The role of women in 1 and 2 Maccabees

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Abstracts

This thesis is a thematic examination of two primary texts from the Second-Temple period of Judaism. 1st and 2nd Maccabees, two "histories" which cover the same political events from diverging perspectives, were examined exhaustively for their depiction of women. These depictions were catalogued and analysed, resulting in the creation of seven original categories which organized the results. The results were compared with contemporaneous depictions of women, and it was decided that the literary treatment of women was, in both works, in keeping with a patriarchal Greco-Roman Jewish *status quo*, with some noteworthy exceptions.

Cette thèse représente un examen thématique de deux textes bibliques de la période juive «Deuxième-temple ». Maccabées 1 et 2, deux « histoires » qui racontent les mêmes évènements politiques, de deux points de vues différents, ont été soigneusement examiné pour déterminer leurs traitements envers les femmes. Ces traitements ont été collectionné et analysé, le résultat étant sept catégories qui organisait le matériel. Ces résultats ont étés comparés avec d'autres traitements de l'époque sur les femmes. Ensuite, j'ai decidé que le traitement littéraire des femmes etait, dans les deux cas, representant d'un « status quo » juif Grèco-Romain (sauf quelques exceptions intéressantes).

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Introduction and Approach

1. Introduction

The 1st and 2nd books of Maccabean history were authored by Jews in the Second-Temple Period, preserved by early Christians, and can be found today in the Christian Apocrypha (or "Deuterocanon" in the Catholic tradition). The two books offer scholars of Greco-Roman Judaism a wealth of important material, such as information on political and sectarian history, insight into ancient theological standpoints, clues to the way various Jewish groups were interpreting scripture and defining their communities, and a background for early Christianity. However, very little work has been done on how these books might relate to the study of women in antiquity.

The present study examines these Second-Temple texts, in order to ascertain the ways in which women are depicted in the two works. Its task is descriptive (that is, it will describe women's appearances in the texts) as well as comparative (that is, it will compare and contrast these appearances with others in Greco-Roman Judaism).

2. Approach

Let us begin with a brief discussion of my approach to this task.

While gender studies of ancient literatures have made considerable advances in recent decades,[1] no single established list of agreed-upon criteria

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[1] According to S.A. White, "interest in the role and status of women in Second Temple Judaism (and generally in Judaism and Christianity) has increased exponentially in the past twenty-five years." Sidnie Ann White, "Women: Second Temple Period," in *The Oxford Guide to People and Places of the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 330. According to Cullen Murphy, in *The Word According to Eve*, "The Bible is famous for being the world's most overstudied book – overstudied by male scholars and commentators, that is to say. It has not, however, been overstudied by women. Indeed, until recently, it was studied by female scholars hardly at all, let alone by female scholars who were interested specifically in what the Bible had to say about women. This has changed, to put it mildly..." (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), x. Says R.D. Young: "The role of women in Hellenistic Judaism has been subject recently to a thorough reexamination." Robin Darling Young, "The 'Woman with the Soul of Abraham': Traditions about the Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs," in *Women Like This*, 68.

exists for determining the "role of women" in a text.[2] The way in which I have endeavoured to make such a contribution is by approaching the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees *tabula rasa*,[3] and taking note of each and every reference to female characters (both individuals and groups) or to notions of the feminine – no matter how seemingly insignificant. During the initial stages of my research, if uncertain of what constituted a reference, I attempted to err on the side of inclusion. (When unsure whether, for instance, poetic devices using feminine metaphors should be included, they *were*.) After locating these passages, the second stage of the project consisted of grouping similar types of references into appropriate categories. I found that the smallest number of useful groups into which the passages could be broken down was seven. My seven categories are not intended to be *prescriptive* (i.e. they are not criteria), but rather *descriptive*. In other words, they do not pretend to be necessarily applicable to other works, nor to be the "correct" way to subdivide 1 and 2 Maccabees' references to women. They simply arrange the references into manageable categories about which one can speak meaningfully.[4]

3. Methodological Caveats

Three important methodological boundaries must be mentioned.

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[2] See, however, Adela Yarbro Collins, ed. *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, for a history of approaches to the question and a careful discussion of method (Chico: Scholars, 1985), as well as the introductory chapters to Carol Meyers, ed. *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).

[3] Of course, by this I do not mean with perfect objectivity. I understand (as Achtemeier puts it) that "there is no such thing as a neutral, historical-critical, scientific, objective interpretation of the Scriptures." Elizabeth Achtemeier, "The Impossible Possibility: Evaluating the Feminist Approach to Bible and Theology," *Interpretation* 42 (1988): 50. I only mean that I examined the primary texts *before* examining commentaries and secondary literature, and without hoping for certain conclusions.

[4] For instance, an alternative method for dividing the types of references to women in 1 and 2 Maccabees can be seen in the reference work, *Women In Scripture*. The editors chose to treat each mention nearly individually, by name or by social role, e.g.: wives of priests, brides, women persecuted by Antiochus IV, mothers with circumcised sons, women defended by Judas and Simon, etc. (See the chapters on 1 and 2 Maccabees, Meyers, *Women In Scripture*, 384-392.) Conversely, G. Oegema, in his article on the portrayal of women in the two works, chose to address each relevant passage separately, in commentary style. Gerbern S. Oegema, "Portrayals of Women in 1 and 2 Maccabees," in *Transformative Encounters: Jesus and Women Re-viewed* (ed. Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger; BIS 43; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 245-264.

a) Literary as Opposed to Socio-historical Treatments of Women

First, this is not a sociological study. An important qualification has been maintained regarding the distinction between *literary depiction* and *social reality*, that is, the distinction between women's representation in a text and women's actual experiences in society.[5] "One cannot," in Claudia Camp's words, "make the error of equating 'women's roles' with 'female images,' lest one equate historical or sociological data with literary creations."[6] So the project confines itself to women's *literary* roles without attempting to relate these to any actual or imagined *socio-historical* roles. In other words, the conclusions will not pertain to the status of women in Greco-Roman Jewish society/ies, but to their textual representation, since the one cannot be proven to necessarily illuminate the other. As Randall Chesnutt points out, "What is feasible for women in literary fiction is not necessarily feasible in social reality," nor do roles depicted in literature even "necessarily represent an author's social ideal."[7] See also Amy-Jill Levine:

> The scholar ... does not have a clear path from the literary depiction to the history behind the text. What an author may suggest about women's lives may bear little resemblance to social realities, and the social realities cannot be generalized across all women. Studies of the ancient literature consequently face a host of methodological problems ... Upon what evidence does one determine if a document is prescriptive or descriptive? ... Do (writers) speak for what is, or for what they think should be? ... Do the

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[5] See Brooten on this distinction: "Recognizing that, for women, the state of the sources is similar to that for men and women for the periods usually deemed prehistorical should elicit in us the shock necessary for rethinking the way we use the sources. *Sources by men are also primarily about men*; they may have little or nothing to do with women's activities or perceptions of themselves" (emphasis mine). Brooten, "Early Christian Women and their Cultural Context: Issues of Method in Historical Reconstruction," in *Feminist Perspectives*, 67. Finally, see Schüssler Fiorenza: "Ideas of men *about* women ... do not reflect women's historical reality since it can be shown that ideological polemics about women's place, role, or nature increase whenever women's actual emancipation and active participations in history become stronger." Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Remembering the Past in Creating the Future: Historical-Critical Scholarship and Feminist Biblical Interpretation," in *Feminist Perspectives*, 57.

[6] Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Decatur: Almond, 1985), 75.

[7] Randall D. Chesnutt, "Revelatory Experiences Attributed to Biblical Women," in *"Women Like This*, 123.

documents address the way authors *perceive* things to be?[8]

Bernadette Brooten also finds a "major problem" in the "conceptual framework within which one studies women in ancient Judaism," namely, "the confusion of prescriptive with descriptive literature; that is, one takes rabbinic sayings about women to be a reflection of Jewish women's reality... The focus is on male writers and their attitudes toward women, rather than on women themselves... It is not surprising that literature is confused with reality."[9] She goes on to advocate clear differentiation between the two areas of research. Rather than illuminating the history of women, female characters created by male authors "reveal more about the wishful thinking, fears, aspirations, and prejudices of their male creators than about women's authentic lives."[10] It is not that one question is more appropriate than the other: as Collins notes, "what men thought about women ... is a legitimate subject of study."[11]

Collins also points out the scarcity of evidence about women's lives, in comparison with the relative abundance of evidence on men's opinions about women, and writes: "reconstructing the history of women in the biblical period is comparable to writing the history of both men and women in prehistorical time. The task is not impossible, but difficult."[12]

However, this caution does not apply only to the search for women's societal roles, but to *any* societal roles, since what we are left with as data is merely the tip of a long-lost iceberg, and (even literary data) often only attests to the social realities of the elite. Cf Grabbe: "For long periods in antiquity, it is not usually possible for modern scholars to say much about the average man, much less the average women. Literary sources tend to focus on the upper classes and the wealthy."[13]

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[8] A.-J. Levine, "Preface," in *Women Like This*, xii-xiii.
[9] Brooten, "Early Christian Women and their Cultural Context," 73.
[10] Esther Fuchs, "The Literary Characterization of Mothers and Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible," in *Feminist Perspectives*, 118.
[11] Collins, *Feminist Perspectives*, 7.
[12] Collins, *Feminist Perspectives*, 7.
[13] Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 183.

This study must, therefore, remain focused on the textual depiction of women without socio-historical speculation. It is more accurate to conceive of this study not as of women themselves, but of woman used as a literary motif by men.

b) Irrelevance of Our Research Question to the Ancient Authors

In addition to the above word of warning, it is also obvious that neither 1st nor 2nd Maccabees has the primary rhetorical aim of detailing its society's or its author's views on women (as is also the case with most Second-Temple documents.[14] (1 Maccabees largely refers to women only in lists of possessions, and Ilan says it comes from a "tradition" that "seems to have had little interest in women.")[15] As a second methodological boundary, therefore, I have examined the two books under the assumption that unless the role of women is a key theme of the work, it is unlikely that one will find a single, well-developed answer to the question of their role in the text. It is possible that the scholar will be playing the role of scavenger among comments and opinions dropped accidentally on the way to where the text is really headed, rhetorically speaking, and that a plurality of stereotypes and realities, both societal and literary, would have existed for an author to draw from. For these reasons, I have allowed for the potential co-existence of several seemingly inconsistent attitudes in a single text. In other words, the present study does not attempt a "grand unified theory" of women in 1 and 2 Maccabees, but rather a description of what is found there, along with comparative analysis.

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[14] "The major groups of texts of the Second Temple period are androcentric in focus, written by male authors for a male audience, and they mention women only rarely and usually in peripheral contexts." White, "Women: Second Temple Period," 331.

[15] Tal Ilan, *Integrating Women into Second Temple History* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 101. Ronald Kline comments on the relative unimportance of women to the author of 1 Maccabees: "Women are conspicuously absent in 1 Maccabees, except as unnamed members of Jewish patriarchal family households, as Judahite mourners for the temple and victims of oppression, as non-Jewish women of the indigenous people of the Judean area, or as wives and women of the Greco-Roman invaders. There are no named women in this story..." Meyers, *Women in Scripture*, 384. It is nonetheless, I believe, important to catalogue what meagre references to women *do* appear in such texts, simply to complete the scholarly exercise of exhaustively examining *all* ancient canonical, apocryphal, and non-canonical texts with the question of women in mind.

c) Narrowing of Scope to Exclude "Famous Females"

There are several well-developed female characters – even protagonists – in the literature of this period. About these characters (such as Judith in the Apocryphal book of Judith, Rebekah in *Jubilees*, Asenath of *Joseph and Asenath*, Esther, Susanna, etc.) much has now been written. For the sake of scope, these "famous females" have been excluded from my study when comparing 1 and 2 Maccabees with contemporaneous writings. It will simply be noted that these stronger female characters exist in the period, without detailed analysis.

d) Summary of Methodological Boundaries

With these three qualifications in mind, therefore, whatever conclusions such a study reaches should not be mistakenly over-treated as well-developed theories of women's roles on the part of the ancient author(s) or as solid socio-historical data. Nor should the existence of far more well developed female literary characters in the Second-Temple Period be ignored for our question, simply because this study does not encompass them.

Nevertheless, since the role of women in Greco-Roman Jewish literature is a relatively new field of study, all findings, however tentative or fragmentary, may be seen as important – even the setting out of what we *cannot* say about women in a given text.

4. Methodological Advantages

The similarities in dating and content of the two works offer a uniquely convenient basis for comparison. Attempts to date the works do not put them very far apart. The earliest possible date for 1 Maccabees is early in the administration of John Hyrcanus, which started in 135 B.C.E.,[16] and Momigliano argues for a

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[16] Bezalel bar Kochva, *Judas Maccabaeus: The Jewish Struggle Against the Seleucids* (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 152.

date c.130 B.C.E.[17] Others date it later, during Alexander Jannaeus' time, "just after (John's) death in 103 BC."[18] 2 Maccabees has also been dated around 100 B.C.E., or in the late 2nd century.[19] For internal reasons, it could not have taken its final form later than 63 B.C.E.[20] The time period spanned by the actual events of 1 Maccabees is approximately 175 to 135 B.C.E., and includes the confrontation between certain Jewish groups and king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the resulting Maccabean wars, and the subsequent Jewish self-government up to king John Hyrcanus – and the events in 2 Maccabees fall within those boundaries as well.[21]

In other words, we are afforded the unique opportunity of examining two virtually contemporaneous texts that cover the same historical events, but from two dissimilar – even rival – standpoints.[22] Seldom are we handed such a convenient starting-point for comparison.

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[17] See A. Momigliano, "The Date of the 1st Book of Maccabees," in *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* (Rome: Storia & Letteratura 150:2), 561-66.

[18] John R. Bartlett, "1 Maccabees," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (ed. James G.D. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 808; J.D. Douglas, *New Bible Dictionary* (2nd ed.; Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1988), 58.

[19] John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (N.Y.: Crossroad, 1983), 72.

[20] In the time of the epitomist, Jerusalem must not have been subject to any external power (see 2 Macc 4:11 and 15:37), and Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. John R. Bartlett, "2 Maccabees," *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, 832. Cf. Williams: "The majority of scholars feel that the epitome must be dated before the entry into Jerusalem of the Roman general Pompey in 63 B.C.E. This is because the epitome displays a favourable attitude toward Rome ... and asserts in 15:37 that Jerusalem has remained in Jewish hands from the time of Judas's victory." David S. Williams, "Recent Research in 2 Maccabees," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2.1 (2003): 73.

[21] Bar Kochva, *Judas Maccabaeus*, devotes a chapter to the sources, dates, and provenance of the two works, summarizing and evaluating various theories.

[22] Both works cover the historical events surrounding the attempt on the part of the Seleucid monarch Antiochus IV Epiphanes to abolish the practice of Judaism, followed by the rise to power of the Jewish "Maccabean" (or Hasmonean) rebel soldiers, who went on to defeat the Seleucids and establish Jewish self-rule. It is remarkable that, while both books cover many of the same episodes and characters, and were written during the same period (mid-Hasmonean monarchy), they unquestionably reflect disparate perspectives. Jonathan Goldstein (a leading Maccabees scholar) went as far as to label the accounts "sharply different," and the authors "bitter opponents." J. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 4. Nickelsburg concludes that they are "two different and, at points, diametrically opposing interpretations of the same historical events." Nickelsburg, "1 and 2 Maccabees – Same Story, Different Meanings," in *George W.E. Nickelsburg in Perspective: An Ongoing Dialogue of Learning* (vol. 2; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 673. The fact that two works would be written so close together about the same series of happenings may even be the biggest clue that they are at philosophical, theological, or political odds. Peter Haas, "The Maccabean Struggle to Define Judaism," in *New Perspectives on Ancient Judaism. Vol. 1: Religion, Literature, and Society in Ancient Israel, Formative Christianity and Judaism* (Brown Judaic Studies 206; Atlanta:

A second (admittedly more tenuous) advantage may lie in the fact that the Maccabean revolutionaries (and our ancient historical witnesses to them) were not asking our research question. That is, discussion of the role of women in society was not even a secondary or tertiary concern of Hasmonean historians/propagandists. For this reason, as previously mentioned, we can expect only accidental hints (rather than fully-developed treatises) on where women fit into Maccabean worldview(s). However, this seeming disadvantage for a look at women's roles might, in a way, prove beneficial:

> Propagandists can and do lie, but propagandistic historians lie only where it is to their advantage and only where there is small danger of being exposed. Since each of our two books presents one of two extreme opposing views, they can be made to act as a check one upon the other. Thus, one can sharply restrict the field for imaginative scholarly scepticism which would reject or radically alter their accounts.[23]

Because our research question is outside the priorities of either writer, we *may* be able to expect inadvertent honesty/accuracy on the part of each when it comes to women's roles, especially because (according to Niditch) portrayals of war are often glimpses into the propagandists' fundamental values.[24] Moreover, because

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Scholars, 1990), 52. (Haas compares this situation to that of the gospels, where, "the need to retell the same story once again, or to repeat part of an already available story in more detail, masks a conviction on the part of the latter author that the first telling misses, or misrepresents, the point." He goes on to posit that Second Maccabees is written for the express purpose of correcting or disputing something about First Maccabees.) While both Maccabean books share the aim of explaining events that (according to Goldstein) "cried out for an interpretation in accordance with the teachings of the Torah and the Prophets," (Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, 3) their explanations of these events are not the same. As to how their explanations differ, see further *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, e.g.: "1 and 2 Maccabees ... are very partisan interpretations of these events, and each has its own heroes and villains. (...) The authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees disagree strongly in their interpretations of the crisis. The author of 1 Maccabees strongly supports the activities of Judas Maccabee and his brothers and celebrates their accession to power. The author of 2 Maccabees praises Judas Maccabee with restraint, ignores his brothers, and attributes the defeat of Antiochus IV and the salvation of Israel to the fortitude of the Jewish martyrs and to divine intervention. (...) Thus 1 and 2 Maccabees each have differing versions of what went wrong and competing visions of how Jewish society must operate if it is to know peace in harmony with God." *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible* (ed. Howard Clark Kee, Eric M. Meyers, John Rogerson, and Anthony J. Saldarini; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 321.

[23] Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, 4.

[24] "The study of war ... provides a window into the various groups and ideologies that lie behind the Hebrew Scriptures as well as important keys to its authors. Portrayals of war reveal a culture's

the two works cover the same wartime events, but from differing perspectives, we can compare them against each other when differences arise.

Research Question: Where and How are Women Mentioned in 1 and 2 Maccabees?

Although, as previously mentioned, women are not the main focus of these works, much allusion is made to them in passing. The first step in this study consisted of locating and cataloguing these allusions, and the simplest manner to undertake this initial cataloguing was by order of appearance. The lengthy catalogue of verses that were taken as possible references to women/femininity (including pertinent references to masculinity, when arguably opposed to femininity) follows this paper as an appendix. References are there cited in full (in translation),[25] in the order in which they appear in each book, and an attempt to be exhaustive has been made.

It should be noted that the words "woman/women" and "wife/wives" are used interchangeably throughout this study to represent the single Greek word γυνή/γυναῖκες. This oscillation between "woman" and "wife" based on context is the way in which most translators choose to render this Greek word in order to represent what have now become two separate English words. Virtually all references to women in both 1 and 2 Maccabees use the word γυνή (unless a specific trait is being addressed – such as virginity or widowhood), so the underlying Greek will only be mentioned if this is not the case.

The next step consisted of analysis. When viewed all together, certain very obvious patterns emerged in these references to women and femininity. A

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fundamental values. The war texts may be characterized as propaganda, but propaganda can provide glimpses into their originators' most basic fears, insecurities, and problems in self-definition. Biblical texts concerning war may be read as templates of key belief systems. Attitudes to war are a cultural map of sorts, war a world in itself in which relationships between life and death, god and human, one's own group and the other, and men and women all hang in the balance. Issues of gender and war have recently been addressed in several interesting studies." Susan Niditch, "War, Women, and Defilement in Numbers 31" (*Semeia* 61; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 43. This being said, speculation about "a culture's fundamental values" far exceeds the scope of this study, which remains focused on the texts themselves without attempting to reconstruct socio-historical realities.

[25] Throughout this work, the English translation used (unless specified otherwise) was that of the RSV, checked by the author against the Greek of Rahlfs Septuaginta, with all original renderings noted as such.

categorization of the references into seven groups follows. I called these seven categories "Woman as evil," "Woman as possession," "Woman as helpless treasure," "Woman as part of a '*shalom* package,'" "Woman as personification," "Woman as human being," and "Woman as empowered individual."

Some of these categories are significantly larger than others, due to the varying amounts of evidence for each. (The martyred mother of 2 Maccabees, for instance, is part of a long passage in which she plays a key role, which makes my "woman as empowered individual" category quite lengthy. The brief first category, "woman as evil," on the other hand, is present in so slight a way and in such peripheral verses that is arguably not present in the texts at all.)

However, before defining and discussing the categories, a final word about approach might be warranted, namely, to set out what this project does *not* attempt to do. That the ancient world leading up to and including the Greco-Roman Jewish period was "patriarchal," that is, having an "ideological and social system based on the subordination of women and younger males to adult males,"[26] is neither disputed nor surprising. As Eryl Davies writes,

> few would deny that the Bible is an overwhelmingly patriarchal book. ... The biblical traditions reflect a predominantly androcentric world-view which relegates women to the margins and assigns to them a subordinate role in the religious and social life of Israel. The patriarchal ethos is reflected in various complexes of tradition, ranging from the legal texts to the narratives, and from the prophetic texts to the sayings encountered in the wisdom literature.[27]

Or, in the words of Schüssler Fiorenza's classic, *Bread Not Stone*, "The Bible is not only written in the words of men but also serves to legitimate patriarchal power ... insofar as it 'renders God' male and determines ultimate reality in male terms, which make women invisible or marginal."[28] The biblical text presents a

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[26] Fuchs, "The Literary Characterization," 117.
[27] Eryl W. Davies, *The Dissenting Reader: Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 1.
[28] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1984), xi.

paradigm of "father-rule," that is, "the perspective of some powerful males over other males, and over most women and children."[29]

The books of 1 and 2 Maccabees draw heavily from these biblical traditions,[30] and the fact that women appear only at the margins of these texts is to be expected (and is the case). For this reason, it is necessary to go beyond a simple "yes" or "no" about patriarchy if we want to do any kind of justice to our study. This is important for two reasons. First of all, although this is a textual study, it is also one wherein historical context is considered – and I view the historian's task as descriptive, rather than laudatory or condemnatory. Verdicts of "guilty" or "not-guilty" to anachronistic charges of sexism are not within my aims.[31] Secondly, this study hopes to be somewhat original, and simply to establish that 1 and 2 Maccabees are "patriarchal" would be anything but.[32] Even the seemingly obvious "patriarchal" verdict will need description and qualification. Rather than determining that women are marginal, this paper focuses on a discussion of their perceived role where they *are* mentioned, and argues that these roles are not as negative as one might expect (i.e. not as negative as depictions of women in some other ancient and Greco-Roman Jewish texts). The somewhat positive conclusions delineated in this paper are not intended to ignore or override the general paucity of interest in women in both its primary texts. I am also aware of the difficulties immediately inherent when one uses

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[29] Ann Loades, "Feminist Interpretation," *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (ed. John Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 82.

[30] Cf. my paper presented at the American Academy of Religion Eastern International Regional meeting, Montreal, 2005: "Biblical Interpretation in 1 and 2 Maccabees."

[31] "The terms 'improvement' and 'deterioration' are not relevant to the question of women's status and condition ... (T)he role of the historian is to *describe* changes and developments without making value judgements." T. Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine: An Inquiry into Image and Status* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 6. This being said, the descriptive task (especially when performed as vastly and carefully as Ilan does) is, of course, far from useless as a feminist tool. While my own study does not begin from a methodologically feminist approach, but from a strictly literary and historical interest in classifying, it will presumably be useful to feminists (and others) as raw data nonetheless.

[32] It came to my attention only after this thesis was completed that Schüssler Fiorenza has recently moved from discussing "patriarchy" to discussing "kyriarchy," which might have corroborated my work even more fully. Kyriarchy, writes Schüssler Fiorenza, was a term "coined to connote a complex systemic interstructuring of sexism, racism, classism, and cultural-religious imperialism." Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist/Women Priests – An Oxymoron?" *New Women, New Church*, Fall (1995): 18. I thank Dr. Ellen Aitken for directing me to this information.

language like "positive/neutral/negative," namely: oversimplification.[33] For this reason, an attempt to keep description at the fore will be sustained.

With these qualifications in focus, let us describe the patriarchy of the Maccabees.

Observations

1. Hierarchical Worldview

Let us begin with an initial broad observation gleaned from the two texts. After an initial reading (and very generally speaking), the cosmic paradigm evidenced in both works seems to be hierarchical. In other words, the authors seem to organize reality according to a system of ranked priorities. This is not a great surprise, given the common correlation between patriarchy and hierarchy. (Some write hierarchy into the very definition of patriarchy, e.g. Schüssler Fiorenza, who defines patriarchy as "a male pyramid of graded subordinations."[34]) In the texts in question (and this is especially evident in 1 Maccabees), when it comes to a list of ideal human priorities, there is a "pyramid of graded subordinations" at play. God is at the pinnacle. Next comes Torah, then the temple(s). Next come men who fight/die for Torah, then men who at least *keep* Torah. Next are Jewish women. Next are children (of either gender, although some ambiguity will be discussed below), followed closely by livestock, then by other possessions. Somehow, as I will later argue, "the land" also fits into this hierarchy, and is connected with the latter four groups, from women to

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[33] For instance, in critiquing the otherwise careful work of Leonard Swidler in his work on feminist issues in ancient Judaism and early Christianity, Bernadette Brooten says of Swidler's use of the terms "positive/ambivalent/negative": "Were one to be interested primarily in concrete Jewish women, their daily lives, rituals, achievements, and struggles, one would not utilize such categories. For how could one evaluate the complex historical phenomena of Jewish women's lives with the categories 'positive,' 'ambivalent,' and 'negative'? Even as categories for describing attitudes, this is not adequate." However, Brooten goes on to illustrate that it is not so much the categories *themselves* that result in oversimplification of data, but rather Swidler's lack of attention to cultural context (both ancient and his own) when applying these labels. Brooten, "Early Christian Women and their Cultural Context," 75ff.

[34] Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, xiv.

possessions. Last, of course, are Gentiles and "apostates" (both male and female). I have not examined this hierarchy intertextually, and do not pretend to speak on behalf of all post-biblical Judaism here. I only assert that it appears in 1 and 2 Maccabees. Some examples are as follows:

The clearest indication of the existence of a hierarchy is the fact that (in both books) several lists of "possessions" appear, always in the descending order "women, children, and cattle" (with some variations[35]). Furthermore, one list (1 Macc 5:45) clearly illustrates a hierarchical distinction between men and women, where men are higher. It reads: *"all the Israelites in Gilead ... with their wives and children and goods."* It is possible to infer from this that women and children are not fully Israelites, since "all" (πάντα) the Israelites came "with" their wives, children, and goods (a list strung together by a succession of καὶ's). The same kind of thing occurs in 1 Macc 2:29-30: "...many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness ... they, their sons, their wives (γυναῖκες), and their cattle." The wives are a separate category, as though women were incapable of "seeking righteousness and justice."

Another descending list reads: "I will avenge my nation and the sanctuary and your wives and children" (1 Macc 13:6). Preceding the final major battle in 2 Maccabees, we see an indication that the temple ranks above one's own family when we read that the warriors' "concern for wives and children, and also for brethren and relatives, lay upon them less heavily; their greatest and first fear was for the consecrated sanctuary" (2 Macc 15:18).

Another example of hierarchy is the indication that there is a distinction between the value assigned to *Jewish* women and the value assigned to women in general. For instance, G. Oegema demonstrates how the author of 1 Maccabees frowns upon the taking captive of women as booty when it is done to Jewish women, and yet does not complain when Romans take *Greek* women into captivity:

> (The) Syrians are portrayed in a negative way by pointing to the fact that they are the ones who have taken the women and children of Israel into captivity

[35]See "Category 2: Woman as Possession" below for a discussion of these descending lists.

> and have killed them; ... the Romans are praised because they have taken into captivity the women and children of Greece. ... (The) Syrians had to be portrayed negatively, because they were the enemies of the Jews ... the Romans had to be portrayed positively, because they were going to become future allies of the Jews. (...) Jewish women are considered to be first of all Jewish and only secondarily female: only for this reason are they (depicted as) killed by the Syrians and spared by the Romans.[36]

Another category within the above-mentioned hierarchy is "the land." The word throughout the books is ἡ γῆ (the earth, the land). It appears without distinction any time land is referred to at all, such as in 1 Macc 1:24: "he departed to his own land" or 2 Macc 9:28, where Antiochus died "in a strange land." However, the word seems exceedingly important in 1 Maccabees (it appears 74 times). 17 of these occurrences consist of a special usage where no qualifier is attached to the noun (i.e. not "their land" or "the land of Egypt" or "over land and sea," but it simply appears alone with the definite article. I am convinced that the majority of these cases (unlike the others in the book) refer to more than simple geography, but entail the concept of territory promised through covenant and are connected with righteousness and blessing.[37]

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[36] Oegema, "Portrayals of Women in 1 and 2 Maccabees," 253-254 (pertaining to 1 Macc 1:32, 60 – where the taking of women by the enemy is portrayed as terrible – and 1 Macc 8:10, where it occurs at the hand of the Romans without comment).

[37] Here is a full list of these instances (where "land" appears only with the definite article and often seems to take on supra-geographical connotations): 1 Maccabees 1:28: "Even *the land shook for its inhabitants*, and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame"; 1 Maccabees 1:44: "And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; he directed them to follow *customs strange to the land*"; 1 Maccabees 1:52: "Many of the people, every one who forsook the law, joined them, and *they did evil in the land*"; 1 Maccabees 2:56: "Caleb, because he testified in the assembly, *received an inheritance in the land*"; 1 Maccabees 3:8: "He went through the cities of Judah; he *destroyed the ungodly out of the land*; thus he turned away wrath from Israel"; 1 Maccabees 3:29: "Then he saw that the money in the treasury was exhausted, and that the revenues from the country were small because of the dissension and *disaster which he had caused in the land* by abolishing the laws that had existed from the earliest days"; 1 Maccabees 6:49: "He made peace with the men of Bethzur, and they evacuated the city, because they had no provisions there to withstand a siege, since *it was a sabbatical year for the land*"; 1 Maccabees 9:53 "And he took the sons of *the leading men of the land* as hostages and put them under guard in the citadel at Jerusalem"; 1 Maccabees 11:34: "We have confirmed as their possession both the territory of Judea and the three districts of Aphairema and Lydda and Rathamin; the latter, with all the region bordering them, were added to Judea from Samaria. To all those who offer sacrifice in Jerusalem, we have granted release from the royal taxes which the king formerly received from them each year, from *the crops of the land* and the fruit of the trees"; 1 Maccabees 11:38: "Now when

In these cases, whatever concepts are embedded in the word "land" are actually of greater importance in the hierarchy than are individual human beings. (For instance, in 1 Maccabees 3:8, Judas is said to have "destroyed the ungodly out of the land; thus he turned away wrath from Israel." Here, God is depicted as placing the purity of the land on a greater level than human beings who are "ungodly."

The word is infrequent in 2 Maccabees, but Jerusalem is once referred to specifically as "the holy land" (2 Macc 1:7).[38]

The law, too, is of great importance in both works. The word (ὁ νομός) appears 24 times in 1 Maccabees, and 12 times in 2 Maccabees, each time denoting something desirable, necessary, and laudable. "Forgetting" (1 Macc 1:49) or "forsaking" (1 Macc 1:52) the law or following "customs contrary to the law" (2 Macc 4:11) are mentioned as indicators of apostasy from Judaism and are seen as crimes worthy of death. "Opening one's heart to" the law (2 Macc 1:4), "obeying" the law (2 Macc 7:30), and "zeal" for the law (1 Macc 2:26) are seen as highly desirable (and well worth dying for) and thus – like the land in 1 Maccabees – are more valuable than life itself.

It is clear that, in first Maccabees especially, there is a hierarchical worldview at play.

2. Description of Observed Categories of Women's Roles

Demetrius the king saw that *the land was quiet* before him and that there was no opposition to him, he dismissed all his troops, each man to his own place, except the foreign troops which he had recruited from the islands of the nations. So all the troops who had served his fathers hated him"; 1 Maccabees 11:52: "So Demetrius the king sat on the throne of his kingdom, and *the land was quiet* before him"; 1 Maccabees 13:32: "and became king in his place, putting on the crown of Asia; and he *brought great calamity upon the land*"; 1 Maccabees 14:4: "*The land had rest all the days of Simon*. He sought the good of his nation; his rule was pleasing to them, as was the honour shown him, all his days"; 1 Maccabees 14:11: "*He established peace in the land*, and Israel rejoiced with great joy"; 1 Maccabees 14:13: "*No one was left in the land* to fight them, and the kings were crushed in those days"; 1 Maccabees 15:29: "You have devastated their territory, *you have done great damage in the land*, and you have taken possession of many places in my kingdom."

[38] Gk: ἡ ἁγια γῆ

Within the Maccabean hierarchy, each category can be subdivided extensively. This is what this thesis will attempt to do for the references to women in the two books. For the category "women," the subdivisions do not appear to be overly hierarchical, other than the fact that Jewish women (specifically, Jewish women who follow the law) are shown to have greater value than women of other religions. Rather, the images of women are simply diverse, at times seeming to depend upon which literary function the reference was intended to fulfill. For example, women were useful devices for evoking readerly pity on several occasions, exemplifying innocence due to their perceived helplessness, and providing a handy foil to the valiant deeds of Judas and his fellow warriors.

While the references to women might be subdivided in various ways, it is my assertion that, in order to do justice to them, the smallest number of groups into which they can be divided is seven. It is possible to rate the seven groups as to whether they portray women negatively or positively. At risk of oversimplifying, I have roughly classified one as very negative, one as somewhat negative, three as neutral, one as positive, and one as very positive. These seven working categories are as follows, ordered from most negative to most positive:

1. Woman as evil/sexual tempter (blamed in the text for men's mishaps) – very negative
2. Woman as possession (listed in the text along with belongings, or sold as property) – somewhat negative
3. Woman as helpless treasure to be protected (used in the text as rhetorical inspiration) –negative and/or positive
4. Woman as part of a "*shalom* package" (connected with earth and blessing) –negative and/or positive
5. Woman as personification of Jerusalem (a theological poetic device) – negative and/or positive
6. Woman as human being (treated equally to man in the text) – positive
7. Woman as empowered individual/hero (such as the martyred mother of 2 Maccabees) – very positive

Category 1: Woman as Evil/Sexual Tempter

This category is the most extreme example of patriarchy and/or androcentrism found in our two examined works. It lays the blame for sin and calamity upon the female sex. What is very important to keep in perspective, however, is that it is the least attested of the seven categories, both in quantity and in quality. In fact, its existence is so slight that the category may (arguably) not be present in the two works at all. I include it only because it exists in other literature of the period.

Only two instances in the catalogue of verses hint at this connection of women with sin, and they are not explicit. Both are in 2 Maccabees. In 2 Macc 6:4, "the temple was filled with debauchery and revelling by the Gentiles, who dallied with harlots (μεθ' ἑταιρῶν – with 'companions') and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts."[39] In 2 Macc 4:30, "the people of Tarsus revolted because their cities had been given as a present to Antiochis, the king's concubine." These two examples are certainly not overt, but they may nevertheless link (or go along with a tradition that links) women with sexual sin, in the first case as direct temptresses, and in the latter case as the indirect cause of misfortune due to their stupefying effects on males who are enamoured with them.

These may indicate a slight difference between 1 and 2 Maccabees, since there are no hints of this particular negative view of the feminine in 1 Maccabees.

However, it is important to place these references in perspective. Upon comparison of 2 Maccabees with other Greco-Roman Jewish documents, namely, the book of *Sirach* and the writings of Philo and Josephus, we see that these references, although tied to a very negative tradition within Judaism, appear only in a mild and indirect (even arguable) form in 2 Maccabees. While barely alluded to in 2 Maccabees, and not at all in 1 Maccabees, there is a wealth of attestation to this category elsewhere, both before and during the Maccabean era.

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[39] (It is the "intercourse with women" I am referring to here, and not the RSV translation "harlots" which should actually be translated simply "companions," and ranges in use throughout the Hebrew Bible and LXX to mean companions, comrades, and friends, sometimes male and sometimes female, with no necessary sexual connotation. Since the word appears in the genitive plural in this verse, there is no indicator of gender.)

In the words of Cullen Murphy:

> Since early Christian times the accounts in Genesis of the creation of human beings and of their expulsion from the Garden of Eden have been used to explain and justify the subordination of woman to man and to fix responsibility for humanity's fallen state firmly on the shoulders of woman. Eve came to be seen as responsible for what Christian theology deems original sin, the transgression that would stain all future generations.[40]

Murphy is only partially right. The responsibility for "original sin" was certainly being placed on women's shoulders in "early Christian times" – see 1 Timothy 2:12-14, for instance.[41] However, this occurred in some *pre-Christian* circles as well. *Sirach* (or *Ecclesiasticus*) is the most striking example that falls within the same body of texts (apocrypha) as the two Maccabean histories, and it also happens to be relatively close in date to them, some 200 years before Jesus Christ.[42] It is often suggested by scholars that *Sirach* represents the very first piece of Jewish writing that ascribes the beginning of sin and the resultant curse specifically to Eve, due to such verses as: "From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die" (*Sirach* 25:24).[43] Trenchard argues for *Sirach*'s culpability for this way of thinking:

> Maline demonstrates that the majority view contemporary with Ben Sira was that sin derived from the fall of evil angels and their cohabitation with

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[40] Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, 52.

[41] "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

[42] "Scholars are generally agreed on placing the date of composition around 180 B.C. This is determined largely by the statement of his grandson in the Prologue to the Gr translation that he went to Egypt in the year 132 B.C. and translated his grandfather's work sometime thereafter. The other main factor in dating the composition is its reflection of a generally tranquil urban society. This would require a date prior to the outbreak of the Maccabean Revolt in 168 B.C.; in fact, probably before 171 B.C., when Antiochus Epiphanes appointed Menelaus as high priest." W.C. Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women: A Literary Analysis* (Brown Judaic Studies 38; Chico: Scholars, 1982), 3.

[43] See, e.g., Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*. See also Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), 16-17: "*Ben Sira*, written in Palestine around 180 B.C.E. ... expresses strong opinions about women: they exist only in relation to males ... The book is the earliest extant piece of Jewish writing explicitly ascribing the beginning of sin and the resulting death to Eve."

> women, according to the interpretation of Gen 6:1-4. Rabbinic theology usually regarded Adam as responsible for sin and death. But for Ben Sira, in the words of Spicq, 'the mother of life is the cause of the death of her children.'
>
> Von Rad may be justified in denying that this verse is a definitive pronouncement by Ben Sira on the issues of sin and morality, but he is not correct in characterizing it as a passing statement. The author has deliberately traced the evil of women and their evil influence to a woman's role in the origin of all evil. In fact, he has placed this assertion here (25:24) as a kind of climax to this entire section on the bad wife, with what follows functioning as a denouement."[44]

Outside *Sirach* exist other examples more overtly connecting women with sin and evil than 2 Maccabees does. Josephus counsels that the testimony of women should not be admitted in court "on account of the levity (κουφότητα) and boldness (θράσος) of their sex" (*Ant.* 4, ch.8.15). He also offers an ironic discourse on how "powerful" women are, since men become foolish for the love of them (just as Judas Maccabeus met his demise shortly after marrying), but turns it into a lesson on a type of beauty preferable to the "shallow" kind women have to offer: that is, the "beauty of Truth" (*Ant.* 11, ch.3.5-6).

Philo, too, connects femaleness with "sin," in the form of passion. "The passions are female by nature, and we must study to quit them, showing our preference for the masculine characters of the good dispositions."[45]

Ruether, from biblical, apocryphal, and pseudepigraphical sources (including the above-mentioned *Sirach* data), traces expansions upon the

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[44] Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 81-82.

[45] Philo, *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better*, IX, 28. See further: "those who look upon life as only a tragedy full of acts of arrogance and stories of love, impressing false ideas on the tender minds of young men, and using the ears as their ministers, into which they pour fabulous trifles, waste away and corrupt their minds, compelling them to look upon persons *who were never even men in their minds, but always effeminate creatures* as gods; for the calf was not made of every description of female ornament, but only of the earrings of the women. The lawgiver showing us by this that nothing wrought with hands is a visible and true God, *but only so by report*, and as far as he is thought so, *and that, too, the report of a woman and not of a man*; for it is the conduct of a soul *utterly enervated and rendered completely effeminate* to receive such nonsense." Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile*, XLVIII, 165-166.

allegedly misogynous "agency of woman in the cause of evil" in the Eve narrative through to the *decidedly* misogynous blame of woman for seducing the Watchers and being the general source of evil and evils.[46] The origin of sin began to be attributed to the fallen angels at least as early as the Shemiziah myth in the Book of the Watchers (1 *Enoch* 1-36), but the specific view that it was *women* who seduced the watchers (and were therefore the cause behind the cause) was prevalent by the first century C.E. (and existed earlier, as *Sirach* shows).[47] By the time of Philo, it was explicit: Philo expounded on the direct connection of women with the *origin* of sin, ostensibly interpreting Genesis 3:

> The woman, being imperfect and depraved by nature, made the beginning of sinning and prevaricating; but the man, as being the more excellent and perfect creature, was the first to set the example of blushing and of being ashamed, and indeed, of every good feeling and action.[48]

Regarding this passage, Wegner writes, "while the woman initiates sin, the man initiates atonement. His guilt is thus mitigated (by Philo) in two ways: first, he sinned only because the woman seduced him; second, he was the first to repent. These examples demonstrate Philo's pronounced male bias."[49]

However, it is important to note that the connection of women with sin did not arise suddenly in the Greco-Roman period as though from a vacuum, invented by the authors of *Sirach* and *Enoch*. In fact, it draws on a latent tradition in the Hebrew Bible which links women with deceit and with causing men to sin. Examples of this are dispersed throughout the prophetic, the Wisdom, and the patriarchal traditions.[50] Esther Fuchs finds that "deceptiveness is a common characteristic of women in the Hebrew Bible" and that "the characterization of

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[46] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 91-92.

[47] I thank my McGill colleague Shem Miller for generously sharing his research on the history of interpretation of the origin of sin.

[48] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis,* I:46.

[49] Judith Romney Wegner, "Philo's Portrayal of Women – Hebraic or Hellenic?" in *"Women Like This,"* 50.

[50] For the Wisdom tradition, cf Prov 6:24-29 and all of chapter 7, as well as Eccl 7:26. For the prophetic tradition, see e.g. Ezek 13:17. For the penteteuchal narratives, see Num 31:15-17 and, of course, Genesis 3:6.

women presents deceptiveness as an almost inescapable feature of femininity."[51] Davies finds that the prophetic tradition repeatedly "single(s) out women as especially responsible for behaviour which they (the prophets) deemed to be unworthy or morally unacceptable," citing Amos, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah,[52] and that some of these prophets "regarded women as the main culprits in the religious apostasy of the people."[53]

The books of Maccabees are absent from this blame-game. When, in 1984, The Southern Baptist Convention declared that women are "cursed by God with permanent subordination because of their primary responsibility for everyone's sin,"[54] they could not draw from 1 and 2 Maccabees for support. Although 1 and 2 Maccabees may contain the veiled insinuation that temple is more important than hearth (and women are connected to the latter),[55] it would be difficult to imagine a narrative within 1 or 2 Maccabees which involved, for instance, such a cunning Siren as Philo's (recurrently lambasted) wife of Potiphar[56] or such explicit blame as his statement that "the most numerous and most serious wars have been kindled on account of love, and adultery, and the wiles of women."[57]

Connected with the topic of woman as evil, although not as drastic, is the prevalence in some forms of Judaism (and Hellenism) of women as a mild nuisance, best to be avoided unless necessary. *Sirach* makes the simple but disparaging claim that "the birth of a daughter is a loss" (22:3). The following passage contains what at first appears to extol a good wife:

> A woman's beauty gladdens the countenance, and surpasses every human desire. If kindness and humility mark her speech, her husband is not like other men. He who acquires a wife gets his best possession (κτήσεως), a helper fit for him and a pillar of support. Where there is no fence, the property will be plundered; and where there is no wife, a man will

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[51] Fuchs, "Who is Hiding the Truth? Deceptive Women and Biblical Androcentrism," in *Feminist Perspectives*, 137.
[52] Davies, *The Dissenting Reader*, 5-6.
[53] (E.g. Jer 44:15-23) Davies, *The Dissenting Reader*, 6.
[54] Achtemeier, "The Impossible Possibility," 46.
[55] See discussion in "Woman as Part of a '*Shalom* Package'" below.
[56] Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women*, 111.
[57] Philo, *On Joseph*, XI, 56.

> wander about and sigh. For who will trust a nimble robber that skips from city to city? So who will trust a man that has no home, and lodges wherever night finds him? (*Sirach* 36:22-26)

However, upon inspection, the passage describes the good wife as one who is a possession or acquisition (κτήσις, from κτάομαι). Her value exists only in relation to her husband, as she is useful to "help" and "support" him, and is responsible for keeping him out of trouble in order to protect *his* reputation.

In light of these texts, the Maccabean histories are rather kinder to women. The deliberate disparagement of women is simply absent from their agenda. In comparison with their historical neighbours (both with close Hellenistic-Jewish neighbours such as Sirach as well as more distant Hellenistic Jews such as Philo), the participation of our two primary texts in the blaming of womankind for various human problems seems negligible.

Category 2: Woman as Possession

This category represents the bulk of the references in the two works, usually in the form of the common list "women, children, and cattle" (as in 1 Macc 1:32)[58] or "wives, children, and goods" (as in 1 Macc 5:13).[59] There are eight such lists of three: women/children/cattle 1 Macc 1:32; wives/children/cattle 2:38; destroy wives/destroy children/despoil 3:20; wives/children/goods 5:13, 5:45; wives/children/possessions 5:23; took captive wives/took captive children/plundered 8:10; and women/children/baggage 2 Macc 12:21.[60] These seem to imply a descending order, with women as the most valuable. However, their placement at the top of these lists does not alleviate the fact that women certainly seem to be considered as a kind of possession.[61]

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[58] "...τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὰ κτήνη..."
[59] "...τὰς γυναῖκας αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὴν ἀποσκευὴν..."
[60] "...τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀποσκευὴν..."
[61] "(A)lthough the captivity of women and children is mentioned in the same sentence as the taking possession of the cattle, we cannot state explicitly that women and children are considered to range on the same level as cattle, because a certain order is implied (women, children, cattle). Nevertheless, they do have something in common, that is, their dependence on those men who are in power." G. Oegema, "Portrayals of Women in 1 and 2 Maccabees," 251.

Another list reads, "they, and their sons, and their wives, and their cattle" (1 Macc 2:30). υἱοὶ is used, whereas the others have all been τέκνα. The troublesome question here is: where do daughters fit in this list? Are they included with cattle or (future) wives? Are they utterly unimportant? One hopes they are meant to be subsumed in the "sons" heading. It is noteworthy that, if the descending order still applies, then male offspring are higher than their mothers in the chain of hierarchy or value.

Another type of woman-as-possession citation appears in the form of women being given as a gift, sold, or used as a bartering tool. In 2 Macc 5:24, Antiochus commands Appolonius to "kill all the grown men" but to "sell the women and boys as slaves." Again, daughters are mysteriously absent. There is an interesting distinction between "grown men" and "boys." Evidently, a male does not become superior to a female until he is a grown man. The selling of people as slaves (in this case women and children) obviously reifies them, and the differentiation between killing the men and selling the women implies a perceived difference in their value or function. However, since, in the case of 2 Macc 5:24, this order is being given by the enemy, one cannot assume the author's complicity in this reification and differentiation of women.

Reification of women appears in 1 Macc 10:54 as well, in a different form, when Alexander asks for and receives Cleopatra, Ptolemy's daughter, as a human treaty, but then in 1 Macc 11:9-12 she is "revoked" and given to Demetrius when Ptolemy's allegiance shifts. (The English translation has Ptolemy say "I will give you in marriage my daughter who was Alexander's wife," but the Greek reads literally "I will give you my daughter, whom Alexander had" – δώσω σοι τὴν θυγατέρα μου ἣν εἶχεν Ἀλέξανδρος – so translators have softened the implied ownership with the addition of the relational "in marriage" and "wife.")

This portrayal of woman as possession, prize, and plunder seems common to various cultures, but it need not represent a strong component in a culture's overall view of women. It exists in greater quantity in the two Maccabean histories than do the other categories, but only in passing, since there are many

occasions calling for the details of who and what went where with whom and when (!).

This device is (of course) not unique to 1 and 2 Maccabees. It exists in *Sirach*, for instance, such as in the book's depiction of a "good wife": "We see that the good wife in v.24 is considered among her husband's possessions. He has purchased her along with other items. Her value is in her help and support to him and not in any independent quality."[62]

Descending lists of possessions appear outside 1 and 2 Maccabees as well, such as in this verse in 1 Esdras: "After this the heads of fathers' houses were chosen to go up ... with their wives and sons and daughters, and their menservants and maidservants, and their cattle" (1 Esdras 5:1). The book of Judith presents an interesting one: "They and their wives and their children and their cattle and every resident alien and hired labourer and purchased slave – they all girded themselves with sackcloth" (Judith 4:10).

Of course, the notion of woman-as-possession was not novel in the Hellenistic period. Bird cites numerous instances from the Hebrew Bible, some of which are especially consistent with this depiction of women in 1 and 2 Maccabees:

> The Hebrew wife has often been characterized as essentially a chattel. And in some respects this view is justified. Wives, children, slaves, and livestock described a man's major possessions (Exod 20:17). Wives, or simply 'women,' are found in lists of booty commonly taken in war (Deut 20:14; cf. Deut 21:10-14; I Sam 30:2,5,22: I Kings 20:3,5,7; II Kings 24:15), and wives are counted – along with concubines, silver, and gold – as an index of a man's wealth (I Kings 10:14-11:8). In these and other references in which mention of a wife serves simply to complete a reference to family, household, or possessions, she is usually anonymous and is not formally distinguished from other property.[63]

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[62] Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 24.

[63] Phyllis Bird, "Images of Women in the Old Testament," in Ruether, *Religion and Sexism*, 64. Cf. Davies, *The Dissenting Reader*, 4.

Some of the verses Bird mentions as "lists of booty" bear quoting in full, given their similarity to our texts (especially 1 Maccabees). Deuteronomy 20:14 reads "the women and the little ones, the cattle, and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourselves; and you shall enjoy the spoil of your enemies..." Note the same descending order: women, little ones (טַף), cattle, and everything else. 1 Kings 20:7 says "...he sent to me for my wives and my children, and for my silver and my gold, and I did not refuse him."

Other Hebrew Bible passages that can be interpreted in this light include Numbers 30:3-15, which depicts women as subject to their father until marriage, and then subject to their husbands. (A woman's vow could be nullified by a word from the male in authority over her, and only had to be kept if a male had heard the vow and had not overruled it). Davies uses Pentateuchal laws to show that "a woman's sexual and reproductive functions were regarded as the legal property of her father or husband."[64] For instance, it is a father who is seen as wronged if his virgin daughter is raped (Deut 22:19), and a husband who is seen as wronged if a pregnant woman is hurt and accidental miscarriage occurs (Exo 21:22).

The giving of a woman as a present also finds precedent in the Hebrew Bible. Just as in 1 Macc 10:54, where Alexander receives Ptolemy's daughter as a gift, daughters are gifts in the Old Testament as well. Davies has collected some of these cases, and concluded:

> That daughters were regarded as the possession of their fathers is evident from the fact that they could be bartered for economic gain; their marriage was a matter of negotiation and financial arrangement between the groom and the father (cf. Gen 29:18-20; 34:12). Even among royal families, marriage was often a matter of political expediency, and the woman does not appear to have had any role in the negotiations (cf. 1 Sam 18:17-29).[65]

Some of his other biblical examples include Lot offering his daughters to the men of Sodom to save his male guests (Gen 19:8), Reuel giving Moses Zipporah, as a

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[64] Davies, *The Dissenting Reader*, 3.
[65] Davies, *The Dissenting Reader*, 4.

wife – without consulting her – (Exo 2:21), and Caleb promising his daughter in marriage to whomever destroyed Kiriathsepher (Judges 11:29-40). Similar verses might include Genesis 41:45, where Pharaoh gives Asenath to Joseph, or 1 Chronicles 2:25, where Sheshan gives his daughter to his male slave in hopes that she will bear sons for him. Outside the Hebrew Bible, there is also the example of Sarah in the book of *Tobit*, who is given to Tobit simply because he is the next of marriageable kin.

Given the tendency of the two Maccabean works to use biblical language and imagery, this familiar listing of wives, children, and cattle (and their important connection with "the land"), which appear so regularly in similar cases in the Hebrew Bible, is not surprising. 1 Maccabees, which uses biblical language more commonly than 2 Maccabees (and was written in Hebrew), also employs the category of women as possession more commonly.

Category 3: Woman as Helpless Treasure to be Protected

This category is used in these works invariably as a narrative tactic to elicit *pathos*, and is frequent. Pictures of women being paraded around with their murdered babies hanging from their necks, references to provisions being stolen from (or generously shared with, depending on the rhetorical aim) widows and orphans, and dramatic speeches such as "I will avenge my nation and the sanctuary and your wives and children" (1 Macc 13:6) all serve to evoke in the reader sufficient pity for the "right" side – or disapproval of the "enemy."

It is likely that the use of women (and especially widows) for this rhetorical purpose is facilitated by their "protected" status under Torah. For example, 2 Maccabees 3:10 refers to "deposits belonging to widows and orphans (χηρῶν τε καὶ ὀρφανῶν)." In the chapter's narrative sequence, Heliodorus has arrived in Jerusalem in order to despoil the temple, and the high priest attempts to dissuade him (unsuccessfully) by explaining that "it was utterly impossible that wrong should be done to those people who had trusted in the ... sanctity and inviolability of the temple" (2 Macc 3:12). (Craven points out that the deposits

mentioned in 3:10 may refer to the triannual tithe for orphans and widows mentioned in Tobit.[66]) Of course, widows and orphans in Judaism symbolize society's helpless/needy, since "to be without a male is to be without protection and inheritance in the patrilineal world of the Bible," so "violation of the funds belonging to the widow (and orphan) would be a most hideous act."[67] Female figures (such as widows) and other "weak" characters (such as children) are used repeatedly, to play on the readers' emotions. Examples include 2 Macc 8:28, where Judas' army defeats Nicanor, and the author takes care to mention that Judas "gave some of the spoils to those who had been tortured and to the widows and orphans (ταῖς χήραις καὶ ὀρφανοῖς)," and again in 2 Macc 8:30, where he defeats Timothy and Bacchides, and Judas' men are said to have divided "very much plunder" among "those who had been tortured and to the orphans and widows (καὶ ὀρφανοῖς καὶ χήραις), and also to the aged, shares equal to their own."

There is one group of verses in particular that depict women as both precious and helpless for clearly rhetorical reasons. In at least three cases, it is explicitly noted that warriors viewed as righteous (such as Judas Maccabeus and the Romans) kill only the males when they take over a city.[68] Care is taken to specifically mention both Simon and Judas rescuing Jewish women/wives (1 Macc 5:23 and 1 Macc 5:45). The enemy, on the other hand, is shown killing women on numerous occasions. This might be a literary device to illustrate the mercy and justice of the righteous, as opposed to the cruelty of the enemy, as Craven points out: "In 2 Maccabees, atrocities against women are perpetrated explicitly only by the enemy. Jewish attacks and counterattacks, which surely

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[66] Craven, in Meyers, *Women in Scripture*, 388. Craven is referring to Tobit 1:8: "A third tenth I would give to the orphans and widows and to the converts who had attached themselves to Israel. I would bring it and give it to them in the third year, and we would eat it according to the ordinance decreed concerning it in the law of Moses and according to the instructions of Deborah, the mother of my father Tobiel, for my father had died and left me an orphan (NRSV)."

[67] Craven, in Meyers, *Women in Scripture*, 388.

[68] Judas' army kills only males in Bozrah in 1 Macc 5:28. Judas' army kills only males in Alema in 1 Macc 5:35. Judas' army kills only males in Ephron in 1 Macc 5:51.

resulted in the death of women (they burned entire towns), never single out women as victims."[69]

Conversely, enemy attacks contain explicit mention of female (and similarly weak) casualties. 2 Macc 5:13 unequivocally declares that when Antiochus attacked Jerusalem, "there was killing of young and old, destruction of boys, women, and children, and slaughter of virgins and infants." Not only the female characters "women" and "virgins," but every single type of character in that list can be seen as helpless, and the only type missing is the only one not perceived as weakened/dependent: the adult male. Similar instances occur repeatedly in both books, and include the following:

- 1 Macc 1:32: Antiochus takes women captive.
- 1 Macc 1:60ff: Antiochus orders women who circumcise put to death.
- 1 Macc 2:38: The enemy attacks Jews on the Sabbath, including women/wives.
- 1 Macc 3:20: Judas complains that the Syrians destroy women/wives.
- 1 Macc 5:13: The Jews cry to Judas that the Gentiles have captured their women/wives.
- 1 Macc 8:10: Romans take Greek women/wives captive and enslave them.
- 2 Macc 5:13: A list of Antiochus' victims includes women/wives and virgins.
- 2 Macc 6:10: Ptolemy has Jewish women/wives publicly killed.
- 2 Macc 7: A Jewish mother (μήτηρ) and her seven sons are martyred by "the king"
- 2 Macc 12:3-4: The enemy from Joppa drowns Jews with their women/wives

Surely, the repeated highlighting of innocent death at the hands of the Seleucids and other rival groups served the rhetorical function of shaming these mighty opponents.

As good apologists in a Greek context, the writers engaged not only the audience's *rational* belief in justice and the rightness of the Law, but engaged the

[69] Craven, in Meyers, *Women in Scripture*, 389.

reader's *emotions* as well. These references certainly see women as tender and worthy of protection, and assume the audience will agree. Part of this "tender" or "weak" parcel is the woman's inability to defend herself or assist in the manly fight.

Whether this depiction of women views them in a negative or positive light is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, the women are seen as a *cherished* commodity worth protecting, and even worth dying for. On the other hand, their weakness might present a kind of liability. However, this category was not titled "Woman as Helpless *Treasure*..." without reason, since the Maccabean histories do not employ the category with the express purpose of advocating a negative view of women. Of course, if woman is a possession (even a prized one), she is passive rather than active. However, unlike some strains of Second-Temple Judaism, where women were blamed for evil or mistrusted as constant sources of conniving and cunning, the strain we witness in 1 and 2 Maccabees contains positive elements. Alice Keefe, in a study of rape scenes in the Hebrew Bible, for instance, finds that, while women are certainly depicted as weak and in need of protection, they are at the same time seen as worthy of protecting and vital to the community:

> While these stories of rape undergird an assumption that strong paternal or royal authority is necessary to ensure community coherence, that coherence itself is figured in images of woman's body. This female body is situated as a sacred center in Israel that can nourish life and generate the bonds of community. Its violation is a violation of life, and images of brokenness through sexual violence serve most potently as figures of brokenness in the continuity of life and community. These rape scenes are embedded within a gendered symbol system in which male authority is entrusted with control. But the system does not leave the feminine wholly disempowered or marginalized. The wars of men fall subject to critique and judgment through these tales of rape...[70]

[70] Alice A. Keefe, "Rapes of Women/Wars of Men" (*Semeia* 61; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 94.

Sirach, once again, makes the most strikingly negative contrast among apocryphal (and perhaps even pseudepigraphal literature) in this category. Not only viewing women as helpless and requiring protection, *Sirach* seems to view females (especially daughters) as a downright liability, to be kept under tight control so that they wreak the least damage, and gotten rid of as quickly as possible. Trenchard presents the results of his systematic examination of the role of daughters in *Sirach* as follows:

> ...he devoted several discussions to woman as daughter. These are all negative. He considers daughters to be a great burden, financially and otherwise. They cause more trouble and worry than sons, bringing their fathers anxiety and shame. Since they are sexually irresponsible and seductive, they must be constantly guarded. A father's goal is to give them in marriage and to keep them married. If he is successful in this, he will be relieved of a great trouble... The thought of daughters seemed to bring out the worst side of Ben Sira's negative view of women. ...at the end of a section on daughters he formulated his most indefensibly negative remark about women. Ben Sira unabashedly disliked daughters. In his discussions concerning daughters he reveals his personal bias against women more clearly than anywhere else. His views are consistent, occurring in various sections of his work. The negative picture seems to be intensified in his final remarks. If we had nothing else about women from his pen but this material on daughters, we could justifiably conclude that Ben Sira exhibits a personal bias against women.[71]

Although seen in some instances as possessions in both 1st and 2nd Maccabees, women are at least treasured and depicted as worthy of protection by the (ideal) man: a strong, brave, righteous warrior (like Judas Maccabeus). While this might be construed as a subordinate and therefore negative role, it is not as *blatantly* negative as Sirach's treatment.

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[71] Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 170-171.

Category 4: Woman as Part of a "Shalom Package"

This section will show that, in both primary texts, women are sometimes connected with the "physical" as opposed to the "spiritual" realm. The division of all of reality into these two categories can be called "dualism," and is common across many cultures and literatures. It is not an originally Jewish phenomenon, but entered via Jewish contact with other cultures, namely those of Persian Zoroastrianism and Greek Platonism.[72] Sometimes, dualistic worldviews will relegate the female to the physical/worldly realm and the male to the spiritual/otherworldly realm, with the implication that the latter is somehow "higher" than the former.

We see evidence of this connection between women and the earth happening in some Greco-Roman Jewish literature, and 1 and 2 Maccabees' lists of possessions that include "women, children, and cattle" are no exception. However, perhaps because of the Hebrew concept of שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*), such dualism in Judaism need not necessarily take on as negative a connotation as it might in, for instance, Persian, Platonic, or Gnostic dualisms (where the physical is perceived explicitly as inferior to the spiritual). There is a sense, perhaps unique to Judaism, that creation is טוֹב מְאֹד, "very good," and when a state of *shalom* is in effect, all is right with the world.[73]

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[72] "In Persia, the... attempt to systematize the multiplicity of polytheism issued in the dualistic philosophy of later Zoroastrianism. The whole realm of being was divided into two kingdoms, created and ruled by two lords: Ahura Mazda, the creator of light and life, law, order and goodness, and Anro Mainyus, the author of darkness, evil and death. (...) Of all these religious philosophies, only those of Assyria and Babylonia, and of Persia, are likely to have come into any contact with Biblical thought. The ... influence of the latter may be traced in the dualism and angelology and demonology of later Judaism, and again in the Gnostic systems that grew up in the Christian church, and through both channels it was perpetuated, as a dualistic influence, in the lower strata of Christian thought down through the Middle Ages." The Platonic system, too, was "rent by an irreconcilable dualism of mind and body, spirit and matter, good and evil." International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (revised ed.; Melvin Grove Kyle, revising editor; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), s.v. "philosophy."

[73] According to the Brown/Driver/Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, "*shalom*" (שָׁלוֹם) is rendered as connoting such concepts as wholeness, completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safety, health, prosperity, wellness, quiet, tranquillity, contentment, friendship, and peace with God. Together, these things form what I conceive of as a "package" – a package not complete without women as not only important but also "טאב מְאֹד."

Ruether agrees that there is, especially in biblical Judaism, very little sense of the later Persian/apocalyptic/Platonic dualism, and calls it "a naturalistic religion of this-worldly hope," which only changed "to one of apocalyptic despair as it lost its national autonomy and passed under the yoke of the Persian, Greek, and Roman empires."[74] If one follows Ruether, one might observe this latter "apocalyptic despair" hinted at in 2nd Maccabees in the sense that there is an emphasis on the resurrection of the dead. However, neither work takes on a binary worldview which downplays the importance or goodness of the present, physical realm. The joy of a righteous Jew, especially in 1 Maccabees, is still the joy of the Promised Land here and now. As for women, they are essential if this dream of descendants and *shalom* is to come true, not just as a necessary evil, but as "very good." Although the highest pinnacle of the Maccabean hierarchy is clearly God, followed by the Law and the Temple, there is also a holiness to life on earth with possessions, land, and family, and women are connected to this latter criterion for blessing. For instance, a link between women and the task of childrearing is certainly present in the texts (e.g. 1 Macc 1:38, 1:60, 2 Macc 6:10).[75] (The only places where men are mentioned in connection with childrearing at all is when sons are being groomed/trained as future kings. In these cases, no mother is ever mentioned.)

The clearest example of how simple earthly pleasures – "*shalom*" – are construed as positive might be when Judas said to the warriors who "were building houses, or were betrothed (literally "espousing women/wives – μνηστευομένοις γυναῖκας), or were planting vineyards, or were fainthearted, that each should return to his home, according to the law" (1 Macc 3:56). Might this verse function rhetorically to remind readers of the potentially loving and lovely reasons behind their gory bloodbaths? Juxtaposed against the backdrop of horrendous battles, these gentle images of young grapevines, wedding feasts, new homes, and even the "cowardly" instinct not to kill or be killed are powerfully

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[74] Ruether, *Religion and Sexism*, 151.

[75] 1 Macc 1:38: "...Jerusalem ... became strange to her offspring, and her children forsook her"; 1 Macc 1:60: "they put to death the women who had their children circumcised"; 2 Macc 6:10: "two women were brought in for having circumcised their children. These women they publicly paraded about the city, with their babies hung at their breasts."

magnified. This warm and inviting picture may serve to make the warriors seem all the more valiant in comparison, but it also reminds the reader of things worth fighting for (an important rhetorical task of state propaganda such as 1 Maccabees – even today).

Viewed in this light, women, although certainly connected in the texts with the physical as opposed to the spiritual (if such distinctions apply), are nevertheless sacred in the sense that they are part of a covenantal package: *shalom*. The Maccabeans are not depicted as fighting for God and the Law without purpose. The goal was not only to defeat the Gentiles and apostates, but to then re-establish national covenantal bliss, including the simple joys of marriage, descendants, the rewards of honest work,[76] good food, and wine. This bliss is physical and earthly, but it is "very good."[77]

This connection of women with the physical is also ambiguous, since when physical and spiritual are dichotomized, there is often a tendency to place more value on the spiritual (and a tendency to categorize men with the spiritual and women with the physical). The latter is, indeed, the case in our texts, as seen above. However, in the particular dichotomy witnessed (at least in 1 Maccabees), the physical is not construed as unimportant. Here the two primary texts diverge. 2 Maccabees, with its important theological theme of resurrection of the dead, places higher importance on the spiritual and otherworldly. 1 Maccabees, however, includes the here-and-now in its "highest good," rather than awaiting an eschatological future good in order for *shalom*-like blessing/justice to be reinstated. In the words of John Bartlett, "The author's kingdom is undoubtedly of this world."[78]

When comparing this with contemporaneous literature, one can scarcely think of the dichotomy between spiritual and physical without thinking of Philo, and particularly of his linking of women with the latter. Even within an

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[76] E.g. (describing the peaceful reign of Simon the Maccabee), 1 Macc 14:8: "They tilled their land in peace; the ground gave its increase, and the trees of the plains their fruit"; 1 Macc 14:12: "Each man sat under his vine and his fig tree, and there was none to make them afraid."

[77] There is a distinction between 1 and 2 Maccabees on this point. Unlike 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees is undoubtedly concerned with the resurrection of the dead, creating a weaker *shalom*-focus than in 1 Maccabees.

[78] Bartlett, "1 Maccabees," 808.

individual, Philo considers spirituality a male trait, and physicality a female one. "Philo designates the lower, carnal part of the individual as female, and the higher, spiritual part as male."[79] The one group of women he does speak highly of, the "Therapeutics," he views as "spiritually male."[80] He repeatedly connects maleness with the inner person and femaleness with the outer. For instance, note how the following passage insists that men have to do with intellect and women have to do with "outward sense." Also note that the intellect can stand on its own as a virtue, but the "outward sense" needs to be "purified":

> Two choruses, the one proceeding from the conclave of the men, and the other from the company of the women, will stand up and sing in alternate songs a melody responsive to one another's voices. And the chorus of men will have Moses for their leader; and that of the women will be under the guidance of Miriam, 'the *purified* outward Sense' ... both in accordance with the suggestions of the intellect and the perceptions of the outward senses, and that each instrument should be struck in harmony, I mean those both of the mind and of the outward sense.[81]

In Philo's *On Drunkenness*, he again mentions "the *unmanly and women-like* association with the outward senses, and the passions, and the objects of the outward senses,"[82] and contrasts "those reasonings which are really masculine and manly, which have a nature free from all spot and stain, and which honour that which is really honest and incorrupt" with "those more feminine reasonings which are in every respect overcome by those things which are visible, and which are unable to comprehend any object of contemplation which is beyond them" in *On the Migration of Abraham,* XVII, 95.

However, one does not have to search ahead to Philo to see a negative aspect to this division into man/spiritual and woman/physical. Susan

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[79] Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women*, 219.
[80] Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women*, 212.
[81] Philo, *On Husbandry*, XVII, 79-80. So as not to overstate this dichotomy, I should note that Philo does not view "mind" as perfect and "sense" alone as imperfect. In fact, both mind and sense are somewhat physical/negative for him, with only the (ungendered) "soul" as fully positive. That being said, soul is more connected with mind than sense, since he calls soul an "endowment of mind" (*On The Creation* XXI 64).
[82] Philo, *On Drunkenness*, XV, 63.

Thistlethwaite detects a pre-Maccabean tradition of this dichotomy within the Hebrew Bible. She, too, notes a connection of women with the land, but does not consider this a *shalom*-related compliment, but rather a chattel-related put-down. She first refers to another scholar's comment: "Drorah Setel notes that there is a deeply pornographic element to the way women's sexuality is presented in the biblical texts: 'as an object of male possession and control, which includes the depiction of women as analogous to nature in general and the land in particular, especially with regard to imagery of conquest and domination'..."[83] She goes on to condemn the connection of women with nature/land further, citing Hosea 2:3 ("lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and set her like a parched land, and slay her with thirst"), and arguing that in this kind of passage, "where the land is imaged as a woman and the punishment of the land is the punishment of a woman, is lodged a strong support for the modern description of conquest of land in war as rape" (which, she continues, supports the view of women as less than fully human.[84] However, Thistlethwaith is dealing with *potential* negative ramifications of the textual connection of woman with land. One could surely posit potential *positive* ramifications as well, as suggested in the "*shalom* package" concept.

Category 5: Woman as Personification of Jerusalem

Five times in 1 Maccabees, Jerusalem is depicted using a female metaphor. In some cases, "she" is personified as a woman who can suffer and mourn, and in other cases, there is simply the use of a feminine pronoun with no further personification. The references are:

- "Because of them the residents of Jerusalem fled; she became a dwelling of strangers; she became strange to her (αὐτῆς) offspring, and her (αὐτῆς) children forsook her (αὐτήν). Her sanctuary became desolate as a desert; her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into a reproach, her

[83] Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, "'You May Enjoy the Spoil of your Enemies': Rape as a Biblical Metaphor for War" (*Semeia* 61; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 62.
[84] Thistlethwaite, "You May Enjoy the Spoil of your Enemies," 62.

honour into contempt. Her dishonour now grew as great as her glory; her exaltation was turned into mourning." (1 Macc 1:38-40)

- "Her temple has become like a man without honour; her glorious vessels have been carried into captivity. Her babes have been killed in her streets, her youths by the sword of the foe. What nation has not inherited her palaces and has not seized her spoils? All her adornment has been taken away; no longer free, she has become a slave..." (1 Macc 2:8-11)

- "Jerusalem was uninhabited like a wilderness; not one of her (αὐτῆς) children went in or out..." (1 Macc 3:45)

- "But now I remember the evils I did in Jerusalem. I seized all her (ἐν αὐτῇ) vessels of silver and gold..." (1 Macc 6:12)

- "Let Jerusalem be holy and her environs (τὰ ὅρια αὐτῆς), tithes, and revenues, be free from tax (translation mine)." (1 Macc 10:31)

This is not an innovation on the part of the author, but appears frequently in the Greco-Roman world and the Ancient Near East, including the Hebrew Bible, where Jerusalem and "Zion" are often conceived as feminine,[85] and continuing through non-canonical[86] and New Testament writings.[87] (Other cities, such as Babylon are sometimes conceived as feminine too.)[88]

These female similes and metaphors can be interpreted either positively or negatively for women. In one way, the use of the feminine for something so holy and integral to this pious branch of Second-Temple Judaism might be seen as an honour, much like the feminist arguments made for the affirmation of femininity portrayed in female images of the Divine.[89] J.H. Otwell, after analyzing a list of

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[85] (E.g. Lamentations 1:17: "Zion stretches out her hands, but there is none to comfort her.") "The community is traditionally represented by female figures ranging from the virgin (2 Kgs 19.21//Isa 37.22; Lam 1.15; 2.13; Jer 14.17) to the bride (Jer 2.2-3; Hos 2.15b) to the whore (Hos 1-4; Ezek 16) to the widow (Lam 1.1; Isa 54.5-8)." A.-J. Levine, "Sacrifice and Salvation: Otherness and Domestication in the Book of Judith" in *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna* (The Feminist Companion to the Bible 7; ed. A. Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 209.

[86] E.g. Baruch 4:8 "you grieved Jerusalem, who *reared* you." (Greek is feminine).

[87] E.g. Revelation 21:2, where a new Jerusalem comes down from heaven "as a bride adorned for her husband."

[88] E.g. 4 Esdras 3:28: "Are the deeds of those who inhabit Babylon any better? Is that why she has gained dominion over Zion?"

[89] See, for instance, M.J. Winn Leith's article in *The Oxford Guide to People & Places of the Bible*, where she takes the mention of God's "womb-feeling" as an indication of the Hebrew Bible's positive view towards women. Mary Joan Winn Leith, "Women: Ancient Near East and

female personification passages in the Hebrew Bible, concluded that "feminine personifications may have been used because of the high standing of woman in Israel. Even though the male acted as the epitome of the family and nation in normal affairs, the female became the epitome of the whole people in times of great urgency."[90]

Conversely, such setting-up of women on this kind of pedestal might be construed as encouraging the common criticism that females in a patriarchal society are reduced to mere flat "types": either idealized virgins or harlots. Whether this poetic device bodes ill or well for the role of women is a matter of opinion, and is likely a little of both.

What is noteworthy, upon comparison with other texts, is that there is an element of continuity between the Maccabean passages that refer to Jerusalem as female and some of the Qumran documents. *4Q Apocryphal Lamentations A* refers to Jerusalem as a "wounded, abandoned, and barren woman," and 1QH 3:6-18 features a "woman-in-travail" passage, in which the woman may represent the elect community.[91] This shows that the feminization of one's city or nation is not exclusive to 1 Maccabees in the Second-Temple period (in fact, it is a common occurrence), thereby suggesting that Maccabean femininity is, in this respect, representative of the status quo. The motif was obviously still seen as viable in the early Christian era, considering the vision of the woman in Revelation 12, but that document is within the apocalyptic category as well, so may be part of a similar trajectory. No notable divergence can be found which would separate 1 Maccabees from its contemporaries.[92]

Israel," (ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 329.

[90] J.H. Otwell. *And Sarah Laughed: The Status of Women in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 185.

[91] For a fuller discussion of interpretations of these and other Qumran documents as they pertain to Messianism, see Elliott, *Survivors*, 472-478.

[92] As an aside, it is almost humorous to witness the rhetorical acrobatics Philo accomplishes in order to assure the reader that, despite a feminine metaphorical tradition, Wisdom is definitely male: "How, then, can the daughter of God, namely, wisdom, be properly called a father? Is it because the name indeed of wisdom is feminine but the sex masculine? For indeed all the virtues bear the names of women, but have the powers and actions of full-grown men, since whatever is subsequent to God, even if it be the most ancient of all other things, still has only the second place when compared with that omnipotent Being, and appears not so much masculine as feminine, in

However, if we look earlier, within the Hebrew Bible, where the Jerusalem-as-female device began, we find not only ample similar examples,[93] but many that are rather more negative. For instance, in the many cases where Jerusalem's relationship with God is depicted using a spousal metaphor, Jerusalem is always the female, and is often seen as lascivious, adulterous, conniving, and illicit. Images of Jerusalem as a prostitute are common. "How the faithful city has become a harlot, she that was full of justice," reads Isaiah 1:21. Ezekiel 16:15-16 says, "you (Jerusalem) trusted in your beauty, and played the harlot because of your renown, and lavished your harlotries on any passer-by. You took some of your garments, and made for yourself gaily decked shrines, and on them played the harlot; the like has never been, nor ever shall be." The Jerusalem-as-female metaphor never takes on this negative light in 1 Maccabees.

Even more negative are the passages in the Hebrew Bible that describe the harlot Jerusalem's punishments. The words "abusive" and "violent" come to mind as descriptors of this divine marriage. See Jeremiah 6:2-6:

> The comely and delicately bred I will destroy, the daughter of Zion. ... 'Prepare war against her; up, and let us attack at noon!' ... 'Up, and let us attack by night, and destroy her palaces!' ... thus says the

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accordance with its likeness to the other creatures; for as the male always has the precedence, the female falls short, and is inferior in rank. We say, therefore, without paying any attention to the difference here existing in the names, that wisdom, the daughter of good, is both male and a father, and that it is that which sows the seeds of, and which begets learning in, souls, and also education, and knowledge, and prudence, all honourable and praiseworthy things," *On Flight and Finding*, IX, 51-52. However, this is not directly related to our category, which is woman as a metaphor for Jerusalem, rather than as metaphor in general...

[93] There are cases where Jerusalem, personified as female, is seen in very similar scenes of lament as in 1 Maccabees. (E.g.: "the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city" Isa 1:8; "How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the cities has become a vassal. She weeps bitterly in the night, tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies" (Lam 1:1-2); "What can I say for you, to what compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What can I liken to you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For vast as the sea is your ruin; who can restore you?" (Lam 2:13). In other passages, Jerusalem is personified as female, but instead of lament, the scene is one of rejoicing. (E.g.: "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married, says the LORD" (Isa 54:1); "Shake yourself from the dust, arise, O captive Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion." (Isa 52:2); "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!" (Zeph 3:14).

> LORD of hosts: 'Hew down her trees; cast up a siege mound against Jerusalem. This is the city which must be punished.

Jeremiah 13:22-27 contains more violent imagery, this time of a more sexual nature:

> ...if you say in your heart, 'Why have these things come upon me?' it is for the greatness of your iniquity that your skirts are lifted up, and you suffer violence. ... I will scatter you like chaff driven by the wind from the desert. This is your lot, the portion I have measured out to you, says the LORD, because you have forgotten me and trusted in lies. I myself will lift up your skirts over your face, and your shame will be seen. I have seen your abominations, your adulteries and neighings, your lewd harlotries, on the hills in the field. Woe to you, O Jerusalem!

Ezekiel 16:33-39, too, includes a harsh indictment for the personified Jerusalem: She is accused of being a harlot not out of necessity, but out of her own desire, which is depicted as being somehow one step lower:

> Men give gifts to all harlots; but you gave your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from every side for your harlotries. So you were different from other women in your harlotries: none solicited you to play the harlot; and you gave hire, while no hire was given to you; therefore you were different. Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD:

Again, the punishment is sexual violence:

> Thus says the Lord GOD, Because your shame was laid bare and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotries with your lovers, and because of all your idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers, with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you loathed; I will gather them against you from every side, and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. And I will judge you as women who break wedlock and shed blood are judged, and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy. And I will give you into the hand of your lovers, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your

> lofty places; they shall strip you of your clothes and
> take your fair jewels, and leave you naked and bare.

While 2 Maccabees does seem to share the *theology* of these prophets, who see Jerusalem's calamities as being the direct result of the sins of the people, neither 2 Maccabees nor 1 Maccabees (which uses the same Jerusalem-as-female metaphor as these prophets did) approach Jerusalem's punishment with the metaphor of graphic violence done to a woman by her husband. (Although 2 Maccabees' famous martyrdom scenes are graphically violent, utmost care is taken to ensure that the reader responds with sympathy and empathy.) Passages like these lead Davies to conclude that "the prophets contributed to some of the most vividly misogynist material encountered in the Hebrew Bible."[94] Surely, at least in this category, the Maccabean histories treat the female Jerusalem with greater respect than their literary ancestors.

Category 6: Woman as Human Being

There is sometimes a sense in 1 Maccabees that "people" are being spoken of, and that there is a category called "human" where gender is not relevant. The category did not appear at all in 2 Maccabees, and its existence in 1 Maccabees is ambiguous at best, and severely modified in light of some of the other categories.

One example is found in 1 Maccabees 13:28, where Simon erects seven pyramids for his "father and mother and four brothers." Simon's monument to his father (Mattathias), his mother, and his brothers (Eleazar, Judas, John, and Jonathan) does not divide along gender lines. There is no sense that any of the deceased are of greater or lesser importance. There is simply the sense of lamentation for one's lost family. (It should be noted that this small argument for equality is mitigated by the fact that the lives of Mattathias and the four brothers are detailed at length elsewhere in the text, while the mother remains not only unknown and unmentioned elsewhere, but even unnamed.)

An equally small example (and perhaps equally ambiguous) occurs when the Gazarites beg Simon for peace. They protested (by tearing their clothes), with

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[94] Davies, *The Dissenting Reader*, 7.

men, wives, and children all on the wall together (1 Macc 13:45). This *might* be seen as evidence of both genders and various ages uniting in political action. However, the Greek, which reads, "ἀνέβησαν οἱ ἐν τῇ πόλει σὺν γυναιξὶν καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ἐπὶ τὸ τεῖχος διερρηχότες τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν καὶ ἐβόησαν," not only separates the women and children from the men grammatically, but also allows for the possibility that the verbal action is being performed by the men alone, who have simply brought along their mute wives and children as props. There is no way of knowing the intended gender of αὐτῶν, which could either mean that everyone tore his/her clothes, or that the men alone performed this act of protest.

The only unambiguous example of ungendered humanity is found in the poetic lament describing the dark days of Judah's persecution, also found in 1 Maccabees. The theme of the poem is wholeness: the whole of Israel mourned, including the land. Women are not excluded from this catalogue of inclusion in weeping:

> Israel mourned deeply in *every community*,
> Rulers and elders groaned
> Maidens (παρθένοι) and young men (νεανίσκοι) became faint,
> The beauty of the women faded.
> *Every* bridegroom took up the lament;
> She who sat in the bridal chamber was mourning.
> Even the land trembled for its inhabitants,
> And *all the house of Jacob*
> Was clothed with shame (1 Macc 1:25-28).

In this case, the focus is on humans in general, rather than on specifically female or male humans. It is a scant case for equality, given the paucity of this type of passage compared with the woman-as-possession passages, and given the ambiguity of my first two examples. Still, it shows evidence of some level of belief in a single umbrella of humanity, covering both genders.

Of course, there exist many other times when women and men in Judaism are depicted together as "Jews" or "human beings," without discussion of gender. For instance, Kline compares the above passage to "traditional lamentation

imagery like that in Jeremiah and Baruch,"[95] and highlights not the gender, but the *youth* of the men and women as the crucial part of such passages:

> ...the poem poignantly describes the destruction of the strength and beauty, gladness and mirth associated with young women and young men, brides and bridegrooms. Such weakening of persons, near or at the childbearing stages of their lives, represents destruction of potential or actual fecundity for the community.[96]

Given the poem's varied cast of characters (rulers, elders, young women, young men, bridegrooms, brides, the land, its inhabitants, and "all the house of Jacob"), it seems likely that at least one of the lament's aims is to convey the widespread and thorough nature of the devastation caused by Antiochus' persecutions – which would, in turn, make the text's heroes appear all the more widespread and thorough in their victories. The womanly role of bride in the poem, therefore, is not singled out in any way from the male role of bridegroom, but rather evokes humanity in general (particularly humanity as procreative).

Ezra-Nehemiah may offer further support of a different nature for this somewhat egalitarian category:

> Several commentators have noted the presence in Ezra-Nehemiah of women at the assembly (קָהָל) that convenes at crucial moments in the life of the people and appears to constitute the broadest authority of the community. Women belong to the קָהָל before which Ezra reads the Law (Neh 8:2-3), and which later takes an oath of allegiance to the Law (Neh 10:29) ... Also significant is Neh 5:1-13, where women are explicitly mentioned along with the men as crying out for their threatened possessions "our fields, our vineyards, and our houses." It appears therefore that despite the ostensibly patriarchal social organization of the post-exilic period, women in the community were significantly enfranchised.[97]

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[95] Meyers, *Women In Scripture*, 385.
[96] Meyers, *Women In Scripture*, 385.
[97] H.C. Washington, "The Strange Woman of Proverbs 1-9 and Post-Exilic Judean Society," in *Second Temple Studies 2: Temple and Community in the Persian Period* (JSOTS 175; ed. T.C. Eskenazi and K.H. Richards; Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 237.

Whether or not we can follow Washington to the same socio-historical conclusions about women's *actual* enfranchisement, we can certainly agree that the above Ezra-Nehemiah texts *depict* women alongside men, participating actively in the religious and political realms.

Of course, several types of passages modify this equality in 1 Maccabees, such as the woman-as-possession passages, the passages where men are clearly depicted as the normal human being,[98] and the passages indicating a hierarchy where women are below men. However, the case can be made that a category exists in 1 Maccabees where women are on some level ensouled and positive humans, albeit humans with distinct societal roles that are based on perceived gender differences.

This category can, of course, be contrasted with other examples within Greco-Roman Judaism (such as Josephus,[99] Sirach,[100] or Philo[101]), where women are distinctly and repeatedly referred to as qualitatively inferior.

The fact that this "human being" category did not appear in 2 Maccabees may not indicate that it has a more negative perception of women, since the most positive depiction of all exists in that book, as the next section will demonstrate.

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[98] Such as 1 Macc 2:38, where "righteous Jew" applies only to the males, and women are added on as a possession or dependent, and are given no agency: "So they attacked (the righteous Jews) on the Sabbath, and they died, with their wives (γυναῖκες) and children and cattle, to the number of a thousand persons."

[99] E.g., *Antiquities* 3:5: "When Moses saw how much the people were cast down, and that the occasion of it could not be contradicted, for the people were not in the nature of a complete army of men, who might oppose a manly fortitude to the necessity that distressed them; the multitude of the children, and of the women also, being of too weak capacities to be persuaded by reason, blunted the courage of the men themselves..."

[100] *Sirach* 42:14: "Better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good..."

[101] E.g.: "...his illegitimate brethren, who, being the sons of concubines, derive their name from the inferior sex, that of the women, and not from the superior sex, that, namely of the man." Philo, *On the Unchangeableness of God*, XXV, 121. Or: "It is especially the conduct of women to pay regard to customs; for, indeed, that is the habit of the *weaker and more feminine* soul; while the nature of men, and of that reason which is really vigorous and masculine, is to be guided by nature." Philo, *On Drunkenness*, XIII, 55. Or: "(The Sabbath can be) called the motherless, as being produced by the Father of the universe alone, as a specimen of the male kind unconnected with the sex of women; for the number seven is a most brave and valiant number, well adapted by nature for government and authority..." (like men?) Philo, *The Special Laws 2*, XV, 56.

Category 7: Woman as Empowered Individual

This is the most positive depiction of women present in the two compositions, at least by modern standards. Like the first very negative category, this very positive category is also very scarce in the documents (three cases). Nevertheless, it exists, depicting woman as an agent in her own right, capable of following Torah, dying courageously for her beliefs, and thinking for herself.

The first sample of this way of thinking is found in 2 Maccabees. Firstly, in 3:19, women seemingly devise and carry out a brave political action. When Heliodorus was about to seize the temple money, "women, girded with sackcloth under their breasts, thronged the streets" in a campaign of their own volition (the women are the subject of the sentence in the LXX, and the verb is active). This shows that they were not only seen as rational, but also as political/spiritual, at least in this case.[102] Furthermore, the author/abridger of 2 Maccabees does not disapprove of this public display of dissent, but rather shows it to have merited divine approval: The subsequent introduction into the narrative of a miraculous horse and rider from heaven, accompanied by angelic henchmen who flog Heliodorus nearly to death, indicates that the women's supplications are viewed as having been effective and proper.

The second instance is found in 1 Maccabees, in the passage dealing with Antiochus' attempts to annihilate the distinctive Jewish tradition of circumcision, by putting to death the mothers who chose to continue the practice. This particular type of persecution is mentioned in both works, both in 2 Maccabees 6:10 and in 1 Macc 1:60-61. In the former, "two women were brought in for having circumcised their children." The women were publicly taunted and then killed, and are then passed by in the narrative without further mention. While this draws attention to the women as objects of pity, it does not suggest individual agency. However, in the 1 Maccabees account, there is a greater sense that the women

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[102] It is interesting that the next verse (2 Macc 3:20) mentions "maidens (τῶν παρθένων) who were *kept indoors*" and says they "ran together to the gates, and some to the walls, while others peered out of the windows. And holding up their hands to heaven, they all made entreaty." One might speculate that these "maidens" were not only going against foreign authorities, but resisting one of their own contemporary inner-Jewish customs by "making entreaty" out-of-doors.

chose to circumcise their sons despite Antiochus' decree, which would imply a measure of bravery as well as religious fervour. The Greek expresses the verb "to circumcise" using an active participle: τὰς γυναῖκας τὰς περιτετμηκυίας τὰ τέκνα αὐτῶν. The RSV's "the women who *had their children circumcised*" might even be better translated "the women who *circumcised* their children," according them an even greater agency. This latter case shows a rational decision on the part of the mothers to risk their lives for what they perceived as a higher law than that of the king. This "agency" suggested by the use of an active verb can not literally mean that the women performed the actual circumcision procedure, since the following verse also lists among the victims "their families and those who circumcised them" (καὶ τοὺς οἴκους αὐτῶν καὶ τοὺς περιτετμηκότας αὐτούς). Nonetheless, whether the passage is supposed to have been an accurate historical account or, rather, an attempt to figuratively illustrate the cruelty of Antiochus or the threat to Judaism's future[103] does not alter the depiction of a measure of women's empowerment here, at least the power to decide whether or not to circumcise their male infants, and the power to resist authority at great personal cost.

The third, and greatest, example of an empowered, rational, and spiritual woman is the case of the martyred mother who, before her own death, is forced to witness her seven children being tortured and killed. The striking rhetorical element in this passage is the ease with which it could have been stopped. A single bite of pork would have saved them all from elongated agonies. This lengthy passage, which, as I will argue, is at the crux of the work, highly praises the mother for her righteous actions and her Stoic ability to overcome her emotions, and even puts articulate and persuasive sermons in her mouth.

In the cases of both 1 and 2 Maccabees, references to previous people and events frequently act as literary tools for linking current events to the great myths

[103] A figurative interpretation is suggested by Kline: "The deaths of mothers (and their sons) represent the actual destruction of the community and its future." Meyers, *Women In Scripture*, 385.

of Israel's past, in order to glorify the Maccabean heroes.[104] This is certainly the case in the martyred mother narrative. Of course, the motif of a powerless yet righteous character called publicly before a king and forced to choose between "righteousness" and "idolatry" is not unheard of in the biblical text. Daniel is thrown to the lions for having defied a royal decree in order to follow his religious convictions (Daniel 6). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to pay homage to the king's images, and are sentenced to death in a furnace (Daniel 3). However, the martyr passage in 2nd Maccabees makes *explicit* links to earlier tradition by making repeated reference to the fact that the martyrs were speaking Hebrew, the "language of their fathers," and interpreting their crime as none other than following the "Law of Moses." In the 42 verses comprising chapter 7 (the entire tale of the martyred mother and her sons), Moses is mentioned twice (7:6, 7:30); "his law" (ὁ αὐτὸς νόμος) or "the law" (ὁ νόμος) is mentioned three times (7:1, 7:9, 7:11); the "laws of the fathers" (τοὺς πατρίους νόμους / τῶν πατρίων νόμων) are mentioned twice (7:2, 7:37); the fact that the martyrs are speaking Hebrew (or "in the language of the fathers" - τῇ πατρίῳ φωνη) is mentioned twice (7:21, 7:27); and the covenant of God (διαθήκη θεοῦ) is mentioned in 7:36.

Clearly, as this section of the study will demonstrate, the martyred mother is a hero in her own right. For instance, she is depicted as a theologian, waxing eloquent on the resurrection of the dead using language reminiscent of Greek philosophy. In 2 Maccabees 7:22, her meditation on the mystery of life ("I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you") uses a Greek term

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[104] It should be noted, of course, that the two books do not share the *same* Maccabean heroes. 1 Maccabees, "after paying brief respect to the brave but suicidal efforts of pious Jews to disobey the king's decrees, ... introduces the aged priest Mattathias," (Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, 5) and goes on to glorify the whole Hasmonean line, whereas 2 Maccabees glorifies only Judas and the martyrs – notably a female martyr-hero – and does not deem Mattathias worthy of a single mention. "Mattathias in Jason's view must have been a heinous violator of the Sabbath. Jason would have found it embarrassing to associate the heroic Judas with such a sinner. Hence, the omission of all mention of him in the abridged history is ... *damnatio memoriae*," Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, 79.

"elements" (στοιχείωσιν, from στοιχεῖον, τό) first used in this sense by Plato,[105] and is also reminiscent of the Wisdom tradition.[106] Her speech in 7:28 ("look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed") may even represent the first mention in history of the *creation ex nihilo* doctrine (albeit in nascent form). Origen, for instance, interpreted the passage in this way (Origen *De Principiis II* 1:5), as do some modern scholars.[107] She is "filled with a noble spirit" as well (2 Macc 7:21).

It is true that the language is gendered, when she encourages her son in the language of their "fathers,"[108] and that the writer had to explain her good points as male ones: she "fired her woman's reasoning with a man's courage" (2 Macc 7:21). But I do not agree with condemnations of the passage as just another patriarchal and unrealistic caricature of women.[109] This is a woman who acts and has power, if only the power to die with dignity and faith.

Dying with dignity may seem at first glance to be a feeble argument for empowerment. However, these deaths are clearly depicted not as failures but as victories. The whole scene shows a reversal of the *topoi* honour/shame, with deliberately "weak" characters – an elderly man, orphan children, and a widow – standing up to and ridiculing a powerful monarch. The martyrs are depicted as going on to glorious honour in the resurrection, and the king's eternal fate is

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[105] In *Theaetetus* 201E, according to Bartlett, "2 Maccabees," 840. Liddell and Scott also list this secondary meaning as a specifically Platonic usage, when στοιχεῖον appears in the plural (which it does in this verse).

[106] Bartlett, "2 Maccabees," 840.

[107] Others argue that the passage merely implies God's shaping of unformed matter. (See a brief summary of this debate in Williams, "Recent Research in 2 Maccabees," 78.)

[108] As Schüssler Fiorenza asserts, "sacred androcentric, that is, grammatically masculine, language symbolizes and determines our perception of ultimate human and divine reality." *Bread Not Stone*, xii.

[109] L. Swidler, for instance, writes, "the story about the 'mother and her seven sons' is extremely moving, but when one asks what the image of the woman in this story is, the answer is rather stereotypical: she was a mother (of sons!), and suffered; hardly 'reliable evidence' that 'the general attitude toward women took a turn for the better.'" (Swidler is here deriding the earlier work of Joseph Klausner who had concluded that the "status of women in Judea was improved under the Hasmoneans.") Both citations are from Swidler, *Women in Judaism: The Status of Women in Formative Judaism* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1976), 57.

predicted as dire.[110] However, the victory embedded in the scene involves more than a personal victory of one's faithfulness to the Law over the fear of physical torture and death. Rather, the martyrdoms are seen as bringing *literal* victory over the foreign oppressors as well, just as though the mother and her seven sons had been there on the battlefields with Judas and his brothers, wielding swords.

The retribution in the passage of Antiochus' death is poetic eye-for-an-eye justice: Antiochus "was seized with a pain in his bowels for which there was no relief and with sharp internal tortures – and that very justly, for he had tortured the bowels of others with many and strange inflictions" (2 Macc 9:5-6). The text then ensures that Antiochus also gets his limbs tortured, since this, too was done to the martyrs:

> Yet he did not in any way stop his insolence, but was even more filled with arrogance, breathing fire in his rage against the Jews, and giving orders to hasten the journey. And so it came about that he fell out of his chariot as it was rushing along, and the fall was so hard as to torture every limb of his body (2 Macc 9:7).

This unmistakably reminds the reader of the gory slaughter of innocents two chapters previous, and we are led to assume that, since the fifth son's prediction of torture came true (2 Macc 7:17),[111] the fourth son's prediction will come true too (2 Macc 7:14),[112] leaving Antiochus with no hope for a blessed afterlife. The author describes the rest of his downfall with great relish:

> Thus he who had just been thinking that he could command the waves of the sea, in his superhuman arrogance, and imagining that he could weigh the high mountains in a balance, was brought down to earth and carried in a litter, making the power of God manifest to all. And so the ungodly man's body

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[110] The fourth son, on the brink of death, declares to Antiochus, "One cannot but choose to die at the hands of men and to cherish the hope that God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!" (2 Macc 7:14) The fifth predicts, "Keep on, and see how his mighty power will torture you and your descendants!" (2 Macc 7:17) The seventh prophesies, "But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will certainly not escape the hands of God." (2 Macc 7:31) The predictions, of course, come true two chapters later, when Antiochus is, indeed, afflicted with a mysterious and disgusting death, and his attempts to repent go unheeded (see 2 Macc 9:5-13).

[111] "Keep on, and see how his mighty power will torture you and your descendants!"

[112] "For you there will be no resurrection to life!'"

> swarmed with worms, and while he was still living in anguish and pain, his flesh rotted away, and because of his stench the whole army felt revulsion at his decay. Because of his intolerable stench no one was able to carry the man who a little while before had thought that he could touch the stars of heaven. Then it was that, broken in spirit, he began to lose much of his arrogance and to come to his senses under the scourge of God, for he was tortured with pain every moment. And when he could not endure his own stench, he uttered these words: 'It is right to be subject to God, and no mortal should think that he is equal to God.' Then the abominable fellow made a vow to the Lord, who would no longer have mercy on him..." (2 Macc 9:8-13)

Surely, the reader is meant to connect the death of Antiochus (and its association with the rise to power of the Maccabees) with the deaths of the *martyrs*, rather than the warriors. This may explain the various differences between the account of his death here as contrasted with 1 Maccabees (which aims to glorify the warriors, and depicts the martyrs as weak and ineffective at best). Bartlett describes the key difference as "the emphasis on (Antiochus') painful death as an appropriate reward for his treatment of the Jews."[113] 2 Macc 8 tends to support this when, only a few verses after the martyrdoms, it describes Judas' immediate military victory and calls it "the beginning of mercy" (2 Macc 8:27).

Furthermore, the prominence of the passage containing the episode of the martyr-mother within the larger scheme of the narrative cannot be underestimated. The episode is not included haphazardly. Her sacrifice of both her children and her own life are, rather, the crux of the work. One indication of this is that the structure of the book, if taken as chiasmic, places the episode in the centre. Mittmann-Richert calls the martyr stories the "*Zeit der Wende*" of the entire work, and argues for a nicely-balanced chiasmic structure.[114] Nickelsburg, who persuasively argued for a modelling of 2 Maccabees after the latter chapters of

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[113] Bartlett, "2 Maccabees," 841.
[114] Ulrike Mittmann-Richert, "2 Makkabäerbuch," in *Historische und legendarische Erzählungen* (JSHRZ Sup 6:1:1; Gütersloher: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2000), 43.

Deuteronomy, considers this passage to be the "linchpin in Jason's history,"[115] the Deuteronomistic "turning point" that ushers in blessing/salvation.[116] (He also posits a connection between the martyr narrative of 2 Maccabees 7 and "Second Isaiah," noting that the author reinterprets the same images used to describe Israel's return from exile. The martyrs "are the suffering but vindicated servants of the Lord. In the resurrection the Creator redeems them."[117])

It seems clear that in 2 Maccabees (in sharp contrast to 1 Maccabees), not only are the martyrs assured vindication in the resurrection, but they are also the direct cause of the Maccabean battle victories in the here and now. It is due precisely to the sacrifices of these righteous martyrs, not to military prowess, that Judas and his brothers gain the upper hand. [118] In the climactic speech at the close of the martyr narrative, we read: "I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our fathers, *appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation* and by afflictions and plagues to make you confess that he alone is God and *through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty* which has justly fallen on our whole nation" (2 Macc 7:37-38). Only a couple of verses later, Judas musters an army and "as soon as Maccabeus got his army organized, the Gentiles could not withstand him, *for the wrath of the Lord had turned to mercy*" (2 Macc 8:5). Of course, Antiochus meets his horrid end as well, in the following chapter. In Meyers' words, "Death has lost its power in the face of obedience to the laws of the ancestors and belief in God's mercy and resurrection of the dead."[119] For Bartlett, the death of the mother and her seven children "was more than an example and a memorial (6:31); it was an effective appeal to God's mercy."[120]

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[115] Nickelsburg, "1 and 2 Maccabees – Same Story, Different Meaning," 669.
[116] Nickelsburg, "1 and 2 Maccabees – Same Story, Different Meaning," 668.
[117] Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety in Early Judaism: Texts and Documents* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), 139.
[118] Young writes that the martyrs in 2 Maccabees "are set apart from the military heroes who occupy most of the Maccabean literature, but it is the opinion of the author that their sacrifice for the covenant, the Mosaic Law, and the more recent doctrines of *creatio ex nihilo* and the resurrection to life ... makes possible the Jewish military victories which follow their deaths." Young, "Woman with the Soul of Abraham," 72.
[119] Meyers, *Women In Scripture*, 391.
[120] Bartlett, "2 Maccabees," 840.

And, of all the martyrs, the mother's is in a position of climactic importance, making her arguably the most important character in the book.[121]

Van Henten, in a form-critical comparison of *Judith* with 2 Maccabees, once overlooked the centrality of the mother to the entire narrative structure of 2 Maccabees. He found that both Judith and Judas Maccabeus function in their respective books in the capacity of "saviour." His list of motifs is as follows:

1. A decree of a foreign king threatens the existence of the Jewish nation (*Judith* 2:1-3;3-8 / 2 Macc 5:12, 24; 6:1-2, 6-9, 21).
2. A prayer by pious Jews precedes a turn for the better (*Judith* 9 / 2 Macc 7:37-38).
3. Rescue by God or because of his approval of the performance of human saviours (*Judith* 10-13; 14 / 2 Macc 8, 15:1-28).
4. Revenge on the foreign attacker (*Judith* 12:10-13:20 / 2 Macc 15:32-35).
5. The celebration of the rescue during a national feast (*Judith* 15:8-16:20 / 2 Macc 10:5-8; 15:36).[122]

These recurring motifs (which he also skilfully traces in 1 and 3 Maccabees and Esther) work nicely. However, I would argue that Van Henten's point #3 (above) could easily be replaced with the martyr narratives instead of the selected passages focussing on Judas. There, he would find more explicit proofs for divine rescue "because of (God's) approval of the performance of human saviours," as I hope I demonstrated above. (Indeed, in the same article, Van Henten does call the martyred mother "heroic,"[123] but does not make the logical step of allowing her and her sons to function in "saviour" roles in his form-critical scheme. Later, however, he does just this in his monograph, the title of which says everything: *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People*. Here, he states (e.g.) that:

> The Maccabean martyrs and Razis are presented in these writings as heroes of the Jewish people. In both works (2 and 4 Maccabees), the martyrs fulfil a crucial role in the process of the re-establishment of an ideal existence of the Jewish people. The way of

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[121] "The martyrdoms ... lead in ascending order to the exhortation of the mother." Young, "Woman with the Soul of Abraham," 71.

[122] J.W. van Henten, "Judith as Alternative Leader," in *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*, 226-227.

[123] van Henten, "Judith as Alternative Leader," 252.

> life displayed by the martyrs functions as a shining example for other Jews.[124]

It is unfortunate that a considerable amount of scholarship (Van Henten aside) *assumes*, rather than demonstrates, that Judas Maccabeus is the hero of both Apocryphal texts. While this is undoubtedly the case in 1 Maccabees, it seems clear that the mother of seven sons should carry this title in the epitome.

Another link between our martyred mother and Judas' victories on the battlefront may derive from her femaleness itself. The fact that our Maccabean mother is a female may, in terms of genre, help to link her more *strongly* with victory in the narrative, if we consider earlier "by the hand of a woman" victory tales from the Hebrew Bible. Murphy notes the existence of a Jewish victory motif that links the triumph of a weak woman over a strong man with divinely-ordained victory:

> This 'by the hand of a woman' theme is a trope that turns up in other examples of the genre known as victory song, and its points, as one scholar, George J. Brooke, of the University of Manchester, has noted, is twofold: 'Not only does it show that God protects the weak, but that (God) protects the weak through the weak.'[125]

Our martyred widow with her orphan sons are an unusual but unmistakable symbol of victory in 2 Maccabees.

A further argument for the importance of the martyred mother is that she may have the honour of being used to express an important theological aim of the author. Later, the idea of propitiary atonement was to become a core Christian belief. It is a basic Christian tenet that Christ's death pays one's "debt" to God in one's stead. Atonement, of course, figures prominently in Israel's past, but the notion of *propitiary* atonement is often (mistakenly) thought to have originated with Jesus' and/or his followers. However, voluntary propitiary or vicarious atonement (the death of one human being or group of human beings as a deliberate "ransom" for another human being or group of human beings) may

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[124] van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 295.
[125] Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, 56.

have appeared for the first time in history in 2 Maccabees. The concept is explicitly connected with the Maccabean martyrs in the (probably post-Christian) 4 Maccabees,[126] but it was seemingly latent in 2 Maccabees as well. Doran admits at least the possibility that the martyrs' deaths intentionally represent the concept of vicarious atonement,[127] and definitely concludes that the deaths "form a watershed in 2 Maccabees, after which God's mercy abounds."[128]

Although her death is not described in detail, as the martyrdoms leading up to hers were,[129] the mother, as the culmination of the "watershed" martyr narratives, certainly counts among the Maccabean victors, perhaps as the greatest victor of them all. She is commemorated in no uncertain terms by the author, with high praise and explicit reference to her bravery and spiritual piety: "The mother was *especially admirable* and *worthy of honourable memory*. Though she saw her seven sons perish within a single day, she bore it with *good courage* because of *her hope in the Lord*" (2 Macc 7:20).

If we can assume a parallel to exist between our mother and the one in Jeremiah 15:9, which mentions "she who bore seven" languishing and "swooning away,"[130] then another argument can be made for the Maccabean martyred mother as a (contrasting) empowered and positive character. The Jeremiah passage reads:

> She who bore seven has languished; she has swooned
> away; her sun went down while it was yet day; she
> has been shamed and disgraced. And the rest of them

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[126] See "You know, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I am dying in burning torments for the sake of the law. Be merciful to your people, and let our punishment suffice for them. Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange for theirs," 4 Macc 6:27-29, and "The tyrant was punished, and the homeland purified – they have become, as it were, a ransom for the sin of our nation. And through the blood of those devout ones and their death as an expiation, divine Providence preserved Israel that previously had been afflicted," 4 Macc 17:21-22. These verses comprise views that are virtually without precedent in Jewish literature – although important in Greek tragedy. See J.L. Mays, ed., "Maccabees, book 4" (*Harper Collins Bible Commentary* rev. ed.; San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2000), 844ff. Of course, such views are also fundamental to early (and current) understandings of Jesus' death.

[127] R. Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees* (CBQMS 12; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 54.

[128] Doran summarized by Bartlett, "2 Maccabees," 840.

[129] 2 Maccabees 7:41 reads simply, "Last of all, the mother died, after her sons."

[130] Goldstein certainly makes this connection, considering the story in 2 Maccabees to have been developed from the grain in Jeremiah. Goldstein, *2 Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 41A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983-4), 296-98.

> I will give to the sword before their enemies, says the LORD (Jer 15:9).

Could there be an intended connection between 2 Maccabees' martyr narrative of the mother and her seven sons and this forlorn mother of seven in Jeremiah? If so, our mother is the stronger of the two characters: "This mother, unlike her counterpart in Jer 15:5-9, did not swoon, nor is she disgraced by her children or her own actions. She is mother of a martyr family that was unified in facing death."[131] Our mother is not only stronger, but also can be credited with having accomplished a redemptive feat.[132] Although unprovable, a relationship between the two texts is at least possible, especially because the author(s) of 2 Maccabees seem to have been familiar with Jeremiah.[133]

There is a potential parallel between this maternal sacrifice and another Hebrew Bible text, and the martyred mother may *again* trump her predecessor. In this famous passage, Abraham is asked to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, in order to prove his devotion and obedience to God. Of course, at the last minute, a ram is provided in Isaac's stead, but Abraham's devotion is proved. In our passage, however, the mother goes through with the sacrifice – not once, but seven times. This significant number of sacrificed sons, connected throughout the Hebrew Bible with perfection, might function rhetorically as an implication that this sacrifice was more perfect than even the patriarch Abraham's, and that – this time – the covenant would not be broken, but would remain forever.[134]

Given the above arguments for the positive nature of this woman's role in the text of 2 Maccabees, the martyred mother may represent a rare thing: a

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[131] Meyers, *Women in Scripture*, 392.

[132] Interestingly, Goldstein also suggests that the mother and the seven martyred sons can be seen as positive contrasts not only to Jeremiah's distraught mother, but also to the seven sons of Mattathias who were the heroes of 1 Maccabees (Judas and his four brothers, plus the "half-brothers" Joseph and Azariah). Goldstein, *2 Maccabees*, 299.

[133] The connection with Jeremiah is confirmed in part by the fact the two Maccabean works shared the Jeremian belief that heathen foreign powers could be used as instruments of God's divine judgement, and that God would ultimately punish the instruments themselves, once the sins were expiated. There are also numerous literary echoes from Jeremiah.

[134] (Of course, positing that such a connection was made by the author is speculative, at best. However, the connection was certainly made by later rabbinic authors. See, e.g., R. D. Young's "The 'Woman with the Soul of Abraham': Traditions about the Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs," in *Women Like This*, for various examples.)

positive biblical role model of a strong woman. Fuchs' lament that "whereas the male (biblical) role models are mostly judged in terms of their relations with Yahweh, the female role models are mostly evaluated in terms of their relations with men"[135] may not apply to the mother of seven sons. It *is* her relationship to Israel's God that saves the day. Unlike most biblical dramas, this female character is not set up in relation to a husband or father under whose authority she functions. Both remain unnamed and unimportant to the foci of the pericope – which are the mother's strength, her independence, her bravery, her persuasive power, her intelligence, and her moral high ground in her knowledge of the law and willingness to follow it at any cost.

Still another way in which the mother of seven sons is depicted more positively than her female Hebrew-Bible counterparts is in her ability to overcome her "maternal instinct." The connection of women with the care of children to the virtual exclusion of other interests is a theme common to feminist critiques of patriarchies both ancient and modern. It is nearly unheard of in the Hebrew Bible for a woman not to be desirous of (male) offspring. "Barrenness" is devastating, and once a woman does bear children, she is depicted as fiercely devoted to their protection, and they exceed her in importance. Esther Fuchs lists extensive examples of this:

> ...the biblical narrative is consistent in positing the child as woman's greatest desire ...Both the positive and negative mother figures are shown to prefer their sons' well-being to their own. The mother-harlot is willing to give up her baby to make sure that he survives. The best consolation offered to Hagar, who has been driven out by Sarah, refers not to herself, but to her son ("Fear not ...I will make him a great nation") ...Yahweh's promise to the pregnant Rebekah that she will bear twins seems to put an end to her intolerable pangs. Rachel's fatal pregnancy is presented as peripheral to the birth of Benjamin. ...Woman's reluctance to give birth or to assume maternal responsibility for her child is an option that

[135] Fuchs, "The Literary Characterization," 119.

> is completely excluded from the represented reality of the Bible. ...woman always desires to be a mother.[136]

Fuchs lists many other cases in the biblical text where women/mothers are associated with fierce rivalry over offspring, (over)protectiveness of offspring, and even obsession with offspring. She convincingly demonstrates the Bible's oversimplified mother-child relationships, juxtaposed against the greater variety and deeper nuance of the different kinds of male relationships. Particularly relevant to our martyred mother is Fuchs' finding: "Only father figures are presented as capable of sacrificing the lives of their children. There is no female counterpart to Abraham and Jephthah, except the mother who sacrifices her son to save her life (2 Kgs 6:29)."[137] Obviously, had Fuchs examined the apocryphal books, she would have found one stark exception.

How does the empowerment of women in 1 and 2 Maccabees compare with other Jewish literature in the Greco-Roman period? The various allusions to women taking political action, whether to bare their breasts in an expression of dissent or to die for the Law, are a vastly different species from the women in the Mishnah (Shabbat 6:5), for instance, who are "too vain to refrain from plucking out newly discovered grey hairs on the Sabbath if they should be permitted to use a mirror on that day"[138] or in Philo, who are "taken in by plausible falsehoods"[139] or "do not apprehend any mental conception."[140] Sirach's ideal women is literally silent:

> The first thing that the good wife does not do, is talk (v. 14). Her characteristic of silence is declared to be a gift from the Lord. In fact, such a trait in a wife is priceless. This, of course, makes sense only in the context of the husband. He is the one who is either advantaged by having a silent wife or disadvantaged by having a talkative one. The gift that is mentioned is given to him. The value placed on her is value to

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[136] Fuchs, "The Literary Characterization," 131-133.
[137] Fuchs, "The Literary Characterization," 133-134.
[138] as cited in C. Baker, *Rebuilding the House of Israel: Architectures of Gender in Jewish Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 140.
[139] *Questiones et solutions in Exodum* 1.27
[140] *De Legatio ad Gaium* 10.319

> him. Therefore, a silent wife is good because her silence is a benefit to her husband.[141]

These samples present quite a strong contrast to the politically and spiritually active – even theologically sophisticated – examples in our primary texts.

My somewhat positive verdict on the Maccabean histories may seem surprising in light of Tal Ilan's, who finds that 1 and 2 Maccabees are the worst possible apocryphal texts for the interests of women. Ilan divides the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha into "historiographical and non-historiographical" compositions, with only 1 and 2 Maccabees in the former group.

> In the first (historiographical) category, there are only two works: 1 and 2 Maccabees. It is striking that the former category shows total lack of interest in women. I do not know of a source from the Second Temple period that refers less to women than does 1 Maccabees. On the other hand, in the latter category, women figure quite prominently ... I can only deduce from this that in the minds of the ancient historians, real history was enacted in the male realm, while women were confined to the field of fiction. This attitude is borne out further in the writings of other predominantly historiographical works of the period, the books of Josephus.[142]

I would argue that the occurrences of *more* references to women in other apocryphal works do not ensure more positive views, and might even indicate a negative focus on women, rather than the more neutral Maccabean silence. Women are, after all, a major element in *Sirach*:

> One of the most prominent features of Sirach is the discussion of women. Of the 1390 verses in Sirach,

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[141] Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 16. Trenchard also shows how Sirach's women are only ever depicted in relation to men, never on their own merits or for their own sake: "A wife is considered good if she meets her husband's needs, makes him happy, pleases him sexually, remains silent, and looks beautiful. She is not assessed in her own right. Thus, Ben Sira here views even the good wife negatively, since she is made secondary to her husband," 18, and further: "The underlying suggestion of vv. 25-26 is that a wife will prevent a man from leading a roving, rootless existence. Such a condition would be socially unacceptable. Thus, a wife is necessary for a man to reach a respectable level in society. This is her contribution. But it is a contribution that centers on the husband," 25.

[142] Ilan, *Jewish women in Greco-Roman Palestine*, 28.

> 105, or about 7 percent, deal with women. While some of the units concerning women are isolated distichs, about two-thirds of the material is found in sections of five verses or longer. One such section contains thirty-two verses.[143]

This quantity of references in *Sirach* certainly does not translate into a positive portrayal of women. However, it is also important to note that (if I am permitted temporarily to bring sociological data into the discussion), there is also evidence that, in "real life," societies (including Jewish ones) seem to have existed where a far greater measure of empowerment was meted out to women than we see evidence of in 1 and 2 Maccabees.[144] Also, 1 and 2 Maccabees are slightly richer texts for my question (the literary use of women by men) than for Ilan's (the status of women in society) – for which they are indeed impoverished.

The Role of Women Via the Role of Men

The verses in the catalogue that have yet to be mentioned all fall under a heading not directly about women. Instead, they focus on the role of men. Namely, these remaining verses have to do with the association of men with authority. There is no need to deal with them at length, since this is implicit in the definition of patriarchy. However, they should at least be mentioned, since depictions of what is specifically masculine have a bearing on what is seen as specifically feminine. Writes Levine, "representations of women cannot be looked

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[143] Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 1.

[144] For instance, there are several pieces of evidence, albeit small, that women were even serving as Jewish priests during the Maccabean era. This is put forth by Bernadette Brooten in a small monograph attempting to prove that various leadership titles bestowed on Jewish women, as attested by inscriptions, are not, as previously thought, simply honorific, but functional. She cites many examples of terms such as "priest," "head," and "elder" found on the inscriptions of women's tombs. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue*. Chico: Scholars, 1982. "Virtually all of the inscriptions that Brooten analyzed have been known to scholars for many years, even centuries, but until her study, they were routinely explained away as honorary, that is, denoting no functional leadership activity on the part of Jewish women," R.S. Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1992), 118.

at in a vacuum, because any construction of woman always already implies a construction of man."[145]

Some examples of this indirect commentary on women's roles include the usage of strictly male language such as "sons" and "brothers" and "fathers" (see 1 Macc 2:17-18, 2:20, and 2:28), or the all-male list given by Mattathias illustrating ancient roles models of trust and strength (1 Macc 2:51-61).[146]

There is no question that the army proper was made up exclusively of men, despite female "soldiers" of sackcloth and such. In 1 Macc 9:5, Judas' army is made up of "3000 picked men (ἄνδρες)," and in 1 Macc 5:32, Judas speaks to the "men (ἀνδράσιν) of his forces." In 1 Macc 9:53, "the sons of the leading men (τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἡγουμένων – masculine participle) of the land" are taken as hostages. 1 Macc 5:55-65 is a particularly androcentric account of war, which was obviously a game for boys only.[147]

G. Oegema cites 1 Macc 2:1-5[148] (a listing of the males in Matatthias' family, with no mention of wives, daughters, or sisters) as indication that "it is not the purpose of the author of 1 Maccabees to discuss either the role of women or their fate. (...) The perspective of 1 Maccabees is exclusively male."[149] The notion of authority as a male trait and war as a male activity is widely attested to across the Greco-Roman and Jewish spectrums, and need not be repeated here.

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[145] A.-J. Levine, "Preface" in "*Women Like This,*" xii.

[146] This all-male list can be contrasted with some of the "rewritten bible" genre, where, in some cases, women only hinted at in the OT become huge and intricate characters when rewritten. In other cases, however, OT women in strong, positive roles get "unwritten."

[147] (See Appendix A for the passage in full.) Another contemporaneous account of the connection of maleness with war is a portrayal in Diodorus, where a Macedonian hermaphrodite girl who turned into a man was immediately expected to enlist in the army! Bar-Kochva, *Judas Maccabaeus*, 107.

[148] "In those days Mattathias the son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, moved from Jerusalem and settled in Modein. He had five sons, John surnamed Gaddi, Simon called Thassi, Judas called Maccabeus, Eleazar called Avaran, and Jonathan called Apphus."

[149] Oegema, "Portrayals of Women in 1 and 2 Maccabees," 253. See further, "(An) example of the neglect of female characters in the book is the figure of Mattathias, the leader of the revolt against Syria, to whose five sons the author constantly refers, but whose wife or possible daughters are never mentioned." *Ibid*, 245.

Conclusion

Those wishing to study "the role of women" in a given literature, time period, geographical location, or sect in ancient Judaism (including early Christianity) do not, as yet, have a ready reference work to which they can go for compilations of data. Many individual books, both canonical and extra-canonical, remain to be studied for this purpose. My work with 1st and 2nd Maccabees has been a small step toward this end.

I assembled all material related to women in the two books. Rather than examining whether or not the overall results are "patriarchal," since that had long ago been established, I sought to treat them descriptively, rather than judgementally. After a preliminary look at these data, I formulated the working hypothesis that the place of women differed both between and within 1 and 2 Maccabees. I then endeavoured to analyse the nature of the data, which led me to divide the references to women into several categories, in order to deal with specific types of references separately, and thereby more accurately. Having done this, and having taken into account (as far as scope would allow) possible contemporaneous comparisons and contrasts, such as the books of *Sirach*, Daniel, the Hebrew prophets, or the works of Philo and Josephus, I came up with a synthesis of the data for each work.

I have not assumed that literary depictions of women in 1 and 2 Maccabees reflect actual sociological roles of women during the Maccabean era (or the era of composition if this differs).

A summary of my results is as follows:

1. Summary: Woman as Evil/Sexual Tempter

The first category, which was the most negative and only appeared in 2nd Maccabees (and even there only in doubtful form), was described as connecting women with sin or downfall. While found to be readily present in other works, including all three divisions of the Hebrew Bible as well as extra-canonical works

such as *Sirach*, 1 *Enoch*, Philo, and Josephus, this category was clearly not an important focus of the two Maccabean books. However androcentric the books may be, the deliberate disparagement of women was found to be absent from their agenda.

2. Summary: Woman as Possession

The second category, where women were depicted as possessions, was found to be highly represented both quantitatively (i.e. in 10 cases) and qualitatively (i.e. explicitly) in 1st Maccabees. Women were seen to be dependents at best, and chattel at worst (although ranking higher than domestic animals in value). They were listed with other possessions, given as gifts or sold as slaves. The category was present in 2nd Maccabees as well, but only in two cases, neither of which was decisively condoned by the author because they were describing the actions of the enemy. This category was shown to be widespread both within the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere.

3. Summary: Woman as Helpless Treasure to be Protected

The third category, where women are depicted as weak and helpless in order to elicit pathos, was demonstrated to be frequent in both works. Most instances used the merciful or violent treatment of women/wives in order to paint the males as either villains or heroes. This was located in the "widow-as-helpless" motif and the rape motif in the Hebrew Bible as well. As in the Hebrew Bible, this category was found to be ambiguous in both Maccabees books, since, on the one hand, it shows women as dependent and weak, yet, on the other hand, it shows positive treatment of them as valiant, and negative treatment of them as shameful. The book of *Sirach* was used to demonstrate the existence of differing streams of thought which also depicted women as weak and helpless, but lacked the positive element of depicting them as something to be cherished and treated well.

4. Summary: Woman as Part of a "*Shalom* Package"

In the fourth category, a dualistic division into two realms – physical and spiritual – was discussed. It was shown that this sometimes resulted in the physical realm being conceived of as inferior, and further that women were sometimes connected with the "inferior" realm, while men were connected with the "superior" (e.g. in Philo). It was argued that, although a connection of women with the physical as opposed to the spiritual was present in both works, this was not as negative as might be expected, because no strict dichotomy existed that relegated the physical to an inferior position. It was suggested that the Jewish notion of creation as טוֹב מְאֹד, "very good," was a mitigating factor, and that earthly blessing or "*shalom*" was seen as a very positive thing.

1 Maccabees follows the Hebrew Bible in this regard. 2 Maccabees, however, presented a slight difference from 1st Maccabees, since its central themes include the promotion of the belief in a resurrected afterlife, and of martyrdom as worthwhile. This implies that, for the author of 2 Maccabees, one's physical body and present life matter far less than one's spirit. This would not bode well for women, if they were connected with the physical, but such a connection was not shown to exist in 2 Maccabees, where a "spiritual" female character is found (see section 7).

5. Summary: Woman as Personification of Jerusalem

The fifth category discussed the use of feminine imagery for cities. It did not occur in 2 Maccabees, but occurred five times in 1 Maccabees, sometimes in extended passages. The personification of cities as female was shown to be ambivalent vis-à-vis women, and was also shown to be common from ancient through to New-Testament times. Several cases of this device in the Hebrew Bible, where public sexual violence was depicted as a just and deserved punishment for the "harlot" Jerusalem, were shown to be decidedly negative in comparison with the more neutral usages in 1 Maccabees, where the metaphor of

violence against the female Jerusalem came not from God, but from enemies, and was lamentable rather than laudable. No instances of condoned ill treatment of women (metaphorical or otherwise) existed in either book, and it was noted that the graphic violence in 2 Maccabees' martyr narrative was depicted as despicable and intended to elicit pathos and sympathy.

6. Summary: Woman as Human Being

In the sixth category, it was asserted that there existed (very scantily) in 1 Maccabees a category called "human" where gender was not relevant. This equality was severely modified by both books' "woman-as-possession" passages, use of the male to represent humanity, and hierarchical worldview. However, in comparison with other Judaisms (such as Philo's or Sirach's), where women were distinctly and repeatedly referred to as qualitatively inferior, it was found that women in the Maccabean histories were, at least, ensouled human beings, despite being lower in the hierarchy than males, and despite their distinct societal roles based on perceived gender differences.

7. Summary: Woman as Empowered Individual

The seventh and most positive category was discussed at greater length, due to its containing the most important female character: the martyred mother of seven sons. Like the first very negative category, this very positive category was also scarce in both documents (three cases). Nevertheless, it was shown to depict women as capable of acting out of righteous/moral/political motivation with decisiveness and agency and achieving effective results. This was shown to be comparatively rare in Second-Temple Jewish literary documents.

8. Synthesis

A tally of the ways each category occurs in each book (a chart for which can be found in Appendix B) produced some general observations.

I have tentatively decided that the depiction of women in these two Maccabean writings were not drastically different from the writings of other Jewish and non-Jewish groups of their era, but that several notable exceptions exist. Some suggest that the Maccabean authors (as depicted in our two primary references) were sociologically more gendered than, for example, their Elephantine compatriots. On the other hand, other factors, such as the abundance of overt misogyny in similarly-dated works, suggest that the Maccabean authors might be placed somewhat closer to gender equality (on the literary spectrum) than some of their contemporaries.

It is important, in a study of two books where woman are not a main focus, not to "make mountains out of molehills." Neither 1 nor 2 Maccabees is a particularly rich text for women's roles (with the possible exception of the martyred mother, who is of great importance in the overall narrative of 2 Maccabees). Nonetheless, the task of description and comparison of the depiction of women should, ideally, be performed for all Second-Temple Jewish texts without exception with a view to thoroughness and inclusiveness of data.

As for the way in which the two books compare with each other, it might be said that their depictions of women and female roles share many facets, such as their general view of women as a possession or dependent. Both books view the female role as a secondary one within their narratives, although 2 Maccabees has at least one female character with a central role, while 1 Maccabees does not. Neither book takes part in that overtly malicious promotion of patriarchy or misogyny which existed at the time in some writings.

9. What Further Study is Recommended?

I would challenge scholars to embrace the now-popular scheme of "diversity" as a way of understanding both Second-Temple Judaism and Hellenism. Even the present, very limited, study indicates that, while patriarchy is a rule of thumb, there are possible exceptions to it (or, at the very least, a myriad

of versions of it). It will be fascinating to see if exhaustive enquiry (which is already taking place)[150] expecting diversification and focused on women, might illuminate surprisingly proto-feminist events, nuance our discussions of patriarchies/kyriarchies, uncover women's history and the history of men's discourse on women, and present unexplored perspectives in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature of the Second-Temple Period.

It is my opinion that 1 Maccabees, for instance, has a comparatively positive literary view of women (e.g. the "*shalom* package") when contrasted with not only the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, but some Greco-Roman attitudes as well. (Of course, its scarcity of any mention of women, as well as the possibility of reading the "*shalom* package" negatively, must be kept in mind as balancing factors.)

Another suggestion I would make after completing this study is an elevation of the status of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal texts by both Jewish and Christian scholars and laypeople.[151] When discussing the role of women as it relates to canon, a main issue has been that there quite often *isn't* a role for women. In the Hebrew Bible (which makes up the entire canon for Jews, and the bulk of the canon for Christians), the paragon of Judaism is the male. "Good Jews," both male and female, looked to male heroes for their example. However, we approach Second-Temple literature inappropriately when the term "non-canonical" becomes an excuse to be dismissive. What if the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha were to be treated as canonical (that is, to be studied and disseminated with the same attention and gusto)? The role of women would not change dramatically, and the canons would not thus be transformed into feminist collections (1 Maccabees would provoke little change, and *Sirach* would be a downright negative addition). However, 2 Maccabees' martyred mother, along with Susanna, Judith, the daughters in the *Testament of Job*, the Rebekah of *Jubilees*, and Asenath, come to mind as steps towards a larger collection of female role models. These are heroes that women of faith could aspire to imitate in their

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[150] E.g. the impressive legwork begun by Brooten, Ilan, etc.

[151] (...with the exception of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Christian traditions, of course, which do treat more books as authoritative than their Jewish and Protestant counterparts)

ingenuity, their fasting, their faith during hardship, their courage, their strength, their wisdom, their piety, and their intelligence. They aren't perfect, and feminist deconstruction of the ways in which these women are not ideal models will certainly occur,[152] but the same could be said of the traditional male heroes of Israel's past. The inclusion of 2 Maccabees would at least create one more "female voice" in the person of the martyred mother, if only a literary and not authorial one.

Of course, the role of women is only one of *many* areas upon which the intellectually rich, radically diverse, and breathtakingly colourful literatures of the Second-Temple era might shed welcome light for centuries to come.

[152] Of course, it is already beginning to occur. For instance (on the problematics of Judith as role model), see the short treatment in E.M. Schuller, "The Apocrypha," in *The Women's Bible Commentary* (ed. C.A. Newsom and S.H. Ringe; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 243. It should also be noted that (as per Adela Yarbro Collins), "It is now widely recognized that the women who appear in biblical texts cannot function unambiguously as role models for women seeking empowerment today. The reason is that, whether historical persons or literary characters, these women are enmeshed in patriarchy and are presented and behave in androcentric ways. Their stories are still powerful, however, as Phyllis Trible has amply demonstrated." Collins, *Feminist Perspectives*, 5.

Appendix A: Exhaustive List of References to Women, in Order of Appearance[153]

1. 1 Maccabees

1:25-28 *"Israel mourned deeply in every community, rulers and elders groaned, maidens* (παρθένοι) *and young men* (νεανίσκοι) *became faint, the beauty of the women* (τῶν γυναικῶν) *faded. Every bridegroom took up the lament; she who sat in the bridal chamber was mourning. Even the land shook for its inhabitants, and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame."*

1:32 *They* (Antiochus' chief collector of tribute) *took captive the women* (τὰς γυναῖκας) *and children, and seized the cattle"*

1:38-40 "(Jerusalem, depicted as female by the use of feminine pronouns) *became a dwelling of strangers; she became strange to her offspring, and her children forsook her. Her sanctuary became desolate as a desert; her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into a reproach, her honour into contempt. Her dishonour now grew as great as her glory; her exaltation was turned into mourning."*

1:60-61 *"According to the decree, (of Antiochus) they put to death the women who had their children circumcised* (τὰς γυναῖκας τὰς περιτετμηκυίας), *and their families and those who circumcised them* (τοὺς περιτετμηκότας αὐτούς); *and they hung the infants from their mothers' necks* (Gk simply reads, 'their necks')."

2:1-5 *"In those days Mattathias the son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, moved from Jerusalem and settled in Modein. He had five sons, John surnamed Gaddi, Simon called Thassi, Judas called Maccabeus, Eleazar called Avaran, and Jonathan called Apphus."*

2:8-11 *"Her* (feminine pronoun referring to "the holy city") *temple has become like a man without honour (*ἀνὴρ ἄδοξος*); her glorious vessels have been carried into captivity. Her babes have been killed in her streets, her youths by the sword*

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[153] The English version cited is the RSV. Greek is from Rahlfs Septuaginta.

of the foe. What nation has not inherited her palaces and has not seized her spoils? All her adornment has been taken away; no longer free, she has become a slave."

2:17-18 *"You are a leader, honoured and great in this city, and supported by sons and brothers* (υἱοῖς καὶ ἀδελφοῖς). *Now ... do what the king commands ...you and your sons* (σὺ καὶ οἱ υἱοί σου) *will be numbered among the Friends of the king, and you and your sons* (σὺ καὶ οἱ υἱοί σου) *will be honoured with silver and gold..."*

2:20 *"I and my sons and my brothers* (οἱ υἱοί μου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί μου) *will continue to live by the covenant of our fathers* (πατέρων ἡμῶν)."

2:28 *"And he and his sons* (οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ) *fled to the hills and left all that they had in the city"*

2:29-30 *"... many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness ... they, their sons, their wives* (γυναῖκες), *and their cattle"*

2:38 "*So they attacked* (the righteous Jews) *on the sabbath, and they died, with their wives* (γυναῖκες) *and children and cattle, to the number of a thousand persons."*

2:51-61 (Mattathias speaking) *"Remember the deeds of the fathers* (πατέρων) *Abraham ... Joseph ... Phinehas ... Joshua ... Caleb ... David ... Elijah ... Hannaniah, Azariah, and Mishael ... Daniel ... observe, from generation to generation, that none who put their trust in him will lack strength."*

3:20 (Of Seron the Syrians' commander, Judas says:) *"They come against us in great pride and lawlessness to destroy us and our wives* (γυναῖκας) *and children, and to despoil us."*

3:45 "*Jerusalem was uninhabited like a wilderness; not one of her* (Gk feminine pronoun) *children went in or out..."*

3:56 *"And he* (Judas) *said to those who were building houses, or were betrothed* (lit. "espousing women/wives - μνηστευομένοις γυναῖκας), *or were planting vineyards, or were fainthearted, that each should return to his home, according to the law."*

5:13 *"and all our brethren (ἀδελφοὶ) who were in the land of Tob have been killed; the enemy have captured their wives* (γυναῖκας) *and children and goods, and have destroyed about a thousand men* (ἄνδρες) *there."*

5:23 *"Then he* (Simon) *took the Jews of Galilee and Arbatta, with their wives* (γυναιξὶν) *and children and all they possessed."*

5:28 Judas' army kills *"every male"* (πᾶν ἀρσενικὸν) in Bozrah

5:32 Judas' army = males (*"and he said to the men* (ἀνδράσιν) *of his forces, 'Fight today for your brethren (ἀδελφῶν)!'"*)

5:35 Judas' army kills *"every male"* (πᾶν ἀρσενικὸν) in Alema

5:45 *"all the Israelites in Gilead ... with their wives* (γυναῖκας) *and children and goods."*

5:51 Judas' army kills *"every male"* (πᾶν ἀρσενικὸν) in Ephron.

5:55-65 *"Now while Judas and Jonathan were in Gilead, and Simon his brother was in Galilee before Ptolemais, Joseph, the son of Zechariah, and Azariah, the commanders of the forces heard of their brave deeds and of the heroic war they had fought. So they said, 'let us also make a name for ourselves...' And they issued orders to the men of the forces* (Gk: 'men' not specifically stated, but implied by use of the masculine article: τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς δυνάμεως) *that were with them, and they marched against Jamnia. And Gorgias and his men* (ἄνδρες) *came out of the city to meet them in battle. Then Joseph and Azariah were routed ... because, thinking to do a brave deed, they did not listen to Judas and his brothers* (ἀδελφοί). *But they did not belong to the family of those men* (ἀνδρῶν) *through whom deliverance was given to Israel. The man Judas* (ὁ ἀνὴρ Ιουδας) *and his brothers* (οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ) *were greatly honoured in all Israel and among all the Gentiles, wherever their name was heard. Men gathered to them and praised them. Then Judas and his brothers* (οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ) *went out and fought the sons* (υἱοὺς) *of Esau..."*

6:12 *"But now I remember the evils I did in Jerusalem. I seized all her vessels of silver and gold* (lit. "the equipment of silver and gold in her – ἐν αὐτῇ)..."

8:10 The Romans killed the Greeks and *"took captive their wives* (τὰς γυναῖκας αὐτῶν) *and children; they plundered them, conquered the land, tore down their strongholds, and enslaved them..."*

9:5 Judas' army = male *"3000 picked men* (ἄνδρες)*"* in El-asa

9:53 *"the sons of the leading men* (τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἡγουμένων – masculine participle) *of the land"* are taken as hostages by Bacchides

10:31 *"And let Jerusalem be holy and her environs* (τὰ ὅρια αὐτῆς)*, tithes, and revenues, be free from tax* (translation mine)*."*

10:54 Alexander to Ptolemy: *"Give me now your daughter* (τὴν θυγατέρα σου) *as my wife* (εἰς γυναῖκα)*, and I will become your son-in-law, and will make gifts to you and to her in keeping with your position* (lit. 'worthy of you')*."*

11:9-12 (Ptolemy to Demetrius, after he shifts his allegiance away from Alexander:) *"I will give you in marriage my daughter who was Alexander's wife* (lit. 'I will give you my daughter, whom Alexander had' – δώσω σοι τὴν θυγατέρα μου ἣν εἶχεν Ἀλέξανδρος)*, and you shall reign over your father's kingdom. For I now regret that I gave him my daughter* (τὴν θυγατέρα μου)*, for he has tried to kill me ... So he took his daughter* (τὴν θυγατέρα) *away from him and gave her to Demetrius."*

11:62 Jonathan takes the *"sons* (υἱοὺς) *of* (his enemies') *rulers as hostages."*

13:6 After Jonathan is seized, Simon vows to the Jews of Jerusalem: *"I will avenge my nation and the sanctuary and your wives* (γυναῖκες) *and children."*

13:28 Simon erects 7 pyramids *"for his father and mother and four brothers* (τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ καὶ τοῖς τέσσαρσιν ἀδελφοῖς)*."*

13:45 *"The men* (indicated by masculine article) *in the city* (of Gazara)*, with their wives* (σὺν γυναιξὶν) *and children, went up on the wall with their clothes rent, and they cried out with a loud voice, asking Simon to make peace with them."*

2. 2 Maccabees

3:10 *"The high priest explained that there were some deposits* (in the temple) *belonging to widows and orphans* (χηρῶν τε καὶ ὀρφανῶν)... *"*

3:19-20 As the king's messenger, Heliodorus, prepares to take the sacred money, *"Women, girded with sackcloth under their breasts* (ὑπεζωσμέναι δὲ ὑπὸ τοὺς μαστοὺς αἱ γυναῖκες σάκκους), *thronged the streets. Some of the maidens* (τῶν παρθένων) *who were kept indoors ran together to the gates, and some to the walls, while others peered out of the windows. And holding up their hands to heaven, they all made entreaty."*

4:30 *"it happened that the people of Tarsus and of Mallus revolted because their cities had been given as a present to Antiochis, the king's concubine* (παλλακή)."

5:13 When king Antiochus attacked Jerusalem, *"there was killing of young and old, destruction of boys, women* (γυναικῶν), *and children, and slaughter of virgins* (παρθένων) *and infants."*

5:24 *"Antiochus sent Appolonius ... and commanded him to slay all the grown men* (lit. 'all [those] in maturity' – the 'all' is masculine) *and sell the women* (γυναῖκας) *and boys as slaves."*

6:4 *"the temple was filled with debauchery and revelling by the Gentiles, who dallied with harlots* (μεθ' ἑταιρῶν – with 'companions') *and had intercourse with women* (γυναιξὶ) *within the sacred precincts, and besides brought in things for sacrifice that were unfit."*

6:10 "*For example, two women* (γυναῖκες) *were brought in for having circumcised* (περιτετμηκυῖαι feminine active participle) *their children. These women* (implied by feminine pronoun) *they publicly paraded about the city, with their babies hung at their breasts, then hurled them down headlong from the wall."*

7:5-41 Seven Jewish brothers and their mother are arrested and pork is forced on them *"but the brothers and their mother* (μήτηρ) *encouraged one another to die nobly..."* After six of the brothers are dead, we read that *"the mother was especially admirable and worthy of honourable memory. Although she saw her seven sons perish within a single day, she bore it with good courage because of her hope in the Lord. She encouraged each of them in the language of her fathers* (πατρίῳ). *Filled with a noble spirit, she fired her woman's reasoning* (τὸν θῆλυν λογισμὸν) *with a man's courage* (ἄρσενι θυμῷ). *She encouraged each of them in*

the language of their fathers. Filled with a noble spirit, she fired her woman's reasoning with a man's courage, and said to them, 'I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws.' Antiochus felt that he was being treated with contempt, and he was suspicious of her reproachful tone." Antiochus asks the mother to persuade her youngest son to betray his principles. *"But, leaning close to him, she spoke in their native tongue* ('fathers' language': τῇ πατρίῳ φωνῇ) ... *deriding the cruel tyrant: 'My son, have pity on me. I carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years, and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you. I beseech you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. Thus also mankind (*humankind: τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος*) comes into being. Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again with your brothers' ... last of all, the mother died, after her sons..."*

8:28 Judas' army defeated Nicanor, and they *"gave some of the spoils to those who had been tortured and to the widows and orphans* (ταῖς χήραις καὶ ὀρφανοῖς)*."*

8:30 Judas' army defeated Timothy and Bacchides, and they divided "*very much plunder*" among "*those who had been tortured and to the orphans and widows* (καὶ ὀρφανοῖς καὶ χήραις)*, and also to the aged, shares equal to their own."*

12:3-4 The people of Joppa trick the Jews of Joppa and drown them *"with their wives* (σὺν γυναιξὶν) *and children."*

12:21 "*When Timothy learned of the approach of Judas, he sent off the women* (τὰς γυναῖκας) *and children and also the baggage to a place called Carnaim..."*

14:25 Demetrius sends Nicanor to fight Judas, but instead he makes a deal with him. Nicanor *"urged him to marry and have children; so* (Judas) *married, settled down, and shared the common life."*

15:18 When Nicanor is about to take Jerusalem, Judas' army is concerned: *"Their concern for wives* (γυναικῶν) *and children, and also for brethren and relatives* (ἀδελφῶν καὶ συγγενῶν), *lay upon them less heavily; their greatest and first fear was for the consecrated sanctuary."*

Appendix B: Tally of Occurrences of Each Category in Each Book

Category 1: Woman as Evil/Sexual Tempter

1 Macc: No cases

2 Macc: 2 instances, both tenuous (6:4, 4:30)

Category 2: Woman as Possession

1 Macc: 10 clear instances (1:32, 2:30, 2:38, 3:21, 5:13, 5:23, 5:45, 8:10, 10:54, 11:9-12)

2 Macc: 2 instances, but neither condoned (12:21, 5:24)

Category 3: Woman as Helpless Treasure to be Protected

1 Macc: 12 instances (1:32, 1:60, 2:38, 3:20, 5:13, 5:23, 5:28, 5:35, 5:45, 5:51, 8:10, 13:6)

2 Macc: 5 instances (3:10-12, 5:13, 6:10, 8:28-30, 12:3-4)

Category 4: Woman as Part of a "*Shalom* Package"

1 Macc: 3 possible cases (1:38, 1:60, 3:56)

2 Macc: 1 possible case (6:10)

Category 5: Woman as Personification of Jerusalem

1 Macc: 5 clear instances (1:38, 2:6-11, 3:45, 6:12, 10:31)

2 Macc: No cases

Category 6: Woman as Human Being

1 Macc: 3 instances, but 2 very ambiguous (1:25-28, 13:28, 13:45)

2 Macc: No cases (but see category 7)

Category 7: Woman as Empowered Individual

1 Macc: 1 clear instance (1:60-61)

2 Macc: 2 clear instances (3:19, 7:1-42)

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