**The Original Language of 1 Maccabees: A Reexamination**

**Abstract**

Recent scholarly interest in determining the original language of apocryphal books, as well as the new methodology and arguments presented in these studies, necessitate a renewed and detailed examination of 1 Maccabees. This examination will consider whether a Hebrew *Vorlage* stands behind the Greek text, or whether it was actually originally composed in a “Targumic Greek” imitating the style of the Septuagintal version of the canonical books – the implication being that no Hebrew version of 1 Maccabees ever existed. The scholarly assumption of a Hebrew *Vorlage* of 1 Maccabees is traditionally based on four main types of evidence that will be reexamined: (1) the testimony of the Church Fathers; (2) the heavy Hebraistic style; (3) the absence of typical linguistic features of standard literary Greek; (4) the presence of errors that could only have emerged through translation from Hebrew. In this paper, I also investigate two further criteria in light of the new arguments raised in the Apocryphal research: (5) quotes from and literary allusions to biblical texts in 1 Maccabees; (6) and reflection of the Hebrew of the Hellenistic period. My reexamination reveals that although recent studies of several Apocryphal books rightly call for greater caution in claiming clear indication of a Hebrew *Vorlage*, the balance of the evidence in our case nevertheless favors the conclusion that the Greek text of Maccabees was preceded by a Hebrew text.