 1:1; 6:31; 7:16; 10:15; 11:21; 13:1; 15:23; 16:1; 17:22; 18:2; Prov 12:12; 13:19; Sir 11:17, 22; 12:2, 4; 13:17; 16:13; 23:12; 27:11, 29; 28:22; 33:14; 37: 12; 39:27 et al; Pss. Sol. 13:5; Is 24:16; 26:7; 32:8.

95 David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (GrandRapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002), 123. See also below, deSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 34–35.

The Greeks and Romans understood piety toward the gods as a reflection of loyalty to the city, as a marker of reliability. The person who knew how to pay proper respect to the gods would know his or her duty in a civic crisis, or would be a reliable partner in business, or would be no fomenter of division in the city. The Jews did not participate in the worship of these gods and were thus never free from suspicion and slander — their devotion to the One God allegedly reflected their concern for the one people, the Jews, and their lack of concern for the public welfare While usually benefiting from official edicts of toleration, Jews were nevertheless frequently the objects of the dominant culture’s hostility on account of these threatening differences, which were usually subsumed under the heading of *misoxenia*, ‘hatred of outsiders.’

96 Or, ὀσσεβεία (impiety).

onstrates Jewish “pious reason” (εὐσεβῆς λογισμός, cf. 1:1), which exhibits a unique combination and appropriation of Hellenistic Judaism and Greco-Roman philosophy. The Fourth Maccabees asserts not only that Jews are adaptable and obedient to *poleis*, but also that their “pious reason” is equivalent, or even superior, to Greco-Roman piety.⁹⁷ Jews’ self-designation of “pious” thus has political significance, asserting (appealing to) their social appropriation of and “equal citizenship” (*isopoliteia*) with Greeks/Romans — particularly, in those cities like Alexandria, Caesarea, and other Hellenistic *poleis*.⁹⁸

2.2.7. The Seventh Son

Lastly, the seventh and youngest son reviews and integrates the major elements of his brothers’ speeches. Yet, his speech lacks the creational-redemption motif, which probably only the mother is entitled to testify to — the mother who carried her sons in her womb for nine months, nursed them for three years, and raised and sustained them until their present age (7:27).

The martyrdom episode is concluded by the youngest son’s prayer (7:37–38). Although he addresses Antiochus (“you”), his statement is in fact a supplication to God (ἐπικαλούμενος τὸν θεὸν ἵλεως ταχὺ τῷ ἔθνει γενέσθαι), thus linking together all his mother’s and all his brothers’ statements and offering them under God’s mercy.

The epitomist concludes the entire section with a reflective passage (7:42), which refers to both martyrdom episodes (“eating the swine flesh” [τοὺς σπλαγγισμούς] and “exceeding torture” [τάς ὑπερβαλλούσας αἰκίας]), and thus unifies them.

⁹⁷ deSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 81–85.

⁹⁸ deSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 35.

Conclusion and Further Implications

The martyrdom episodes present the paradigmatic examples of being a Jew. This identity is inseparable from piety (εὐσέβεια) — reverence for God and the adherence to the ancestral laws. The martyrdom episodes embody this piety *even unto death*.

“Pious” (εὐσεβής) is double-edged — in Greco-Roman society, this epithet justifies Jews’ alignment with familial, social and divine obligations and responsibilities, whereas in a Jewish sense, it evokes the ideal Jewish piety, that is, faithfulness to their customs and value system. The martyrs’ piety thus evinces the *hybridity* of both Jewish and Greco-Roman piety. Ironically, 2 Maccabees exhibits a Hellenized overtone. The Second Maccabees asserts being Ἰουδαῖος (‘a Jews’) and Ἰουδαϊσμός (‘Judaism’) — to construct the self-understanding of Jewish identity over against the Other — Hellenism. And yet, 2 Maccabees’ linguistic and cultural influences show the deep infiltration in Hellenization. The Hebrew language is the symbol of their defiance, but this narrative text is written in Hellenistic Greek. Thus, 2 Macc shows both opposition to and appropriation of Hellenism. In this sense, the martyrdom narrative is a powerful representation of “diaspora-ism” in the Hellenistic milieu; “they are willing to die, not necessarily to fight (and even when they do fight, they are of course willing to die -).”⁹⁹

In terms of its intense piety, 2 Maccabees is closer to Daniel. They share the basic ideas of martyrdom, and more importantly, the belief in resurrection, which is lacking in 1 Macc. As in Daniel, the belief in resurrection in 2 Macc is the hope and the reward of death (cf. 2 Macc 7:14), which provides one of the earliest descriptions of a future resurrection and divine judgment in the cosmological and eschatological scheme.

The cosmic scheme envisions the true residence of the martyrs; the cos-

99 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 50.

mological and mythopoetic description of the trial scene imbues their identity with *otherworldly* significance. The Second Maccabees shares the tripartite and spatial understanding of the cosmos (heaven, earth, and underworld), as the backdrop of the postmortem concept. The Second Maccabees demonstrates the prevalent concept of the cosmos and the incipient cosmic dualism in Hellenistic Judaism, upon which contemporaneous apocalyptic literature depends. As a shared conviction, resurrection is “a mode of transcending death whereby humans participate in the heavenly sphere of reality.”¹⁰⁰

The two episodes are well constructed. The death of Eleazar embodies the archetypal noble death; he risks the total loss of his existence for the ancestral laws without any repayment for his death, pointing to the crucial point of human dignity — and vulnerability as well. Upon this exemplary model, the anonymous martyred family exhibits a general application of intense piety in the hope of future resurrection — a hope that God the Creator will re-create humans at the end time, restoring their original blessed state, prevalently observed in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period.

In the Deuteronomic scheme, the death of the martyrs expiates sin — the sin of Hellenization. In this narrative, martyrdom functions as an atonement for sin. However, this point is still incipient in 2 Macc — whereas 4 Macc develops and in which the martyrs are clearly depicted as “atonement” for the sins (cf. 4 Macc employs a series of cult-related terms: “purification” (4 Macc 6:29, καθάρσιον), “ransom” (6:29; 17:21, ἀντίψυχον), and “atonement” (17:22, ἰλασμός).

The martyrdom narrative of 2 Macc stands at the incipient point of Jewish diaspora literature, which could be placed within a larger frame of Jewish historiography.¹⁰¹ Although recent scholarship has undermined the distinction between

100 Perkins, *Resurrection*, 22.

101 Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 47. Cf. idem, “From the Maccabees to Masada: On Diaspora Historiography of the Second Temple Period,” in *Jüdische Geschichte in hellenistisch-*

Palestine and Hellenistic (Diaspora) Jewish literature,¹⁰² the contrast between 1 and 2 Macc exhibits at least a different perspective on the self-constructive discourse. The martyrdom narrative of 2 Macc enacts its characteristic identity formulation through textuality.

römischer Zeit, ed. A. Oppenheimer and E. Müller-Luckner (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), 29–40.

102 Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (London: SMC, 1974).