

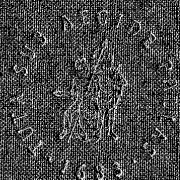
the Maccabees

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THE LIBRARIES IN 2 MACC 2:13-15, AND THE TORAH AS A PUBLIC DOCUMENT IN SECOND CENTURY BC JUDAISM

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1. INTRODUCTION

Judaism is a book religion. Books and holy scriptures have played a central role throughout the whole of Jewish history. It is not surprising, therefore, that the interest of scholars has been focused on these themes and adjacent issues like canonization, reading, or exegesis from the very beginning of Jewish studies and scientific research in the Old Testament, since the history of Jewish book-culture obviously starts in the Biblical period. But however important the reconstruction of every detail of book-culture in Old Testament and early post-biblical times may be, the available sources are few and all too often create only a narrow basis for any further consideration.

From the perspective of Old Testament studies, certainly one of the most important sources for Jewish book culture is preserved in 2 Maccabees (2 Macc 2:13-15):

13 ἐξηγοῦντο δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς
ἀναγραφαῖς
καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνηματισμοῖς
τοῖς κατὰ τὸν Νεεμῖαν
καὶ ὡς καταβαλλόμενος
βιβλιοθήκην
ἐπισυνήγαγεν τὰ περὶ τῶν
βασιλέων βιβλία
καὶ προφητῶν καὶ τὰ τοῦ Δαυὶδ

καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βασιλέων περὶ
ἀναθεμάτων

14 ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ Ἰουδᾶς
τὰ διαπεπτωκότα διὰ τὸν
γεγονότα πόλεμον ἡμῖν
ἐπισυνήγαγεν πάντα
καὶ ἔστιν παρ' ἡμῖν

The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Nehemiah, and also that he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and prophets, and the writings of David

and letters of kings about votive offerings.

In the same way Judas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war that had come upon us, and they are in our possession.

15 ὧν οὖν ἐὰν χρεῖαν ἔχητε
τοὺς ἀποκομιούντας ὑμῖν
ἀποστέλλετε

So if you have need of them,
send people to get them for you.

Within the literary context of 2 Maccabees, these three verses belong to the second of the two festal letters preserved at the beginning of 2 Maccabees (2 Macc 1:10b-2,18). As is well known, these two letters have been prefixed to an abridged version (epitome) of Jason of Cyrene's history (beginning in chapter 3) and the epitomizer's introduction (2:19-32) to this version.¹ Both the exact date of the festal letters as well as the authenticity of the second festal letter are still under discussion. While the latter question may be totally ignored in the following, the problem of the historical date of the second festal letter will be touched on at the end of this paper.

Without any doubt, the intent of the verses 13f is "to promote a typological comparison between Judas [Maccabaeus] and Nehemiah" in order "to glorify Judas" and "to bolster his religious image".² By making use of a tradition about Nehemiah Judas is presented as the founder of a βιβλιοθήκη and as a collector of books. On account of this literary observation it seems improbable that the author of the second letter himself fabricated the story about Nehemiah. Rather, he referred to a tradition generally known to his contemporaries and especially to the addressees of his letter, notwithstanding the question of whether it was a genuine letter or a literary creation.

The declaration of 2 Macc 2:13 that Nehemiah was the founder of a βιβλιοθήκη in Jerusalem and collected books has always attracted the attention of scholars. Not a few of them have reckoned it an important source for the canonization of holy scriptures after the return from the Babylonian exile. Although I will leave this question aside in the following discussion, it should be noted that the passage under discussion seems to be of almost no historical interest for the reconstruction of the early post-exilic period. Therefore, I would like to restrict myself to the exploration of 2 Macc 2:13-15 and its cultural background within the framework of 2nd and 1st century Jewish book culture and canonical history.

In this context, two issues should be dealt with. Does the text of the second festal letter speak about the collection of holy scriptures? Is the text a reliable source that attests the existence of a library in Jerusalem?

2. NEHEMIAH AND JUDAS—COLLECTORS OF HOLY SCRIPTURES?

The passage under discussion has been taken by some scholars as a reliable source, that Judas Maccabaeus was in fact the collector of the books which became part of the Hebrew canon. Judging by the wording, however, this

¹ For a detailed account of the sources and the literary history of 2 Maccabees see C. Habicht, *2. Makkabäerbuch* (JSHRZ 1/3, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1976) 169-77.

² T.A. Bergren, "Nehemiah in 2 Maccabees 1:10-2:18," *JSJ* 28 (1997) 249-70, 262.

conclusion seems not very convincing. The following arguments clearly speak against this assumption.

The Greek expressions τὰ τοῦ Δαυὶδ cannot simply be taken as meaning "Psalter." With respect to the context of the sentence, it means either "the books of David" (τὰ τοῦ Δαυὶδ [βιβλία]) or "the books about David" (τὰ [βιβλία περὶ] τοῦ Δαυὶδ), the former being more probable. According to the rabbinic tradition, David was an important scholar and the author of several literary compositions besides the Psalter.³ That this is a tradition, which was current as early as in the 1st century BC at least is well demonstrated by 11QPs^a where David is praised as "wise, and a light like the light of the sun, and a scribe, and intelligent" (וְדָוִד חָכָם וְשֹׁפֵר וְכַתֵּב וְיָדָע וְיָדָע וְיָדָע) and is said to have been the author of 4050 compositions.⁴ Therefore, if the expression τὰ τοῦ Δαυὶδ does not refer to accounts reporting the deeds of David, it should be regarded as referring to "books written by David" in general, and not specifically as a designation of the Psalter.

It is very improbable that the designation "the books about the kings and prophets" (τὰ περὶ τῶν βασιλέων βιβλία καὶ προφητῶν) really means the historical and prophetic books which became part of the Jewish canon.⁵ Especially suspicious seems the expression περὶ προφητῶν, in which "prophets" serves as the logical object ("about prophets") and not as the subject of the writing ("[words] of prophets"). The latter, however, should be expected in the case of the prophetic books. Additionally, "prophets" should be determined by the article when referring to the canonical books of the prophets. That both was required—prophets being determined and being the subject of the writing—is well illustrated by the prologue to Ben Sira, where the designations "the prophets" (οἱ προφῆται) or "the prophecies" (αἱ προφητεῖαι) appear. The expression τὰ βιβλία περὶ προφητῶν, therefore, seems to refer not to the prophetic books, but rather to stories or accounts about prophets. This conclusion is supported by other parts of the letter in question as well: 2 Macc 2:1-7 refers to an apocryphal tradition about the prophet Jeremiah, reportedly contained in what is called a "record" (v.1: ἀπογραφή) or a "document" (v.4: γράφη). It seems very probable that this was the kind of book which the author of the second letter had in mind when he was speaking of "books about prophets," namely prophetic stories.

The conclusion that the author did not even try to present Nehemiah as the collector of the holy books which became part of the Hebrew Bible gets further support from the continuation of the passage. According to the text, Nehemiah collected in his library "letters of kings about votive offerings" (ἐπιστολάς βασιλέων περὶ ἀναθεμάτων). It is true that royal documents apparently have been included in the text of several books of the Hebrew

³ See I.M. Ta-Schma, "David, In the Aggadah," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v.

⁴ 11QPs^a xxvii 2f and 10 (see DJD 4: 91-93), cf. Ch. Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second Temple Period* (JSOTSup 291, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1998) 124f.

⁵ Cf. R.T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism* (London: SPCK 1985) 150f.

Bible and we even find a royal document concerning dedications for the temple of Jerusalem in the book of Ezra (Ezr 7:11-26):

11 This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave to the priest Ezra, the scribe, a scholar of the text of the commandments of the LORD and his statutes for Israel: 12 "Artaxerxes, king of kings, to the priest Ezra, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven: Peace. And now 13 I decree that any of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom who freely offers to go to Jerusalem may go with you. 14 For you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to make inquiries about Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of your God, which is in your hand... 26 All who will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on them, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of their goods or for imprisonment."

However, none of the historical documents as such became part of the Hebrew Bible, even if they may have been included in literary compositions which became part of the Hebrew Bible.⁶

In sum, the passage in question does not present Nehemiah nor Judas as collectors of the holy books, but rather as the collector of historical accounts and royal documents. Neither Nehemiah nor Judas are regarded as fathers of the Hebrew canon but rather as fulfilling the duties of secular administrators. It is therefore hardly an accident that within Rabbinical literature the image of the religious leader of early post-exilic Judah has not been attributed to Nehemiah, but to Ezra,⁷ of whom the second festal letter tells nothing. Neither does the book of Ben Sira, where Nehemiah is remembered as someone famous for his building activities in Jerusalem:

The memory of Nehemiah also is lasting; he raised our fallen walls, and set up gates and bars, and rebuilt our ruined houses (Sir 49:13).

Again, this saying fits the image of a secular ruler. It seems that this was the core of the Nehemiah tradition referred to by the author of the second festal letter in order to glorify Judas as the new Nehemiah.⁸

I will now come to the second aspect mentioned above: the supposed foundation of a library in early post-exilic Jerusalem.

⁶ The nature and the historical background of the documents mentioned in 2 Macc 2:13 have been discussed in detail by M.-F. Baslez. She compares them to royal letters inscribed in stone and kept in the Greek temples of Lindos and Miletus. See Baslez, "Le Temple de Jérusalem comme lieu de mémoire: à propos de la bibliothèque de Néhémie," *Transseuphratène* 21 (2001) 36-42, passim.

⁷ Cf. EJ, Art. "Ezra, In the Aggadah".

⁸ It has been emphasized that "2 Maccabees... displays a critical view of the combination of political and priestly leadership in one person" (A. van der Kooij, "The use of the Greek Bible in II Maccabees," *JNSL* 25 [1999] 16).

3. THE SUPPOSED FOUNDATION OF A LIBRARY IN JERUSALEM

According to 2 Macc 2:13, Nehemiah founded a βιβλιοθήκη in Jerusalem. It seems, however, that the word βιβλιοθήκη in Hellenistic Greek cannot simply be understood as "library." Rather, it means an archive, especially a royal archive, devoted to the collection of official documents.⁹ This may be demonstrated by comparison with the other occurrences of the word βιβλιοθήκη in the Septuagint:¹⁰

Ezr 6:1: "Then Darius the king made a decree and caused a search to be made in the archives (ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις), where the treasure is stored in Babylon."
Est 2:23 (LXX): "And the king gave orders to make a note for a memorial in the royal archive (ἐν τῇ βασιλικῇ βιβλιοθήκῃ) of the good offices of Mardochaeus, as a commendation."

Although the exact difference between a library and an archive is not always entirely clear, the terminological distinction between the two should nevertheless be upheld, as has been emphasized by the vast majority of contemporary scholarly literature.¹¹ The former served for the collection of literature, while the latter the collection of official documents. The different purposes are reflected in the different ways in which a library and an archive were organized: while the former was arranged according to the sort of documents and the date of writing, the latter was arranged according to subjects.¹²

The use of the word βιβλιοθήκη implies, therefore, that neither Nehemiah nor Judas is presented as founding a library, but rather a royal archive. Again, they do not fulfill the duties of a religious official, but of an enlightened Hellenistic ruler, according to the second festal letter.¹³ It should be remembered here that 2 Maccabees is very precise to keep the function of the

⁹ Cf. U. Kellermann, *Nehemia. Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* (BZAW 102, Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann 1967) 123. Similarly, Clarysse translates βιβλιοθήκη as "archive" and "record office" (W. Clarysse, "Tomoi Synkollēsimoι," in *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record-Keeping in the Ancient World* [ed. M. Brosius, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003] 345).

¹⁰ For an analysis of these references see U. Kellermann, "Wenn ihr nun eines von diesen Büchern braucht, so lasst es euch holen (2 Makk. 2,15)," *ZDPV* 98 (1982) 104-9.

¹¹ See e.g. K.R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: an Introduction," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. *idem*, Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 1986) 4f; M. Haran, "Archives, Libraries, and the Order of the Biblical Books," *JANES* 22 (1993) 52-55; M. Brosius, "Ancient Archives and Concepts of Record-Keeping: An Introduction," in *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions*, 10f. On the other hand, the clear-cut difference between library and archive in the Ancient Near East has been questioned by Otten with regard to the evidence from Hattuša (see H. Otten, "Archive und Bibliotheken in Hattuša," *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries*, 184-90).

¹² See Haran, "Archives," 52.

¹³ See Haran, "Archives," 59.

royal administrator and of the religious leader apart and does not support the opinion that the leadership in both areas should be given to only one ruler.¹⁴

Our observation that the text under discussion speaks about a royal archive, and does not tell anything about the foundation of a library, is of special importance since the second festal letter of 2 Maccabees is the only historical reference which could possibly be referring to a library founded in early post-exilic Jerusalem.¹⁵ Neither Josephus nor any rabbinic text nor any other ancient source gives support to the hypothesis that there once existed a library of holy scriptures in Jerusalem in general or in the temple in particular.¹⁶ According to the analysis above, this theory should be abandoned.

4. THE STATUS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES ACCORDING TO THE SECOND FESTAL LETTER

Obviously, a collection of holy books was already in existence in the second century BC, consisting of at least two parts (Torah, Prophets), but more probably a third part was acknowledged as well (Writings).¹⁷ Accordingly, we should presume that this concept of a bipartite or rather tripartite collection of holy books was known to the author of 2 Maccabees and of the second festal letter as well as to their audience(s). The observation, therefore, that the author of the second festal letter credited neither the alleged archive-founder Nehemiah nor the book-collector Judas with the collection of the holy books probably means, that the creation of this collection was not understood to be connected to the existence of an archive (nor a library) nor as the work of a famous book-collector. We may therefore ask what other concept about the collection of holy books the author of the second festal letter had in mind.

It seems, at least with regard to the Torah, that the text gives a clear indication of the answer this question. In 2 Macc 2:1-3 it reports a tradition about the prophet Jeremiah. According to this tradition, he submitted the Torah to

¹⁴ See J.W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (JSJSup 57, Leiden: Brill 1997) 54.

¹⁵ See Haran, "Archives," 59.

¹⁶ See A.F.J. Klijn, "A Library of Scriptures in Jerusalem?," in *Studia codicologica* (ed. K. Treu, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1977), 265-72.

¹⁷ A. van der Kooij, "The Canonization of Ancient Books Kept in the Temple of Jerusalem," in *Canonization and Decanonization: Papers presented to the International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR), held at Leiden 9-10 January 1997* (eds. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Toorn, SHR 82, Leiden: Brill 1998) 37.

the people who were forced to go into the Babylonian exile before their departure from Jerusalem.¹⁸

1 εὐρίσκειται δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀπογραφαῖς
ιερεμίας ὁ προφήτης ὅτι ἐκέλευσεν

τοῦ πυρὸς λαβεῖν τοὺς μεταγομένους

ὡς σεσήμανται
2 καὶ ὡς ἐνετείλατο τοῖς
μεταγομένοις ὁ προφήτης δούς
αὐτοῖς τὸν νόμον
ἵνα μὴ ἐπιλάθωνται τῶν
προσταγμάτων

τοῦ κυρίου
καὶ ἵνα μὴ ἀποπλανηθῶσιν ταῖς
διανοίαις
βλέποντες ἀγάλματα χρυσᾶ καὶ
ἀργυρᾶ
καὶ τὸν περὶ αὐτὰ κόσμον
3 καὶ ἕτερα τοιαῦτα λέγων
παρεκάλει μὴ ἀποστῆναι τὸν νόμον

ἀπὸ τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν

One finds in the records
that the prophet Jeremiah ordered
those who

were being deported to take some
of the fire,
as has been mentioned,
and that the prophet, after giving
them the law, instructed those
who were being deported
not to forget the commandments

of the Lord,
or to be led astray in their
thoughts
on seeing the gold and silver
statues
and their adornment.

And with other similar words
he exhorted them that the law
should not
depart from their hearts.

According to this text, Jeremiah had free access to the book of the law, the Torah. What seems important here is that Jeremiah was only an ordinary priest without any other official function. The author of the text, therefore, regarded the Torah not as a document which was exclusively accessible to high officials, like the king or the high priest, but as a public document available to ordinary people like Jeremiah as well. This presupposition is well in line with the conclusion drawn above; that the concepts of "archive" (or "library") and "collection of holy books" cannot be connected since in antiquity neither a library nor an archive was a place usually open to the general public. Rather, it served the purposes of a very restricted readership.¹⁹ By saying that the law was handed over to "those who were being deported" (τοῖς μεταγομένοις), the text even emphasizes that the Torah was available to all.

The concept that the Torah is a public document is a *topos* which is by no means special to 2 Maccabees, but which is well known from Philo, Josephus

¹⁸ It cannot be doubted, that Habicht and others are right in giving preference to the reading μεταγομένους "those who were being deported" instead of μεταγενομένων in v. 1 (and accordingly in v. 2), see Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch*, 205.

¹⁹ See L. Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2001) 15 and 53.

and rabbinic sources.²⁰ 2 Maccabees, however, provides an important early attestation for this view. Moreover, it adds some interesting aspects which seem worthwhile to recount in detail.

The first observation is with regard to the role of the prophet Jeremiah. Obviously, there is a certain tension between the view that the Torah was a public document and him personally handing over the law. Why did he need to hand over the Torah if it was public? And why just him? Based on the image attributed to Jeremiah in the Aggadah²¹ it seems that the tradition behind the second festal letter regarded Jeremiah as the one exemplary pious during the time when Jerusalem was conquered and the first temple was destroyed. Although theoretically everyone would have had access to the Torah he was regarded as the only one who practiced it and kept its rules.

The second observation is with regard to prophetic or more generally religious authority: according to the story under discussion, the prophetic authority seems clearly secondary to that of the Torah. Apparently, Jeremiah was not admired for his own prophecies or for the book containing them, but because he enforced the law and helped keep the tradition.²² The second festal letter, therefore, seems to exhibit a clear inclination towards placing the Torah in the center of religious life. In the end, it is the Torah which has the only or at least the primary authority. The evidence, therefore, supports a strong counter-argument to Chapman's hypothesis that the Hebrew canon was from the very beginning a bipartite collection of Torah and prophets.²³

The third observation is with regard to the status of the Torah. According to the text, its appropriate place is neither in a private library nor in the temple, but in midst of the congregation. Obviously, the publicity of the Torah meant that it was accessible to all.

If the Torah was really a public document for the author of the second festal letter and for his audience, we should expect most people or at least most literate people to be well acquainted with it. One can imagine, however, different possible ways of being acquainted with a text, ranging at least from being able to report its content to knowing it by heart. In order to get a more detailed picture of what the public character of the Torah meant in everyday religious life, an analysis of the biblical quotations contained in 2 Maccabees

²⁰ "One of the characteristic aspects of Judaism was the notion that the Torah was the possession of all Jews, not only of the clergy and the priests. This characteristic of Judaism was inherited from its biblical foundations..." (A.I. Baumgarten, "The Torah as a Public Document in Judaism," *Studies in Religion* 14 [1985] 17).

²¹ See A. Rothkoff, "Art. Jeremiah, In the Aggadah," in *EJ* s.v.

²² Apart from handing over the Torah to the deportees, Jeremiah dealt with the preservation of the holy fire and hid the tent, the ark and the altar of incense, according to the second festal letter (2 Macc 2:5).

²³ S.B. Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets: a Study in Old Testament Canon Formation* (FAT 27, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2000) 285. Most unfortunately, Chapman's remarks on 2 Maccabees (cf. 261f) are of a rather general nature and therefore cannot be taken as supporting his position.

may turn out helpful. In order not to complicate things, I will restrict myself to the biblical quotations of the second festal letter, but it must be noted that the inclusion of the other biblical quotations in 2 Maccabees would not change the picture.

5. BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS WITHIN THE SECOND FESTAL LETTER

Within the second festal letter, five scriptural references are found, all of which are explicitly marked. Four of them have been taken from the Torah (1:29; 2:10.11.17); the fifth refers to a story contained in 1 Kgs and 2 Chr (2:10).²⁴

None of these quotations are a literal rendering of the biblical text as it is known to us from the manuscripts of the Septuagint. Maybe, the author referred to some other textual tradition or even to another literary tradition, like para-biblical texts or re-worked biblical texts. What seems more significant, however, is that the text of the second festal letter does not even claim to be a word-for-word quotation of a written document. Instead of introducing the quotation with the formula *καθώς γέγραπται*, he uses the formulations *καθώς εἶπεν Μωυσῆς*, *καὶ εἶπεν Μωυσῆς* and *καθώς καὶ Μωυσῆς προσήξατο*, explicitly referring not to a written document but to a spoken saying. This is even true for the following biblical reference, contained in 2 Macc 2:17f:

ὁ δὲ θεὸς ὁ σώσας τὸν πάντα λαὸν αὐτοῦ	It is God who has saved all his people,
καὶ ἀποδοὺς τὴν κληρονομίαν πᾶσιν	and has returned the inheritance to all,
καὶ τὸ βασίλειον καὶ τὸ ἱεράτευμα	and the kingship and the priesthood
καὶ τὸν ἀγιασμόν	and the consecration,
καθὼς ἐπηγγείλατο διὰ τοῦ νόμου	as he promised through the law.

Verse 17 presents a free reference to Ex 19:6: "...you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." The text of the second festal letter acknowledges the Torah as the source for the reference ("as he promised through the law," *καθὼς ἐπηγγείλατο διὰ τοῦ νόμου*). It asserts explicitly, however, that it is not the text as it is written which is important to him, but the message this text contains. The written text of the Torah is only the medium through which God is speaking, and this is clearly expressed in the formulation "through the law" (*διὰ τοῦ νόμου*).

²⁴ For the terminological distinction applied here (marked vs. unmarked references) see D.M. Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung: Form und Funktion der biblischen Anspielung in den magischen Texten der Kairoer Geniza. Freie wissenschaftliche Arbeit zur Erlangung des Grades einer Magistra Artium am Fachbereich Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Judaistik 2004) 50.

This tendency to disregard the written shape of the text appears even clearer in a further reference, which presents a very free narrative of what had happened according to the text of the Torah (2 Macc 2:11):

καὶ εἶπεν Μωυσῆς	And Moses said:
διὰ τὸ μὴ βεβρώσθαι τὸ περὶ	“Because the sin offering had not been
τῆς ἀμαρτίας	eaten
ἀνηλώθη	they were consumed.”

Obviously, this is a very free paraphrase of Lev 10:16-20:

Then Moses made inquiry about the goat of the sin offering, and it had already been burned! He was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's remaining sons, and said, "Why did you not eat the sin offering in the sacred area? For it is most holy, and God has given it to you that you may remove the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement on their behalf before the LORD. Its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded." And Aaron spoke to Moses, "See, today they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and yet such things as these have befallen me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been agreeable to the LORD?" And when Moses heard that, he agreed.

Notwithstanding the question of whether the immediate source of the second festal letter was the text of the Torah as known to us, the relation between the biblical text and the reference seems significant. The text does not present a literal quotation of the Biblical text, but a rather free narrative account based on the biblical text.

The same tendencies with regard to biblical quotations appear in the following verse (2 Macc 2:10):

καθὼς καὶ Μωυσῆς προσήξατο	Just as Moses prayed to the Lord,
πρὸς κύριου	
καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ	and fire came down from heaven
καὶ τὰ τῆς θυσίας ἔδαπάνησεν	and consumed the sacrifices,
οὕτως καὶ Σαλωμων προσήξατο	so also Solomon prayed,
καὶ καταβάν τὸ πῦρ ἀνήλωσεν	and the fire came down and
	consumed
τὰ ὄλοκαυτάματα	the whole burnt offerings.

Again, the biblical reference is not a word-for-word quotation but a free narrative summary of two biblical stories, one from the Torah and one from 2 Chronicles. The first part of the verse under discussion is a reference to Lev 9:23f:

Moses and Aaron entered the tent of meeting, and then came out and blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. Fire came out from

the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

As may be seen by comparison, the paraphrase, although considerably shorter than its biblical source, adds a detail not contained in the biblical text, namely that Moses spoke a prayer. Apparently, this detail has been introduced due to influence from the parallel reference in 2 Chr 7:1, which appears in the second half of the verse:

When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

It is interesting to note that the other biblical account of Solomon's prayer, preserved in 1 Kgs 8, does not contain a reference to a prayer. The parallel presentation of Moses' and Solomon's offerings should be seen as some kind of narrative harmonization of the two different stories. Both spoke a prayer, and in both cases fire came down from heaven after the prayer and consumed the offering.

From the evidence cited above it can be determined that what was important to the author was not the exact word-for-word rendering of the biblical text, but its meaning. Clearly, he does not refer to the surface structure (*Oberflächenstruktur*) of the biblical text, but to the deep structure (*Tiefenstruktur*).²⁵

This disregard for the surface structure and the focus on the deep structure of the biblical text which expresses itself in the second festal letter through both the type of quotation formula it uses as well as through the references themselves are characteristic of a stage within the canonical history of the Hebrew Bible prior to the 1st century BC. According to Adiel Schremer, it was only when turning from the 2nd to the 1st century BC onwards that scriptural references appeared as an authoritative proof for a certain view in the Jewish *halakha*.²⁶ Scriptural references of this proof-type are introduced by the formula "as it is written" (כַּכְּתוּבִים; καθὼς γέγραπται) and a literal quotation of the respective verse. The fact that in these cases the quotation runs word-for-word shows clearly that the quotation refers to the surface structure. Prior to that period, on the other hand, the surface structure is widely neglected and authoritative statements are made by rather general references to the "tradition of the fathers" (παράδοσις τῶν πατέρων) or the like.

²⁵ For the terminology see H.F. Plett, "The Poetics of Quotation," in *Von der verbalen Konstitution zur symbolischen Bedeutung – From Verbal Constitution to Symbolic Meaning* (eds. J.S. Petöfi and T. Olivi, Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag 1988) 317.

²⁶ A. Schremer, "[T]he[y] Did Not Read in the Sealed Book: Qumran Halakic Revolution and the Emergence of Torah Study in Second Temple Judaism," in *Historical Perspectives: from the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. D. Goodblatt, et al., STDJ 37, Leiden: Brill 2001) 105-26.

This turning point in the reception history of the Hebrew Scriptures²⁷ coincides with the emergence of the regular public reading of the Torah. Although prior to that era the Torah was of course a subject of study in Judaism, and although certainly there had taken place occasional public readings from the Torah (which is confirmed e.g. by Neh 8, Ezra's public reading aloud of the Torah), it is only in the last decades of the 2nd century BC that the public reading from the Torah became a regular institution in Second Temple Judaism.²⁸ And it is only through this institution that the word-for-word quotation of the text of the Torah became a regular option at all, enabled by the more widespread knowledge of the surface structure of the Biblical text.

6. CONCLUSION

The second festal letter of 2 Maccabees clearly favors the pre-eminence of the Torah over against the other books which became part of the Hebrew Bible. It regards only the Torah as the primary religious authority, the authority of all other canonical scriptures being secondary to it.

According to the author, the Torah is a public document, destined for and accessible to the whole congregation. Within the historical context of the second festal letter, however, this publicity did not mean the word-for-word acquaintance with the text of the Torah which became characteristic of the lectoral culture of both rabbinic Judaism and Samaritanism. Rather, it meant an acquaintance with the narrative content of the text, an acquaintance with its deep structure, and additionally knowledge of certain central Biblical expressions and phrases.

The second festal letter, therefore, attests a stage in Second Temple Judaism prior to the emergence of the regular public reading of the Torah and prior to the emergence of lectoral culture in the 1st century BC. It should be noted that this observation supports a date at the end of the 2nd century BC for the compilation of the second festal letter.

²⁷ The prehistory of this turning point has been analyzed by Armin Lange. He successfully demonstrates that during the Maccabean era, "authoritative literature gained a dignity of its own and became scripture" (Lange, "From Literature to Scripture: The Unity and Plurality of the Hebrew Scriptures in Light of the Qumran Library," in *One Scripture or Many? Canon from Biblical, Theological, and Philosophical Perspective* [eds. Ch. Helmer and Ch. Landmesser, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004] 107). He makes, however, no distinction between the different kinds of scriptural references, i.e. especially between quotations referring to the deep vs. the surface structure of the alluded text. In fact, the greater part of the compositions listed in his second group (dating from the period between Jason and Pompey) still attest quotations of the first kind.

²⁸ S. Schorch, *Die Vokale des Gesetzes: Die samaritanische Lesetradition als Textzeugin der Tora, Band 1: Das Buch Genesis* (BZAW 339, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2004) 57-61.