

# Investigating the communicative strategy in 2 Maccabees 3: Six scenes which influence the reader throughout the narrative

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The events in the introduction to 2 Maccabees (2 Macc 3:1–39) undoubtedly centre round the Jerusalem Temple. It is depicted as world-renowned, holy and just. Many scholars have therefore highlighted the theme of the Temple in 2 Maccabees, introduced by 2 Maccabees 3. Yet, the reason for the Temple's centrality is not traditionally seen as more than a mere link to the rest of the narrative. This article, however, asks the question: Why is the author incorporating the Temple in such a specific manner? What is the impact on the implicit reader of this specific depiction of the Temple? In other words, how is the implicit reader's experience throughout the rest of the narrative influenced by the events in this introduction? To answer these questions, the article identifies six scenes in 2 Maccabees 3 and applies a rhetorical analysis in order to establish the communicative strategy and its possible impact on the implicit reader.

## Introduction

In 2 Maccabees 3:1–39, the author presents a carefully constructed introduction to the narrative. The elements which will unfold in the rest of the book are present: the apparent inviolability of the Temple, the weaknesses of its safeguard, good and evil, heroes of the faith, the enemies of the Jews and their faith, holy and unholy, Judaism and Hellenism. For this very reason, this section has been broadly researched for meaning and relevance.

An aspect which is less frequently discussed is how this section forms part of the narrative and what it tells of the narrative plan. Some contributions do, however, exist regarding this question.

Mott (1978:23–26), for example, discusses the use of terms such as εὐσέβεια (3:1: piety) in positively presenting the Jews in the Hellenistic arena. Schwartz (2008:186–187) adds to this discussion and notes that '... by featuring this term alongside of the polis in the first verse of his story, the author clearly situates himself, and his story, in the Hellenistic world'. Bickerman (1979:42–48) shows that the conflict present in 2 Maccabees 3 is the first of a series of events in the narrative which prove that the struggle originated from within the Jewish nation. Van Henten (1997:244) identifies a pattern which is present in ancient texts of a deity's defence of his or her temple: Attackers approach, defenders ask for the deity's assistance, the deity intervenes, and the attack is stymied. Through the repetition of this pattern, 3:1–39 is linked with the rest of the narrative.

For Nickelsburg (2005:106–107), this section serves as a moral guideline for the rest of the narrative. The ideal situation is ascribed to the fact that the laws were maintained and to the fact that the high priest Onias was pious and hated evil. This becomes clear through the author's frequent moralising comments (3:1; 4:16, 17, 26, 38, 42; 5:10, 19–20; 6:12–16; 15:32–33).

Schwartz (2008:184) demonstrates how the author uses this introduction in order to establish the *status quo ante* for the rest of the book. The implicit reader gets a glimpse of a scenario where all is well with Jerusalem. The holy city dwelt amid complete peace (3:1), the nations were honouring the place and the Temple (3:2), and the financial system of the Temple was healthy (3:3). These circumstances will only be reintroduced late in the narrative, after the rededication of the Temple.

Doran (2012:89) highlights that one of the prominent features of this first scene is that the style of the author is introduced through various traits. The attention of the implicit reader is focused on the visual portrayal through the repetition of the root of the verb φαίνω [I appear]. The variations of this verb is found throughout this first episode (3:1–39): ἐμφανισμοῦ (v. 9), ἐνέφανεν (v. 16), ἐπιφάνειαν (v. 24), ἐφαίνετο (v. 25), προσεφάνησαν (v. 26), φανερώς (v. 28),

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ἐπιφανέντος (v. 30), ἐφάνησαν (v. 33) and ἄφανεις (v. 34). A similar emphasis on the power of God is found through the repetition of the root for 'power' (κράτος) in v. 22 (παγκρατῆ), v. 34 (κράτος) and v. 30 (παντοκράτορος). This same effect is also found in the repetition of the root for 'I preserve' (τηρέω). Other stylistic devices are paronomasia in the same verse (3:15 – παρακαταθήκης ... παρακαταθεμένοις, 3:22 – τὰ πεπιστευμένα τοῖς πεπιστευκόσιν, 3:33 – χάριτας ... κεχάρισται and 3:35 – εὐχὰς μεγίστας εὐξάμενος), unusual words such as φρικασμός (v. 17) and ἀγεληδόν (v. 18), and contrasts through the μὲν ... δὲ construction (3:8, 22, 29).

These views contribute to the discussion on the place that 2 Maccabees 3 holds in the narrative as a whole. They do not, however, focus on the possible impact of this pericope on the reader or hearer. Through the events described in 3:1–39, the readers or hearers are influenced in a specific way, which in turn affects the manner in which they perceive the rest of the narrative. It would seem that the content of this pericope is designed to amplify the worth of the Temple's sanctity and therefore, after its desecration, the intensity of its profanity. Accordingly, the author seems to carefully apply each of the following six scenes in 2 Maccabees 3 in order to convince the implicit reader that, in this narrative, nothing is more important than the holiness of the Temple:

Scene 1: The Jerusalem Temple is world-renowned and associated with deep-rooted holiness (3:1–3).

Scene 2: Evil characters want to desecrate the Temple (3:4–8).

Scene 3: The Temple is confirmed as the symbol of justice (3:9–12).

Scene 4: The entire nation reacts in an exaggerated fashion to the threat (3:13–23).

Scene 5: The threat is eliminated by the highest authority (3:24–34).

Scene 6: The enemy asserts the worth of the Temple (3:35–39).

The six scenes are constructed in such a manner as to convince the reader or hearer of the Temple's worth and indispensability as well as the horror, should the Temple be desecrated. This in turn, conditions the implicit reader to experience the intensity in the rest of the narrative where this precious sanctity is lost.

An ideal method of dealing with these aspects is the application of rhetorical analysis. Rhetorical analysis has a pragmatic approach and focuses on the contract of trust between the author and the reader. Thus, the impact of these scenes on the implicit reader will be highlighted, and the proposition and argumentation clarified. This method will now be explained and applied to the six scenes in 2 Maccabees 3:1–39.

## Methodology

In an attempt to answer the questions presented above and construct a rhetorical analysis, the article will aim to eliminate ambiguity and clarify the text of 2 Maccabees 3:1–39, determine the communicative strategy applied to encourage

the implicit reader to adopt certain ideas and determine the function of these ideas.

Firstly, a syntactical and semantic analysis will be performed. Intra- and inter-textual references will be highlighted in order to indicate semantic relationships. The following questions are important:

Why is a certain phrase or word used in a particular way?

Why are certain aspects not mentioned?

Why are certain aspects emphasised subjectively?

Secondly, in order to establish the communicative strategy and the purpose of specific ideas, a pragmatic analysis will be applied. The communicative strategy will be determined through answering the following questions:

In which manner does the author project himself in order to generate a contract of trust between himself and the implicit reader?

In which manner does the author create a contract of trust between individual characters or specific groups within the text and the implicit reader?

Subsequently, the sensual and non-sensual dimensions of the real text world (unacceptable epistemic practice) and alternative text world (ideal epistemic practice) will be discussed in terms of their attributes.

Lastly, trans-universal relations will be specified in order to explicate the manner in which the implicit reader is moved from the real text world towards the alternative text world. This methodology will then be applied to the text.

## Structural analysis

### Syntactical and semantic analysis

#### Scene 1: The Jerusalem Temple is world-renowned and associated with deep-rooted holiness (3:1–3)

In this first scene, which opens the narrative as a whole, a key facet of the text-world is set. The reader is informed of the existence of good and evil. In this scene, the Temple is asserted as a force of good. Anything working against its harmony and sanctity is therefore evil. At the head of all things good is the Jerusalem Temple and its earthly protector, the high priest Onias III. A second facet which is highlighted by the text is that all the nations and rulers were honouring the Temple. This has a dual effect. Firstly, the reader is convinced that the Temple plays a vital role in maintaining all things good and in prolonging peace. Secondly, the author demonstrates that, if the pagan rulers recognise the Temple's importance, the Jews should certainly regard it as indispensable.

The term συμβαίνω (3:2) is used impersonally and can have the meaning of 'to come to pass or to result or follow' (Muraoka 2009:1024). The verb is employed to cause the transitioning from the broader context to the specific scenario. Here, however, the description in 3:2 is still part of the general context. It seems that the author suggests a link between the proper following of the law and the honouring of the Temple,

the latter being a consequence of the obedience to or enforcement of the law.

The use of τόπος [place] in 3:3 to refer to the Temple is a rare occurrence in the LXX. This specific use of the term is found also in 3 Maccabees (1:9) but is not present prior to 2 Maccabees. Outside the LXX and in cognate literature, the term is frequently employed in referring to temples (Vanderhooft 1999:628–630).

### Scene 2: Evil characters want to desecrate the Temple (3:4–8)

With the introduction of Simon, the author aids the implicit reader in clearly assessing the character of this man. He is juxtaposed with the high priest. The reader quickly becomes aware of various traits of Simon. He seemingly has no respect for the high priest, is scheming and devious, works in secret and teams up with non-Jewish officials against his own people and Temple. This kind of behaviour is further highlighted by the actions of Heliodorus, who hides his intentions of marching straight to the Temple.

The author vilifies the character of Simon and groups him with pagan forces. Subsequently, the implicit reader is encouraged to abandon the thought that the Temple would be desecrated because of natural circumstances. It is an event of pure evil. This, in turn, causes the reader to experience the circumstances after the desecration of the Temple (5:15ff.) as the presence of evil in the midst of the Jews. Thus, without having to clarify continuously, the author achieves an intense involvement on the part of the reader throughout the narrative until the Temple is restored.

Not much is said about the conflict between Simon and Onias. In 3:4, a quarrel is mentioned, and a reason is briefly described: Simon had some problems with the market regulation throughout the city. The intensity of the situation is, however, confirmed in 4:3 where matters escalated to the point of murders being planned. The perpetrator, according to the text, is Simon, a member of the Judean society, of the priestly clan of Bilgah.<sup>1</sup> The term φυλή, which is found here in 4:3, is often used to refer to one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This explains why the Greek manuscripts would have the reading ‘of the tribe of Benjamin’. If the Greek manuscripts are followed, it would mean that ‘... our story’s first troublemaker and its worst villain both lacked priestly descent’ (Schwartz 2008:95). The fact that the author does not employ this fact as a major stylistic device makes the reading ‘of the tribe of Benjamin’ unlikely. This study will therefore adopt, as does Hanhart (1961:483), the reading of the Latin and Armenian manuscripts and assume that Simon was of the Priestly clan of Bilgah.

In 3:6, a specific verb (προσαγγέλλω) is used to refer to the action of Simon. Simon did not merely tell Apollonius, he sold out his own to the enemy. This negative use of the verb προσαγγέλλω [I announce or denounce] is also evident

1. According to the Vetus Latina.

in 13:21, where it is explicitly mentioned that the information was given to the enemy.

The use of ἐφοδεύω in 3:8 is in line with what this verse is stating about the journey of Heliodorus. The verb can be literally translated as ‘I am on the march’, but in the context of 3:8, it has the sense of practicing administrative duties. The journey of Heliodorus had to be presented as going from place to place to inspect the cities of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia and not as a march directly to Jerusalem. The verb evidences the plan of Heliodorus to prevent the Jews from knowing that Jerusalem is the main reason and destination for his journey.

### Scene 3: The Temple is confirmed as the symbol of justice (3:9–12)

The section in 3:9–12 is imperative in securing the implicit reader’s positive perception of the Temple and viewing it as indispensable. The author employs the powerful device of accusation and refutation. With the accusation comes the possibility of doubt in the mind of the reader. What if there is in fact undisclosed funds that could fall under the authority of the king? These doubts are, however, immediately eliminated through demonstrating that the funds were for a just cause, protecting widows and orphans. The high priest also exhibits a transparent attitude through revealing the details of the funds. The reader is encouraged to adopt a strong and unconditional loyalty towards the Temple, which is the symbol of justice. This encouragement is further enforced by the high priest’s declaration of the Temple’s worth.

In 3:10, παρακαταθήκη [deposit] is employed rather than παραθήκη [deposit], the first being the classical and the latter the Hellenistic form. This choice, firstly, shows the competence of the author and, secondly, implies a more official meaning (Schubart 1932:cols. 1077–1084 [col. 1080 on this verse]).

The name ‘Hyrcanus’ in 3:11 may cause some problems. Is this Hyrcanus son of Joseph of the clan Tobiad or is it Hyrcanus son of Tobias? Some scholars prefer to read ‘Hyrcanus, son of Tobias’ as referring to the family name to which Hyrcanus belonged rather than to the name of his father (Meyer 1952:2:134 n.1.; Schwartz 2008:194.). This view can be based on what Josephus writes of a Hyrcanus that lived in the days of Seleucus IV (*Ant.* 12.234) and has various political implications (Doran 2012:82–84; Schwartz 2008:194–195). Tcherikover (1959:157) has built on this in order to make some deductions such as that Onias could have been sharing Hyrcanus’s pro-Ptolemaic tendency and that this could have been the real point of Simon’s dilation to the Seleucids. These deductions are based on the facts that Hyrcanus had funds protected in the Temple while Onias was high priest and that Onias particularly pointed to Hyrcanus’s property. These deductions are, however, as Schwartz (2008:194) states, ‘building quite a lot on very little’. The focus should remain on what this narrative of 2 Maccabees is saying about Hyrcanus. The most obvious reading is that the father of this Hyrcanus was Tobias. Since there is no plausible evidence to

prove otherwise and since the text does not demonstrate any further use of this particular character, the obvious reading will be followed (Doran 2012:83).

In 3:12, one finds that the Temple is 'honoured' (τετιμημένου). This contrasts with 3:1 where the place is honoured (τιμᾶν). This further supports the parallel between τόπος [place] and ἱερός [temple].

#### Scene 4: The entire nation reacts in an exaggerated fashion to the threat (3:13–23)

In the fourth scene of this pericope, the implicit reader is moved through a mass reaction to the profane threat of desecrating the Temple. Without explicating the implications of the Temple's desecration, the author moves the reader or hearer to adopt the idea that such an event would be catastrophic. The author sketches a scene where each and every Jew is seemingly reacting with agony – from the high priest to the enclosed unmarried girls. The reader is strongly influenced to follow suit. This appeal to the reader to react similarly is enforced by the depiction of the high priest. The narrative has already established that Onias III is closely linked to the circumstances of peace. Now this symbol of goodness, peace and order is shaken by the thought of what is to come. The readers are aided into arguing that, if such a man of authority and power is shaken, who are they to react differently?

The scene is carefully phrased in order to stir up the perfect emotion in the implicit reader who is moved to compassion for the high priest and the whole of the city. The ingressive function of the imperfect verb εἴσειμι [I go into] in 3:14 heightens the feeling of anticipation. A valid translation for the term ἐπίσκεψις (3:14) is 'audit' (Bickerman 1986:2.171; Mauersberger 1956:2.952; Welles 1934:321). This translation corresponds with the meaning of 'numbering' that the term ἐπίσκεψις has in the LXX (Nm 1:21; 1 Chr 21:5; 23:34) as the word refers to a specific investigation of the funds in the Temple. In 3:14, the author uses litotes (the double negative) to underscore the emotional intensity of the scene. This device is also linked with a crisis scenario in 15:19 and is employed, as Doran (1981:42) points out, nine times in 2 Maccabees as compared to the total absence in 1 Maccabees.

Verses 14b–20 start off by the anguish of the whole city and are then subdivided into categories of people in anguish: the high priest and other priests (3:15–17), men (3:18), married women (3:19a) and unmarried women (3:19b–20). In this section (3:14–23), a balance is maintained through a link between 3:15 and 3:22: Verse 22 has the same wordplay (πεπιστευμένα τοῖς πεπιστευκόσιν) as 3:15 (παρακαταθήκης ... τοῖς παρακαταθεμένοις). Both verses have the same form of the verb ἐπικαλέω [I call on or appeal to], and both have some form of the verb διαφυλάσσω [I preserve or maintain].

The role of the unmarried women gathering at the doorways and peeking through the windows leads Doran (2012:85) to assume that the view of the author is that the unmarried women should not be present in public. This is, however,

only one of the possible deductions that can be made from the sketched scene. The author could merely be keeping to the contemporary setting since the aim of the narrative is still to provide a historical overview, not reinventing history.

The function of the imperfect form of the verb ἐπιτελέω [I accomplish] in 3:23 is classified by Doran (2012:85) as conative (attempting to accomplish), emphasising the attempted action. This may be a correct interpretation, but an ingressive function (beginning to accomplish) seems to be more fitting.

#### Scene 5: The threat is eliminated by the highest authority (3:24–34).

Similar to the fourth scene, the parties involved explicate the importance of the Temple. Here, in 2 Maccabees 3:24–34, the Almighty Himself gets involved and demonstrates his power. This has a two-fold effect on the implicit reader. Firstly, the reader is convinced that the Temple's sanctity is unfathomably important since God Himself intervenes to protect it. Secondly, the reader is persuaded to abandon all traits similar to those who are brought to their knees. Furthermore, as in the fourth scene, the reaction of the Jews drives the readers to mimic their actions. As they partook in their anguish, they (readers) also share in their (Jews) joy. Accordingly, this anguish and joy will be experienced in the rest of the narrative where the Temple is in fact violated and later restored. This happens without the author explaining the intensity of the circumstances.

In 3:24, the action of Heliodorus is classified as an attempt to accomplish what had been determined. Heliodorus was already near the treasury. The fact that he was on his way to enter the Temple signifies the first step in achieving what has been planned.

The fact that our author frequently uses the term δυνάστης [ruler] for God (here and in 3:24; 12:25, 28; 15:3, 4, 29) is evidence of the tendency in 2 Maccabees to place God exactly opposite the earthly Seleucid enemy. It is a battle between a powerful ruler on earth and the ultimately powerful ruler in heaven.

There are three elements present in 3:26, 27 and 28 that lead Bickerman (1986:2.173–174) and, following him, Schwartz (2008:202) to consider the possibility of the interweaving of two epiphanic traditions. Firstly, in 3:26, there is mention of 'another two youths'. This gives the idea that youths have already been mentioned, which is not the case. Consequently, this could mean (especially when compared with a similar story in 3 Maccabees 6:18) that this reference could be a remnant of an earlier version of the story according to which other youths had already appeared from heaven. Secondly, 3:27 reads: 'they gathered him up and put him on a litter.' This makes for an ambiguous reading. It could be that the two floggers put Heliodorus into the litter, but the more logical interpretation would be that members of his retinue aided him. Lastly, Bickerman (1986:2.173–174) makes a case for the interlacing of two traditions based on the incompatibility of the pluperfect with the imperfect (ἔφερον – [they carried])

used in 3:28 since Heliodorus' bodyguards had already carried him off.

Interestingly, it is noted that Heliodorus' men ask Onias to call upon God, and the way he reacts is by making a sacrifice (3:31). This evidences a Jewish Hellenistic point of view, namely that prayer is the main category, and one of the ways to pray is to bring a sacrifice (Schwartz 2008:203).<sup>2</sup>

The term ὑψιστος [Most High] referring to God is a relative reference and was used by both Jews and Gentiles (Bertram 1972:614–620; Niehr 1990; Zimmermann 2007:573–602). Here, the author focuses the implicit reader on the theomachy between the God of the Jews and the earthly kings and rulers. The fact that the Jews are associated with the highest authority secures the victory of their nation.

### Scene 6: The enemy asserts the worth of the Temple (3:35–39)

In this last scene, the author sketches a powerful picture of the enemy proclaiming the power of God and the worth of the Temple. This forms an *inclusio* with the introductory setting of the nations who were honouring the place.

In 3:36, Heliodorus' reaction to the first and second epiphanies is to bear witness 'to all of the works of the greatest God'. Here, by stating that Heliodorus had been an eyewitness (ὕπ' ὄψιν), the authenticity of the epiphany is maintained. This type of recognition of divine power is found in the Hebrew Scriptures where Nebuchadnezzar and Darius bear witness to the works of the God of Israel after He had done supernatural works (Dn 2:47; 3:28–29; 4:37; 6:25–27).<sup>3</sup> This demonstrates the effort of the Israelites, particularly those in exile, to have non-Israelites respect their religion (Doran 2012:87).

Sentences of summary such as the one in 3:40 are also found at the end of Chapters 7, 9 and 13. The verb χωρέω [I turn out] used here is also found in some of the other summarising sentences and involves both the process and its end. The author is emphasising the outcome of scenarios where the God in heaven and his Temple is challenged. The μὲν ... δὲ construction applied here is a favourite for the author to link certain events as well as to demonstrate the progression of the narrative.

The use of the term πατρις [fatherland] in 4:1 signifies the author's preference to portray the preceding events not only as an attack on the Temple but also as an attack against the city of Jerusalem. This evidences the metonymic character of the Temple. The Temple is a symbol for the stability of the rest of the land. On this verse, Doran (2012:91) notes: 'Here begins the theme of the defence of the fatherland and of the ancestral laws.' The root 'evil' (κακός) is found in both the verb κακολογέω [I speak evilly] and in the phrase,

<sup>2</sup>This view is also reflected in 2 Maccabees 12:44, Wisdom 18:21–22 and Philo, *Life of Moses*, 2.5.

<sup>3</sup>This type of story is also found in epiphanic Greek narratives such as the Lindos Chronicle.

τῶν κακῶν δημιουργός, describing the accusation against Onias. This contrasts the real evil of Simon with Onias, who was blameless in reality.

Despite the idea that Simon was an isolated villain, 4:3 introduces one of Simon's followers (τοῦ Σιμωνος δεδοκιμασμένων). This phrase literally means 'one of those approved by Simon'. In this manner, progress is achieved and anticipation intensified. There is a growing group of villains that have evil plans against the fatherland. This progression is furthered by the mention of Apollonius, son of Menestheus (4:4). In 3:5, it was merely mentioned that Simon had connections with the governor of Coele-Syria (Menestheus). Now Simon is explicitly supported by Menestheus' successor, Apollonius. This, together with 4:3, sketches a scene where the opposition party is growing in numbers and the threat intensifying.

The passive meaning of the verb used in 4:5 (διακομίζω) is 'to cross over'. Verses 5 and 6 imply that Onias was not only a model priest but also a cunning politician. He had all the talents that are required for playing the game of politics. He sought out the right friends in order to control the threat of Simon's faction. Yet, even this action (that also has the meaning of going over into enemy territory) is qualified by the author as a selfless act that is only for the gain of Onias' fellow citizens.

## Proposition and argumentation

Through the six scenes, the author directs the implicit reader into adopting the idea that the Temple is indispensable. This is enforced by the notion that all nations demonstrate an understanding of the worth of the Temple, that a sanctified Temple brings peace, that the Temple is a source of good, that the Temple enforces justice and that the Temple is protected by heaven.

Furthermore, it is clear that most of the chapter is dedicated to the threat and rescue of the Temple. For the duration of the threat, there is great despair. After the rescue, there is great joy. Through this effect, the author is demonstrating the indispensability of the Temple in Jerusalem. The reader or hearer is convinced of the Temple's worth since everyone in Jerusalem acts that way. As mentioned above, this notion of the Temple's indispensability is important for the rest of the narrative since, after the Temple's desecration, the events all aim at the purification and restoration thereof.

The proposition can be formulated as follows:

### IF

There is complete peace when the Temple's sanctity is protected, all nations recognise the importance of the Temple, the inspection of the Temple is not because of a natural flow of events, the inspection of the Temple is initiated by a truly evil character, the Temple is proven to protect those who are most exposed,

every single Jew reacts with immense anguish to the threat, God Himself intervenes to protect the Temple, the enemies of the Jews declare the worth of the Temple,

#### THEN

Jews especially should recognise the Temple's importance, the Temple plays a vital role in upholding justice, the desecration of the Temple must have catastrophic implications, no-one should underestimate the Temple's significance, the Temple is indispensable.

This, in turn, secures the implicit reader's emotional investment throughout the rest of the narrative where the Temple is desecrated. Since the worth of a sanctified Temple is established, the reader experiences intense anguish until the Temple is restored. This happens without the author's explication of the severity of events succeeding the Temple's desecration. In this sense, the author stores the potential experience of the reader within this first section of the narrative.

## Pragmatic analysis and conclusion

### Communicative strategy

The importance of the Temple and its liturgy is communicated through exclaiming the reaction of the Jews in Jerusalem to the threat posed by the Seleucid official. Nothing is said to explicate the consequences were Heliodorus to be successful. Yet, the implicit reader has a definite grasp on the intensity of the situation. This happens by means of association. The reader associates with the priest and the Jerusalemites because of the vivid emotional description.

Secondly, the emotional appeal is established through punishment and reward. Implicitly, however, there is a clear portrayal of the conditions: If the priest were not piously maintaining the laws, the Temple would not be protected. This also aims a warning at the reader. The reader is encouraged to choose the scenario where the Temple is protected and conflict is avoided. This scenario implies that the reader chooses the pious maintaining of the laws.

### Real and alternative text-world

The author recognises a situation where Jews are confronted with assimilation to the Hellenistic way of life. This assimilation has the potential of leading Jews away from the Temple liturgy and obedience to the law.

Thus, the solution is to communicate that the only way for peace and the protection of the Temple and the city is to maintain the laws and the Temple liturgy. This, according to the author, symbolises the Jews' loyalty to Judaism. In this way, the situation where the whole city, from the high priest through to the normal citizen, piously obeys the laws is the alternative text world. This becomes the *status quo ante* for the

rest of the narrative that provides an ideal situation against which to measure the rest of the text.

### Trans-universal relations

Through an exaggerated response of the community and a strong emotional and logical appeal, the implicit reader is moved away from the desire to assimilate with the Hellenistic lifestyle and to underestimate the role of the Temple towards loyalty to Judaism and viewing the Temple as indispensable.

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### Authors' contributions

The two authors, E.C. (North-West University) and P.J. (North-West University), contributed equally in terms of conceptualisation, research and execution of ideas as well as in terms of the notation of the accumulated work.

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