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Honor and Shame as Argumentative Topoi in 4 Maccabees

The Fourth Book of Maccabees stands as a rather enigmatic piece of Diasporic Jewish literature. Scholars have long debated its form, audience, date, place, occasion and purpose. What, indeed, is the author's aim? What does the author hope to accomplish in regard to his audience, and how does he seek to attain this end? As a presentation of Jewish models of obedience to the Torah in Hellenistic philosophic garb, the book promises to reveal much about the relationship of Diasporic Jews to their Greco-Roman environments.

Analysis of the use of language related to honor and dishonor may provide an important key to 4 Maccabees. Considerations of honor—its preservation, its acquisition, and the proper demonstration of honor toward others—weighed heavily in the decision-making process of people in the Hellenistic world. Alongside the rhetorical genre of epideictic speech, which is devoted to the praise or censure of some particular person, collective body, or characteristic and so works by demonstrating or setting forth what is honorable and what is shameful, the rhetoricians also placed heavy emphasis on honor as a means of developing a deliberative speech. The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, for example, regards advantage (the aim of the deliberative speech) to be composed of two subheads—security and honor, the latter being composed of what accords with the cardinal virtues of wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance, as well as with what leads to an honorable remembrance (3.2.3–7). Quintilian goes further in holding up as the aim of all deliberation the discovery and pursuit of the honorable course of action (*Inst. Or.* 8.1). Seneca speaks of considerations of honor and its opposite as final (that is, determinative or decisive) topics: "the one firm conviction from which we move to the proof of other points is this:

that which is honorable is held dear for no other reason than because it is honorable" (*Ben.* 4.16.2).

Rhetorical handbooks from the Greco-Roman world also provide significant guidance for a text-centered method for investigating this realm of discourse, describing, as they do, the ways in which a communicator could successfully use considerations of honor to move the audience in the direction desired by the speaker. Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* all discuss how the orator is to use honor and dishonor in deliberative and epideictic speeches in order to persuade the hearers. These theorists also provide a more precise idea of the place of honor among the values of Greco-Roman society, and what its component parts include. They also provide reliable guidance concerning how considerations of honor could be expected to provide the necessary motivation for an audience to respond as the orator urges (in deliberative rhetoric), as well as insights into how epideictic rhetoric might also be employed to persuade an audience to embrace a certain course of action over its alternatives.[1]

Rhetorical Genre and the Purpose of 4 Maccabees

Rhetorical genre and a document's situation and purpose are integrally related. Indications of genre, therefore, are extremely helpful in determining the goal that the author sought to achieve through his oration. Aristotle noted that no genre tends to be used exclusively in a speech, but rather the successful speech will utilize several genres in the service of the principle aim of the oration. For example, when the author desires to move his hearers to decide on a certain course of action, his primary genre will be the deliberative speech. Nevertheless, he may devote extensive sections to praise or blame (epideictic) or consideration of the just and the unjust (forensic) in the service of this aim.

4 Maccabees as Epideictic Oratory

Scholars would largely agree that 4 Maccabees belongs to the genre of epideictic, or demonstrative, oratory.[2] This category is the least well-defined,

1. See, further, deSilva, *Hope of Glory*, 1–33.

2. cf. Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch*, 659: "Diese allgemeine Gattungsbezeichnun »epideiktische Rede« ist zugleich die sicherste."

and, indeed, became a sort of catch-all category for speeches that were not clearly deliberative or forensic.[3] The language used by the author himself, nevertheless, points to this category. First, he uses the language of demonstration (ἐπιδείκνυσθαι, 1:1; ἀπόδειξιν, 3:19; ἀπέδειξα, 16:2). His concern to demonstrate a philosophical proposition, stated conspicuously at the outset, has led certain scholars to view the work as an example of diatribe.[4] Several scholars have questioned the adequacy of this description, based particularly on the author's own admission that his work includes an ἔπαινος (1:2), "praise," of virtue and seeks to praise (ἐπαινεῖν, 1:10) the Maccabean martyrs as exemplars of virtue.[5]

These two aspects of demonstrative oratory have led scholars to posit a number of plausible aims that the author sought to achieve through his writing. First, one may take the author at his word and understand his aim to be the demonstration of his thesis that "devout reason is sovereign over the emotions" (αὐτοδέσποτός ἐστιν τῶν παθῶν ὁ εὐσεβὴς λογισμός, 1:1).[6] Those who possess an εὐσεβὴς λογισμός, the author seeks to demonstrate, will achieve the highest honor. The faculty itself leads one to restrain the impulses that hinder justice, temperance, and courage (1:3–4), which are three of the four cardinal virtues seen as essential components of honor (e.g., *Rhet. ad Her.* 3.2.3). Furthermore, those who have displayed the sovereignty of this faculty are held up as exemplars of virtue (ἀρετή, 1:8) and, as such, are praiseworthy (1:10), the other component of honor according to the author of the *ad Herennium* (3.3.7). The author presents the cultivation of εὐσεβὴς λογισμός as a means of attaining true honor, which he sets in direct opposition to other forms of claiming and pursuing honor, which he calls "the malevolent tendency" (ἡ κακοήθης διάθεσις, 1:25) of the soul. Apart from "devout reason," all attempts

3. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 73.

4. Schürer, *History*, 588; Hadas, *Maccabees*, 101; Anderson, "4 Maccabees," 531; Lebram, "Literarische Form," 81.

5. Schürer (*History*, 588) felt this tension of form when, having labelled 4 Maccabees a diatribe, he continued by saying that "at times it also verges into panegyric." Hadas (*Maccabees*, 102) also noted the possibility of arguing that "our book is rather a panegyric or encomium than a diatribe." Lebram ("Literarische Form," 83) favors this description: "Durch den Terminus technicus ἔπαινος ist die Gattung unserer Rede schon genauer bestimmt. Sie gehört zum γένος ἐπιδεικτικόν, zur Gattung der Prunk- und Lehrreden, wie z.B. der *Panegyrikos* von Isocrates und die Lobreden auf Städte von Dion von Prusa." Based on internal indications of oral delivery at a specific occasion and the suggestion of an epitaph for the martyrs in 17:8, he further classifies it as akin to the funeral oration: "Dieser Rede hat der Autor eine Form gegeben, die starken Einfluss des athenischen Epitaphios verrät" ("Literarische Form," 96). Cf. also Gilbert, "4 Maccabees," 317.

6. Translations of 4 Maccabees in this chapter are taken from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

to satisfy the "thirst for honor" are but "empty reputation," "arrogance," and "boastfulness" (1:26; 2:15).

The epithet given to "reason" in the phrase εὐσεβὴς λογισμός points more precisely to the focus of the author's demonstration.[7] The emphasis is not on the Stoic ethical proposition that "reason is sovereign over the emotions,"[8] but rather on the nature of the reason that is able to achieve and maintain such sovereignty.[9] Lebram captures the essence of this shift in focus: "treuer Gehorsam gegen das jüdische Gesetz gleichbedeutend mit der Überwindung der πάθη ist. Dieser Gehorsam ist aber nichts anderes als die fromme Vernunft, der εὐσεβὴς λογισμός."[10] 4 Macc 1:15–17 brings the reader from more or less vague Hellenistic concepts squarely into the heart of Jewish particularity:

> Reason is the mind that with sound logic prefers the life of wisdom. Wisdom, next, is the knowledge of divine and human matters and the causes of these. This, in turn, is education in the law, by which we learn divine matters reverently and human affairs to our advantage.

Reason of the sort that leads to the life of virtue and praiseworthy remembrance realizes its goal by choosing the life that accords with wisdom. Wisdom is here further defined in the exact terms of Stoic philosophy (cf. Cicero, *Tusc. Dis.* 4.25.57: *rerum divinarum et humanarum scientiam cognitionemque quae cuiusque rei causa sit*). The manner of wisdom's acquisition, however, is "education in the Law" (ἡ τοῦ νόμου παιδεία, 1:17). The author clearly has in mind not the Stoic law of nature, at least not as presented by Antiochus in 5:8–9, but rather the Jewish Torah, as indicated by the

7. Lauer ("*Eusebes Logismos*," 170) considers the expression paradoxical or oxymoronic. Hadas (*Maccabees*, 144) rightly objects, however, that the use of "devout" as a qualifier of reason "is a logical solecism only if we equate 'reason' with 'rationalism'. In the Stoic view it is nearer tautology, for all reason is God-directed."

8. Schürer, *History*, 589.

9. Redditt ("Concept of *Nomos*," 249) is correct in saying that "the dominance of reason over emotion is, however, only the formal and not the crucial focus of 4 Maccabees," but only insofar as the author is concerned rather to demonstrate the nature of the reason which is so dominant, and in so doing advance his program for the promotion of obedience to Torah among Diasporic Jews who are constantly attracted to the advantages of some measure of assimilation to Hellenistic society.

10. Lebram, "Literarische Form," 81 ("faithful obedience to the Jewish Law is synonymous with overcoming the passions. This obedience is, however, nothing other than 'pious reason'."). Cf. also Schürer, *History*, 589–90: "Even the basic idea is a Jewish one recast, for the reason to which he ascribes command over the passions is not reason in the sense used by the Greek philosophers but religious reason, εὐσεβὴς λογισμός, i.e., reason that follows the norm of the divine law."

examples of particular commands from the Torah cited in 1:30–3:18. The Jewish Law teaches wisdom—the knowledge of things human and divine—and the one who adheres to this teaching will act reverently towards God and gain advantage in human interactions. In short, the Torah educates the reasoning faculty and leads to its mastery of emotions and thence to the individual's ability to live consistently in line with the virtues that stand at the core of personal honor and honorable remembrance.[11]

The examples of reason's mastery over feelings that the author chooses to present also point strongly in this direction. While the author declares that he can furnish proof of his thesis from any number of examples, he claims that the best illustrations of the principle at work are to be found in the history of the Maccabean martyrs, who "died for the sake of virtue" (1:7–8). It is precisely in Eleazar, the seven brothers, and their mother that one may see the mastery of devout reason over feelings—hence the reoccurring reference to the thesis after their deaths (6:31–33; 7:10; 13:1, 5; 16:1–2). Their suffering and deaths on behalf of "virtue" (1:8) or "piety" (6:22; 7:16; 9:6, 7, 30; 11:20; 16:17; 17:7) or "reverence for God" (7:22) were clearly also deaths on account of fidelity to Torah. That is, the matter at issue in the trials and tortures each faced was whether to transgress the Jewish Law (5:19–21, 29; 9:1–2, 4; 13:15). The author's examples of the sort of reason that conquers emotions, therefore, are examples of unwavering fidelity to the Torah. The author seems therefore quite intent on demonstrating that obedience to the Torah is what makes virtue (honor) and honorable remembrance possible.[12] The phrase εὐσεβὴς λογισμός becomes a sort of *leitmotif* for firm obedience to Torah.[13]

The true nature of the thesis that the author seeks to demonstrate becomes even clearer when seen against the claims the author makes throughout his discussion concerning the attainment of the reason that masters feelings and leads to a virtuous and honorable life. Victory over the emotions

11. Cf. Eleazar's reply to Antiochus in 5:23–24: "It teaches us self-control, so that we master all pleasures and desires, and it also trains us in courage, so that we endure any suffering willingly; it instructs us in justice, so that in all our dealings we act impartially, and it teaches us piety, so that with proper reverence we worship the only living God." The appearance of piety here in place of wisdom is more an apparent than a real substitution. Wisdom consists, after all, of the knowledge of and proper response to human and divine matters, and so embraces justice and piety (cf. Plato, *Gorg*, 507: "In relation to other men [the temperate man] will do what is just; and in his relation to the gods he will do what is holy").

12. Cf. Anderson, "Maccabees, Books of," 452.

13. Cf. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 189: "'reason' in 4 Maccabees is virtually equated with obedience to the law," specifically, "the Jewish law in all its particularity."

that hinder the practice of justice comes "as soon as one adopts a way of life in accordance with the law" (2:8). Similarly, in unfolding God's provisions in the creation of humanity for a life of virtue, the author states that "to the mind he gave the Law; and one who lives subject to this will rule a kingdom that is temperate, just, good, and courageous (2:23)."[14] As the demonstration progresses and the audience is caught up more and more by the noble examples of fidelity to the Torah, the author becomes increasingly exclusive in his claims: "As many as attend to religion with a whole heart, these *alone* are able to control the passions of the flesh" (7:18, emphasis mine). Lest the reader think that the author speaks of religion in general terms, he adds an explanation for his claim that roots it in Jewish religion: "since they believe that they, like our patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, do not die to God but live to God" (7:19). Finally, the author places upon the lips of the eldest brother the thesis that their deaths seek to demonstrate: "I will convince you that children of the Hebrews *alone* are invincible where virtue is concerned" (9:18, emphasis mine). They prove this through their unwavering fidelity to the Torah even in the face of the cruelest tortures.

Since the author seeks to promote obedience to the Torah as the exclusive means to attain and practice virtue, the work takes on a more protreptic nature than one would expect from an intellectual, philosophical demonstration. George Kennedy, a pioneer in adapting ancient rhetorical theory for use as a tool in New Testament interpretation, explains that this is not unusual for epideictic rhetoric:

> Aristotle sought to make a basic distinction between situations in which the audience are judges and those in which they are only spectators or observers . . . As Aristotle subsequently admits (2.18.1391b), the audience in [epideictic] cases becomes a judge, but a judge of the eloquence of the speaker rather than of his cause. Yet funeral orations and panegyrics were intended to be persuasive and often imply some need for actions, though in a more general way than does deliberative oratory. Greek orators regularly sought to give significance to their words by holding up the past as worthy of imitation in the future, and in the Roman empire epideictic orations celebrating the virtues of a ruler, Pliny's panegyric of Trajan, for example, often came to praise not the virtues he actually had, but virtues the orator

14. Hadas (*Maccabees*, 157) notes that the Stoic ideal of the wise person as king here is attained through the agency of Torah. One may also compare with this the Platonic ideal of the temperate person, who rules over his or her pleasures and passions (*Gorg.* 491).

> thought he should cultivate. They thus take on a more or less subtle deliberative purpose.[15]

He mentions also in this context the chief purpose that modern rhetoricians attribute to epideictic rhetoric, namely "the strengthening of audience adherence to some value as the basis for a general policy of action." It is this subtly deliberative function of epideictic that leads scholars to see the demonstration of a thesis as merely the "formal function" of 4 Maccabees and not its crucial function. The author appears rather to seek "to inculcate and preserve national and religious loyalty" and "to advocate fidelity to the Law."[16] That such a program lies behind 4 Maccabees becomes even more evident as its ancillary rhetorical genre is examined more closely.

4 Maccabees as Deliberative Rhetoric

While the epideictic elements of 4 Maccabees are prominently placed on the surface of the text and have been noted by most scholars of the book, its deliberative elements have largely gone overlooked. These elements ought not to detract from the description of the primary genre as epideictic or demonstrative, but rather serve to heighten the protreptic purpose of the whole work, and clue in modern readers to the nature of the impact that the author hopes to make on his audience.

First, one should note the direct exhortations addressed to the audience. In 1:1, as a form of *captatio benevolentiae*, the author advises his hearers to pay earnest attention to philosophy, particularly the philosophy expressed by his theme, because of the fruits of the mastery of reason over the emotions, namely the unhindered practice of praiseworthy virtues. As we have already seen, however, this "philosophy" concerns obedience to Torah as the surest means of cultivating these virtues. Because of this, the initial encouragement to pay attention to philosophy can be transformed into the concluding exhortation of 18:1–2: "O Israelite children, offspring of the seed of Abraham, obey this law and exercise piety in every way, knowing that devout reason is master of all emotions, not only of sufferings from within, but also of those from without." From these exhortations, it is clear that the author seeks to move his audience to keep the Torah, and to secure their absolute loyalty to Torah as their "policy" upon which all other actions are based.

15. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 73–74.

16. Hadas, *Maccabees*, 93; Anderson, "Fourth Maccabees," 532.

The author's expansion of the stories of the martyrs narrated more concisely in his source (2 Maccabees 6:18—7:40) allows him to create a sort of deliberative world within his epideictic discourse. This is evident from the explicit presence of two "counselors" in the martyrs' arena. That the two are opposed in their advice is clear from their juxtaposition in 9:2–3: "We are obviously putting our forebears to shame unless we should practice ready obedience to the Law and to Moses our counselor (συμβούλῳ Μωυσεῖ). Tyrant and counselor of lawlessness (σύμβουλε τύραννε παρανομίας), in your hatred for us do not pity us more than we pity ourselves."[17] Antiochus also presents himself as an advisor who presents considerations for the martyrs' deliberations: "I would advise you (συμβουλεύσαιμ' ἄν) to save yourself by eating pork" (5:6); "Not only do I advise you not to display the same madness as that of the old man . . . but I also exhort you to yield to me and enjoy my friendship (συμβουλεύω . . . παρακαλῶ)" (8:5). In both cases, Antiochus offers several considerations that aim at moving the martyrs to choose a particular course of action (capitulation) over another (persistence in obedience to Torah).

As a deliberative speaker and counselor, Antiochus is given the opportunity to make a case for the course he urges. This results in the appearance of what Klauck fittingly called *Rededuelle*,[18] "speech-duels" in which Antiochus offers his counsel (5.5–13; 8:5–11; 12:3–5) and the martyrs present their reasons for rejecting his counsel (5:16–38; 9:1–9; 12:11–18). These speeches are important not only as means of heightening the drama of the contest but also as a means of engaging the arguments that could be presented against the author's thesis that the Torah is the way to virtue and that uncompromising obedience to the Torah is the equivalent of the mastery of reason over the passions. The arguments considered by the author may very well reflect those that certain members of the audience might have heard (and *entertained*) advocating greater assimilation to the Hellenistic way of life as a path to advantage in a context that did not universally respect Judaism.[19]

17. Hadas (*Maccabees*, 193) points this out as an intentional contrast.

18. Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch*, 652.

19. See, for example, the calumnies against Judaism recorded and refuted by Josephus in the *Contra Apionem*, as well as the anti-Semitic presentation of Jews in Tacitus' *Histories*, Book Five. Even Quintilian manages to give evidence of this attitude in the midst of his discussion of epideictic rhetoric (*Inst.* 7.21): "founders of cities are detested for concentrating a race which is a curse to others, as for example the founder of the Jewish superstition." *Superstitio* was itself a derogatory term for a foreign religion among Romans.

Antiochus' address to Eleazar raises several issues: Is following Judaism on a parity with pursuing the noble task of philosophy (5:7)? Does not Jewish law conflict with the law of nature, to which the wise person must conform himself or herself (5:8)? Is it not unjust to treat nature's gifts with contempt (5:9)? Does adherence to the Jewish law not amount to holding an empty opinion with regard to the truth (5:10)? Would it not be better to adopt a more philosophical guide, such as reasoning according to the truth of what is beneficial (5:11)? Finally, Antiochus bids Eleazar consider that no divinity would blame him for transgressing under compulsion (5:13), an argument that appears again when he addresses the seven brothers (8:14). Eleazar, however, answers each of these objections and defends the course of resistance as reasonable and honorable.[20]

The second *Rededuell*—the exchange between Antiochus and the seven brothers—raises another set of issues. Here, Antiochus proposes a new benefactor-client relationship between himself and the brothers, promising them advancement and positions of honor in his kingdom (8:5–6). He knows how to benefit those who obey him, he claims (8:6): the only requirement is that they conform to the Hellenistic way of life (which is presented rather as a life of enjoyment): "Enjoy your youth by adopting the Greek way of life and by changing your manner of living" (8:8).[21] The only alternative is to suffer an excruciating death. Such deliberations again suggest that the author indirectly addresses the peculiar tension which would be felt by Jews living in the centers of Greek civilization, who had themselves accepted Greek as their language and many aspects of Greek thought as their thought as well. Perhaps some felt, as did the innovators mentioned in 1 Macc 1:11, that separation from the Gentiles only meant disaster and decline, that one was indeed faced with a choice of becoming Greek in ever deeper ways so as to strengthen one's place in the network of patronage and clientage that held together the Greco-Roman world or to be subject to the tensions, deprivations, and marginalization of an ethnic and religious minority group. The importance of these considerations for

20. Redditt ("Concept of *Nomos*," 250) rightly notes this apologetic aspect of 4 Maccabees: "the author attempts to show that the dictates of a rational, divine *nomos* do not contradict the world order. Rather, *nomos* is the genuine criterion by which to judge truth or philosophy." Similarly, he stresses how the author, in the voice of Eleazar, is at pains to demonstrate that the Torah is in fact in deepest accord with the law of nature, since both Torah and nature have their origin in the one God ("Concept of *Nomos*," 257).

21. Significantly, this exhortation recalls the negative example of Jason, who "changed the nation's way of life and altered its form of government in complete violation of the law" (4:19).

the author's audience is emphasized by the repetition of the offer and alternatives by Antiochus to the last surviving brother in 12:3–5.

The deliberative atmosphere of 4 Maccabees is heightened further by the author's creation of alternate or hypothetical responses by the seven brothers and the mother at 8:16–26 and 16:5–11. In these speeches, the author presents a line of reasoning which the martyrs *might* have adopted but *did* not. In their hypothetical speech, the brothers are depicted as capitulating to Antiochus' arguments that the necessities of their situation will excuse transgression (8:22, 24) and that Jewish particularism is indeed a "vain opinion" (8:19). These reasonings lead them to choose the king's friendship (which means a place of political honor and power) over "a disobedience that brings death" (8:18). The author, however, identifies this response as "cowardly and unmanly" (8:16), and sweeps it aside with the bold declaration of fidelity to the law which marks the martyrs' true attitude (9:1–9).

As a final deliberative element, one should not overlook the exhortations which the martyrs address to one another, but which, because of the fact that the whole speech is addressed to the audience and that the audience has been led at every point to identify with the martyrs, are also indirectly addressed to the audience. When Eleazar declares his refusal even to pretend to eat the food offered to idols, he closes with the exhortation: "therefore, O children of Abraham, die nobly for your religion!" (6:22). Similarly, the eldest brother expires with the exhortation on his lips: "Imitate me, brothers! Do not leave your post in my struggle or renounce our courageous family ties. Fight the sacred and noble battle for religion" (9:23–24). After the deaths of all seven brothers, the author reflects on how they exhorted one another to steadfastness to the Law, recounting these at length (13:9–18). Finally, he recounts the mother's stirring exhortation: "My sons, noble is the contest to which you are called to bear witness for the nation. Fight zealously for our ancestral law . . . Remember that it is through God that you have had a share in the world and have enjoyed life, and therefore you ought to endure any suffering for the sake of God" (16:16–19).[22] The

22. Seeley (*Noble Death*, 93–94) has argued that it is in fact the mimetic process which led to the martyrs' victory over Antiochus: "the martyrs become the 'cause of the downfall of tyranny' precisely because 'all people' marvel at their 'courage and endurance'. By inspiring others to re-enact their resistance they create an implacable barrier to Antiochus's efforts, sending him finally on his way . . . 1.11 and 18.5 make clear that the critical factor is the mimetic process by which others follow the martyrs' example." Furthermore, the author intends for his audience to be affected by the narrative so as to find the heart to imitate the martyrs as well: "It is clear that the vicarious effect of the martyrs' deaths can be appropriated mimetically even without having to re-enact literally their grisly end . . . Through describing the details, [the author] seeks to inspire obedience in his audience the way (he says) the martyrs' deaths inspired

auditors of such exhortations would no doubt have at least had to consider the applicability of such advice to their own situations.

While 4 Maccabees consists largely of epideictic oratory, then, it also contains a number of elements of deliberative oratory, including series of speeches which present various considerations and arguments as to which of two courses—capitulation or fidelity to Torah—is the better course. The auditors of the work are thereby called to consider the various issues raised within the framework of the martyr narrative, but are also provided a guide for evaluating these considerations by the author himself. Here we enter upon an examination of how the epideictic frame relates to these embedded deliberations.

Relation of Epideictic to Deliberative Rhetoric in 4 Maccabees

By setting the considerations of which of two courses to take within the framework of demonstrative oratory, the author is able to persuade the audience to take one course over the other not only by the arguments themselves (the responses in the *Rededuelle*) but also by means of his own commendation and censure of the various counselors, persons, choices, and actions. That is, the epideictic frame allows the author to show which choices and responses are approved as honorable and praiseworthy; to label as honorable or virtuous certain choices, reasonings, and their representatives; and to label as dishonorable, vicious, or deficient other choices, reasonings, and so forth.[23] It enables the author to set the conflict in a certain perspective in which the choice he recommends and in which he desires his audience to be confirmed may be presented as already positively evaluated.

In the ancient Mediterranean world, praise was closely linked with emulation. In Aristotle's words, emulation is

their contemporaries. This purpose accounts for the lingering, detailed description. By means of such mental re-enactment, the audience will benefit from the deaths. It will put itself in the martyrs' place, come to understand that it, too, could endure torment, and thus gain courage to live, or, if necessary, to die obediently (cf. 18.1, the first direct exhortation to the audience, which is told to 'obey this law')."

23. In this regard, the author of 4 Maccabees exemplifies the close relation of the two rhetorical genres spoken of by the rhetorical theorists. Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1.9.35–36), for example, writes that "praise and counsels have a common aspect; for what you might suggest in counselling becomes encomium by a change in the phrase . . . Accordingly, if you desire to praise, look what you would suggest; if you desire to suggest, look what you would praise." Similarly Quintilian (*Inst.* 7.28): "panegyric is akin to deliberative oratory inasmuch as the same things are usually praised in the former as are advised in the latter."

> a feeling of pain at the evident presence of highly valued goods, which are possible for us to attain, in the possession of those who naturally resemble us—pain not due to the fact that another possesses them, but to the fact that we ourselves do not. Emulation therefore is virtuous and characteristic of virtuous men, whereas envy is base and characteristic of base men; for the one, owing to emulation, fits himself to obtain such goods, while the object of the other, owing to envy, is to prevent his neighbour possessing them. (*Rhet*. 2.11.1)

In Thucydides' *History* (2.35), Pericles is given the honor of delivering a funeral oration which is somewhat self-reflective on the Greek practice of giving and hearing such a speech. Pericles approaches the task of praising the fallen soldiers with some caution:

> The man who knows the facts and loves the dead may well think that an oration tells less than what he knows and what he would like to hear: others who do not know so much may feel envy for the dead, and think the orator over-praises them, when he speaks of exploits that are beyond their own capacities. Praise of other people is tolerable only up to a certain point, the point where one still believes that one could do oneself some of the things one is hearing about. Once you get beyond this point, you will find people becoming jealous and incredulous.

Auditors of an epideictic speech that aims at praise apparently responded, if the speech was successfully constructed, with a feeling of emulation, affirming themselves inwardly as they heard the speech with assurances of "I could do that if I had to" and being drawn by the orator's praise into the conviction that one could oneself also act in a similarly praiseworthy manner. If one began to distance oneself from the subject of praise and from the possibility of upholding the values for which he or she was praised, the auditors would become unfavorable hearers.

As one might expect from a good orator, Pericles seeks to foster the auditors' feeling of emulation, even by direct exhortation and application: "We who remain behind may hope to be spared their fate, but must resolve to keep the same daring spirit against the foe" (2.43); "It is for you to try to be like them. Make up your minds that happiness depends on being free, and freedom depends on being courageous" (2.44). Similarly, the author of 4 Maccabees aims at inspiring the feeling of emulation among his auditors and seeks to strengthen their own resolve to "keep the same daring spirit," drawing them in by the hope of honor and praiseworthy remembrance and by their own sense of honor.

The author evaluates the character of the martyrs as honorable. They are associated in various ways with the virtue of καλοκἀγαθία, a word used in the LXX only in this book. According to Danker, who traces the use of this word in inscriptions to benefactors,

> to describe a person as *kalokagathos* (a perfect gentleman) or *kalēkagathē* (a noble woman) was one of the highest terms of praise in the Greek vocabulary. In some inscriptions the term *kalokagathos* appears as an alternate expression for *anēr tēs aretēs* (man of arete) and other terms used to describe high achievers or benefactors.[24]

The martyrs died "on account of καλοκἀγαθία" (1:10), die "equipped with καλοκἀγαθία," their deaths attesting to their character (11:22; 15:9), and lived with "a common zeal for καλοκἀγαθία" (13:25). This same virtue and virtuous description, however, is also made available to those of "temperate mind," who give religious reason dominion over their passions, this is, who emulate the martyrs' choices (3:18). The martyrs act out of a commitment to ἀρετή, "excellence" or "virtue" as well as the reputation for being of such a character. The brothers endure torture and die "for the sake of ἀρετή" (1:8; 10:10; 11:2) which assures them also of receiving the "prize of ἀρετή" (9:8); once again the emulation of this devotion to "excellence" is held up to the auditors in the form of a rhetorical question: "What person who . . . knows that it is blessed to endure any suffering for the sake of ἀρετή, would not be able to overcome the emotions though godliness?" (7:21–22).

In particular, the martyrs are credited with the virtue of εὐσέβεια, "piety," and ἀνδρεία, "courage." The former is not properly one of the four cardinal virtues of Stoicism or Platonism, but often appears as a replacement for one of those virtues (cf. Philo, *De spec. leg.* 4.147; Xenophon, *Memor*. 4.6). It may also be regarded as a subtype of justice, "giving to each thing what it is entitled in proportion to its worth" (*Rhet. ad Her.* 3.2.3) where what is due Deity is considered.[25] Piety and dutifulness are closely related values, as one sees in the frequent use of the epithet *pius* to describe the hero of the *Aeneid*, who is dependable, faithful, and dutiful with regard to the requirements of family, country, and divinities. As such, it is a very important social virtue. The martyrs in 4 Maccabees highly value this virtue, in that they suffer

24. Danker, *Benefactor*, 319.

25. Cf. also Socrates' definition of the temperate person in Plato, *Gorg*, 507: "And will not the temperate man do what is proper, both in relation to the gods and to men; —for he would not be temperate if he did not? Certainly he will do what is proper. In his relation to other men he will do what is just; and in his relation to the gods he will do what is holy; and he who does what is just and holy must be just and holy? Very true."

and die "on account of εὐσέβεια," a fact of which the auditors are reminded throughout the oration (5:31; 7:16; 9:29; 15:12; 16:13, 17, 19). Their choices are determined by their refusal to violate their life of εὐσέβεια and their reputation for this virtue (9:6, 25; 13:8, 10; 15:1, 3). As such, their deaths become a demonstration of piety (13:10).

Similarly, the martyrs demonstrate the virtue of ἀνδρεία, "courage," through their endurance of the most extreme tortures to the point of death. They are shown to possess a virtue that was highly praised in Greek culture. The funeral oration given by Pericles noted above takes as its keynote the fallen soldiers' demonstration of "manliness and courage" (which are synonymous terms in Greek thought). By their demonstration of ἀνδρεία, the martyrs win the admiration of all, including that of their torturers (1:11). The brothers endured the tortures bravely (14:9) as did the mother with even "greater courage than any man" (15:23, 30). Eleazar likewise exemplifies the "wise and courageous" person (7:23). In all their endurance of hardship, they shunned the course of ἀνανδρεία ("cowardice") and were not branded as δειλόψυχοι ("fainthearted") as those who did not hold firm to piety towards God expressed through obedience to the Torah would be (8:8; 16:5). They become exemplars of "courage" even to those engaged in military exploits, the traditional arena for the demonstration of "manliness" (17:23–24).

The author may therefore rightly commend them as καλός and γενναῖος ("noble") frequently throughout the oration (6:10; 7:8; 8:3; 9:13; 10:3; 15:24, 30). This nobility, however, is manifested in their choice to remain steadfast to God and the Torah in their encounter with the demands of Gentile society (cf. 9:27, where the second brother's choice is simply referred to as τὴν εὐγενῆ γνώμην, "his noble judgment"). It is precisely when their virtue is put to the test that their lives are seen to be exemplary and praiseworthy, and the end of their lives color the whole as dedicated to piety, courage, and the other virtues. It is in the outcome of their lives that their honor is secured, even as Pericles looks to the soldiers' deaths as the seal of their virtue: "To me it seems that the consummation which has overtaken these men shows us the meaning of manliness in its first revelation and in its final proof" (Thucydides, *Hist.* 2.42). Eleazar knows that his reputation for piety demonstrated through a long life of devotion is on the line in the test posed before him by the intrusion of Gentile demands—he may become an "example of ἀσεβεία" in an instant if he does not remain firm (5:18, 6:19).

As the consummation of their piety and courage, therefore, the martyrs' suffering and dying is lauded as endured "nobly" or "blessedly" (καλῶς, μακαρίως: 6:30; 9:24; 10:1, 15; 11:12; 12:1, 14; 15:32; 16:16). They are credited with having purged their πατρίς ("homeland") of a great evil (1:11: cf. Pericles' praise of the soldiers for the preservation of their

country's freedom) through having achieved a victory over the tyrant and his forces (1:11; 6:10; 7:4; 8:2, 15; 9:6, 30; 11:20, 24–27; 16:14; 17:2). The results and rewards of their firmness clearly include a honorable remembrance (amplified by the oration itself, with its *encomia* of the martyrs in 7:1–15; 13:6–14:10; 14:11–17:6). They endured εἰς δόξαν, "unto a glorious reputation" (7:9, translation mine), and enjoy the distinction of being honored by God (17:5), by the patriarchs (who still "live" as a court of public opinion able to ascribe honor, 13:17), and by their nation as its saviors (1:11; 17:20). They now stand in the presence of God, the ultimate reward for God's servants (9:8; 17:5, 17–19; 18:23).

The noble character, choices, actions, and rewards of the martyrs stand in stark contrast to those of their antagonists and other figures presented in the narrative as anti-exemplars. Antiochus IV is presented as ὑπερήφανος καὶ δεινός, "arrogant and fearsome" (4:15; cf. 9:15). He is a formidable adversary, but not an honorable one. He lacks respect for what is due God, and so is described as ἀσεβής, "impious" (cf. 9:32; 10:11; 12:11). Indeed, the author sets up intentional contrasts (underscored by the μέν . . . δέ antithesis) between the martyrs' virtue and Antiochus' vice (e.g., "We, on the one hand, O most abominable tyrant, suffer these things on account of the education and excellence of God, but you, on the other hand, will endure unending torments on account of your impiety and cruelty," 10:10–11). Antiochus is further vilified as a "hater of virtue" (μισάρετε, 11:4) and as "bloodthirsty, murderous, and utterly abominable" (αἱμοβόρος καὶ φονώδης καὶ παμμιαρώτατος, 10:17). His actions are negatively evaluated as impious (9:31), unjust (11:6), and shameless (12:11, 13). No alliance with such a person (or like persons) is possible for honorable people.

The author of 4 Maccabees presents, however, a number of persons who did seek such an alliance. The first is Simon, who for political reasons sought to slander the noble high priest Onias (4:1). Failing to achieve political honor in this arena, he turned to court the favor and seek the praise of the Gentile leaders (4:2–4). He is presented as a betrayer of his πατρίς and described as κατάρατος, "accursed" (4:5). The second is Jason, who contracted with Antiochus to purchase the honored office of High Priest and who, receiving this power, "changed the nation's way of life and altered its form of government in complete violation of the law" (4:19), setting aside the Torah as the basis for the Jerusalem polity in favor of a Greek constitution and structures. Such a course of action is precisely what Antiochus hopes the brothers will adopt, faced with the alternatives of enjoying his favor and promises of advancement and the suffering of tortures to the point of death (8:8). Seeking advancement in Gentile society at the cost of obedience to Torah and honoring God, however, provokes the wrath of God and brings

judgement upon the nation (4:21) and eternal torment upon individuals (9:9, 31; 10:21; 11:23; 12:12, 14, 18; 13:15; 18:5, 22). Not only is such a course "unmanly" and "fainthearted" (8.6), it is opposed to the course of virtue (by which the Torah leads the subject mind to "rule a kingdom that is temperate, just, good, and courageous," 2:23) and dishonors the One who is able to bring down both temporal and eternal tribulation on the heads of the disobedient and disrespectful (4:21; 13:15).

The path of the martyrs, therefore, is presented as the path of virtue and honorable remembrance. Those who seek to answer the demands of pagan society through loosening their observance of the Torah act dishonorably and irreverently, gaining a shameful reputation, in the author's estimation of honor, and earning the wrath of the Deity whom they despised through disregard for God's Law. As honor is a socially granted value, the author depicts the martyrs as engaged in a public contest, which takes place before Antiochus, his Friends, his soldiers, and his herded victims (5:1–2, 15, 27–28; 12:8; 17:14).[26] The martyrs receive honor from God and the patriarchs (13:3, 17; 17:5); since this court of reputation delivers an eternal verdict its opinion is of the highest importance. The author suggests, however, that the only way to receive lasting honor from the Gentiles is through obedience to the Jewish Law. Eleazar suggests, for example, that, at a deeper level, Antiochus would really despise the same capitulation he would seem to praise (6:21) and that transgression of the Law would lead not to honorable assimilation into Gentile society but would rather be an occasion for mockery and derision (5:27–28). To reinforce this perception, the author states that the martyrs' endurance provoked the admiration of their torturers (1:11; 6:11; 9:26; 17:16) and that Antiochus himself proclaimed them as an example of courage and manliness (17:23). Collins

26. A number of scholars have seen the importance of the public nature of these trials, since this puts not only martyrs' reputation but also God's honor on the line. The martyrs' steadfastness demonstrates their respect for God, just as their capitulation would enact disregard for God. See, for example, the comment by Hadas (*Maccabees*, 119–20): "A great distinction in gravity is made between sins committed in private and in public . . . more especially if public issue is being made of the transgression . . . When an issue *is* made, then even a slight transgression involves *hillul ha-Shem*, 'profanation of the divine name,' avoidance of which is the highest obligation . . . Hence it is no mere point of personal pride when Eleazar objects that he will be laughed at for violating his principles, no bolstering of pride when he refers to his reputation, and no bravado when he expresses indignation at the proffered ruse by which he would only *appear* to be transgressing. At all points Eleazar is behaving precisely as later codification . . . demanded." Hadas is followed on this point by Anderson, "Fourth Maccabees," 538 and Redditt, "Concept of *Nomos*," 254. An interesting parallel also appears in Rom 2:24, where Paul attributes the Gentiles' slander of God's name to the disrespect shown the Law by disobedient Jews.

rightly calls this a blatant fiction,[27] and the comments in other places of the narrative reveal a truer picture of the pagan estimation of these martyrs. Antiochus counsels the brothers against raging with "the same madness as that of the old man who has just been tortured" (8:5), as the torturers counsel the fourth brother not to "act the madman with that same madness your brothers have shown" (10:13, translation mine). Speaking to the youngest brother, Antiochus states: "You see the result of your brothers' stupidity, for they died in torments because of their disobedience" (12:3). The pagan view of these martyrs is that they died on account of "madness" (μανία) and "foolishness" (ἀπόνοια) rather than the virtues of piety and courage. Their deaths were not a noble contest with sufferings, but rather the just (and therefore all the more shameful) punishment of the disobedient. Nevertheless, the author holds up the hope that such a course of action will be recognized as virtuous and honorable in the deepest sense by all humankind (1:11; 18:3) and that the alternative course of capitulation will be universally recognized as cowardly and impious.

By means of his skillful use of epideictic rhetoric, the author has set two possible courses within an evaluative framework. His praise of the one course aims at moving the auditors to emulation, to the desire to demonstrate in their own settings the same dedication to virtue and thus to achieve the rewards of an honorable remembrance in this world and an honorable reception in the next.[28] His censure of the alternative course seeks to distance them from the possibility of transgressing the Torah by presenting this as a course opposed to honor and virtue and as a course that violates God's honor and leads to the provocation of God's wrath.

Audience and Effect

To whom was the author addressing this piece of demonstrative oratory? While a full discussion of the date, destination, and situation would be both long and unnecessary,[29] a few remarks concerning the audience

27. Collins, *From Athens*, 190.

28. This is succinctly expressed in Townshend, "Fourth Book," 653: "Immortality is their reward in heaven, while they enjoy on earth the honour of being held the saviours of their country, which noble title [the author] would inscribe as their epitaph. His impassioned eulogy is intended to rouse the patriotic and religious feelings of his audience to the highest pitch and harden them to the point of following so glorious an example."

29. The arguments concerning the date of the piece cluster around two likely periods—the years before Caligula's self-deification and the calamities that entailed for Jews throughout the empire (cf. Hadas, *Maccabees*, 95–99; Townshend, "Fourth Book," 654; Bickermann, "Date of Fourth Maccabees") and the period between the Jewish Wars

may be permitted. Schürer seems to indicate that the author was writing to Gentiles,[30] and Bertram sees a mixed audience as the recipients of an apologetic work.[31] Collins appears to be correct, however, in noting that the work "might not persuade many gentiles,"[32] especially since it rests on the assumption that the Torah has its source in the Deity, an assumption not shared by many Gentiles (such as those who regarded Judaism as a *superstitio*). I would agree with Klauck that 4 Maccabees "ist nach innen gerichtete Apologetik,"[33] an "inner-directed apology" presented to Jews who have lost their certainty with regard to the Torah as the surest path to the exhibition and attainment of true honor. The situation of the audience—Diaspora Jews—may best be described as one of "profound tension."[34] Victor Tcherikover expresses this tension as a fluctuation

> between two mutually contradictory principles: between the ambition to assimilate arising from the Jew's desire to exist among strangers by his individual powers, and the adherence to tradition, induced in the struggle for existence by the need of support from the strong collective organization represented by the community.[35]

These Jews were faced with the tension between remaining faithful to the ancestral Law, which alienated them in many ways from Gentile society, and attaining a place of distinction, acceptance, and honor in Gentile society. For some, the stakes may have seemed nearly as high as for the Maccabean martyrs—not torture and death, to be sure, but palpable economic and social deprivation.

For the different needs of the individuals who make up such communities, 4 Maccabees promises to achieve different effects. For those Jews committed to Torah, the author presents material to reinforce that commitment and fuel the heart for the endurance of whatever form the tension with the larger society will take. For wavering or confused Jews, the author

under Trajan and Hadrian's persecution (cf. Breitenstein, *Beobachtungen*, 173–75). There is, however, no need to "posit a time of extreme crisis and threat for the Jews" as the life setting of this text (Anderson, "Maccabees, Books of," 453). It appears to be safer and more useful to eschew the attempts to locate the book and its intended effects too narrowly and seek rather to examine how the book might have effect a more generalized audience.

30. Schürer, *History*, 590.
31. Bertram, "Παιδεύω," 612.
32. Collins, *From Athens*, 190.
33. Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch*, 665.
34. Redditt, "Concept of *Nomos*," 264.
35. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 346.

presents material to exhort them to take a stand for the Torah and Torah-centered piety, calling them back to commitment to Jewish particularism as the means of achieving highest honor and reputation.[36] For Jews feeling the threat and loss especially deeply, the author provides examples to fuel endurance and courage to face the contest. Claims such as that found in 2:23 ("one who lives subject to [the law] will rule over a kingdom that is temperate, just, good, and courageous") and many like it will be heard in different ways by different hearers: the author's choice of epideictic oratory as the means to achieve his end allows for this ambiguity, such that the same piece may encourage the committed and challenge the wavering.

Honor, Shame, and the Embedded Argument of 4 Maccabees

Fourth Maccabees appears to address people faced with real alternatives, namely whether to remain faithful to God by means of Torah-obedience whatever the consequences or to seek compromises with Greco-Roman society that will facilitate greater acceptance and advancement within the framework of Hellenistic society. Attention to the language of honor and shame in this document has already provided a picture of the author's aim and strategy. Further attention to the details of what is presented as honorable and dishonorable action, moreover, leads to a clearer picture of the issues at stake for the author and his addressees. Here the consideration of the two aspects of one's sense of honor—that is, one's desire to attain honor and one's sensitivity to honor others properly—comes to the fore.

The martyrs, we have seen, are exemplars of honor in that they exemplify the cardinal virtues (1:7–10; 5:23–24; 15:10) and, through their actions, have attained an honorable remembrance (7:9; 18:3).[37] These are depicted as choosing honor above advantage (without honor) and compulsion. The highest compulsion, their spokesperson Eleazar declares, is obedience to the law (5:16), which translates roughly into piety or reverence for God (cf. θεοσέβεια, 7:22). The martyrs are highly sensitive to God's honor, even as Apollonius and Jason were insensitive to God's honor and provoked God's wrath (4:7–12; 4:21). The concern for showing respect for God's law guides their choices (5:19–21, 27–28; 9:4; 13:13) and is superior to the concern

36. cf. Hadas, *4 Maccabees*, 133: the author's goal is "to furnish guidance to readers perplexed by real alternatives."

37. One may recall the division of the Honorable into the "Right" and the "Praiseworthy" in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (3.2.3–3.4.7).

for honoring the demands of Antiochus where these hinder observance of God's law (4:24, 26; 5:10).

This obedience to God is linked with the martyrs' experience of God as Benefactor and their hope for the continued experience of God's benefits. The mother urges her sons on to death in obedience to God's law based on God's beneficence: "Remember that it is through God that you have had a share in the world and have enjoyed life, and therefore you ought to endure any suffering for the sake of God" (16:18–19; cf. 13:13). The martyrs hope thus to gain future benefits from their Benefactor, both for the nation in the form of deliverance from political oppression (6:27–28) and for themselves as individuals in the form of eternal life in the presence of God (7:19; 9:8; 15:2–3, 13; 16:25; 17:18–19). As honorable clients, therefore, they set their hope in this Benefactor (16:25; 17:4) and demonstrate πίστις with regard to God (7:19; 15:24; 16:21–22; 17:2, 3). This "faith" has been variously interpreted,[38] but seems to retain its sense of "firmness" (hence, "reliability") or "loyalty" in 4 Maccabees. Faith, then, expresses the proper stance of a client toward a benefactor, the proper return for benefits conferred.

This gives particular moment to Antiochus' offers in 8:5–7, promising the brothers a place of honor in Hellenic society: "I encourage you, after yielding to me, to enjoy my friendship (παρακαλῶ συνείξαντάς μοι τῆς ἐμῆς ἀπολαύειν φιλίας)" (8:5), the king's "friend" being an influential position. He proposes to replace God, in effect, as their patron: "I can be a benefactor to those who obey me (δυναίμην . . . εὐεργετεῖν τοὺς εὐπειθοῦντάς μοι)" (8:6). Finally, he promises to raise them to positions of authority (ἀρχαί, 8:7). In 12:5 he repeats the promise of secular honors to the last surviving brother. The brothers refuse the offered relationship, holding to their relationship with God. Antiochus' promise (benefaction) can only effect temporary safety (15:3) and advancement; God's promise (benefaction) of eternal life is infinitely to be preferred (15:2). Their willingness to provoke Antiochus (who regards them thence forward as ingrates as well as disobedient, 9:10) is based on their proper evaluation of the danger of God's outraged virtue as the greater threat (13:14–15; cf. Matt 10:28). The ultimate tribunal is the

38. Cf. Townshend, "Fourth Book," 664: "The word 'faith' also occurs, in a distinctively religious sense . . . In this religious sense πίστις belongs not to Stoic, nor even to Greek thought, but to that devotional side of the Hebrew mind which was to be more fully expressed in Christianity. Here, however, as Maldwyn Hughes says, 'It is rather trust in an external Providence than an inner dependence arising from an inward relationship. Faith is not a renewing and life-giving power, but confidence in the providential order.'" Such a triumphalist understanding of "faith," however, obscures its true nature as a most admirable quality shown by both Jews and Christians towards God (cf. Hebrews 11).

court of God's judgement. This conviction enables them to disregard the verdicts of the lower court.

What, then, is shameful in 4 Maccabees? The author does not consider for a moment that the tortures and physical outrages to the martyr's bodies adversely affect their honor in any way. While such treatment is thought to include the destruction of a person's honor and place in society, for the martyrs it is a sign of honor. The author solves this problem philosophically: the tortures are a test of virtue (10:10; 11:2, 12, 20);[39] the treatment is undeserved and therefore not an insult or injury (9:15, 31; 10:10; 11:2; 12:11);[40] the despising of injuries is the sign of a wise and courageous person (1:9; 5:27; 6:9; 9:6; 13:1; 14:1, 11). Even if the body is stripped (exposed, shamed) or made to fall, the martyr remains clothed with virtue and his or her mind unconquered (6:2, 7).[41] The author also solves this problem metaphorically through the use of "contest" imagery, by which he turns ignominious death into a victory over a foreign invader (5:10; 7:3; 9:30; 11:20; 12:14; 15:29; 16:16; 17:11–16).[42]

Neither shameful treatment at the hands of Gentiles nor the failure to attain honor in Gentile society counts as shameful for the author, but rather the violation of piety and proper reverence for God. To those asking the question, "should we seek to acquire honor by extending our patron/client networks into the Gentile population at the expense of absolute obedience to the Torah?" the author holds up the negative examples of Simon and Jason and displays the martyrs' virtuous refusal to take such a course. In the voices of the martyrs, the author engages in a critique of the Greco-Roman society which does not make a place for Torah-observant Jews, but rather which lives itself contrary to the law of God and despises Jews for living by this law. Antiochus' punishment of the brothers shows his own ignorance of what is just and what is honorable: "For what act of ours are you destroying

39. Cf. Seneca, *Constant.*. 9.3: the wise person "counts even injury profitable, for through it he finds a means of putting himself to the proof and makes trial of his virtue."

40. cf. Seneca, *Constant.*16.3: "Both [Stoics and Epicureans] urge you to scorn injuries and, what I may call the shadows and suggestions of injuries, insults. And one does not need to be a wise man to despise these, but merely a man of sense—one who can say to himself: 'Do I, or do I not, deserve that these things befall me? If I do deserve them, there is no insult—it is justice; if I do not deserve them, he who does the injustice is the one to blush.'"

41. Cf. Plato, *Gorg*, 523–26. Socrates recounts the tale of the divinely appointed judgement of people at their deaths. Judging them while alive and clothed led to bad judgements, so they are now judged after death and naked. The goodness of the soul, not how the body fared in life, is what is judged and what determines eternal destiny.

42. Cf. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, 23–48, for the use of this imagery in Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish literature.

us in this way? Is it because we revere the creator of all things and live according to his virtuous law? But these deeds deserve honors, not tortures" (11:4–6). From the perspective of the court of God, Antiochus himself may be evaluated as shameless, lacking the essential element of honor which regards the honor due God and other human beings:

> You profane tyrant, most impious of all the wicked, since you have received good things and also your kingdom from God, were you not ashamed (οὐκ ἠδέσθης) to murder his servants and torture on the wheel those who practice religion? . . . As a man, were you not ashamed (οὐκ ἠδέσθης), you most savage beast, to cut out the tongues of men who have feelings like yours and are made of the same elements as you, and to maltreat and torture them in this way? (12:11–13)

Antiochus is thus censured as a dishonorable client. He does not acknowledge God's benefits and even sets himself against God's faithful clients. He also lacks that important element of αἰδῶς which regards the honor of other human beings within the context of reverent fear of God. He is thus possessed of a ὑπερήφανος λογισμός ("arrogant reason," 9:30) rather than a εὐσεβὴς λογισμός, and so remains alienated from the attainment of virtue and honor.[43]

Conclusion: The Purpose and Message of 4 Maccabees for Jews in the Diaspora

The author's demonstration seeks to show that the sort of reason that achieves the Greek ideal of virtue is "devout reason," which is reason choosing wisdom as taught in God's law, the Jewish Torah. Attainment of virtue (honor) and an honorable remembrance depends on setting one's mind on following the training gained through obedience to the Torah. 4 Maccabees is especially concerned to present a model of honorable and praiseworthy response to the demands and tensions of the encounter with the Greco-Roman world. The author holds up the Jewish martyrs as the supreme examples of honorable choices, commitments, and actions. This will challenge those listeners who are wavering in their commitment to Judaism as a result of the encounter with Greco-Roman society.

43. He is thus a foil to David, as presented in 3:15–16. David refuses to drink the water stolen from the enemy camp at the jeopardy of two human lives. To cross the line and satisfy one's own desires with such disregard for other human beings' worth would be to act arrogantly in God's sight. He therefore reverently offers it as a drink offering. See chapter 4 below.

Through his presentation of deliberative considerations within the evaluative framework of epideictic oratory, the author seeks to convince the auditors that honoring God and remaining firm in their commitment (showing faith) toward God is the only reasonable and honorable course. They would, in this way, continue to know and experience God as their Benefactor. Dishonoring God for the sake of acceptance by and assimilation into Greek culture and release from tension (whether the physical tension of the rack or the social tension of identification with a minority group and a suspect people) and becoming clients of the dominant culture leads to the experience of God as avenger of God's outraged honor and violated beneficence (cf. God's response to Jason, 4:21).

Furthermore, the need exists to educate the inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world in the matters of true honor and piety by remaining firm in witness to God and devotion to God's educative Law. Antiochus embodies the extremes of Gentile error. Non-Jews need to learn true respect for God as creator and benefactor (12:11)—that is, instruction in piety; they need to learn true respect for other human beings as God's clients (12:13, cf. 3:15–16); they need to learn about the honorable and the just from the true perspective of God's court of reputation and God's standards of virtue and the praiseworthy (11:6).

Like the martyrs, the audience, too, is involved in the noble contest (16:16), striving to exhibit virtue and fidelity to God, striving with the other cultures of the world to bear witness to them (thus relating with them salvifically), learning from them (as exhibited by the author's use of Greek ideals and modes of argument), but not being beaten by them through assimilation. While the exact situation of the audience remains a mystery, the message of 4 Maccabees remains constant: as epideictic rhetoric it takes on a more timeless quality that speaks in different ways to different situations (as the different situations of each member of the audience constitute distinctive rhetorical situations, inviting the same text to work in different ways). Its diagnosis of Gentile culture as standing in need of learning to enact respect for other human beings out of a reverent fear for God is a message no less relevant today than in the first century.