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Did the Septuagint's Account of the Life of Abraham in Gen 12–25 Serve as a Model for the Description of Mattathias' Achievements in 1 Macc 2:1–70?

Abstract: By recording Mattathias' final eulogy (1 Macc 2:49–68), the author of 1 Maccabees presented the main character as encouraging his sons to imitate faithfully their ancestors (2:51). The fighting insurgents were to take this example for their behaviour in specific, difficult life situations. In this way, the successively mentioned fathers were to become both models and support in the struggle for the religious and political freedom of the Jews in the Seleucid period. It is very likely that the main character himself – the patriarch of the Maccabean family – was described as a faithful follower of Abraham, the first patriarch of all Israel. The article shows possible connections between these two figures on the basis of situational and literary associations, to answer the question whether this could have been the hagiographer's intended intention or it is just an accidental similarity. Intertextual exegesis seems to be most suitable tool for studying this problem.

Keywords: Septuagint, First Book of the Maccabees, biblical theology, Abraham, Mattathias, intertextuality

Introduction

With regard to the title of this study, we can ask ourselves some fundamental questions about two specific biblical heroes: Mattathias from the First Book of the Maccabees and Abraham from the Greek text of the Book of Genesis. Are there any connections between them and, if so, what are they?¹ Further, are the possible

¹ Despite attempts to reconstruct the Hebrew text of 1 Maccabees, it is not possible to conduct research today on the possible relationship between the Hebrew

threads binding them together only superficial, such as similar behaviours, or are there also some – admittedly sometimes very different – life situations in which they found themselves, which nonetheless allow these figures to be juxtaposed? Finally, did the inspired author intend to create this relationship between the two characters and, if so, how was it accomplished?

The following study of the biblical material of both books will try to answer these questions in two main areas of research: the essence of the relationship between them and the literary way of presenting it. Simply put, we want to answer the question of how the literary presentation of the life of Mattathias reflects the description of Abraham's life in the Book of Genesis. It is impossible to provide a complete answer to the question: what place, as a Jew, did historical Mattathias give to Abraham in his faith and activity? However, one can – and this is probably more valuable for a contemporary reader of 1 Maccabees – try to answer: how could the inspired author present the life of Mattathias by referring to some events from the description of the history of Abraham? The hagiographer's message to the reader might then sound like this: which aspects of Abraham's life are important to Mattathias so that, upon understanding them, they can also become important to me? If I admire the life of the first hero in the First Book of the Maccabees, then certainly the patriarch of the whole people can make a significant contribution to me.²

versions of both books. The hypothetical nature and uncertainty of such procedures is too great to draw specific research conclusions.

² A number of valuable examples of the heroic ways of behaviour of characters from the past in Germanic mythology, referred to as the paradigm of behaviour worthy of praise in posterity, is given, among others, by Régis Boyer. The author gives three levels of the relationship between the former hero and his successors: prototype – ideal model – the supreme type. The feature of the “prototype” is that the “archetype is atemporal to the extent that it is part of its nature not only to have existed first, but also to have given rise to the temporality that explains its successors.” The “ideal model” is characterized by the fact that “here the term is coloured by a value judgement.” Finally, the value of the “supreme type” is that the archetype is the “absolute, the perfect image that transcends particular circumstances because it goes straight to the essential point wherever one chooses to tap it.” Boyer, “Archetypes,” 111, 112, 114. It seems that we can understand the relationship between

It is important to note that, extant exegetical studies of the literary quality of the book show that the hagiographer simultaneously used many other biblical books, which he considered to be worthy and appropriate theological resources for his work.³ In some places, these others may even outweigh the material of Gen 12–25, but they never contradict it in the slightest. On the contrary, they all work together to support, clarify and enrich the message that the First Book of the Maccabees presents to us today.

Finally, as regards, intertextual analysis will mainly be used, in that it is the most appropriate for demonstrating a relationship pattern between a leader (Abraham) and a follower (Mattathias).⁴

1. Can a Relationship Be Built Between Mattathias and Abraham on the Basis of 1 Macc 2:52?

It is not easy to answer the question of whether the hagiographer intended to establish a relationship between the first leader of the Maccabean uprising and the prime ancestor of the chosen people. Although the dying Mattathias mentions the most important ancestor of all Israelites, presenting him as one of the models

Abraham and Mattathias suggested by the author of 1 Maccabees on these same three levels.

³ Among the many examples of Old Testament figures constituting the background of Mattathias' deeds in 1 Macc 2:24, the author recalls a deed of David in 1 Sam 17:51. In 1 Macc 2:25 he refers to the actions of the priest Jehoiada in 2 Kings 11:15–18. In v. 26 he evokes Saul in 2 Sam 21:2, Elijah in 1 Kings 19:10, 14, king Jehu in 2 Kings 10:16, unnamed faithful members of God's chosen people in Jdt 9:4, and Sirach in Sir 51:18–19. This way of characterizing the struggle of his heroes is confirmed by the hagiographer explicitly mentioning specific figures from the history of Israel in 1 Macc 2:51–61.

⁴ This analysis also worked as an exegesis tool in the search for the theological influence of the Books of Chronicles on First Maccabees in the description of the actions of the main heroes of the Jewish uprising against the Seleucids. This was especially evident in the allusions used by the author of 1 Maccabees to specific figures in the history of Israel in order to show the theology of the events in the lives of Mattathias' successors: Judas Maccabeus, Jonathan and Simon. By the use of the verb *καταδιώκω*, "to follow, to pursue," the figure of Abraham in Genesis 14:14 will also appear there as a model for Jonathan's military actions in 1 Macc 10:78. Nawrot, "Wpływ," 189.

of behaviour for his sons, this passage mentions various figures of the Old Testament, who are all examples of faith and fidelity to God. The mention of Abraham as the first role model does not necessarily distinguish him from the others, because, as the progenitor of the chosen people, it is reasonable that he be listed first.⁵ Therefore, one might rightly ask if the author's intention in 1 Macc 2:52, is to present Abraham as a model for Mattathias in 2:1–70?

Mattathias' resemblance to the former figures of the Old Testament can be seen even more clearly in the case of Phineas (v. 54), to whom he is directly compared in 1 Macc 2:26.⁶ Let us first quote consider the wording of v. 52:

Αβρααμ οὐχὶ ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός
καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην

Was not Abraham found faithful when tested,
and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?⁷

It is difficult to indicate one specific moment in the patriarch's life that would constitute the basis for recognising his behaviour as faithful to God. It seems that the author of 1 Maccabees introduces the combination of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1–12) and the covenant promise in Gen 15:2–6. When mentioning *πειρασμός*, “trying,” in Gen 22:1, he employs it in noun form from the verb

⁵ One wonders, however, about the presentation of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1. In v. 1 Abraham appears as the historically first ancestor, but in the summary of v. 17 the emphasis is rather on the importance of this figure in the lineage of Jesus, as mentioned next to David, because of the value of the promises made to the ancestor of Israel. Paciorek, *Ewangelia według św. Mateusza*, 86–87.

⁶ It seems that the theological bonding of Mattathias with Phineas is not the intention of the hagiographer. In the only two verses of 1 Macc 2:26, 54, mention of the behaviour of the main character's ancestor does not find any terminological reference to the Book of Numbers as his possible source, contrary to the Book of Genesis in the description of Abraham's life. The name of Levi, the ancestor of the entire priesthood, does not occur at all in 1 Maccabees. The only time Aaron's name in 7:14 appears, but not in the connection with the activities of Mattathias.

⁷ In the English translation, we use the text of the *New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*.

πειράζω, “to test.” The author of Sir 44:20 seems to follow the same line of exegesis, containing exactly the same construction in the text: ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός.⁸

On the other hand, the phrase ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην refers directly to the time of Abraham's life, in which he came to believe in the truthfulness of God's promises despite the lack of a descendant (Gen 15:6). This is his first step on a path of unconditional faith, which will be completed in obedience to God's command in Gen 22:2, 10.⁹ An interesting theological perspective is provided by the juxtaposition of Abraham's test in Gen 22 with the covenant made in Gen 15 within both Sir 44:20 and 1 Macc 2:52. Both events in the life of the patriarch are connected in these passages when, first Abraham believed God's words, and then demonstrates his complete faithfulness to God.¹⁰

In both cases, Abraham's coming to believe that a descendent will be born coupled with the subsequent readiness to sacrifice him at God's command together constitute the completion of the covenant and demonstrate man's need for absolute trust in God in every life situation. We are talking here about completing the covenant through proper conduct, because its formal basis is circumcision, to which all male descendants of Abraham must submit (Gen 17).¹¹

It is for these two reasons (the external sign of the covenant plus the internal act of fidelity to it) that the patriarch of the chosen people was included among the models to be followed by the sons of Mattathias in the fight for religious freedom and political independence. However, it can be assumed that, for the author of 1 Maccabees, the faith of Abraham is more important than its visible sign of circumcision, since it was to Abraham's faith that the author precisely referred in v. 52 and not to his circumcision.¹²

⁸ Langkammer, *Księga Syracha*, 369–370.

⁹ For details, see Nawrot, *Pierwsza Księga Machabejska*, 539.

¹⁰ Xeravits, “Abraham in Jewish and Early Christian,” 31. Andrzej Piwowar (“Abraham w Pochwale Ojców,” 90–105) considers the text of Sir 44:20 in more detail.

¹¹ The hagiographer points to the presence of this formal basis of the covenant in the forced circumcision of Jewish children by the insurgents in 1 Macc 2:46.

¹² Romans 4:12 confirms this relationship, pointing to the superiority of faith over circumcision. Mounce, *Romans*, 126.

Therefore, if the sons of Mattathias are to be guided by the faith of Abraham, it is perfectly understandable that the leader of the Maccabean insurrection himself counted the ancestor among the foundations of his own conduct, especially in the struggle for covenant faithfulness to the God of Israel.

Both texts – Sir 44:20 and 1 Macc 2:52¹³ – testify that the theology of the late Old Testament period had its own developed understanding of Abraham’s covenant with God. This message combines circumcision as a formal condition necessary for entering into a covenant with faith, which results in a specific attitude towards the covenant. It is not enough to just undergo circumcision, but one must then prove fidelity to the covenant, especially in the times of trial which God can send to those who, through circumcision, have entered the realm of the covenant.¹⁴ It is possible that, in this light, Mattathias’ fight for respect shown toward the principles of the covenant by his countrymen is presented by the author to be a test from God, just like in the case of the patriarch of Israel. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the sacrifice of Abraham (Aqedah) is itself placed within a covenant context.¹⁵

Such a theology perfectly corresponds to the most important purpose of the Maccabean uprising, namely, to bring the people back to fidelity to the Abrahamic Covenant, both by circumcision and by a proper affirmative attitude that results from it. It is possible, by invoking the theology of the Aqedah event in 1 Macc 2:52, that the readiness of Mattathias is shown on a par with that of Abraham, for both were ready to sacrifice their offspring for God. Despite the noticeable differences in the two accounts, their attitudes as fathers willing to give up their sons at God’s request, connects these characters just as does their steadfastness and persistence in showing faithfulness to God.¹⁶ In Gen 22:16–18, God confirms the covenant

¹³ Also, Tob 6; Jdt 8:25–27 and Exod 10:5. See Xeravits, “Abraham in Jewish and Early Christian,” 32–35.

¹⁴ The translation of a covenant into a specific act of conduct that results from it is also shown in Jas 2:21.

¹⁵ Xeravits, “Abraham in the Old Testament Apocrypha,” 31.

¹⁶ John Bartlett (*The First and Second Book of the Maccabees*, 42) draws attention to this aspect of the attitude of Abraham and the rebels.

made with Abraham that the Maccabees are now striving to restore.¹⁷ Thus, the struggle of the heroes can be interpreted as a condition for the restoration of the covenant between God and all Israel, who are the descendants of Abraham. Thomas Hieke seems to be correct when he writes:

Abraham's faithfulness to God under trial functions as an example for fulfilling the Torah as God's commandment. At the same time the text qualifies the distress of the Maccabees as a time of crisis and trial, like the one Abraham had to undergo. In a very subtle way Mattathias appears as a true successor of Abraham, since he is willing to sacrifice his sons in resistance and battle.¹⁸

This consideration of the faithful commitment of Abraham does not contradict or diminish the emphasis on the role of Phineas as an example of covenantal fidelity to the Maccabean insurgents and – as the author of 1 Maccabees presents it – the ancestor of the Mattathias dynasty. Rather, the two characters can be juxtaposed by seeing in the text a general reference to the life of Abraham and the mention of a specific deed of Phineas (Num 25:7–8) in 1 Macc 2:26, 54. Thus, according to the hagiographer, the strength of Abraham's faith and his faithfulness to God could be for the sons of Mattathias the basis of their struggle, while they should be zealous in living it, by following the example of Eleazar's son and Aaron's grandson.

The content of v. 52 seems to indicate that the biblical author intentionally places Mattathias in the rank of the continuators of Abraham. Since the ancestor of the chosen people is to become the standard of conduct recommended for the sons of Mattathias (v. 51), surely their father cannot be excluded from imitating him.

¹⁷ The motif of God acting in the same way through the ages, regardless of the situation, is known in rabbinic literature, for example in m. Ta'an. 2:4: "He Who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Redeemer of Israel." Undoubtedly, the same attitude of man towards God, regardless of the time in which he appears, will result in the same His response.

¹⁸ Hieke, "The Role of 'Scripture'," 66.

2. Stories about the Lives of Both Heroes

The inspired author recounts his narrative in 1 Maccabees as a deeply religious son of his people, during a specific, very difficult time for Israel – the country’s very fragile and relative stabilisation – in the latter half of the second century BC.¹⁹ He has in his religious memory the unbreakable bond that God established with Abraham, giving him the land and making the promise of offspring, before finally binding himself to him in an everlasting covenant. These fundamental statements of historical faith were then deepened and enriched by the tradition of the ages and through the events of their history, especially their bondage and liberation from Egypt and exile to Babylon. During these great trials of history, God made himself known as the protector of the people. Therefore, the faith of both the narrator himself and his hero, Mattathias, can be summed up as Ronald Hendel does:

In each of these dangerous times, the memory of Abraham induces a turn of mind and opens a possibility for overcoming a dire crisis. To the Israelites in exile, the memory of Abraham gives new hope for a return to the Promised Land, with the exiles resuming Abraham’s original journey from Babylon to the Promised Land. To God in the stories of Exodus and Sinai, the memory of Abraham reawakens his original commitment to Israel, which had wavered in the interim. God’s promise of future memory ensures that this original commitment will never be extinguished, even when all seems hopeless. To both God and humans, Abraham’s memory restores a link between past, present, and future, providing a catalyst for reflection and action.²⁰

This same faith serves as the basis of life and the principle of action for the first leader of the Maccabean uprising as described in the book. So how, then, does the hagiographer portray his hero in detail? Well,

¹⁹ 128–120 BC, the reign of John Hyrcanus I (134–104), an ethnarch but not yet king, is the likely time of writing 1 Maccabees. Nawrot, *Pierwsza Księga Machabejska*, 150.

²⁰ Hendel, *Remembering Abraham*, 32.

before the exegesis of specific fragments, it is worth following the way in which the narrative about Mattathias is composed. There are some general points to note on this topic.

2.1. Mattathias and Abraham Juxtaposed with Each Other

The current point of the article does not lead to an immediate statement of the literary relationship between the genealogy of Mattathias and Abraham. It only allows to capture certain convergences, mainly theological, contained in the general literary presentation of the lives of both main characters in 1 Maccabees and Genesis. It is impossible to determine with certainty on what basis the author of 1 Maccabees could have put both characters together. It seems, however, that such similarities can be established by reading the text of his book.

Describing the achievements of Mattathias in the light of selected events from the life of Abraham, the hagiographer shows at least the literary and theological consistency between them. Having a richer theology of Genesis, he could employ some of the elements necessary for him to achieve his own literary and theological goals. These elements are: introducing a new hero; defining him; and assigning the role that everyone has to play in the fragment of which he is the main character. In this light, the following theological similarities can be established:

| Abraham | Mattathias |
|--|--|
| patriarch of the entire chosen people | patriarch of the Maccabees, descendant of Abraham |
| begins the history of Israel | begins the story of the struggle for its survival |
| inspired by God for an exclusive relationship with Him (Gen 12:1–4) | inspired to fight for the exclusive service of God among the Israelites (1 Macc 2:27) ^A |
| life is subordinate to God's will as an example for the next generations | life is subordinate to God's will as an example to successors and the people |

| Abraham | Mattathias |
|--|--|
| cutting off from the pagan life of the surrounding peoples | cutting off from the pagan life of the surrounding peoples and the Jewish apostates ^B |

^A This is, of course, an implicit supposition, since the author of 1 Maccabees consistently avoids direct and overt interventions of God in the Maccabean struggle in his book, focusing on a close historical account. Nawrot, *Pierwsza Księga Machabejska*, 163. The presentation brings its description closer to Gen 11:31, presenting the first stage of Abraham's journey without any clear indication of God's inspiration.

^B The theology of "cutting off" from the surrounding pagan world is especially strongly visible in the Judaic theology in post-exilic period, which Waldemar Chrostowski ("Konflikt," 82) rightly calls "rejection of assimilation."

Do these similarities allow for a conclusion about the intentional juxtaposition of the two texts by means of allusions? We cannot say with certainty, but the above-mentioned similarities allow us, at least theologically, to establish a thread of continuity between the two heroes.

2.2. The Priestly Function of Mattathias and the Altars during the Time of Abraham

Paradoxically, the author of 1 Maccabees does not explicitly mention the cultic activities undertaken by Mattathias as part of his required sacrificial service at the Lord's altars. There is no doubt, however, that since he was a priest, the service he faithfully exercised to fulfill the provisions of the law was the foundation of his relationship to the temple because he would not have felt sorrow for its woes (2:8–13) had he served God only casually or incompletely. Moreover, the details of his complaints show a deep and personal connection with the house of God, for when he generally mentions *ἁγίαν πόλιν*, "holy city," he does so precisely because of the presence of the house of God in it.²¹ Then, he immediately goes on to mention *ἁγίασμα*, "temple," inextricably linking the holiness of the city with the presence

²¹ It is worth noting that the Greek text Isa 66:20 uses the same phrase *ἁγίαν πόλιν* explicitly noting the presence of *οἶκον κυρίου*, the "house of the Lord," and

of the place to worship the God of Israel (v. 8). The phrase τὰ σκεύη τῆς δόξης, “glorious vessels,” refers to items of craftsmanship and value used in the temple worship in terms of the metal from which they were made.²² These precious vessels of worship were taken away during numerous pagan invasions, especially the most recent one by Antiochus IV, making it impossible to continue the ministry (2:9a).

The lack of a direct and explicit statement that Mattathias performed specific functions in the temple may allude to the presentation of the cultic elements in Abraham's life. This can be inferred from the term ὠκοδόμησεν... θυσιαστήριον κυρίῳ, “built an altar... to the LORD” (Gen 12:7; 13:18; 22:9) or its enrichment with the complement of ἐπεκαλέσατο ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου, “invoked the LORD by name” (Gen 12:8). Janusz Lemański in his commentary on Gen 12:7 believes that “the construction of the altar could have been a thanksgiving and a consecrating of the land intended for his descendants and nothing suggests the cultic patriarch's activity and the purpose of the altar construction remains unclear.”²³ Umberto Cassuto asserts even more clearly that it was not a sacrifice site because there is no mention of any offering, but merely a place to commemorate God revealing himself to Abraham.²⁴ Other exegetes are also convinced of the non-sacrificial character of the altar erected by Abraham.²⁵

However, the most important activity of later priests appears in the description of Abraham's life, namely the offering of animals or agricultural products to God on the altar he built. This action takes place in Gen 22:13 when Abraham offered up as a burnt offering (ἀνήνεγκεν αὐτὸν εἰς ὀλοκάρπωσιν) a ram found in the brush instead of his son Isaac. This means that the patriarch could then make

in a similar context of the temple worship taking place there. Details of the utensils commissioned by God, cf. Exod 25:13–39.

²² Nawrot, *Pierwsza Księga Machabejska*, 460.

²³ Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, 116. Similarly, Joseph B. Soloveitchik (*Abraham's Journey*, 67), but his explanation is highly subjective and unsupported by biblical arguments.

²⁴ Cassuto, *A Commentary*, 328–329.

²⁵ This way Claus Westermann (*Genesis 12–36*, 155) who cites similar opinions from other researchers.

such sacrifices more often, although the biblical authors usually do not emphasize this. Noah had done the same before by making sacrifices on the altar he had built (ᾠκοδόμησε ... θυσιαστήριον ... καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν εἰς ὄλοκάρπωσιν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον, Gen 8:20). This puts the two figures in line with those who followed the law before it was codified by Moses. Andrew E. Steinmann is right when he writes that “altar-building (and presumably sacrifice) is an act of worship in response to the Lord’s actions.”²⁶ According to Deut 27:6, building such an altar (οἰκοδομήσεις θυσιαστήριον κυρίῳ, “You shall build altar of the LORD”) fulfils its purpose precisely in the making of sacrifices to God, despite the lack of such mention in several verses.²⁷ Most of the texts explicitly link the erection of an altar with the offering of sacrifices.²⁸ In addition, the fragment of 1 Kgs 18:24–26 unequivocally links the sacrifice on the altar with the invocation of the name of the deity (ἐπικαλέσατε ἐν ὀνόματι θεοῦ, v. 25) and in vv. 30–37 Elijah also calls God at the altar he rebuilt and on which he laid the slain calf.

When translating the Hebrew text, the authors of the Septuagint seem to unambiguously combine the altar with the sacrifice, regardless of the tradition that created the original. They look at the original text from the theological point of view, not from literary composition or textual history. This perspective seems to be well commented on by Herbert Carl Leupold:

A word from God requires a response on the part of man. Abram felt himself impelled to give personal public testimony to God’s mercy displayed in this appearance. So, he built an altar. This statement is misconstrued by criticism in its attempt to find as many distinctions as possible between so-called sources. This passage, being ascribed to J, is said to mean that J never records instances of actual sacrifices by the patriarchs. That

²⁶ Steinmann, *Genesis*, 147.

²⁷ Gen 26:25; 35:7; Exod 17:15; 1 Sam 7:17; 14:35; 2 Kgs 21:3–5; 2 Chr 33:4–5.

²⁸ Gen 8:20; 22:9; Exod 20:24–25; 24:4–6; 32:5–6; Josh 8:30–31; 22:29; Judg 6:24–26; 21:4; 2 Sam 24:21–22, 25; 1 Kgs 9:25; 2 Kgs 16:11, 13; 1 Chr 21:36; 2 Chr 8:12; Ezra 3:2.

is the argument from silence, and it is inconclusive because the word for altar is *mizbéach*, meaning “a place for slaughter.” The manifest intention of the author must be that “a place for slaughter” was made in order to slaughter a victim. Altars become altars when the victim is slain. A mere altar of stones would have been a formalistic gesture on Abram’s part – a gesture like falling on one’s knees to pray but omitting the prayer. The soul of the patriarchal religion was sacrifice. The critics find matters which no one before their time dreamed of. The altar is said to be built “unto Yahweh” to emphasize the undeserved mercy of His promise.²⁹

It is difficult to state unequivocally whether the author of 1 Maccabees ascribed priestly functions to Abraham,³⁰ but the Jewish tradition itself certainly knew such a theology about the middle of the 2nd century BC.³¹ Then he could have implied it in his interpretation of Abraham’s life based on Genesis 12–25, and therefore may well have treated the life of Mattathias in the same way without explicitly mentioning his hero’s priestly functions. It is noteworthy that, according to 1 Macc 2:27, the most important reason for the insurgents’ guerilla campaign against the pagan army is not the temple and worship, but the law (νόμος) and the covenant (διαθήκη). However, because the term νόμος does not occur *explicite* in the Book of Genesis, one might speculate that verse 27 refers only to the law and the covenant made by Moses at Sinai? Most likely, the hagiographer combined both covenants in his record, since διαθήκη directly recalls the time of Abraham, because this term appears strictly in Gen 17:9–10 in close association with circumcision. One of the main actions undertaken by Mattathias was the compulsory circumcision of the children of Israel by the insurgents (2:46).

²⁹ Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 187.

³⁰ David also made sacrifices without being a priest in the strict sense (2 Sam 6:13, 17–18; 24:25; 1 Kgs 3:4, 15).

³¹ Interpreting Ps 110:4, the rabbinic tradition shows Abraham ordained a priest by God in the manner of Melchizedek (b. Ned. 32b), as does the Book of Jubilees on the foundation of Gen 15. Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests*, 56.

Moreover, in their studies of the late rabbinic tradition, exegetes also discover a connection between Abraham's priesthood and the circumcision in Gen 17. It is possible that the author of 1 Maccabees also shared this conviction in 2:27.³²

2.3. The Struggle of Abraham and Mattathias with Pagan Kings

One quite specific introduction to the Maccabean fight for faithfulness to God's commandments may be found in the priest's lamentation over the destroyed heritage of the people, over which every foreign nation extended (ἐκκληρονόμησεν) their own cultures (1 Macc 2:10). It makes it all the more puzzling that the ordinary and often used verb in the book to describe the domination of a country is βασιλεύω, "to rule, to reign."³³ Thus, in the use of the aforementioned verb by the hagiographer, it is possible to note a deliberate literary-theological reversal of God's promise to Abraham that only his natural descendant would inherit (κληρονομήσει) from him (Gen 15:4).³⁴ In the case of Mattathias and all his sons, they did not end up just weeping over the fate of the house of God and the whole people, but undertaking specific military actions which constitute the main part of the book's literary material.

Further, it seems that the similarity between Abraham and Mattathias is also visible on the basis of the historical and literary convergences between Gen 14:1–16 and 1 Macc 2. Much interesting information about the presumed late origin of Gen 14 is given by Gard Granerød who concludes that the composition of the chapter taking place between the 5th and 2nd centuries BC corresponds very well to the political and religious moods of Judea in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period:

³² Compare the analysis done by Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling (*The Book of Genesis*, 205–209).

³³ 1 Macc 1:1, 7, 10, 16; 6:2, 15, 17, 55; 7:1; 8:7, 13; 10:1; 11:9, 19, 40, 54; 12:7, 39; 13:32.

³⁴ According to Gen 15:7, God swore to give Abraham his own property (κληρομήσαι).

Throughout these centuries, there was no kingdom of Israel or Judah. In these centuries, Judah and the Judeans were bereft of kings and governors of their own. Furthermore, Judah was incorporated as a province in the Persian Empire and later in the Seleucid Empire. With the Hasmonean dynasty's arrival in the second century BCE, Judah, for a short while, partly regained limited independence as a kingdom within the Seleucid Empire. The Hasmonean Kingdom even expanded its territory significantly into the Negev to the south of the Judean heartland and the territories of Israel's former kingdom in the north.³⁵

The entire struggle undertaken by Mattathias and the Maccabean insurgents to free their people from Seleucid domination can be compared with Abraham's fight to free Lot in Genesis 14.³⁶ For the purposes of the present analysis, it is necessary to review the account of the struggle that Abraham waged against the rulers in Gen 14:14–16, including the following stages:

- a. the captivity of Lot as the reason for Abraham's decision to fight against the invaders (Gen 14:14),
- b. attack on enemy troops and victory over them (Gen 14:15),
- c. recovery of the abductees with their stolen property (Gen 14:16).

It seems that similar fragments of the struggle were included in his account of Mattathias by the author of 1 Maccabees, although they are expressed differently, are more scattered and woven into narrative material with richer themes.

The abduction of a relative undoubtedly meant that the existing peace within Abraham's family was disturbed, and this required an immediate and appropriate response. Failure to do so would mean accepting the injustice that befell his nephew in the area he inhabited, with the result that he himself would be defenseless against the stronger attackers. We find similar elements in the attitude of Mattathias facing the violence of the pagan Seleucid ruler, who forcibly entered the area

³⁵ Granerød, "Abram," 638.

³⁶ In the broader, historical context of the Persian and Hellenistic periods of Israel's history. Granerød, *Abraham and Melchizedek*, 143–152.

populated by his defenseless countrymen³⁷ creating an unacceptable living situation as regards their social peace and the ability to freely profess their own faith as it was in the days of the patriarch and his nephew, even among the inhabitants of Sodom. Like Abraham, Mattathias led the assembled troops, completely subordinated to him, to fight the imperial invaders. The author of the Book of Genesis points out that Abraham's troops were composed of his household, that is, people who were loyal and capable of carrying out the task entrusted to them, namely, to free the captured victims of the attack (14:14).³⁸

In turn, the narrator of Mattathias' deeds presents his fighters as faithful to the covenant and righteous men (1 Macc 2:29–30). Both leaders called and organized their divisions (Gen 14:14; 1 Macc 2:27) which were greatly outnumbered by their opponents' armies, so the fact that they were nevertheless victorious is quite striking. Further significant is the mention of the earlier victories of the army of Antiochus IV over Egypt in 1 Macc 1:16–19, similar to the description of Gen 14:5–7, which recounts the Mesopotamian kings first conquering the territories adjacent to Canaan before invading the land inhabited by Abraham and wreaking havoc on it.

Finally, it seems noteworthy that in both cases we deal with brave men, who are not professional soldiers. For Abraham himself was only a shepherd, and Mattathias the priest of the temple of the Lord. In order to free his nephew, the patriarch gathered οἰκογενεῖς, “retainers” (Gen 14:14),³⁹ and Mattathias, in addition to his brave

³⁷ Perhaps not without significance is the fact that in Gen 14:12–14, 16 Lot is referred to as ἀδελφός, “brother” of Abraham. It is the same noun that is used in the plural to define Mattathias and his followers in 1 Macc 2:40–41, people of righteous character, honest and lawful among renegades of their own community, as Lot among the Sodomites.

³⁸ Traditional Jewish exegesis speaks of “pupils” in the sense of warriors whom Abraham “prepared to fight many times.” *Tora Pardes Lauder: Bereszit*, 88. Targum Neofiti in the Book of Genesis says that Abraham “armed [...] the young men who were raised in his house.” Wróbel, *Biblia Aramejska*, 115.

³⁹ The term οἰκογενεῖς covers the entire Hebrew phrase בְּיָדוֹ יְלִידוֹ בֵּיתוֹ, “his retainers, born in his house” and allows the Greek translator to omit the embarrassing noun בְּיָדוֹ, nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, 185. In Gen 14:14; 15:2–3 this noun includes persons belonging to the broadly understood

sons, had at his side a congregation of the Asideans (1 Macc 2:42) and a gathering of various kinds of Jewish patriots fleeing from injustice and oppression (1 Macc 2:43).⁴⁰ The Maccabean resisters often fighting without proper armament (1 Macc 4:6), as did the servants of Abraham in their battles against the regular armies of the Mesopotamian kings.⁴¹

In 1 Macc 1:24, we find the same verbs: λαμβάνω, “to take” and ἀπέρχομαι, “to leave” with the spoil from the unjust seizure of someone else’s property. They also appear in a Greek version of Gen 14:11 with reference to the invading armies against which Abraham fought. The sacred vessels (σκευή) were looted by Antiochus’ armies in Jerusalem (1 Macc 2:9) and the possessions (ἀποσκευή) of Lot in Sodom (Gen 14:12) before both heroes began to act to restore them. After defeating (ἐπάταξεν) his opponents, Abraham pursued them (ἐδίωξεν) until he recovered the abducted people and looted property (Gen 14:15), while the troops gathered alongside Mattathias did the same with their enemies, both heathen and the traitorous fiends from among their own people (ἐπάταξαν, 1 Macc 2:44; ἐδίωξαν, 2:47).

household of Abraham, i.e., his servants. The same applies to Gen 17:12–13, 23, 27; Lev 22:11; Eccl 2:7 and Ezra 3:1, but through the fact of circumcision the term can extend its meaning to all circumcised members of the chosen people as coming from Abraham. Jer 2:14, in which the Greek term applied to all Israel, as well as its Hebrew prototype, appearing both in Gen 17:13, 27 and in this prophetic text, may lead to such a belief, cf. the term οἶκος, frequent in the Septuagint Ἰσραήλ, “house of Israel.” Michel, “οἶκος,” 129–130. Belonging to it is conditioned by obvious fidelity to law and covenant. Although the author of 1 Maccabees nowhere in his work included the term οἰκογενής, it should not be surprising, since οἰκογενεῖς defines servants born in the house of the ruler, not his sons.

⁴⁰ The function of the head of the families makes the text similar to 1 Chr 5:24; 7:2, 5, 7, 9, 11. Doran, “The First Book of the Maccabees,” 47.

⁴¹ However, they were not simple shepherds, unskilled in battle, but – according to the Hebrew source – more slaves or servants capable of providing military assistance and with a significant chance of an effective attack. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 406–407. Translations are possible for “trained men” or “armed servants.” Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis*, 156. The author of Genesis is aware that the most ordinary shepherds would not be able to cope with the regular enemy troops. Likewise, the author of 1 Maccabees suggests that the sons of Mattathias were well prepared to fight, though nowhere are they described as deceptive δυνάμεις, “soldiers.”

The possible reference to Gen 14 in the description of Mattathias' fight can be further understood in the light of the study of the Hebrew text of the Book of Genesis. It turns out that

Judah had no political independence and no indigenous king when Genesis 14 was composed. On the contrary, it was a tiny part of the Persian or the Seleucid Empire. The scribes who composed Genesis 14 were Judeans who construed a fictive historical account with their ancestor Abram as the protagonist and Elam as the main antagonist. Through Abram's interaction with the narrative characters in Genesis 14 the author contributed to the ongoing construction of a Judean/Jewish identity.⁴²

The theological awareness of this fact strengthens the possibility of combining Abraham's struggle with that of Mattathias. In both cases, the theology of victory against great odds shows unequivocally that God is able to fulfill His promises to those who remain faithful to Him.⁴³

2.4. Mattathias and Abraham's Obedience to God's Will

Perhaps the reader is most surprised by the fact that both chiefs and their subordinate troops were not professional soldiers and, yet when they faced armies devoted to their profession, they completely defeated them in direct combat. Undoubtedly, in both cases there is a decree of God's veiled support for a just cause, as was clearly expressed later by Jude Maccabee before the victorious battle of Beth-Horon (1 Macc 3:18). The victories of these leaders demonstrate the result of their obedience to God's will. In this regard, the author of 1 Maccabees probably wanted to present Mattathias as the continuator of the life of his great ancestor.

⁴² Granerød, "Abram," 643–644. Undoubtedly, Jonathan Goldstein (*1 Maccabees*, 7) is right when he cites numerous references of Mattathias' fights to the times of David due to persecution, outlaws, escapes, inequality of power, massacres, etc. However, the emphasis placed on this first-class juxtaposition does not exclude further theological repercussions, shown in relation to the attitude of Abraham.

⁴³ Papaioannou, *Israel*, 23.

Perhaps the most important context for comparing the two heroes is the very covenant entered into by God with Abraham (διαθήκη, Gen 17:4–8), which (ἐν διαθήκῃ, 1 Macc 2:20) after centuries it became necessary for Mattathias and his family to renew, causing an anti-Seleucid uprising.⁴⁴ The conclusion of this fidelity in the life of the leader of the uprising was the killing (ἔσφαξεν) of the guilty idolatrous fellow at the altar erected for this purpose (1 Macc 2:24). An example of such behavior as the absolute fulfillment of God's will can be seen in Abraham's willingness to kill (σφάζει) his own son in the test to which God subjected him (Gen 22:10).⁴⁵ Indeed, the similar, sacrificial context of the actions of both heroes is well worth emphasizing.⁴⁶

However, the more important similarity of the two actions appears when both the decision of Mattathias and the deed of Abraham are seen as the respective crowning of the fidelity of their entire lives. Just as the narrators of Gen 12–25 bring Abraham's active obedience to God to the pinnacle of sacrificing his son, the author of 1 Maccabees wants to show the beginning of Mattathias' struggle as the apex of his own faithfulness to God's law. The recognition of this similarity is entirely justified despite the lack of a common vocabulary that could explicitly bring the two characters together, and despite the noticeable differences in the biblical descriptions. We are not dealing with a literary allusion that requires the presence of a specific literary construction as an intertextual marker. However, there is a situational allusion that makes it possible to juxtapose

⁴⁴ This reference is also conveniently linked by the use of the biblical phrase "We will not obey the king's words by turning aside from our religion to the right hand or to the left" (1 Macc 2:22; NRSV).

⁴⁵ It does not matter that Mattathias, in retaliation for an idolatrous act, killed a stranger to the law, and Abraham, attempting from God, was to kill his own son. The essence of the comparison is the readiness to fulfill, without fail, God's will, whether given directly (Abraham) or through the law (Mattathias).

⁴⁶ The verb σφάζω appears earlier in 1 Macc 1:2, but it cannot be considered as a possible intertextual link, as it appears in an entirely different context for the general description of Alexander of Macedon, rather than the specific situation that binds Abraham to Mattathias. Moreover, the hero of the action is the pagan ruler, not the leader of Israel.

in a sufficiently clear way the actions of the heroes of both biblical accounts, as they are called to decide about the life or death of their children (Gen 22:2, “offer him up as a burnt offering” and 1 Macc 2:50, “give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors”). They are both ready to do just that. For the author of 1 Maccabees, this allusion is a reference so strong that he does not feel the need to compose a specific textual mention. The legitimacy of comparing the two main characters stems from their decision to show complete faithfulness to what they understood as God’s will for themselves and their loved ones.

Mattathias’ fidelity to God’s covenant with Abraham is also evident in the compulsory circumcision (περιέτεμον) of Jewish boys whose families had neglected this duty (1 Macc 2:46). This is undoubtedly the fulfillment of God’s covenantal command to Abraham that all men should be circumcised (περιτμηθήσεται, Gen 17:10). Within this context, the important consideration about the faithfulness of the covenant (ἰσθῶν διαθήκην), to which Mattathias called all his countrymen after killing an idolater from among his countrymen (1 Macc 2:27), perhaps refers not so much to the later Sinai covenant, but to that which God made with Abraham and to the fidelity to which he himself committed to his progeny (στήσω τὴν διαθήκην, Gen 17:7, 19).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ God’s absolute fidelity to covenants with people is shown in the use of the construction ἴστημι τὴν διαθήκην, which – with the exception of Jer 41:18 (LXX) – the only subject in the Bible is God (Gen 6:18; 9:11; Exod 6:4; Lev 26:9; Deut 8:18; 9:5). Well, the text Jer 41:18 (LXX), relating the phrase μὴ στήσαντας τὴν διαθήκην to the unfaithful Israelites, is very characteristic, for it mentions the act of dividing the calf into two parts and the passers-by of the sacrifices between them. The only biblical reference to this ritual is when Abraham made the covenant in Gen 15:10, 17. It is possible, therefore, that the author of 1 Macc 2:27 referred to God’s covenant with the patriarch through the prophetic text, wishing to remind Jews at the same time of the foundation of their belonging to the chosen people, their right to their own land, and their past infidelity to the obligations resulting from the conclusion of all existing covenants. Contrary to the constant construction of στήσω τὴν διαθήκην, present in the above-quoted verses and each time indicating a specific covenant between God and people, in 1 Maccabees there is a general phrase ἰσθῶν διαθήκην suggesting covenants in a general sense, that is, the previous ones: Abrahamic and Sinai. However, the hagiographer does not seem to want to refer to Noahite, despite

This faithfulness was also shown in the real struggle to carry out God's commandments, the key verse in which terminology was used by the author of 1 Maccabees is the text of Gen 26:5, which summarizes the life of Abraham and in which the hagiographer placed his praise in the mouth of God Himself:

ὑπήκουσεν Ἀβραὰμ ὁ πατήρ σου τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς
καὶ ἐφύλαξε τὰ προστάγματά μου καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς μου
καὶ τὰ δικαιώματά μου καὶ τὰ νόμιμά μου

because Abraham, your father, obeyed me,
keeping my mandate, my commandments,
my ordinances, and my instructions.

Three of the four lawful nouns also appear in Mattathias' speeches or actions as explicit intertextual markers. The first is the struggle for *πρόσταγμα*, the "mandate" of God's law. The patriarch of the Maccabean family passionately exhorted his sons to embrace this struggle in his death speech. According to 1 Macc 2:68, they were to adhere strictly to *πρόσταγμα*, which, although given in the singular, is definitely understood collectively in its entirety.⁴⁸ The hero himself gave an example of such faithfulness when he killed his fellow countryman in front of the altar, who, by making an unlawful sacrifice, changed God's command into *πρόσταγμα*, "king's order" (1 Macc 2:23).

Then, in God's praise of Abraham's life, the noun *ἐντολή*, "commandment" appears, which resounded so powerfully in Mattathias' own proclamation of fidelity to God on behalf of himself and his whole family, even if all nations under the sun gave up their cultic traditions and conformed to *ἐντολαῖς*, "royal commandments" (1 Macc 2:19). Stressing faithfulness to God's will, Mattathias, in a way, replicated

the same terminological juxtaposition (Gen 6:18; 9:11) due to the different context and the fact that human conduct, good or bad, has no bearing on God's obligations and His faithfulness to this covenant (Gen 8:21–22; 9:9–11).

⁴⁸ In the same collective sense, cf. Josh 14:14; Judg 11:39; 1 Sam 30:25; 1 Chr 16:17; 26:32; 2 Chr 19:10; 29:15; 35:25; 2 Macc 7:30; Ps 148:6 (LXX); Prov 14:27; Job 4:9.

the will of the patriarch who wanted to completely separate his family from the pagan Canaanites surrounding him, when he ordered his servant to seek a wife for Isaac among his relatives and not in Canaan (Gen 26:5). Likewise, Mattathias has separated himself from the pagans in an act of perfect fidelity to the covenant of his fathers, standing against the consent of traitors from among his people who carry out a mere royal decree while renouncing their native traditions (1 Macc 2:19–20). In turn, Mattathias' thunderous words refer to Abraham's faithfulness to God's *δικαιώματα*, "commandments" in Gen 2:26, as the Maccabean hero warns his countrymen against any abandonment of *δικαιώματα*, "commandments" of the law (1 Macc 2:21). The rightness of the decision to fight for their (*δικαιωμάτων*) implementation, despite it being the Sabbath, was then confirmed at the meeting of the insurgents after the slaughter of their compatriots by the Seleucid army on that day (1 Macc 2:40).

2.5. The Deaths of Mattathias and Abraham

The author of 1 Maccabees seems to promote the idea that natural death, after a long, happy and well-fulfilled life, surrounded by his own family, in contrast to a violent end, is the culmination of a series of blessings that God bestows upon man as a reward for his faithfulness to Him. This fidelity was honored with the death of the founder of the Maccabean family just as it was to Abraham.⁴⁹ In Gen 25:8, the hagiographer recounts the death of the patriarch of Israel who died (*ἀπέθανεν*) naturally in his old age, just as Mattathias' life ended naturally (*ἀπέθανεν*: 1 Macc 2:70), the dying leader joined (*προσετέθη*) his ancestors (Gen 25:8; 1 Macc 2:69), even if the author of 1 Maccabees probably intentionally changed the record of the ancestors.

⁴⁹ This does not prevent us from finding in the record of the hero's death more conspicuous references to the death of Jacob in Gen 49:28–29, 33; 50:10 or Moses in Deut 32:50 and others. Doran, "The First Book of the Maccabees," 52. The memory of Abraham should – as it seems – have the same rank as the others, although we cannot speak here of the intentionality of the hagiographer.

While Abraham was closely associated πρὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ, “to his people,” Mattathias πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας αὐτοῦ, “to his ancestors,” as the inspired writer undoubtedly wanted to emphasize the connection of the leader of the Maccabean uprising with the previous generations of the chosen people, even up to the generations of its founders.⁵⁰ Just as Isaac and Ishmael, the sons of Abraham, buried (ἔθαψαν αὐτὸν... οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ) their father in the cave (Gen 25:9), Mattathias’ sons buried him (ἔθαψαν αὐτὸν οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ) in the family tombs (1 Macc 2:70), fully preserving the ancient traditions of burying their parents.

A clear similarity – despite the terminological differences – can also be seen in the very places of the burials. Abraham rested with his wife in a grotto bought from the pagans (Gen 25:10), while Mattathias rested in the family tomb in Modein (1 Macc 2:70).⁵¹ In the description of the death of Mattathias, there is noticeable lack of reference to the entire record of the end of the life of Abraham, who died at a happy old age, full of life and with length of days (Gen 25:8), but this is understandable given that Mattathias died within completely different circumstances: under the occupation of the promised land by a hostile pagan power, enduring the plunder and destruction of the temple, the insurrection having begun amidst a growing sense of the shameful covenantal betrayal committed by his countrymen and the resulting growing anger of God against Israel.

⁵⁰ Also, the death of Jacob, to which the author of 1 Maccabees refers in the first place, when relating the end of Mattathias’ life, has a record πρὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ (Gen 49:33). Most likely, however, the change of λαός to πατήρ was dictated by the author of 1 Maccabees with a reference to the only such entry in Judg 2:10 (προσετέθησαν πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας αὐτῶν) to indicate the infidelity into which the generation of Israelites who had already settled in the land had fallen when those who conquered it died. Likewise, after the death of Mattathias, his sons will begin to gradually but continuously deviate from the faithfulness of the founder of the Maccabean dynasty.

⁵¹ This is not disturbed by the fact that in his description of the hero’s death, the characters of Jacob, Moses, Joshua and David could also be recalled. Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 239; Gryglewicz, *Księgi Machabejskie*, 71, 75; Abel, *Les livres des Maccabées*, 45.

Conclusion

The above analysis of the arrangement of some biblical pericopes and the terminology they contain allows us to draw the basic conclusion that in the presentation of the life and death of Mattathias, the patriarch of the Maccabean family, the author of 1 Maccabees probably used the description of the life of Abraham, the patriarch and father of faith of the entire chosen people. He chose those episodes from the life of Abraham which, from the literary and theological point of view, suggest the favorable comparison of both characters.

Undoubtedly, it was the death of Mattathias that became the basis for the overall parallel presented by the author of 1 Maccabees. Mattathias is the only one in the entire family who died naturally without perishing in battle, while all his successors as leaders of the uprising lost their lives in increasingly inglorious fashion. Judah Maccabee was described most probably in the light of the life of Saul, the first king of Israel, chosen by God, but gradually departing from his faithfulness and, in the end, dying under conditions of abandonment and hopelessness. Tragic and yet nonetheless heroic, Judah gave his life for the covenant. Jonathan was murdered after being ambushed by wicked pagans, and Simon was killed in a drunken brawl.

In accord with the polish proverb “what life, such death,” the hagiographer undoubtedly presented Mattathias as the most praiseworthy Maccabean hero, whose earthly pilgrimage ended similarly to Abraham, though not under the same conditions of peace and security. Certainly, however, both share a sense of a fulfilled life built on absolute fidelity to God, who for both was the real foundation of life decisions. A key difference in the description of the actions of both characters is that what was spread over many years in Abraham’s life takes place in only the last period of Mattathias’ lifetime.

The proposed analysis seems to confirm the broader process of literary presentation of the patriarchs of Israel as historical figures in the late post-exilic theology of the Old Testament. Waldemar Chrostowski notes that

the memory of them was enriched by additions and embellishments emphasizing their actual achievements as well as

the importance and role. The genre of the legend, enriching the reality, was supposed to authenticate and update them in a way, so that they had an even stronger impact on faith and conduct. The vitality of the legend lasts for many generations, so the memory of people from the distant past became stronger and stronger and strengthened the awareness of common identity and fate.⁵²

In the end, one might say that the records of both books complement each other. The Book of Genesis emphasizes the will of God who constantly governs Abraham's life, talks with him, advises him, and directly guides his life's course. This personally interactive element is missing from the account of Mattathias in 1 Maccabees, which, on the other hand, shows the human struggle for faithfulness to God in a constant, everyday manner. Mattathias' story is a good complementary commentary to the narrative about Abraham, whom the inspired authors present only in subsequent, selected event sequences.

When combined, their two-fold model of behavior becomes all the more valuable and worthy of praise and imitation by successive generations of members of the people, and includes everyone, not only the chosen one.

Czy opis życia Abrahama w Rdz 12–25 w Septuagincie posłużył za wzór do opisu dokonań Matatiasza w 1 Mch 2,1–70?

Abstrakt: W końcowej pochwalie osiągnięć Matatiasza (1 Mch 2,49–68) autor Pierwszej Księgi Machabejskiej przedstawił głównego bohatera zachęcającego swoich synów do wiernego naśladowania przodków (2,51). Walczący powstańcy mieli z nich brać przykład dla swojego zachowania w konkretnych, trudnych sytuacjach życiowych. W ten sposób kolejno wymieniani ojcowie mieli stać się zarówno wzorem, jak i wsparciem w walce o wolność religijną i polityczną Żydów okresu seleuckiego. Jest bardzo prawdopodobne, że sam główny bohater – będący patriarchą rodu Machabeuszów – został opisany jako wierny naśladowca Abrahama, pierwszego patriarchy całego Izraela. Poniższy artykuł jest próbą ukazania możliwych powiązań między tymi dwoma postaciami na podstawie zestawień sytuacyjnych i literackich oraz odpowiedzi na pytanie, czy mogła to być intencja hagiografa, czy jest to tylko przypadkowe podobieństwo. Egzegeza intertekstualna, jako narzędzie badania problemu, wydaje się najbardziej odpowiednia do realizacji zamierzonego celu.

⁵² Chrostowski, "Patriarchowie Izraela," 14.

Słowa kluczowe: Septuaginta, Pierwsza Księga Machabejska, teologia biblijna, Abraham, Matatiasz, intertekstualność

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