AN ACROSTIC POEM IN PRAISE OF JUDAS MACCABAEUS.

That portions of 1 Macc. exhibit the characteristics of Hebrew poetry is a fact which can hardly escape notice. For instance, Mattathias's last charge to his sons in ch. ii 49–68 must have taken a poetical form in the original Hebrew, i.e. it must have fallen into balanced couplets of a more or less rhythmical character. It may be compared with the praise of famous men in Ecclus. xlv 16–1 21. That this should be so is not surprising. Historical as the incident of the old hero's deathbed charge may well be, we can hardly suppose that any very definite record of his speech was handed down. The author of 1 Macc. puts into the mouth of Mattathias sentiments which seemed to him appropriate to the occasion, based very possibly upon a general report of his words; and he had precedents from past history for casting these into the form of poetry (cf. Jacob, Gen. xlix; Moses, Deut. xxxiii; David, 2 Sam. xxiii 1–7).

When we come to ch. iii, which begins the independent career of the chief hero, Judas, we find that in the opening description of his prowess (vv. 1–9) the writer rises to an epic strain; and here again we discern the main characteristics of Hebrew poetry, in a more carefully elaborated form. The poem was clearly designed to fall into couplets, exhibiting a parallelism which is not, as in the speech of Mattathias, synthetic merely, but very largely synonymous; and the rhythmical scheme of the couplets is 3+3 beats. Cf., for example, vv. 4, 5:

'He was like a lion in his deeds,
And like a young lion roaring for prey.
And he pursued the lawless, and sought them out,
And the trouble of his people he consumed.'

Having read the passage and noted these facts, the thought flashed across my mind that possibly a poem in praise of Judas might have been constructed so as to give the acrostic הרוחה מחבקת, Yehadah ham-Makkabah, 'Judas the hammer'. Looking again at the text, the fact that this is so seemed to leap at once to the eye. The letters נ,ל,ן,ן stood out clearly in the opening of the couplets contained in vv. 3–5. No one can help seeing והרוחה מחבקת or הרכות יברוע in ככ.
These Hebrew renderings are in every case the natural equivalents of the Greek. The only liberty which I was allowing myself was the assumption that the καὶ which links the clauses in every case, with the solitary exception of πολέμου συνεστήσατο in v. 3, was not so regularly present in the original form of the poem. Such an assumption is very reasonable. In prose-narrative it is natural to a Hebrew writer to link up the clauses in this way; but, if carried out in poetry to the same extent, the usage would amount to an inelegancy. The two clauses of a couplet may be linked by 'and', but the conjunction is only occasionally used to link a couplet to its predecessor. All, then, that we have to presuppose is that the author of 1 Macc., who probably was not himself the author of the poem, treated the poem as prose when he inserted it into his history, and so linked up all clauses with 'and' in the ordinary fashion of prose-narrative.

Not much ingenuity was needed to discover the rest of the acrostic, as will be seen through examination of the poem verse by verse.

υ. 1, 2 καὶ ἀνέστη Ἰούδας ὁ καλούμενος Μακκαβαῖος νῦν αὐτόν ἀντ’ αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐβομβῆθην αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ ἄδελφοι αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάντες ὅσιοι ἑκκλησάν τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπολέμουν τὸν πόλεμον Ἰσραήλ μετ’ εὐφροσύνης, ἵνα Ἰωάννης ἡμεῖς ἡμᾶς καὶ τὰς ἀδελφὰς καὶ τὰς συνεργάς μας ἅγιας καὶ ἀκακίας ἐκεῖνοι οἱ πρίγνοι μας. Τοῦτο δ’ ἀκολούθησι κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς Μακκαβείας μοι ἀκατάσχετο. Αὐτὸς δὲ τοῦτο πρὸς τὴν κατάληψιν τοῦ Ἰερούμενου ἁγίου Μακεδόνος ὑπέστη ἰδίως ὁ Ιωάννης ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πατρὸς ἀδελφός. Περὶ τῆς ἱστορίας τῆς Μακκαβείας μητροπολίδα τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τῆς Ἰουδαϊκῆς ζωῆς. Μενελαῖος νῦν ἀκολούθησι κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς Μακκαβείας μοι ἀκατάσχετο. Αὐτὸς δὲ τοῦτο πρὸς τὴν κατάληψιν τοῦ Ἰερούμενου ἁγίου Μακεδόνος ὑπέστη ἰδίως ὁ Ιωάννης ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πατρὸς ἀδελφός.
The notes and studies refer to a text that discusses the inclusion of a rhythmical stress in a passage from the Bible. The passage is from the book of Judges, specifically Judges 5:21. The text analyzes the inclusion of the verb "to gird on one's warlike harness" and its implications on the rhythm of the poem. It considers the possibility of a doublet or a simple emendation to correct the rhythm. The text also examines the use of the verbs "to hunt" and "to be girded on" in the context of a lion hunting its own prey. The analysis is part of a larger discussion on the structure and rhythm of ancient Hebrew poetry.
v. 5. καὶ ἐδώκεν ἄνομος ἐξερευνών,
καὶ τοῦς παράστασιν τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἐφλογίσεν.

This is naturally rendered,

This is the LXX equivalent of יָדָע. The word never happens to be rendered elsewhere by δώκει, though it is rendered by κατα-
δώκειν in 1 Chr. x 2. That ἡδονή is here represented by the Greek is at least as probable as that the original was ἡδονή or ἡδονή. The equivalent of ἐφλογίσεν is probably ὄνειρος, since this means both 'burn' and also 'consume' or 'exterminate'. It was doubtless the latter sense which was intended by the original. Here, then, we have the ἡ couplet, and with it the name ἡδονή is complete.

v. 6. καὶ συνεστάλησαν οἱ ἄνομοι ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ,
καὶ πάντες οἱ ἔργα τῆς ἁνομίας συνεπαράχθησαν,
καὶ εὐδοκῆ σωτηρία ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ.

As we have already remarked, the μ of μὴν is to be found in βασιλεὶς = βασιλεῖς in v. 7. v. 6, therefore, should begin with the μ of the Definite Article; and we have this in οἱ ἄνομοι = μὴν. Since in this couplet we have a change of subject, it is in accordance with usage that the new subject should come before the verb. συντάλεων = ὄνειρος in the two Biblical passages in which we know the Hebrew equivalent (Judg. viii 28; xi 33), and ὄνειρος is very suitable in the present connexion. συνεπαράχθησαν may well represent ἔννοια. It renders the Pa'el of Aram. לְיַעַב in Dan. iv 2, 16; ν 6; vii 28. Our μ couplet then is

The final line καὶ εὐδοκῆ κτλ. is not parallel, but introduces a fresh idea. It clearly forms no part of the verse. We shall revert to it later.

v. 7. καὶ ἐπίκρατεν βασιλείας πολλῶν,
καὶ γιγάνταν τὸν ἱακὸβ ἐν τοῖς ἐργοῖς αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ἔσω τοῦ αἰῶνος τὸ μυθόσυνον αὐτοῦ εἰς εἰλογίαν.

The antithetically parallel μ couplet is

The Passive of πικράτεων = ὄνειρος in Isa. xiv 9; Jer. xlv (xxxvii) 15; hence it is reasonable to suppose that the Active = ἔννοια, which may mean either 'angered', as rendered by R.V., or 'perturbed, agitated'. καὶ ἔσω κτλ. spoils the symmetry of the couplet, and cannot belong to it.
Now comes the chief (one might almost say, the only) difficulty. In vv. 8, 9 we have only enough material left for two full couplets, and we still have the three letters וּפ for which to account. As we shall see, v. 8 gives us the ב in en πόλεσιν = רָעִים, and the last clause of the same verse, which combines with the first clause of v. 9, gives the n in απέστρεψεν = בֵיתֹן. What has become of the p couplet?

There is nothing in the final clause of v. 7, καὶ ἔσω κτλ., which, as we have seen, is superfluous to couplet ב, which remotely suggests a Hebrew word beginning with p; nor can we bring in the superfluous clause of v. 6, καὶ εὐδοκή κτλ., to help us. We notice, however, that when we have combined the first clause of v. 9 with the last of v. 8 to form the final n couplet, there still remains καὶ συνήγαγεν ἀπολλυμένους, which is superfluous in its present position. It is surely significant that the natural equivalent of συνήγαγεν is ἔφη, which gives us the very letter which we want; and it is hardly, therefore, too bold to suppose that the clause has suffered accidental misplacement. καὶ ὀνομάζει ἐως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς is clearly the climax of the whole poem, whereas συνήγαγεν ἀπολλυμένους gives merely one of the details upon which that fame rested, and therefore might be expected to be mentioned earlier in the poem. συνήγαγεν ἀπολλυμένους yields, however, only two stresses, μὴ ἔσω. The clause must, therefore, have lost something in transposition; and we may conjecture that it originally ran ἔφη ἔσω ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς. The parallel clause may be found either in the final superfluous clause of v. 6, or in that of v. 7. Perhaps the former suits the parallelism the better. Thus we obtain for the p couplet,

καὶ ἔσω κτλ., καὶ εὑρέθην ἐν πόλεσιν Ἰουδά, καὶ ἐξωκλήθησεν ἀσεβείς ἐπ' αὐτής.

In place of ἐπ' αὐτῆς AV read ἐξ αὐτῆς, which is preferable. Our ב couplet then runs,

ὀφθαλμοὶ ἀσεβείς

διέρχεσθαι = θύμισθαι is frequent. ἀσεβείς stands several times for ἔφη, which is the proper term for the godless apostates.

καὶ ἀπέστρεψεν ὄργην ἀπὸ Ἰσραήλ, καὶ ὀνομάζει ἐως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

The equivalent of ὀνομάζει is somewhat dubious. Elsewhere in LXX ὀνομάζειν represents וּפ, Kal and Hiph'il; בָּל, Kal and Niphal; אָכַל, Kal and Niphal. Either וּפ or אָכַל would almost necessarily have been followed by מֵשׁ; yet, had this stood in the original, it would
almost certainly have been represented by τῷ ὄνομα αὑτοῦ. Secondly, again, would hardly stand by itself. Possibly the Greek verb represents ἐν οἷς, in the sense, 'he made himself known', and this equivalent may be adopted in default of anything more certain. Thus the final ἡ couplet runs,

Having completed the acrostic, we may now conclude with the poem in full:

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Judas, who was called 'the Hammer',
He fought the battle of Israel.

He extended glory for his people,
And donned a breastplate as a hero,

And girt on his warlike harness,
And protected the army with the sword.

He was like a lion in his deeds,
And like a young lion roaring for prey.

He pursued the wicked, and sought them out,
And the troublers of his people he consumed.

The wicked cringed for fear of him,
And all workers of lawlessness were dismayed.

Kings full many he perturbed,
And he made Jacob glad with his deeds.

He gathered the perishing of his people,
And salvation prospered in his hand.

Through the cities of Judah he went,
And destroyed the impious therefrom.

He turned away wrath from Israel,
And was renowned unto the end of the earth.