

PREFACE

After the defense of my Dutch dissertation, *De Joodse martelaren als grondleggers van een nieuwe orde: een studie uitgaande van 2 en 4 Makkabeeën* in November 1986, several colleagues advised me to start preparing an English translation. Other obligations, changing views about certain aspects and hesitations about simply reproducing the dissertation in English, stopped me for years from undertaking this project. A discussion with Hans van der Meij and David Orton during the 1993 SNTS conference in Chicago resulted in a correspondence with Professor Abraham Malherbe about necessary revisions. The end of the story is that the book has been completely rewritten.

Many colleagues and friends were generous in giving useful advice and making most valuable comments to drafts of several chapters. Special thanks are due to my former colleagues of the New Testament Department of the Faculty of Theology at Leiden, Rien and Henk Jan de Jonge, who have devoted much of their research time to the study of the reception of Jewish martyrology by early Christians and discussed the concepts of atonement and resurrection in 2 and 4 Maccabees many times with me; my former colleagues at the Faculty of Theology at Utrecht and my present colleagues at Amsterdam University in the Faculties of Arts and Theology; Jan Maarten Bremer kindly updated my knowledge about the tragedies of Euripides; Athalya Brenner made valuable comments on chapters 1, 6 and 8; Danny Schwartz from the Hebrew University kept me working through a continuous e-mail discussion about details in 2 Maccabees; and the exchange of drafts and correspondence with Tessa Rajak and Anna Maria Schwemer helped me to evaluate my own views. Finally I would like to express my warm gratitude to my assistant Ra'anana Abusch, who has read most of the manuscript meticulously and has suggested many improvements concerning my reasoning and style, to John Collins who generously accepted the book for his series and made valuable corrections as well and to Abeltje Hoogenkamp who helped me with the index of passages.

The style of references and abbreviations used in this book is by and large that of the *Society of Biblical Literature Directory and Handbook* (Decatur: 1992) 209-226. Abbreviations not listed in this *Handbook* are found either in Liddell-Scott-Jones or given in a separate list after this Preface.

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