expansions, some of which represent continuations of the narrative (15:1–14, 25–16, 24), while others are 'islands' which exhibit no, or very few, literary relations with their contexts (e.g. 14:16–49). It is demonstrated that the major theme of the work is the capture and deliverance of the Temple, and that the glorification of the family of Mattathias, sometimes seen as the author’s purpose in writing, constitutes only a thin veneer over the account of the vicissitudes of the shrine.

Martola reaches these convincing conclusions only after a long and pedestrian analysis, sometimes making heavy weather of even the most straightforward issues. But the attempt to see what the text actually says and the form in which it is presented, eschewing all questions of the intentions and sources of the author and the way the work was understood by its first readers, is a useful exercise.

Oxford Centre for Hebrew Studies


It was originally intended that the Anchor Bible commentaries on I and II Maccabees would be included in a single volume. That they should have expanded to become two of the thickest tomes in the series is testimony to the stamina, erudition, and above all the ingenuity of Jonathan Goldstein. The book under review contains a wealth of perceptive detail, intricate argument and novel suggestions. Receptive to, but unbowed by, the considerable achievements of previous scholarship on II Maccabees, Goldstein argues consistently and often brilliantly in the extensive introduction and notes for a series of new hypotheses. Whatever happens to these hypotheses—and by no means all are likely to become part of general opinion—it is in itself a remarkable achievement to have come with so open a mind to a text which has been so often discussed.

The proliferation of speculative hypotheses is an inevitable corollary of Goldstein's main method for explaining the similarities and differences in the accounts found in I and II Maccabees and the divergences between their narratives and 'what really happened' (about which Goldstein gives his own tentative hypothesis on pp. 84–112). What he looks for in each case is the possible non-extant source used (for unknown reasons) in the non-extant work of the obscure Jason of Cyrene, whose writing was abridged by the unknown author of II Maccabees. The peculiarities of each alleged underlying source are then proposed as the main explanation of the final state of the text. Such Quellenforschung leads Goldstein to accord, for example, a prominent role to the 'Memoirs of Onias IV' (for the existence of which he has argued in detail before), while agreements between I and II Maccabees are attributed to a 'Jewish common source' of unknown provenance on the grounds that it cannot be shown that I and II Maccabees are more directly interdependent. A 'legendary source' is tentatively proposed as the origin of II Maccabees 13 because, it is argued, so wilful a distortion of history as the alleged anger of the boy-king Antiochus V is not typical of the (hypothesised) method of Jason of Cyrene.

I and II Maccabees are undoubtedly texts particularly suited to this sort of analysis, as was long ago shown by Bickerman's convincing suggestion that a
Seleucid Chronicle lies behind the official data shared by the two works. On the other hand, it may be argued that such hypotheses would be better used only as a last resort and that rather more could be explained by the activity of the final redactor of the text. Goldstein has an interesting discussion of the aims of Jason (55–70), whose motivation is seen as in part a desire to discredit I Maccabees, but he is inclined to accept at face value the abridge's claim only to have abbreviated, and not significantly to have altered, Jason's work (5), and does not give much space to one of the more obvious explanations of oddities in the text, i.e. the epitomator's incompetence in the difficult task of achieving brevity with coherence.

It is not possible here to do justice to more than a very small fraction of the new ideas crammed into this commentary. Goldstein's restless, rambling, questioning style is not easy to read, but it reflects a genuine willingness to enquire into everything known or asserted about the text. This intellectual honesty extends to his approach to his own previous work: perhaps the most unusual feature of this volume is that it repudiates most of part V of the introduction to the commentary on I Maccabees, where the author had previously argued for a hypothetical source De Mortibus Persecutorum.

At many steps in his complex discussion Goldstein himself points to the fragility of some of his ingenious arguments. Readers need to be warned that, despite this self-awareness, his total picture of II Maccabees, including such crucial issues as the late date proposed for its composition (72, 83), depends on full acceptance of all this mass of conjectures. Not all users of the commentary will find it possible to make such an act of faith, but all will nonetheless find much of great value in this repository of stimulating suggestions and scholarly insight.

Martin Goodman


The subtitle of this ingeniously constructed monograph gives an accurate indication of its argument. Though derived from the studies of W. D. Davies and other recent explorations of the connection between the people of Israel and the promise of the land of Israel, Mendels's interest is not in theology or ideas but in the rewriting of biblical history for narrow political ends at particular moments in time. By 'Hasmonean literature' he means such apocryphal, pseudepigraphic or Hellenistic-Jewish writings as he would claim to be able to attribute to Palestine in the period between 160 and 100 B.C. The premise is that during this time 'a greater awareness of a Jewish state on a Jewish land was emerging in Palestinian Judaism'. The quest is to find precise echoes of the changing Hasmonean position vis-à-vis the Land and its non-Jewish inhabitants in those portions of the key texts which show a radical departure from Scripture, and which deal, generally, not so much with geography or strategic matters (these would be few indeed, though I Maccabees and Judith do offer material) as with patriarchal and other biblical figures operating in apparently symbolic roles. The method is to propose a dating, often controversial, before discussing a text. It would seem that the linking-in of a text with the political