

The Role of 'Scripture' in the Eulogy of Simon (1Macc 14:4–15)

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Eulogy in the Context of 1Maccabees

The book of 1Maccabees is not a "historical book" in the strictest sense of the word. Of course, it relates a history, the dramatic events of the Maccabean revolt in the 2nd century BCE including fierce battles, heroic deeds and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem celebrated each year in Jewish communities at the Chanukah festival. But 1Maccabees tells this history—or, even better, this story—not according to Tacitus' motto *sine ira et studio*, "without anger and zealotry."¹ As Tacitus himself did several times (thus renouncing his own motto), the author(s) of 1Maccabees take sides. The author and his party have a certain political (and, as this can never be separated entirely in Antiquity, also a social and religious) agenda. This agenda is connected to the dynasty which ruled Israel in the era when the text of 1Maccabees originated: the Hasmoneans. This term is taken from Josephus' account and denotes the ruling family who traces its origin back to an ancestor named Hasmon. The dynasty, however, was established by the brother of Judas Maccabaeus, the famous leader of the Jewish revolution against the Seleucids during the second century BCE, Simon "Maccabaeus" (ruled 143–134 BCE) and his son John Hyrcanus (134–104).

As the text of 1Maccabees itself does not stem from the time of Simon but from a later generation, the term "Hasmoneans" is used in the following study in order to denote the ruling group during the late second and early first century BCE in Judaea who supported its agenda with the "historical book" 1Maccabees.

Thus, the book of 1Maccabees relates the history of the Maccabean movement in a pro-Hasmonean manner. One major aspect of this

¹ See Tacitus, *Annals* 1.1.

agenda was to provide the ruling dynasty with divine legitimation: Although this major family came from a Priestly branch, it neither had a Zadokite descent nor any relationship to the Davidic dynasty. It thus possessed no genealogical connection to the dynasties who traditionally ruled Israel in spiritual, cultic, military and political affairs.

1Maccabees not only emphasizes the Hasmoneans' claim of ruling the country by relating and embroidering certain events in the narrative. At certain points the flow of the story is interrupted by poetical insertions.² Especially noteworthy are the testament of Mattathias, the Priest and father of Judas Maccabaeus, Jonathan and Simon, in 1Macc 2:49–70, the praise of Judas Maccabaeus in 1Macc 3:2–9 and the eulogy of Simon in 1Macc 14:4–15. The testament of Mattathias at the very beginning of 1Macc functions as the literary place to anchor the political and religious program of the Maccabean movement in the narrative. The permanent recourse to traditional biblical figures and their connection with the current historical situation make the movement of the Maccabees appear as the natural and divinely-ordained continuation of Israel's history; the deeds and the ideology of the Maccabees—represented in their ancestor Mattathias—stand in *perfect accordance with Scripture*.³ Thus, the allusions to and quotations from Scripture serve to bolster the claim of the Maccabees (the Hasmoneans, respectively) that they are the true rulers of Israel, legitimated by God. The eulogy of Simon in 1Macc 14:4–15 works in the same manner, as will be demonstrated in the following study. The eulogy forms the climax of the narrative about Simon's deeds and achievements. Following a continuation of the victories of Judas and Jonathan, Simon achieves the final liberation of Israel by conquering the citadel in Jerusalem and its ritual cleansing (1Macc 13). The events following the eulogy firmly establish Simon's leadership by internal (inner-Jewish) and external confirmations and treaties (with the Seleucids, with Rome and Sparta). The poetical tone of the eulogy stands out from the context and one can focus on 1Macc 14:4–15 for the purpose of closer analysis.

2 For a general study on this phenomenon in 1 Maccabees, see the study by NEUHAUS, Studien.

3 See HIEKE, Role, 73.

1.2 Method

It is clearly the intention of the authors of 1Macc 14:4–15 to allude to passages from "Scripture."⁴ The eulogy is supposed to sound like a holy text and the events referred to are portrayed as "according to Scripture." However, the precise intentions of the authors and how they obtained access to these traditions remains obscure. It is therefore futile to add any further hypotheses about the origin of the text or to speculate about certain historical situations. What is at hand is the text of 1Maccabees as a deutero-canonical writing within the Christian Bible of the Old and New Testament. Within this canonical text frame one finds connections between 1Macc 14:4–15 and other texts in the larger context of the canon as manifested in the Greek Bible. The following reading is centered on the text and proceeds along these intertextual relationships and analogies. By activating the alluded background texts (hypotexts) woven into the eulogy of Simon, the figure of Simon and the political message receive a deeper meaning. The informed reader (or: model reader) identifies it as the political message of the Hasmoneans and finds it in accordance with the narrative before and after the eulogy. The "reader," as it is understood here, is not a living person, e.g., an empirical reader from the 21st century. Rather, "reader" is the term for a strategy detected in the text, a kind of reading instruction that connects the text with its contextual field.⁵

1.3 Genre

Considering genre, the text under consideration, 1Macc 14:4–15, can be called a "eulogy."⁶ The term comes from the Greek word *eulogia* meaning "good words," and denotes a speech or writing in praise of a person or thing; especially one recently deceased or retired.⁷ The shape and style of 1Macc 14:4–15 obviously fit this definition; however, one must ask whether this is the only intention of the text. The pragmatics of 1Macc 14:4–15 are—this is the basic assumption of the following

⁴ The poetical passages in 1Maccabees allude to all three parts of the three-partite canon, see NEUHAUS, Studien, 177. As NEUHAUS (pp. 180–181) points out, the author probably was a pious Jew intensely acquainted with his "Holy Scripture" and who created his own message from the biblical material as an erudite eclectic.

⁵ Hence it is not necessary to use gender sensitive or inclusive language.

⁶ See, e.g., NEUHAUS, Studien, 95: "Preisgedicht auf Simon."

⁷ For a form-critical comparison of Simon's eulogy with hymns on Egyptian kings, see BLUMENTHAL / MORENZ, Spuren, 22–29.

short study—not restricted to praising the late Simon Maccabaeus for reasons of piety or personal honor; metaphorically speaking, it is not just an inscription on Simon’s wreath.⁸ The eulogy also conveys a political (or, in addition, social and religious) message of the Hasmoneans in order to persuade the audience (the Israelites in Jerusalem and Judaea) to adopt the goals and principles (or, better, the entire rule) of the current leadership in Israel (i.e. the Hasmoneans). The rule of the Hasmoneans is promoted as being legitimated by Scripture, predicted by the prophets, acknowledged and blessed by God. The numerous allusions to and quotations from Scripture in the eulogy urge the readers and listeners acquainted with the scriptural background to draw these conclusions. Thus, the role of Scripture in 1Macc 14:4–15 is to emphasize and support the directive and persuasive character of the text and its inherent political message.

1.4 Text

The basic text for the following study is taken from the Septuagint. If necessary, the Hebrew text of alluded background texts from the Hebrew Bible is included. The Greek language common to 1Macc and the biblical texts from the Septuagint facilitate terminological comparisons and the detection of intertextual relationships. The authors of 1Maccabees did not have a “Codex Rahlfs” at hand as a reference tool. Speculation about which written text (if any) was available to the author(s) is a mere hypothetical exercise. This study does not pursue historical questions, but identifies intra-textual strategies that guide the model reader. Hence it is justified to use the common editions. The interpretation proceeds on the basis of these presuppositions and editions.⁹

8 BLUMENTHAL / MORENZ, *Spuren*, 28, demonstrate that Simon’s eulogy connects the Jewish hope for a Messiah with the Hellenistic ideal of a “Soter.”

9 The Greek text follows RAHLFS, *Septuaginta*, and KAPPLER, *Macchabaeorum libri*.

2. An intertextual reading of 1Macc 14:4–15

2.1 Simon as a "biblical" figure: judge, "Solomon," "Nehemiah", the "Messiah"

One of the major features of Simon's eulogy is his portrayal as a "biblical" figure. Several phrases remind the reader of other persons in biblical narrative and thus make Simon appear to be one of them. At the beginning of the eulogy, the wording *καὶ ἡσύχασεν ἡ γῆ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας Σιμωνος* "and the land¹⁰ became quiet all the days of Simon"¹¹ (14:4) calls the biblical judges to the fore: The same phrase occurs with Othniel (Jdg 3:11), Ehud (Jdg 3:30), Deborah (Jdg 5:31) and Gideon (Jdg 8:28; see also King Asa in 2Chr 13:23). Thus Simon Maccabaeus operates at the same historical level as these important figures from Israel's famous past. But a reader might think of a more recent biblical person who worked as a savior for Israel's nation—hence the next part of the verse *καὶ ἐζήτησεν ἀγαθὰ τῷ ἔθνει αὐτοῦ* "and he sought good things for his nation" alludes to Nehemiah (Neh 2:10).¹²

Having mentioned the famous past of the judges and Nehemiah's restitution of the nation after the exile, the period of the kingdom is still missing. The eulogy first summarizes Simon's military and political achievements and subsequently proceeds to portray the time of his regency in the same manner as the biblical narrative speaks about the days of King Solomon. On the occasion of Solomon's enthronement all the people "rejoiced with great joy" (*εὐφραϊνόμενοι εὐφροσύνην μεγάλην*), 1Kings (3Kings) 1:40—the same root paronomasia occurs in Simon's eulogy (1Macc 14:11): "and Israel was glad with great gladness" (*καὶ εὐφράνθη Ἰσραὴλ εὐφροσύνην μεγάλην*). The next verse (14:12) reads: *καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἕκαστος ὑπὸ τὴν ἄμπελον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν συκὴν αὐτοῦ* "And everyone sat under their own vine and their own fig tree" (14:12). Almost the same phrase occurs in 1Kings 5:5 (= 2:46 LXX) to describe the time of

10 The name of the land (*Ἰουδα* "of Judah") occurs only in Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Venetus (8th century) and in the Latina. While RAHLFS uses *Ἰουδα* in the main text, the Göttingen Septuaginta (KAPPLER) mentions it only in the apparatus.

11 The English translation comes from the New English Translation of the Septuagint, ed. PIETERSMA / WRIGHT.

12 As BLUMENTHAL / MORENZ, *Spuren*, 23–24, point out, the phrase "he sought good things for his nation" can also be found in hymns on Egyptian kings. Other phrases appearing almost verbatim in Egyptian praises of the king are "he widened the borders of his nation" (14:6) and "there was no one to oppose him" (14:7). Several other phrases in Simon's eulogy show some similarities to Egyptian hymns or share common motifs or themes with them.—The wording "he sought good things for his nation" may also point to Est 10:3 (Mordecai), see DOMMERSHAUSEN, 1 Makkabäer, 96.

peace under King Solomon. Like Solomon, Simon fulfilled the prophecy of Micah 4:4 (see below).¹³ Being familiar with Micah, the wording *ἕως ἄκρου γῆς* “to the end of the earth” in 14:10 may lead to Micah’s prophecy about the Ruler from Bethlehem, the Messiah (see Micah 5:3). Simon’s donations according to 14:15 parallel those of Solomon (1Kings 6–7).¹⁴—As Simon is described as judge, King Solomon and Nehemiah it is not surprising that the text suggests him to be also a “Messiah.”¹⁵

2.2 Simon’s obedience to the Law

The eulogy manifests Simon’s ideal obedience to the Law, the Torah of the Lord, in two ways. (1) The text alludes to several promises in the Torah that will be fulfilled if Israel obeys the laws of the Lord. (2) 1Macc 14:14 explicitly says that Simon sought out the law and carried out the commandment of Deut 17:7 etc.

(1) The wording *καὶ ἐπλάτυνεν τὰ ὅρια τῷ ἔθνει αὐτοῦ* “and he widened the borders of his nation” in 14:6 alludes to the Lord’s promises in Exod 34:24 and Deut 12:20; 19:8. The Lord will widen Israel’s borders, if the nation observes the commandments given in the Torah. In 14:8 the eulogy describes the agricultural prosperity of the land in the days of Simon in accordance with similar phrases in Lev 26:4:

Lev 26:4	1Macc 14:8
ἡ γῆ δώσει τὰ γενήματα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ ξύλα τῶν πεδίων ἀποδώσει τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῶν	καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐδίδου τὰ γενήματα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ ξύλα τῶν πεδίων τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῶν
the land shall give ¹⁶ its produce, and the trees of the plains shall give their fruit	and the land was giving its pro- duce, and the trees of the plains their fruit.

The different tense (*δώσει* vs. *ἐδίδου*)¹⁷ indicates the way the claim works: The promise of Lev 26:4 (future) is fulfilled during the time of Simeon (imperfect), hence, for the reader the conclusion is obvious: Simon and the whole nation of Israel faithfully observed the statutes

13 See, e.g., NEUHAUS, Studien, 150.

14 See GOLDSTEIN, I Maccabees, 492.

15 See, e.g., DOMMERSHAUSEN, I Makkabäer, 96.

16 NETS: yield (2x). The translation is adapted here in order to clarify the parallel in 1Macc 14.

17 See NEUHAUS, Studien, 147–148.

and commandments of the Lord. Thus the eulogy reverses the line of reasoning: In the Torah, the prospering land will be the reward for the People's obedience to the Lord's law; in 1Macc 14 one must presuppose Simon's obedience to the law, because the land already prospers and gives its produce. The text leaves the reader with no escape: As the Lord blesses Simon's regency, Simon and the Maccabees were faithful and pious people, fearing God and obeying his commandments.

(2) Within the following lines, the text explicitly says in 14:14, that Simon sought out the law and eliminated every lawless and evil person. The first phrase reminds of Ps 105:44–45 (104:44–45LXX): καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς χώρας ἔθνῶν καὶ πόνους λαῶν ἐκληρονόμησαν ὅπως ἂν φυλάξωσιν τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν νόμον αὐτοῦ ἐκζητήσωσιν "and he [the Lord] gave them [the people of Israel] lands of nations, and labors of peoples they inherited, that they might keep his statutes and seek out his law."¹⁸ With this intertextual link the text claims that the Maccabees, especially under the rule of Simon, faithfully sought out the law of the Lord and hence were rewarded with the expansion of the territory they ruled.—The second phrase καὶ ἐξήρει πάντα ἄνομον καὶ ποιηρὸν is translated in NETS as follows: "and he eliminated every lawless and evil person." However, a similar wording occurs several times in Deuteronomy: καὶ ἐξαρείς τὸν ποιηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν (see Deut 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 22, 24; 24:7), where NETS translates "and you shall remove the evil one from yourselves." It seems obvious that the eulogy wants to demonstrate that Simon carried out the repeated commandment of Deuteronomy to the letter. Simon and the Maccabees are portrayed as true followers of Moses and obedient to the Law of the Lord.

2.3 Fulfillment of prophecies

As the eulogy states, the time of Simon is also characterized by the fulfillment of prophecies, especially the prophecies of salvation and prosperity. The statement in 14:8, "and they were farming their land in peace, and the land was giving its produce, and the trees of the plains their fruit," not only alludes to Lev 26:4, but also to Zech 8:12: αὐτῶν ἢ δειξῶ εἰρήμην ἢ ἀμπελος δώσει τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῆς καὶ ἡ γῆ δώσει τὰ γενήματα αὐτῆς ... "rather, I will demonstrate peace; the vine shall yield its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce." It is typical for the restricted way of talking about God in 1Maccabees that the direct address

¹⁸ See GOLDSTEIN, 1 Maccabees, 491.

"I [God!] will demonstrate peace" is changed to "they were farming their land in peace" in order to avoid mentioning God explicitly. However, the eulogy obviously insinuates that this "peace" is granted by God. As in the reference to the Torah (Lev 26:4), the future tense is substituted by the imperfect in order to make the fulfillment of the prophetic statement evident. In the next verse, the eulogy also quotes from Zechariah 8: "elders were sitting in the city squares" (14:9)—"old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Ierousalem, each with his rod in his hand, because of the great number of days" (Zech 8:4). Old men and old women sitting in the street are a very apt symbol for a prolonged time of peace: People could grow old, because they were not prematurely killed in war or died of famine (caused by war).¹⁹ The two allusions to Zechariah 8 call the whole chapter to the fore: God promises the salvation of Jerusalem (Zion). The phrase about the youths dressing in splendor (καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ἐνεδύσαντο δόξας 1Macc 14:9²⁰) may be read as an allusion to Isa 52:1: ἐξεγείρου ἐξεγείρου Σιων ἔνδυσαι τὴν ἰσχὺν σου Σιων καὶ ἔνδυσαι τὴν δόξαν σου Ἱερουσαλημ πόλις ἡ ἀγία. Jerusalem shall don strength and glory/splendor. Again, the reader of the eulogy notes the text's claim that God's promise of peace and prosperity in Zion materialized during the days of Simon. The pro-Hasmonean stance of the eulogy dares to "date" the realization of Zechariah's and Isaiah's prophecy during the reign of Simon—and it goes even further. The trees and the land giving their produce also allude to the chapter in Ezekiel where God promises to raise up a new shepherd, "my servant David" (Ezek 34:23–28). Although the Hasmoneans cannot claim a direct descent from the Davidic dynasty, they point out that the prophecies of Ezekiel and his colleagues evidently came true during the time of Simon. The eulogy offers a real outlook for the pious people acquainted with Scripture and God's promises through the prophets of old: The "new David" and the time of peace and salvation already became reality with Simon. The pragmatics behind this play with Scripture is also obvious: The Hasmoneans as descendants of Simon (i.e. John Hyrcanus) depict themselves as legitimate rulers fulfilling the Law so that God, in return, fulfills his promises written down in the Torah and the Books of the Prophets.²¹ In other words: The eulogy alludes to Scripture in order to show that Simon and the Hasmoneans act according to the will of God.

19 The motif also occurs in Isa 65:20.

20 Probably the singular δόξαν is to be preferred; δόξας may be a mistake in analogy to στολάς; see SCHUNCK, 1. Makkabäerbuch, 357.

21 See, e.g., DOBBELER, 1/2 Makkabäer, 132.

There are several other elements in the eulogy of Simon that remind the reader of prophetic passages in Scripture. At first sight the wording in 14:11, "he made peace in the land" is a typical (or: coined) phrase for 1Maccabees (to make peace with somebody, see 1Macc 6:49.58; 11:51; 13:37). However, one can also note the admonition in Isa 27:5 to make peace with God²² and the announcement in Isa 45:7 and Jer 40:6.9 that God will make (create) peace (in the comprehensive meaning of the Hebrew word *shalom*). The clause "and Israel was glad with great gladness" contains a root paronomasia that occurs also in 1Kings (3Kings) 1:40 (on the occasion of Solomon's enthronement, see above); Isa 61:10 (a hymn-like sequence); Ps 13:7 (LXX) = Ps 52:7 (LXX) (Israel will be glad when God restores the fortune of his people).

Another famous symbol for prosperity and peace occurs in 1Macc 14:12: "and everyone sat under their own vine and their own fig tree, and there was none to frighten them." The eulogy imitates again the biblical presentation of the time of King Solomon (see above) and quotes from Micah 4:4 as does 1Kings 5:5 (LXX: 3Kings 2:46g) in order to describe the prosperity in the reign of the biblical king:

Micah 4:4	3Kings 2:46g (LXX)	1Macc 14:11-12
καὶ ἀναπαύσεται ἕκαστος ὑποκάτω ἀμπέλου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος ὑποκάτω συκῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ὁ ἐκφοβῶν	καὶ ἦν αὐτῷ εἰρήνη ἐκ πάντων τῶν μερῶν αὐτοῦ κυκλόθεν καὶ κατῴκει Ἰουδα καὶ Ἰσραὴλ πεποιθότες ἕκαστος ὑπὸ τὴν ἄμπελον αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν συκὴν αὐτοῦ ἐσθίοντες καὶ πίνοντες ἀπὸ Δαν καὶ ἕως Βηρσαβее πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας Σαλωμων	11 ἐποίησεν εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ εὐφράνθη Ἰσραὴλ εὐφροσύνην μεγάλην 12 καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἕκαστος ὑπὸ τὴν ἄμπελον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν συκὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ ἐκφοβῶν αὐτοῦς

The wording in 1Macc 14:12 is even closer to the text of Micah 4:4; however, the future tense (*ἀναπαύσεται*) is changed to the aorist (*ἐκάθισεν*) in order to indicate the "fulfillment" of the prophecy. Sitting (together) under one's own vine and fig tree depicts a standard symbol for peace

²² See GOLDSTEIN, 1 Maccabees, 491.

and prosperity, as is indicated by 2Kings 18:31 par. Isa 36:16 and Zech 3:10.

The eulogy continues with phrases taken from or imitating prophetic literature. The wording in 1Macc 14:13, καὶ ἐξέλιπεν πολεμῶν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς "and a person fighting them disappeared in the land," resembles the description of the doom of Babylon in Jeremiah 51 (28 LXX): ἐξέλιπεν μαχητῆς Βαβυλῶνος τοῦ πολεμεῖν καθήσονται ἐκεῖ ἐν περιοχῇ, "Babylon's warrior gave up fighting; they will sit there under siege" (Jer 51:30/28:30LXX). The next clause in the eulogy sounds even bolder: καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς συνετρίβησαν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις, "and the kings were crushed in those days." One must note, however, that the text does not say that Simon crushed the kings, but it rather uses the passive voice which probably points to a divine agent, i.e. God crushed the kings. The success of the Maccabees in driving back the hegemony of the Seleucid king was obviously read in the light of prophetic texts like Ezek 30:21: υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου τοὺς βραχίονας Φαραω βασιλέως Αἰγύπτου συνέτριψα, "Son of Man, I [God] shattered the arms of Pharaoh, king of Egypt." Other passages portray God as the Lord who shatters/crushes weapons and wars, see Ps 45:10 (LXX)²³: ἀνταναιρῶν πολέμους μέχρι τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς, τόξον συντρίψει καὶ συγκλάσει ὄπλον καὶ θυρεοὺς κατακαύσει ἐν πυρὶ "[the Lord] canceling wars to the end of the earth; he will shatter bow and break armor, and he will burn shields with fire." The major example is Exod 15:3: κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους κύριος ὄνομα αὐτοῦ "the Lord, when he shatters wars, the Lord is his name." This line from the Song of Moses is also quoted in Judith 9:7 and 16:2. As soon as the Lord God enters the human sphere of waging wars, the Lord does not fight according to human logic or with human means and weapons—rather, the Lord does things that bring wars to an end. Thus the eulogy interprets the time of peace under the regency of Simon as a time of divine grace and a time of Israel's victory over her enemies (with the help of the Lord who crushes wars and kings). In a word: the time of peace is proof for God's presence in Simon and the Hasmoneans.

Prophets and Psalms are the source also for the next verse in the eulogy, 1Macc 14:14: καὶ ἐστήριξεν πάντας τοὺς ταπεινοὺς τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ "and he supported all the humble among his people." In doing so, Simon fulfilled what is said in Isa 11:4 about the peaceful kingdom of the sprout from the stump of Jesse: ἀλλὰ κρινεῖ ταπεινῶ κρῖσιν "he shall

23 See GOLDSTEIN, I Maccabees, 491.

administer justice to a humble one." Another passage that comes to mind is the psalm about the ideal king of peace, Ps 71:4 (LXX): κρινεῖ τοὺς πτωχοὺς τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ σώσει τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν πενήτων "he will judge the poor of the people and save the sons of the needy." Thus the scriptural background of the eulogy once again supports Simon as "Messiah" and "king of peace." The text leaves no doubt: Simon did exactly what Scripture demanded. The following phrase makes it explicit: τὸν νόμον ἐξεζήτησεν "he sought out the law" (see above on Ps 104:45 LXX: ὅπως ἂν φυλάξωσιν τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν νόμον αὐτοῦ ἐκζητήσωσιν). Thus, Simon is not very far from the ideal of the scribe studying the biblical word of God. This ideal is formulated in Sir 39:1: πλὴν τοῦ ἐπιδιδόντος τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ διανοουμένου ἐν νόμῳ ὑψίστου σοφίαν πάντων ἀρχαίων ἐκζητήσει καὶ ἐν προφητείαις ἀσχοληθήσεται "save for him who devotes his soul and who thinks about the law of the Most High! He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and he will be occupied with prophecies."

Finally, the eulogy describes Simon's restoration and enhancement of the sanctuary in a way that reminds one of the prophecies of the glorious restitution of Jerusalem and the Temple in Isa 60: τὰ ἄγια ἐδόξασεν (1Macc 14:15) may be read as an echo of καὶ ἡ δόξα τοῦ Λιβάνου πρὸς σέ ἔξει ἐν κυπαρίσσω καὶ πύκῃ καὶ κέδρω ἅμα δοξάσαι τὸν τόπον τὸν ἅγιόν μου "and the glory of Lebanon shall come to you, with cypress and pine and cedar together, to glorify my holy place" (Isa 60:13). Although the prophecy of Isaiah 60 was not completely fulfilled during the days of Simon, he made at least a beginning, as the eulogy suggests.

Excursus: The Eulogy of Simon, Son of Onias according to Ben Sira (Sir 50:1–21)

The final verse of the eulogy (1Macc 14:15) may also be read as a distant echo of the praise of Simon's predecessor in the office of the High Priest, Simon II (218–192 BCE, son of Onias II.) in Ben Sira (Sir 50:1–21). The praise of Simon, son of Onias, the magnificent priest, starts with just this aspect: Simon repaired the house of the Lord and the holy shrine; a cistern for water was quarried. The city was fortified (see 1Macc 14:7.10). The song in Ben Sira continues with praise of the splendid appearance of Simon the High Priest when officiating at the sanctuary. The metaphors focus on the beauty and magnificence of the appearance ("morning star, full moon, sun, gleaming rainbow, blossom of roses, gold vessel, olive tree, cypress" etc.). It is remarkable that the

splendor of the High Priest, his “robe of glory” and the precious acting together with the other priests in the cult (see Sir 50:11–17) are completely absent in the eulogy of 1Maccabees 14, although Simon the Maccabee also held the office of High Priest. However, he was not of Zadokite descent as was Simon, the High Priest of Ben Sira (Sir 50). Hence, the Maccabean (or, better, pro-Hasmonean) eulogy does not stress the priestly or cultic aspects, but rather points out that Simon’s biblical antecedents are *political* leaders like the Judges, King Solomon and Nehemiah (see above).

Looking back at the echoes, allusions and quotations from prophetic literature the reader comes to the conclusion that Simon walked in the way of the Lord and that his reign was a blessed time during which God allowed the fulfillment of many divine promises once uttered by the prophets. The text’s intention becomes obvious: All people of Israel should follow Simon and his descendants, the Hasmoneans. Those already on the side of the Hasmoneans will receive final proof for their allegiance; those who still have doubts will be persuaded by the authority of Scripture. Simon’s actions were in accordance with Scripture and his reward was a time of peace and prosperity for the people. The next step of interpretation turns the *proof* into an *admonition*: all followers of Simon (especially his son, John Hyrcanus) are commanded to act like Simon, observing the Law of the Lord and the prophecies of old in order to gain enduring peace and salvation.

2.4 Simon’s counter-history

The term “counter-history” labels phenomena in a story that reverse the usual flow of history. Regarding the history of Israel in post-exilic times, the Jews usually were oppressed or otherwise in a situation of distress where they had to fight against enemies or suffer through violence and exploitation. “Counter-history” refers to a story that tells a completely different constellation. The classical example for Jewish counter-history is the Book of Esther in which the Jews are not only rescued but are on the winning side, ultimately persecuting and executing their foes. In the eulogy of Simon there are two subtle examples of counter-history.

(1) The first reversal of the usual flow of history can be found in 1Macc 14:4: καὶ ἡσυχασεν ἡ γῆ Ἰουδα πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας Σιμωνος, “and the land became quiet all the days of Simon.” Usually the land became “quiet” in the wake of a military defeat by the great power. 1Macc 1:3

states that the earth (!) became quiet before Alexander the Macedonian (καὶ ἡσύχασεν ἡ γῆ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ), but only after he penetrated to the ends of the earth and took the spoils of a multitude of nations. In 1Macc 7:50 the land of Judah had some rest for a few days (!) following the victory over and the death of Nicanor (καὶ ἡσύχασεν ἡ γῆ Ἰουδα ἡμέρας ὀλίγας)—again a situation of “counter-history,” a victory of the Jews, but it lasted only for a few days. Normally the generals and kings of the Seleucids are victorious and bring a “peace” of quietness: Bacchides fortifies several cities in Judah and the citadel in Jerusalem; after the sudden death of the High Priest Alcimus (who was a Hellenist and tore down the wall of the inner court of the holy places), he returns to the Seleucid king, καὶ ἡσύχασεν ἡ γῆ Ἰουδα ἔτη δύο “and the land of Iouda was quiet for two years” (1Macc 9:50–57). In 1Macc 11:38, 52 the Seleucid king Demetrius dismisses his forces, because the land became quiet before him. As the eulogy of Simon uses the same wording in 1Macc 14:4, the reader concludes that Simon gained the same power as the rulers and generals mentioned before: Now it is the Maccabees’ turn to bring peace and quietness to the land of Judah.

(2) The second area of “counter-history” can be located in 1Macc 14:7. First, it is said that Simon gathered many captives (καὶ συνήγαγεν αἰχμαλωσίαν πολλήν).²⁴ In Hab 1:9 this wording is the technical term for the Babylonians’ violence (καὶ συνάξει ὡς ἄμμον αἰχμαλωσίαν),²⁵ see also 2Chr 28:5 (the king of Aram against Ahas of Judah). Usually the Israelites/the Jews were taken captive and brought into exile—now it is Simon who gathers many captives. Alternatively, the phrase can be understood in a way that Simon brought captives back from exile and resettled them (see, e.g., the translation of the New Jerusalem Bible).²⁶ Both ways, it is a kind of “counter-history:” Simon reverses the usual flow of history by his actions. This is manifested even more in the following lines of 1Macc 14:7: Almost the same wording is used for Simon’s deeds (fortification, providing food in the fortified cities) as in some previous chapters for the military operations of the Seleucid Bacchides.

²⁴ See, e.g., SCHUNCK, 1. Makkabäerbuch, 356.

²⁵ See GOLDSTEIN, 1 Maccabees, 491.

²⁶ On this issue see, e.g., DOMMERSHAUSEN, 1 Makkabäer, 96–97.

1Macc 9:52: Bacchides	1Macc 14:7: Simon
καὶ ὠχύρωσεν τὴν πόλιν τὴν Βαιθσουραν καὶ Γαζαρα καὶ τὴν ἄκραν καὶ ἔθετο ἐν αὐταῖς δυνάμεις καὶ παραθέσεις βρωμάτων	καὶ ἐκυρίευσεν Γαζαρων καὶ Βαιθσουρων καὶ τῆς ἄκρας 10 ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐχορήγησεν βρώματα καὶ ἔταξεν αὐτὰς ἐν σκεύεσιν ὀχυρώσεως
And he fortified the city of Baitsoura and Gazara and the citadel, and he placed in them forces and stores of food.	and dominated Gazara and Baithsoura and the citadel, ... 10 He furnished food to the cities and equipped them with imple- ments of fortification ...

The parallel wording seems to be no coincidence; hence the reader must conclude that the text's intention is to demonstrate that Simon is the true and powerful ruler of the land as was Bacchides before him. Simon the Maccabee completely warded off the Seleucids' predominance in the land.

2.5 Connections with the narrative of 1Maccabees

The Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms are major reference texts for the eulogy of Simon, but there are also intertextual relationships within the book of 1Maccabees itself. For example, the mentioning of Joppe, Gazara and Baithsoura (14:5.7) recalls the related stories of the military successes of Jonathan and Simon. According to 1Macc 10:76, Jonathan took control of Joppe. Later on Simon turned aside to Joppe and occupied it (12:33). The official honors for Simon (1Macc 14:25–49) stress that Simon fortified the cities of Judea, especially Baithsoura, Joppe and Gazara. The "islands of the sea," for which Joppe and its harbor functioned as an entrance way (14:5), reappear in 1Macc 15:1: The Seleucid king Antiochus VII Sidetes sent friendly letters from the "islands of the sea."

The town of Gazara was taken by Simon according to 1Macc 13:43; his son John (Ioannes) was made commander of all the forces and resided in Gazara (1Macc 13:53). Simon camped against Baithsoura and took control of the city (1Macc 11:65–66). The detail of Simon taking away the uncleanness from the citadel in Jerusalem (14:7) comes from

13:50 and is mentioned again in 14:36. The furnishing of cities with food and their fortification (14:10) is pointed out several times in the narrative (see 13:33; 14:33–34; 16:14).

These few examples²⁷ suffice to demonstrate that the eulogy of Simon never was an independent "song" or "poem," which was later incorporated in 1Maccabees, but that it was composed as a narrative fulfilling a certain literary function (see below, the message of the Hasmoneans).

The eulogy obviously does not tell the whole story about Simon. The peaceful time during his reign did not last very long (just from 143 to 138 BCE²⁸, the time when the Seleucid king Demetrius II was engaged in war with the Parthian king Arsakes [see 14:1–3]²⁹), and he depended on the grace of the Seleucid kings. Finally his own son-in-law kills him and two of his sons (1Macc 16:16).

3. Conclusion: The Message of the Hasmoneans

Particularly the differences between the eulogy and the historical reality show that the praise of Simon is more of a dream than a reality; it is a political program in form of a hymnal narrative. The eulogy states that peace, prosperity and political independence for the Jews are possible—they became a partial reality during the days of Simon. The key to this time of salvation are the Maccabees (Hasmoneans) and their obedience to the Torah.

The basic political message of 1Maccabees—namely, to support the Hasmoneans (the Maccabees) as the true rulers of Israel—is fostered in the eulogy of Simon in at least three aspects. All of them relate to "Scripture." (1) The terminology that describes the reign of Simon alludes to the time of the legendary judges, to King Solomon, to Nehemiah and resembles the language of the Messianic era. Thus Simon is presented as the heir of Israel's famous rulers. As "Simon" obviously works as a cipher or code for the Maccabean/Hasmonean dynasty, the eulogy subtly proposes that the Hasmoneans are the "ideal" rulers for Israel, chosen and legitimated by God like the figures of the past (in "Scripture") and the Messiah.³⁰

²⁷ For more details see NEUHAUS, *Studien*, 201–205; GOLDSTEIN, *I Maccabees*, 490–492.

²⁸ See NEUHAUS, *Studien*, 203–204.

²⁹ See DOBBELER, *1/2 Makkabäer*, 132. The Parthian king Arsakes/Arsaces V (or: VI) is better known as Mithridates I, the "Great King" of Parthia (ca. 171–138 BCE), see SCHIPPMMANN, *Arsacids*; GOLDSTEIN, *I Maccabees*, 490.

³⁰ See DOBBELER, *1/2 Makkabäer*, 132–133.

(2) During Simon's rule the promises of the Torah became reality ("the land was giving its produce"). This must be due to the fact that Simon obeys God's Torah. It is also explicitly stated that Simon sought out the law and eliminated all evil (see Deut 17:7 etc.). Again, there is a political message between the lines: The Hasmoneans are the rulers who observe God's Law, the Torah. The eulogy tries to convince the pious Israelites who faithfully observe the Torah to follow and support the Hasmoneans: If Israel wants to prosper in the fulfillment of God's promises, the people must adhere to the Hasmoneans and give up all opposition against them.

(3) The prophecies of old are—at least partly—fulfilled: The imagery of peace and prosperity formulated as a promise in the prophetic literature of Scripture is echoed in imperfect or aorist tense and thus described as reality. The eulogy thus insinuates that Simon and the Hasmoneans act according to God's will: The time of peace and prosperity is proof of God's presence within the ruling dynasty of the Hasmoneans.

The eulogy thus does not only praise a famous man of the past—Simon Maccabaeus—but proposes that the whole project stands in accordance with Scripture and thus with God's will and God's plan. The authority of Scripture is used to promote the political, social and religious program of the Hasmoneans.

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