Prolegomenon to Francis Borchardt's OTSEM 2008 Presentation

Undue Praise: The Secondary Nature of the *Priesgedichte* in 1Macc 3.3-9; 14.4-15

Dissertation: My dissertation, which is nearing completion, tentatively titled *The Law in 1Maccabees,* begins by asking one question: what role does the Torah/Nomos occupy in the religious and political world of 1Maccabees? The answer sought is one in which the law is not only placed in a hierarchy of values, but also an answer which, as thoroughly as possible, describes the components most central to the law, and defines what is meant when 1Maccabees uses legal language. The dissertation attempts to fill this void in scholarship on 1Maccabees that has only rarely been addressed, and has not been treated recently at all.

In order to reach our answer we have taken a new approach to reading 1Maccabees. The previous scholarship treating the place of the law in the text has always operated under the premise of a unified composition. More broadly speaking, from the 1920s to the 1980s, and even among most scholars dealing with 1Maccabees today, the idea that there are separate layers of composition in 1Maccabees seems outlandish. In the past two decades however, two scholars have re-opened the case for a diachronic reading of the book. Nils Martola, using a form-critical approach, and David Williams, using structural criticism, have both come to similar conclusions that there are possibly two compositional layers of 1Maccabees.

My own research of the text picks up from these conclusions and tests all of 1Maccabees with a stern literary-critical reading of the text for problematic passages based on content, continuity, formal disagreement, and vocabulary usage. This study reveals a far greater number of secondary passages than either Martola or Williams have recognized. I then use the frequency of themes, characters, plot threads, and vocabulary in these secondary passages and reconstruct four separate literary layers to the text. The ground layer (called 1MaccG) is the basic original unity, which tells the story of the Hasmonean rebellion from Antiochus IV's first invasion into Judea to Simon's victory over the last gentile stronghold in the land. The subsequent three layers do not appear to be independent parallel accounts of the events in 1MaccG, but are rather the work of

individual editors with specific real-world concerns, which they are attempting to address by their work.

The second layer, called 1MaccD because of the proliferation of political and diplomatic documents among its verses, is quite similar to the secondary layers found by both Martola and Williams in their recent studies. It continues the story of 1MaccG throughout Simon's reign as high priest and into the reign of his son, John Hyrcanus. It also has a particular concern for the office of the High Priesthood, relations with foreign allies, and recognition for the political entity of Judea.

The third layer, named 1MaccO because of its introduction of the concept of internal opponents to the story of 1MaccG and 1MaccD, exists on an entirely different plain from the previous two layers. It not only introduces a new plot thread, but new characters and a new worldview as well. It seems concerned with placing the blame for the troubles Israel experienced before and during the persecutions and wars of the Hasmonean era at the feet of a nebulous faction of splinter groups, who many previous scholars have associated with the Hellenizers, familiar from 2Maccabees, but who more closely resemble sectarians of the early first century BCE.

The final layer, titled 1MaccH because of the concentration on the praise and mythologizing of the Hasmonean family, introduces specific stories relating the impressive role each member of the early Hasmoneans played in shaping and being victorious in the rebellion. The layer primarily has idealized accounts of specific events that paint the Hasmoneans in an especially good light, making them into religious and political heroes.

Once we have proven the existence of each of these layers in 1Maccabees we examine the way the law is depicted in each one independently and show how it grows and develops from one layer to the next.

This Presentation: This presentation fits into the overall investigation by examining two such problematic passages (3.3-9; 14.4-15) as lie at the base of my literary-critical conclusions. It examines whether they can be successfully tied to their context or to the book as a whole. It further asks whether there is a relationship between these texts and

leads to the conclusion that they may be at the base of one of these compositional layers. The presentation here is a bit synthetic however, as these two are never treated together in the actual dissertation, and the way these layers are proven to exist is much more thoroughly and broadly based than focusing on particular features of independent passages. This only gives a taste of some of the work I have done.