Named Actors in Second Maccabees

Cultural conflict is the thematic issue that dominates discussion of First and Second Maccabees. These works have been repeatedly read and interpreted in terms of Jewish acceptance or rejection of a pervasive Hellenistic culture. The most recent trend, however, is to minimise any idea of a cultural conflict, focussing instead on how Hellenised Jewish society had already become or how the Maccabean books do not expressly oppose Hellenism and Judaism. Even Second Maccabees, 'the one work regularly cited as the locus classicus for the battle against Hellenism', has now been interpreted to suggest that Judas Maccabaeus rebelled against the king's policies, not Hellenism; and that Judas did not oppose the Greeks as such but various peoples, campaigning against traditional enemies in the 'surrounding nations'.

To a point this argument is persuasive: there can be little doubt that Jews embraced aspects of Hellenistic society. So while it may be erroneous to suggest that Judas' supporters were 1

1 All dates are BC unless otherwise stated. All translations are my own although I have made extensive use of commentaries by J.A. Goldstein II Maccabees (New York, 1983; = The Anchor Bible 41a) and F.M. Abel Les Livres des Maccabées (Paris 1949), so what I have set may reflect agreement with these translations.

2 Consider (e.g.) Erich Gruen: 'The revolt of Judas Maccabaeus represents for most researchers the pivotal point in the confrontation of Judaism and Hellenism' (Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London; 1998) 1). Also J. Goldstein: 'The Greek confronted the Hebrew. Judaism confronted Hellenism.' Thus runs the conventional wisdom of our time' (J. Goldstein 'Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism', in E.P. Sanders, A.I. Baumgarten and A. Mendelson (eds.) Jewish and Christian Self Definition Vol. Two: 'Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman World' (London, 1981) 64-87, 318-326). Both authors argue against these views.

3 See Gruen Heritage and Hellenism (as in n.2) esp. 1-40, quote p. 4.

4 See (e.g.) Hengel M. Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period (London, 1974): 'From about the middle of the third century BC all Judaism must really be designated "Hellenistic Judaism" in the strict sense' (104). For an alternative view see Feldman L.H. Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World (Princeton, 1993). The term 'Jews' here refers to those in the Judaea.
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opposed to 'all things Hellenic', this does not mean that they cannot and do not still identify their enemy as 'Hellenisers' or as associated in some way with Hellenism. As we shall see, the epitomiser does have a tendency to present 'Greeks' and 'Greekness' in a negative way: cultural conflict remains a part of the mix.

Analysing Second Maccabees

We must begin with some observations concerning Second Maccabees itself; it is after all an unusual text. In its extant form it is prefixed by two letters, which are clearly later additions, having only a loose connection with the text proper. It is also the result of several hands, although it is increasingly apparent that the epitomiser is largely responsible for the main text as we have it, reworking and interpreting material with some ability. This recognition has also meant the value of Second Maccabees as a historical source in its own right is undergoing re-evaluation. Scholars have traditionally preferred the more 'matter-of-fact' First Maccabees, but new evidence external to both books has provided support for some of the extra detail (persons and events) that Second Maccabees provides. Problems remain, but it is our intention to analyse Second Maccabees in a fresh way, examining literary constructs and patterns to reveal perceptions and beliefs that in turn should present concepts that the epitomiser and audience take for granted. The guiding premise is relatively straightforward, the epitomiser did not write in vacuo. The world he lived in and understood


6 See (e.g.) H.M. Cotton and M. Wörre ‘Seleukos IV to Heliodorus: A New Dossier of Royal Correspondence from Israel’ ZPE 159 (2007) 191-203; who analyse a stele that is independent verification of Heliodorus and his actions (cf. 2 Macc. 3.4-40). Note also the assassin Andronicus (2 Macc 5.31-38); on him cf. Diod 30.7.2 and Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 238-239. Finally, consider Parker ‘Campaigns’ (as in n.5) 153-179.

41 Prudentia 40.1&2 (2008)
influenced the way he chose to represent events and stories – just as society today provides part of the framework for our own work, guiding how we reconstruct history. In this study, therefore, we shall attempt to ascertain the attitude of the epitomiser to the Greeks through an analysis of characters’ actions, traits, their ethnicity and their names. The assumption is that repeated patterns may identify some of the epitomiser’s beliefs, from which we may be able to extrapolate to gain some understanding of societal perceptions and cultural, or ethnic boundaries.

This is not just pure speculation. The identification of literary constructs can change our understanding of how peoples and/or events in Second Maccabees are both portrayed and interpreted. It is apparent, for example, that the epitomiser uses exaggeration or unlikely scenarios to emphasise a point.7 So when the king dismisses Menalaus’ crimes and condemns his accusers (three members of the Jewish senate) our author does not (as some suggest) note sympathetic (friendly) relations by other nations in support of the Jews. Rather, the epitomiser is making his disgust apparent by suggesting that none, not even the Scythians (understand: those most uncivilised of peoples on the edge of the world) would have condemned these Jews; support is given by an unlikely group to emphasise their plight and perhaps the inequality of Seleucid (Hellenic) justice.8 Recognising the context and the values inherent in the described actions and events is what provides the basis of this interpretation. More broadly, historical narratives and stories alike will have repeated constructs that anchor them in the society that creates and hears the account. The epitomiser and his audience understand that the Scythians represent the antithesis

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7 Morrison ‘Composition’ (as in n.5) 564-572. The need to analyse the subjective aspects of the text in addition to the objective ones has been recognised as the best way to uncover new insights; see Rajak T. ‘Judaism and Hellenism Revisited’. In T.Rajak, The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction (Leiden, Boston, Köln; 2001) 3-10 esp. 6

8 For the account of Menalaus’ treachery, acquittal and the condemnation of the accusing Jews see 2 Macc. 4.39-50. See Morrison ‘Composition’ (as in n.5) 564-572: For the role of the Scythians and the interpretation of this passage 566, 570; and on how this construct can misrepresent Jewish Greek relations 567-569.
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of a civilised people. That recognition informs how the passage is to be understood.⁹

The Named Characters of Second Maccabees

Our intention is to examine the actions of the characters in Second Maccabees and try to identify repeated character traits that appear in the narrative. The assumption is that any repeated character traits are representative of the epitomiser’s perceptions, or could at least provide a guide to how the epitomiser viewed certain aspects of the world that he recorded.

To begin, if we leave aside the two attached letters at the start of the book since these are demonstrably later additions, there is a total of seventy-eight named characters.¹⁰ Our interest is with those named characters that undertake an action that we can categorise. The premise is that reported actions, at least in part, include some editorial discretion. Certainly there are restrictions that do limit the epitomiser’s creativity – not least literary conventions and historical facts – but there is also a certain degree of flexibility, as will become apparent. For now, however, analysis of the named characters

⁹ The same underlying assumptions are evidenced in the way that the Homeric poems provide insights into seventh and eighth century BC aristocratic society. Consider: Raaflaub K.A. ‘Homeric Society’ in I. Morris and B. Powell (eds.) A New Companion to Homer (Brill, 1997) 624-48. Moreover, that this example (the alienation of the Scythians) is ‘Greek’ merely reinforces the epitomiser’s familiarity with Greek constructs. In a more general sense, to a Jewish audience, the Scythians can represent the (strange) inhabitants of a ‘far off land’, a topos in its own right.

¹⁰ In addition to the seventy-eight identified characters there are potentially two other named individuals that have, for simplicity, been omitted. The first is at 2 Macc. 10.11: Here ‘Potarchos’ could be either a name or part of a title held by Lysias; see Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 387ff, who is confident it is a name. Abel translates it as a title (Les Livres (as in n.1) 409). Regardless, the entry is purely descriptive and does not alter the study in any way. The second uncertain entry occurs at 2 Macc. 6.1, where Antiochus sends either an ‘elderly’ Athenian, or an Athenian named ‘Geron’, or even ‘the elderly Athenaeus’ to compel the Jews to abandon their laws. Goldstein takes the Athenian to be named ‘Geron’ (cf. Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 270ff), but there is too much uncertainty. As a result we have chosen to leave him unnamed, although including him would support our argument. The two attached letters are omitted, as they are certainly later additions: see Parker ‘Letters’ (as in n.5) 386-390 and references cited therein.
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identifies twelve that we can label as purely descriptive. That is they are nothing more than the mention of an actor's father or reference to a character from Biblical history; in short, they are of little value to our study.  

Removing these twelve references still leaves us with sixty-six named actors whose characteristics (actions) we can assess. Now we can categorise these actions as positive or negative from the perspective of the epitomiser, or perhaps more broadly from the perspective of a supporter of Judas' cause. So, for example, Heliodorus' attempt to confiscate the Temple's treasure (2 Macc. 3.7) receives a negative classification, as does Jason through his procurement of the High priesthood through bribery (2 Macc. 4.7-10) and introduction of foreign customs at the perceived expense of Jewish practices (2 Macc. 4.11-16). Conversely, Eleazar is categorised as positive as he remains faithful to Jewish law and refuses to eat pork (2 Macc. 6.18ff). The net result is that there are forty-eight named characters that are assessed as negative and eighteen that can be labelled positive. By itself this division is little more than an observation. It tells us very little. Investigation of each category, however, is more insightful.

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11 So (e.g.) Thraseus (2 Macc. 3.5) is simply the father of Apollonius, other similar examples include: 2 Macc. 3.11; 4.4, 45; 8.9; 12.2. Biblical and historical descriptive references include: 2 Macc. 7.7; 8.19; 15.14, 22. The remaining two descriptive references are to Ptolemy Philometer (2 Macc. 4.21) and Jason of Cyrene (2 Macc. 2.23). The last of these perhaps requires a little clarification. Jason is classified as descriptive because we are assessing the extant work, i.e. the form as presented by the epitomiser; so not what Jason wrote: we can only guess at what is original, adapted or new - and regardless we are still left with the epitomiser's interpretation. Therefore, Jason of Cyrene is only a name mentioned in passing to describe or acknowledge the work upon which Second Maccabees is based.

12 Note also Jason's attack against Jerusalem; cf. 2 Macc. 5.5ff.

13 Some characters are complex, undertaking a variety of actions at different places in the book. In such cases 'negative' acts are deemed to outweigh anything positive the character might do; so for example Nicanor is assessed as negative (see 2 Macc. 14.12-18, 28-30, 31-36; 15.1-37) even though at times he was 'positive' (cf. 2 Macc. 14.20-27).
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The Hostile Actors

Let us begin with the forty-eight characters that ‘act’ in a negative way. Our first observation is that only one, Mattathias, has a Hebrew name. Now, Mattathias is one of three characters that negotiate a treaty with Judas on behalf of Nicanor (2 Macc. 14.18ff), the other two being Posidonius and Theodotus (2 Macc. 14.19). Despite the Greek names of his two counterparts these three men were probably Jews, as it would make sense for Nicanor to use locals in order to facilitate smoother negotiations. The treaty itself is initially successful, although it is soon undermined by Alcimus who has the ear of the king (2 Macc. 14.26ff). The outcome of the negotiations notwithstanding, the reason for our negative classification of these three actors is that they were demonstrably on the side of Judas’ enemies: Nicanor sent them to Judas to undertake discussions.

With regard to Mattathias himself we can say very little. Either, he was so named in order to inform the reader that these negotiators were Jews – the reason for which we could speculate about *ad nauseam* and still be no closer to the truth – or, Mattathias could simply be the historical name of one of Nicanor’s negotiators. In short, apart from demonstrating that the epitomiser recognises that Jews can be opposed to ‘traditional Judaism’ (or a particular interpretation of the Torah!), it is difficult to reach any conclusion on why this character is the only Hebrew named actor in Second Maccabees who acts against Judaism. Mattathias is best viewed

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15 Mattathias clearly was Jewish; Theodotus (which corresponds to Elnathan/Jonathan) was a name commonly used by Jews; see Goldstein *II Maccabees* (as in n.1) 489.
17 The epitomiser clearly recognised that individual Jews did betray their own people. For example, in an authorial assertion early in Chapter Five Jason is described (twice) as ‘a butcher of his fellow citizens’ (2 Macc. 5.6,8); while Nicanor also had Jews in his army (2 Macc. 15.2). However, Mattathias is the only Hebrew named actor that opposes Judas’ cause.
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as an anomaly, an exception that in no way undermines some very clear trends.

To return, then, to the remaining forty-seven hostile actors, these individuals all have foreign (i.e. non Hebrew) names. Admittedly, there are two anomalies: we must account for two different men called 'Simon', a name that is well attested in both Greek and Hebrew. Since the epitomiser was demonstrably proficient in the subtleties of Greek it is perhaps significant that he did not transliterate the Hebrew version of the name ('Simeon', in Greek: Σύμεων or Σιμύων) but chooses to use its Greek form (Σίμων).

This suggests that we should categorise these actors as having Greek names, which is what we will do; yet even if we were to classify them as Hebrew, the basic trend in the narrative remains unchanged: named characters that oppose Judas' cause will almost certainly have a foreign (non-Hebrew) name. Furthermore, not only will the name be foreign; it will usually be Greek. Only three of the forty-seven foreign named individuals who are classified as hostile do not have Greek names; they are: Auranus (2 Macc. 4.40), whose name is probably Arabic; Rhodocus (2 Macc. 13.21),


19 See Pape et al. Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen (as in n.18) 1392, 1393ff, 1457. None of these three spellings – Σιμών, Συμεών or Σίμων – are exclusive to one ethnic group; ‘Simon’ is just predominantly Greek and ‘Simeon / Symeon’ predominantly Hebrew. See also Feldman Jew and Gentile (as in n.4) 15; and Cohen, who directly associates the Hebrew name Shimeon to Greek influence: N.G. Cohen 'Jewish Names As Cultural Indicators' ISJ 7 (1976) 97-128 esp. 112-117. The author of First Maccabees distinguishes between ‘Symeon’, the father of John (1 Macc. 2, 1); and ‘Simon’, the son of Mattathias (1 Macc. 2.2).

20 Auranus is the leader of forces that attack the citizens of Jerusalem on orders from Lysimachus and our author describes him as an old fool. The name ‘Auranus’ is probably related to Αὐρανός – a name attested in Arab deserts. Goldstein notes that this is a name borne in the Hasmonian family, with another variant of it – Auaran – found in some manuscripts as an additional name for Eleazar, the brother of Judas: Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 242; also Josephus Antiquities 12.6.1

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which is probably an Iranian name;\textsuperscript{21} and Hycarnus (2 Macc. 3.11), a name that is difficult to assign to any ethnic group. We do know that Hycarnus himself is almost certainly Jewish: the epitomiser introduces him as the son of Tobias and, therefore, as a member of a very prominent Jewish family.\textsuperscript{22} The name may have a Greek origin or connection; it is attested in Attica, and the Tobiad family was clearly Hellenised and doing well under the successor kingdoms (especially the Ptolemies), yet certainty evades us.\textsuperscript{23} To try to avoid arbitrary classifications, we will categorise this name in terms of what we do know: that it is foreign (i.e. not Hebrew), but we will not list it as Greek.

\textsuperscript{21} Rhodocus, is a ‘soldier in the Jewish ranks’ who betrayed Judas’ army by passing secret information to the enemy (2 Macc. 13.21: προσήγγειλεν δὲ τὰ μυστήρια τοῖς πολεμίοις Ροδοκός ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαϊκῆς τάξεως). He was, we learn, caught and duly punished. Now, the story implies that the soldier was Jewish, but his name is not Hebrew nor is it Greek or Arabic. The most probable origin is Iranian, which at least means that we can classify the name as ‘foreign’ and ‘non-Greek’. The letter of Aristeas demonstrates that Jews in this period did have Iranian names (Aristeas 49-50). For an Iranian connection to ‘Rhodocus’ see Goldstein \textit{II Maccabees} (as in n.1). Neither Fraser et al. or Pape et al. (as in n.18) has an entry under this name.

\textsuperscript{22} Or son of Joseph son of Tobias; see Josephus \textit{Antiquities} 12.4.6-11 (186-236).

\textsuperscript{23} Fraser et al. (as in n.18) lists ‘Hycarnus’ as Greek and it appears in an inscription in Attica (SEG 799). See also comments by Ilan T. ‘The Greek Names of the Hasmoneans’ in \textit{Jewish Quarterly Review} 78 (1987) 1-20, esp. 1-2, and by Schürer E. \textit{The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ}, rev. ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman (T. & T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1973) 1.201-2. However, an Iranian origin is also possible. On the Tobiads see Goldstein \textit{II Maccabees} (as in n.1) 207ff and his article ‘The Tales of The Tobiads’ in J. Neusner \textit{Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty} vol. 3 (Leiden, 1975) 85-123.
Regardless of how we categorise these fringe actors the basic trend is clear: forty-eight individuals act ‘negatively’; forty-seven of them have foreign names, and forty-four (or at least forty-two) of these foreign names are of Greek origin. Now, in most cases these forty-four characters are simply the various generals, district governors or king’s friends whom Judas opposes in the course of his campaigns.24 In short, the ethnic origin of the names and the roles of the actors tend to reflect the political reality of the time: we would expect senior officials in the Seleucid Empire, if not Greek, to be Hellenised locals. Greek names simply support, clarify and mark their official roles. That understood, let us cross-reference the Greek names with the likely ethnicity of the individuals involved. In doing so it is immediately apparent that thirty-three of the forty-four are either Greeks or Hellenised non-Jews, probably from the surrounding territories and probably ranged with the Seleucid hierarchy. This leaves eleven Jewish actors with Greek names.25 Moreover, these individuals represent most of the Jews in Second Maccabees who act in a negative way. To be specific, there are fifteen named Jews who oppose Judas or act against his cause. Only one has a Hebrew name, Mattathias (2 Macc. 14.19, see above). Another three have foreign non-Greek names, Auranus (2 Macc. 4.40), Rhodocus (2 Macc. 13.21), and (possibly) Hycarnus (2 Macc. 3.11). The remainder are the eleven Jews with Greek names. In other words, if a Jew does something that is detrimental to Judaism he is most likely to have a Greek name (or be allocated a Greek name) and very unlikely to have a Hebrew name. This is the world that the epitomiser saw or chose to record.

24 E.g. Appollonius, Governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia (2 Macc. 3.5); Heliodorus, Chief Minister of the king (2 Macc. 3.7); Nicanor, king’s friend (2 Macc. 8.9).

25 Simon (2 Macc. 3.4); Hycarnus (2 Macc. 3.11); Jason (2 Macc. 4.7); Menelaus (2 Macc. 4.23); Lysimachus (2 Macc. 4.29); Simon (2 Macc. 7.22); Dositheus (2 Macc. 12.19); Sosipater (2 Macc. 12.19); Dositheus (2 Macc. 12.35); Alcimus (2 Macc. 14.3); and finally Posidonius and Theodotus (2 Macc. 14.19) who are probably Jewish – they, along with Mattathias, help negotiate (on behalf of the Seleucids) the treaty between Nicanor/Demetrius and Judas.
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Simon, Dosithæus and Sosipater

There clearly is a strong correlation between negative actions and Greek names (or more broadly Hellenism and Hellenic associations). Statistics though are not in themselves always (if ever!) the conveyer of the full picture. To that end, examination of occasions in the epitome when Judas’ commanders fail him (or his cause) adds needed detail. The first occurs in Book Ten and is an account of how Simon’s men accepted bribes and let some of the Idumæans they were besieging slip through their lines. Consider the relevant passage in full:

Maccabæus himself departed for places where he was urgently needed and left behind Simon and Josephus, with Zacchæus and his men in sufficient strength to besiege them [i.e. the Idumæans; cf. II Macc. X.14-17]. But Simon’s men were lovers of money, and were persuaded by some in the towers with money. Once they had accepted 70 000 drachmas, they let some people slip through their lines. These matters were brought to the attention of Maccabæus. Assembling the leaders of the people, he denounced those who had sold out their brothers for money by letting their enemies escape to fight again. He then had these men executed as traitors and straightaway he captured the two towers.²⁶

There seems little doubt that the epitomiser included this story in order to promote the capabilities of Judas – upon hearing of the failure he promptly returned, executed the traitors and reduced the strongholds. The account also discredits Judas’ brother, Simon, which may hint at political undercurrents that go beyond the actual

²⁶ 2 Macc. 10.19-23: ‘... ὁ Μακκαβαῖος εἰς ἐπείγοντας τόπους ἀπολιπὼν Σιμώνα καὶ Ἰωσηπον, ἔτι δὲ καὶ Ζαχαχίων καὶ τούς σύν αὐτῷ ἱκανοὺς πρὸς τὴν τούτων πολιορκίαν αὐτός ἐχωρίσθη. οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Σιμώνα φιλαγυρήσαντες ὑπὸ τινῶν τῶν ἐν τοῖς πύργοις ἐπείσθησαν ἄργυρισι, ἐπτάκες δὲ μυρίαις δραχμαῖς λαβόντες εἰσάγαν τινας διαρρυήναι. Προσαγγελλέντος δὲ τῷ Μακκαβαῖῳ περὶ τοῦ γεγονότος συναγαγόν τοὺς ἤγουμένους τοῦ λαοῦ κατηγόρησεν ὡς ἄργυριον πέπρακαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τους πολεμίους κατ’ αὐτῶν ἀπολύσαντες. τούτοις μὲν σὺν προδόταις γενομένους ἀπέκτεινεν, καὶ παραχρῆμα τοὺς δύο πύργους κατελάβετο.'

49 Prudentia 40.182 (2008)
Regardless, this is an important episode that would have received direct attention from the epitomiser thereby providing the opportunity for personal and/or societal prejudices and perceptions to be included. With this in mind, consider that there are three commanders left behind by Judas to undertake the siege: Simon, Josephus and Zacchaeus. Not all are linked to the failure. The epitomiser is clear over who is responsible: it is ‘Simon’s men’ (and only Simon’s men) that are described as ‘lovers of money’ and who consequently allow some Idumaeans to escape. Josephus and Zacchaeus receive no negative attention and are not even indirectly involved in the debacle. So the one commander whose name could be Greek is discredited, a more pertinent observation when we recognise that this story varies from a version present in Josephus’ *Antiquities* and in First Maccabees. This is a point to which we will return shortly.

For now, observe that this is not the last time that we meet Simon. In Chapter Fourteen, as Nicanor advances against Judaea, before Judas arrives Simon engages the Seleucid forces in battle:

Simon, Judas’ brother, had already joined battle with Nicanor and suffered a slight setback because the enemy arrived suddenly.  

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27 See, e.g. Goldstein, who is adamant that there is an anti-Hasmonaean bias in Second Maccabees (*I Maccabees* (New York, 1976; = *The Anchor Bible* 41) 4-8, 62-89); and that the author of First Maccabees is a Hasmonaean propagandist and a bitter opponent of the epitomiser: *II Maccabees* (as in n.l) 4. See also Schürer *History of the Jewish People* (as in n.23) III. 532-3. For a political undercurrent in the cited passage see Goldstein *II Maccabees* (as in n.1) 390. Speculation aside, the passage does give an insight into a possible political structure Judas may have established: see Morrison ‘Note on laos’ (as in n.5) 34-50. It may be that the epitomiser saw Simon as a threat to his hero, Judas.

28 Not all agree, so (e.g.) Goldstein *II Maccabees* (as in n.1) 390. The text cited above, however, is clear: Simon’s men were responsible. There is no mention of Josephus or Zacchaeus in a negative capacity, which militates against any assumption that either suffers any slur in the epitomiser’s version of events.

29 2 Macc. 14.17: Σιμών δέ ο άδελφος Ιουδου συμβεβληκώς ήν τώ Νικάνωρι, βραδέως δε, διά την αφυδίαν των αντίπάλων ἀφασίαν ἐπτακώς. Whether or not the verb συμβάλλειν is understood in terms of ‘to have conversations with’; i.e. diplomacy (cf. Acts 4.15); or ‘to join battle with’ (cf. 2 Macc. 8.23) there is clearly a failing (regardless of degree) on the part of Simon. It
Here Simon's ability as a commander is again found wanting. Certainly, the epitomiser is mild in his commentary, presenting us with some mitigating factors by minimising the 'degree of loss' and providing a (weak) explanatory comment. This, however, does not diminish the underlying fact that Simon fails. Once more it is the Greek-named Jewish commander whose actions and abilities are undermined. Of course we are not advocating that it is because he has a Greek name that Simon is a failure. We can speculate ad nauseam about what actually happened and why, but what will remain consistent is that Simon is undermined by the epitomiser. Could it be that the negative image is, in part developed through the use of the Greek version of his name?

Simon is not the only Jewish commander who fails. Another military setback occurs under Dositheus and Sosipater (2 Macc. 12.19). When we first meet these commanders all seems well; they lead their troops to victory and destroy a stronghold at Charax, which was garrisoned by over ten thousand of Timotheus' soldiers (2 Macc. 12.17-19). Shortly afterwards these same soldiers actually capture Timotheus, however they fail to hold him. Through a simple deception Timotheus convinces Dositheus and Sosipater to let him go, which they do (2 Macc. 12.24-25). Certainly it is true that the epitomiser appears to make this observation without any malice or, at least, direct (objective) hostility. Regardless, the epitomiser is also clear that Dositheus and Sosipater are responsible for Timotheus' escape. To that end, the point that is most relevant is that the commanders that demonstratively fail are (once again) those with Greek names. Moreover, in addition to Judas' brother Simon, these are the only commanders in Judas' army - which the epitomiser decides to mention - who have Greek names. Not only that, but if we include the failure of another Dositheus to capture Gorgias (discussed below, 2 Macc. 12.35) we have noted all the military failures that occur (from the perspective of the Jews) after Judas begins his campaign in defence of Judaism.30 In short, we

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30 Before Judas begins his campaigning there are military setbacks for the Jews,
appear to have the introduction of some prejudice by our author against his Greek-named Jewish commanders, who, while not necessarily inept all of the time, do inevitably endure humiliating military reversals.

Of course these descriptions of events and even the naming of the commanders may not be the result of deliberate patterning by the epitomiser. The presence of Greek names in both these accounts could be coincidental or an accurate reflection of an historical reality; but further analysis militates against any such conclusion. Consider once more the account of Timotheus’ escape (above). At the parallel point in both Josephus’ Antiquities and First Maccabees there is no mention of this story, however there is an account of a military failure. Instead of Dositheus and Sosipater we learn of two Jewish commanders who act contrary to Judas’ instructions and are decisively beaten. The important difference is that these commanders have Hebrew names - Josephus and Azarias. In other words, the epitomiser appears either to have replaced an account of two Hebrew-named commanders disobeying orders and failing militarily, with another that has two Greek-named Jews failing; or to have selected a particular event from various possible episodes. With both possibilities this could have been a deliberate manipulation to discredit ‘Hellenisers’ or, if it was the latter, we have a demonstration of a subconscious bias (against ‘things Greek’).

e.g. 2 Macc. 5.11, 25, etc. However, from when Judas Maccabaeus’ revolt begins (2 Macc. 8.1) until the end of the text there are nine campaigns described by the epitomiser (although some are connected; e.g. Nicanor’s advance (2 Macc. 8.12ff) is a result of Judas’ military actions (2 Macc. 8.5ff)). The campaigns can be found at 2 Macc. 8.5ff, 12ff, 30; 10.14, 24; 11.1ff; 12.1ff; 13.1ff; 14.12ff (the battles described from 15.1ff are considered to be part of Nicanor’s campaign that begins at 14.12). Each campaign may include several military actions: e.g. Antiochus Eupator and Lysias advance against Judaea (2 Macc. 13.1ff); three military actions or battles then occur – 2 Macc. 13.14ff: Judas’ attack near Modin, 13.19ff: the king’s advance on Bethsur; 13.22ff: the king’s attack on Judas. In all the battles in these nine campaigns the only events that resemble a failure for the Jewish cause are those associated with Greek-named Jews.

31 See Josephus Antiquities 12.8.6 (350-2) and 1 Macc. 5.56-65.

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There is a suggestion of further manipulation by the epitomiser. In First Maccabees Josephus is introduced to us as the son of Zechariah (1 Macc. 5.18-19, 56). Goldstein argues that Zacchaeus is a nickname for Zechariah. If this were the case, then it must follow that the account in Second Maccabees of Simon’s failure in besieging the Idumaeans is a reworked version of the story of Josephus and Azarias that we find in the Antiquities and First Maccabees. The epitomiser has simply adjusted the account, confusing Josephus’ father as a fellow commander. This would mean that the primary difference between the accounts is that the epitomiser, while noting the presence of two Hebrew-named commanders (whom he calls Josephus and Zacchaeus), seems to take particular care to minimise their association with any military failure. In Second Maccabees the military setback is clearly the responsibility of Simon. Therefore, regardless of which story in Second Maccabees we attribute as the representation of the version of events recounted by both Josephus and the author of First Maccabees, the epitomiser has clearly reworked the material. In doing so he either deliberately or, as seems more likely, subconsciously, shifted the blame for the military failures onto individuals that he chooses to identify with a Greek name.

The remaining references to Greek named individuals further confirm this pattern; any Jews that fail Judaism tend to have a Greek name. There is, for example, the second Dositheus (introduced earlier) who is specifically described as a Jew (2 Macc. 12.35). In a battle against Gorgias and his men this Dositheus manages to grasp Gorgias’ cloak, but (regardless of the reason) he failed in his endeavours to hold him. Perhaps his devotion to Judaism was not

32 Goldstein I Maccabees (as in n.27) 79-80, II Maccabees (as in n.1) 390.
33 In Josephus and First Maccabees, Josephus son of Zechariah was an incompetent commander; so if he was a half-brother to Simon and assuming an anti-Hasmonaean bias, why would the epitomiser not utilise the story to discredit the Hasmonaees (Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 390)? The hypothesis must remain speculative. Based on Second Maccabees all we can really conclude is that Joseph and Zacchaeus are loyal commanders, and it is Simon who is discredited.
great enough, a point reflected in the origins of his name. At any rate, in the context of the patterning we have identified would we really expect a Greek-named Jew to be presented as a hero, who succeeded in bringing down a Seleucid commander?

The epitomiser’s manipulation of names and events did not only occur in relation to military failures. Consider the narrated activities of the High Priest Jason, purchasing the office of high priest from Antiochus Epiphanes and promoting a Greek way of life among the Jews.\textsuperscript{34} We should not be surprised at Jason’s Greek name; yet it seems he was also known as Jesus, a name the epitomiser chooses never to use.\textsuperscript{35} Whether this was an intentional or subconscious manipulation of events, it is clear that the epitomiser associates negative actions with Greek-named characters. However, the Greeks only comprise some of the characters in Second Maccabees and are only a part of the story. When we apply this same methodology to other actors, in particular Hebrew-named individuals, we can uncover some equally interesting insights. If I may foreshadow our upcoming discussion, it appears that our author provides an equally definitive, positive account of Hebrew-named characters and their actions.

Judas’ Supporters

In Second Maccabees there are eighteen named individuals who support Judas and Judaism. The majority, but not all of these actors, are Jews. The first ‘exception’ we meet is Aretas (2 Macc. 5.8), the king of the Arabs, who recognises the inappropriateness of the actions of Jason (2 Macc. 4.7). However, the Arabs are not always supportive: we also receive an account (albeit with no mention of Aretas) of the Arabs attacking the Jews (cf. 2 Macc. 12.10). Unfortunately this is all we are told, so little can be gleaned about Aretas and the Arabs. There are also two named Romans (2 Macc. 11.34), who are envoys of the Roman people and who support the concessions granted to the Jews by Lysias and Antiochus (2 Macc.

\textsuperscript{34} Introduced at 2 Macc. 4.7.

\textsuperscript{35} Josephus gives us his name; see \textit{Antiquities} 12.5.1 (237-38).
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11.16-33). We can say little about these ambassadors except that in many respects their role is supplementary, the support of the Romans perhaps helping to provide legitimacy to Judas' vision of a Jewish nation. The inclusion of all three of these non-Jewish actors probably has more to do with historical reality and the epitomiser's recognition of shifting political landscapes and/or power balances. At any rate, the minor roles of these characters and the fact that two appear in the same passage means that they are not a significant grouping, nor do they distort our analysis.

There is one other named non-Jewish actor that supports the Jews: Ptolemaeus Macron, a governor of Syria and Phoenicia. Ptolemaeus is particularly interesting because he is Greek (or ranged with the Seleucids), has a Greek name, and is the only named Greek character (Seleucid Official) that does not oppose the Jews and/or Judaism. Is it a surprise, therefore, that Ptolemaeus Macron is also very clearly portrayed as an outcast in the Greek world? Consider the relevant narrative:

Upon ascending to the kingship, he [i.e. Eupator] appointed a certain Lysias regent and chief governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. For Ptolemaeus surnamed Makron [the former governor] attempted to preserve justice, speaking out on behalf of the Jews because injustices had been done against them. He would continually attempt to administer them in a peaceful way. As a result he was denounced by the [king's] courtiers to Eupator. Hearing from every direction that he was a traitor because he had deserted Cyprus, entrusted to him by Philometer, and had gone over to Antiochus Epiphanes, although he held a noble position,

36 The letter is genuine, but there are problems with the second Roman ambassador’s name; see Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 422ff; L.L. Grabbe Judaism From Cyrus to Hadrian (Minneapolis, 1992) 259-263; C. Habicht ‘Royal Documents in Maccabees II’ HSCP 80 (1976) 1-18; A. Momigliano ‘The Second Book of Maccabees’ CP LXX (1975) 81-88; Parker ‘Letters’ (as in n.5) 386-402.

37 2 Macc. 10.11. This is not the same Ptolemaeus as at 2 Macc. 4.45 and 8.9. See T.B. Mitford ‘Ptolemy Macron’ Studi in onore de Aristide Calderini e Roberto Paribeni (Milano: Ceschina, 1957) 163-87; also Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 388.
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he did not receive respect, so he abandoned his own life having taken poison.\textsuperscript{38}

Our author makes it clear that Ptolemaeus attempts to maintain amicable relations with the Jewish people. For his efforts, however, he was denounced to the king and labelled a traitor. Our author links both accusations (i.e. of his treatment of the Jews and desertion of Philometer) through their juxtapositions. In this way the epitomiser connects the positive acts towards the Jews with the betrayal of a king and, ultimately, untrustworthiness. Therefore, it is both these accusations that undermine Ptolemaeus’ position and isolate him to the extent that he commits suicide. This series of events presents Ptolemaeus as anything but a convincing champion of the Jewish cause. In fact the failure and downfall of this character helps reinforce the negativity the epitomiser associates with all the other Greek actors. Ptolemaeus cannot and is not permitted to support the Jews successfully. To use a cliché, this character is the exception that helps prove the rule.\textsuperscript{39}

38 2 Macc. 10.11-13: οὗτος γὰρ παραλαβὼν τὴν βασιλείαν ἀνέδειξεν ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων Λυσίαν τινά, Κοίλης δὲ Συρίας καὶ Φοινίκης στρατηγὸν πρῶταρχον. Πτολεμαῖος γὰρ ὁ καλοῦμενος Μάκρων τὸ δίκαιον συντηρεῖν προηγούμενος πρὸς τοὺς Ιουδαίους διὰ τὴν γεγονοῦσαν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἀδικίαν ἐπειρᾶτο τὰ πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἰρηνικῶς διεξάγειν. θείαν κατηγοροῦμενος ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων πρὸς τὸν Εὐπάτορα καὶ πρὸς τὸν Κύπρον ἐμπιστευθέντα μήτε εὐγενῆ τὴν ἐξουσίαν εὐγενίσας φαρμακεύσας εαυτὸν ἐξέλιπεν τὸν βίον.

39 Ptolemaeus is clearly presented as weak-willed, ineffective and untrustworthy, \textit{Prudentia} 40.182 (2008)
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We are left with fourteen named supporters of Judas, all of whom are Jewish. This accounts for just less than 78% of all positive characters named in Second Maccabees, a statistic that is not completely unexpected – we must remember that Second Maccabees is a text introduced as an account of how Judas defended Judaism. Be that as it may, further analysis of these actors reinforces the patterning that we have identified: thirteen of these fourteen Jews have Hebrew names. With the exception of Biblical/historical references and the treaty negotiator Mattathias (that we discussed earlier), these thirteen individuals represent all the characters in Second Maccabees who have a Hebrew name. In other words, there is a strong correlation between Hebrew named individuals and positive actions.

We will return to these thirteen Jewish actors shortly, but first the anomaly. Our analysis shows that there is one Jew who acts in a positive way but does not have a Hebrew name: Eupolemus (2 Macc. 4.11), a Jew with a Greek name. The epitomiser informs us that Eupolemus was the Jewish representative who later negotiated a treaty with the Romans. We have already noted a supportive, if not friendly, relationship between the Romans and the Jews, so Eupolemus' actions are classified as being positive.

and this proves our point. This notwithstanding, there is also a political side to Ptolemaeus Macron's isolation and demise as he seems to have sided with Antiochus IV against Ptolemy Philometer: Cf. Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 388. For more on pro-Ptolemaic and pro-Seleucid factions in Jewish politics at this time, see e.g. P. Schäfer The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World (Routledge: London and New York; 2003) 27-51.

40 The fourteen named characters that can be classified as positive are: Judas (2 Macc. 2.19); Onias (3.1); John (4.11); Eupolemus (4.11); Eleazar (6.18); Josephus (8.22); Jonathan (8.22); Eleazar (8.22); Josephus (10.19); Zacchaeus (10.19); John (11.17); Absalom (11.17); Esdrias (12.36); and Razis (14.37).

41 There are three Biblical/Historical references: Moses, 2 Macc. 7.6; Jeremiah, 2 Macc. 15.14; Hezekiah, 2 Macc. 15.22. Mattathias, 2 Macc. 14.19, is discussed above.

42 See Goldstein I Maccabees (as in n.27) 359; II Maccabees (as in n.1) 228-229 and I Macc. 8.17ff.

43 Cf. 2 Macc. 4.11; 11.34ff; note also 1 Macc. 8.1ff, esp. 17ff; 12.1ff; 14.16ff; 14.40; 15.15-24.
It is interesting to note several points, however, which perhaps go some way towards explaining why this character is not subject to the patterning we have identified. First, we have a description of a person who acts outside of the time period with which the epitomiser is concerned. Second, having or using a Greek name when engaged in diplomatic relations with the Romans would probably be beneficial. This could also suggest that the adoption and use of Hellenic names, institutions and customs when done so by Jews for their own purposes could well be perfectly acceptable. Third, the negotiating of a treaty with the Romans would have been a prominent event in recent history and everyone would have known who the Jewish representatives were, so the epitomiser just reported what was common knowledge. This seems to be the most likely scenario; although it is still interesting that the epitomiser makes it clear that Eupolemus (despite his name’s origins) is from a strong Jewish heritage. His father - John - has a good Hebrew name and is presented as a loyal Jew: this is the John that negotiated royal privileges for the Jews from Antiochus III. At any rate, when we consider the overall context of the patterning we have identified this one anomaly does not discredit the entire argument: societal perceptions, biases and beliefs do not fall into tidy boxes. There will always be complicating grey issues and areas: what is important are the general trends.

Let us return to the thirteen Hebrew-named Jews who are represented in a positive way. It will not benefit us greatly to go through each character and scenario in turn. Rather it is sufficient to observe that not only are these characters’ actions seen as positive, they are also presented as stout defenders of Judaism. The epitomiser spends a lot of space emphasising the positive aspects of these characters: consider how, for example, Onias III is described...
as ‘pious’ (εὐσέβειαν) and as having ‘a hatred of wickedness’ (μισοπονηρία); while Eleazar is a ‘leading teacher of the law, a man of great age and distinguished bearing’; etc. The positive attributes of these individuals are emphasised through their connection with traditional values, while the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons also reinforces the importance of one’s native language. In this context there seems little doubt that part of the pious, righteous image, or character development is the ethnicity of these actors’ names. It would not seem ‘right’ for a defender of traditional Jewish values to have anything but a Hebrew name.

There is one further observation we can make with regard to these Hebrew-named characters. On several occasions they are set up against an opponent. In each case that opponent is either Greek or has a Greek name. Consider the contrast between the ‘pious’ Onias III and the ‘godless’ Simon (2 Macc. 3.4); while Eleazer’s torture occurs at a time when an Athenian pollutes the Temple and compels Jews to reject ancient customs and the law (2 Macc. 6.1ff). Or it is Razis’ piousness (not to mention his devotion to the law and resultant standing amongst the Jews) that provokes the wrath of Nicanor (2 Macc. 14.37ff). The repetition of such underlying hostility and conflict cannot be ignored or, in light of our analysis, underestimated. The names of the actors involved can be understood, in part at least, to symbolise the pitting of Seleucid power and policy against Jewish traditions and religion. This in

46 See 2 Macc. 3.1 (Onias) and 2 Macc. 6.18 (Eleazar): Ελεάζαρός τις τῶν πρωτευόντων γραμματέων, άνήρ ήδη προβεβηκώς τῆν ηλικίαν καί τῆν πρόσοψιν τού προσώπου κάλλιστος...

47 2 Macc. 7.1-42; note 2 Macc. 7.21, 27. These attributes also demonstrate an ethnic boundary marker: identification as to who is or is not a Jew is clearly linked (for the epitomiser at least) to one’s heritage, one link to that heritage seems to be one’s name.

48 So we find, e.g., (another) Eleazar - or perhaps Ezra, see Goldstein II Maccabees (as in n.1) 334-5) - that reads from the holy book (2 Macc. 8.23); how ‘John’ can provide credibility to Eupolemus, by providing a traditional heritage (2 Macc. 4.11: see above); and a pious Razis who defies Nicanor’s men by committing suicide (2 Macc. 14. 37-46). The ethnicity of one’s name helps establish or emphasise a character’s role.
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turn suggests that the epitomiser may well have perceived Greeks and Jews as opposing forces, even if the nature of that opposition was symbolic of other issues or concepts: Greekness was a visual, easily identifiable part of the changing world that was undermining traditional Jewish values (which could be seen as equating to Jewish identity). In this context ‘things Greek’ can be labelled as the enemy, regardless of what the cultural reality is within one’s society.

Conclusion

The epitomiser perceives Hellenism (or things ‘Hellenic’) to be in some way a threat to Judaism, or the cause of Judas; this we have demonstrated by enumerating Jewish and Greek characters, analysing their actions, labels (names) and ethnicity. Certainly the base numbers may just reflect the historical reality; after all the Jews did rebel against their Seleucid overlords. If this is the case, our analysis still reinforces an expanding Seleucid empire and indicates that a marker of association with this imperialistic power is one’s name. However, it is unlikely that this is the sum total of our investigation. The identified patterns reveal the epitomiser’s conception of history, which provides an indication of his worldview. The polarisation against Hellenic (Seleucid) actors leaves little room for ambiguity. In fact, in the instance of the only exception to the hostility directed at the Jews (Judas), the fate of the Seleucid official Ptolemaus Macron (who can hardly be described as a champion of the Jewish cause) even suggests that the epitomiser has no room for Greek sympathisers.49

The identified hostility also extends to Greek named actors regardless of their ethnicity. We analysed forty-eight characters in Second Maccabees that act against Judaism (Judas), of whom forty-seven have non-Hebrew names and forty-four (92%) have Greek names. When we consider ‘hostile Jews’, of the fifteen named

49 Cf. 2 Macc. 10.11. Note also how Nicanor cannot maintain friendly relations (2 Macc. 14.20ff).
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Jews that betray Judaism, fourteen have foreign names and eleven of them have Greek names. We can surmise therefore that, once again, hostility is directed against foreigners, in particular Hellenes. At the same time we must acknowledge that Jewish society was split, and some Jews clearly supported the new (Seleucid) regime and the social changes. The epitomiser suggests that by doing so these Jews are opposing the traditional values of their people (represented by Judas’ cause). Our analysis demonstrates that they also tend to be connected to ‘things Hellenic’ through, among other things, their names.

None of this means that the epitomiser deliberately constructed his work so that Greek names were associated with negative actions/events and Hebrew names to good ones. Rather, the hypothesis is that societal beliefs and attitudes of the time would mould or provide the framework for the final literary product; they guide the juxtaposition of events and the selection of episodes narrated. It is reasonable to interpret the attitudes evident in Second Maccabees both as a ‘product of’ and ‘reinforcement of’ societal perceptions. Whether it was our author’s intention or not, the roles assigned to names illustrate his prejudices, which are at least representative of that sector in society that he is advocating (i.e. Judas and his supporters). In other words, the Greeks were being blamed on some level (even subconsciously) by a faction in Jewish society for changes to the traditional Jewish way of life. This is what our investigations have shown, but we must also acknowledge that cultural clashes are by their very nature complex. Identification of prejudice and blame does not in itself negate the voluntary adoption of practices that are aligned to the pervasive culture being inveighed against. So the epitomiser can assert that ‘things Hellenic’ are hostile to Judas’ cause, while still writing his account in Greek! This does not undermine our conclusion; it does, however, both recognise and open up a range of tensions and contradictions that require examination, albeit elsewhere. For this paper our final

50 There are twenty-nine Jewish actors in Second Maccabees. As we note fifteen are hostile, the remaining fourteen act in a positive way. It is also worth noting that thirteen of the fourteen ‘positive’ acting Jews have Hebrew names.
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observation is simple: we should not be so fast in dismissing the age-old dichotomy of Jew versus Greek, Hellenism versus Judaism.

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(The quotations from the Greek of the Septuagint follow the edition of A Rahlfs, 1935.)