

TOWARD A SYRIAC JOSEPHUS:
THE MARIA STORY (*teknophagia*) OF JEWISH WAR
6.201–13 AS A MEANS OF ASSESSING THE EARLY
SYRIAC TEXT TRADITIONS OF JOSEPHUS^{*}

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ABSTRACT

The so-called “Maria Story,” found in Josephus’ Jewish War 6.201–13, represents an auspicious case study with which to approach the question of the extent and nature of the Syriac Josephus text tradition, understood here as the portions of Josephan text preserved in part or in whole

^{*} The authors are deeply indebted to Prof. Lucas Van Rompay and Prof. David B. Levenson for each lending their expertise to the criticism and refinement of this article. Core aspects of the article’s argument were informed by Levenson’s expert guidance, and dozens of details in the article were corrected and refined by Van Rompay’s expert eye. We are also grateful to the anonymous reviewer(s) who provided a number of valuable comments and corrections.

in Syriac translation. This is because this story is a notable and important passage that appears not only in the two Syriac translations of Book 6 of the Jewish War—found respectively in Codex Ambrosianus B 21 inf. and manuscript Deir al-Surian 09—but also in the Syriac versions of Eusebius’ Church History, Eusebius’ Theophania (partially), and the Chronicle of Zuqnān. All of these texts existed by the eighth century, making this a study of an ancient Syriac Josephus text tradition. By examining these different Syriac versions of the same Josephan story side by side, we gain insight into the nature of the extant Syriac text traditions that preserve Josephan text, how they relate to each other, and the diversity and/or unity that characterizes a broader Syriac Josephus tradition on the whole. This article undertakes a fine-grained, section-by-section approach to this comparative task, drilling down into the lexicographical, text-critical, and literary-historical aspects of Josephus’ Nachleben in Syriac through late antiquity. In so doing, it joins recent work by scholars like Lucas Van Rompay in establishing the Syriac Josephus tradition as a subfield of scholarly inquiry and also helps situate the texts of the Syriac Josephus tradition within the broader patterns of literary style and translation techniques evident in the first half-millennium of Syriac literature. In broader relief, this article exposes new facets of an important and little-studied aspect of the reception of Josephus, one of the most widely read and influential authors of antiquity: namely, his reception in Syriac. This article also shows that at least a part of Josephus’ Jewish War existed in Syriac by the end of the fourth century.

INTRODUCTION

The writings of Flavius Josephus (c. 37–100 CE), the Jewish priest turned general turned historian who produced our most

important accounts of the later Second Temple Period and its denouement in the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 CE, became some of the most important texts for Christians of the first millennium CE (and beyond).¹ Originally written in Greek, Josephus' works were enthusiastically consumed by some of the most important figures of the early Greek Christian tradition, such as Origen of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea. But Josephus' texts were not to remain constricted to their original language of writing. By the fourth or fifth century Josephus' earliest work, his *Jewish War* (or *Bellum Judaicum* = *BJ*), had been translated into Latin,² and had also appeared in a

¹ Josephus' four extant works include an account of the Roman-Jewish War of 66–73 CE (*BJ*); an account of Jewish history from its beginnings through the Second Temple Period (the *Jewish Antiquities* or *Antiquitates Judaicae* = *AJ*); a brief autobiography added to *AJ* called the *Life* or *Vita*; and a two-book apologetic tractate defending Judaism against contemporary cultural denigrations of it (the *Against Apion* or *Contra Apionem* = *CA*). By way of introduction, see Z. Rodgers and H. H. Chapman, eds., *A Companion to Josephus* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

² On the text of the Latin *War*, see foundationally D. B. Levenson and T. R. Martin, "The Ancient Latin Translations of Josephus," in Rodgers and Chapman, *Companion*, 322–44. For a wider context, see T. Leoni, "The Text of Josephus's Works: An Overview" (*JSJ* 40.2 [2009]) 149–84, updated in T. Leoni, "The Text of the Josephan Corpus: Principal Greek Manuscripts, Ancient Latin Translations, and the Indirect Tradition," in *A Companion to Josephus*, ed. Z. Rodgers and H. H. Chapman (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell), 307–21. The only critical edition of the Latin *BJ* to date is Book 1, in B. Bader, ed., *Josephus Latinus: De Bello Iudaico, Buch 1*, Palingenesia 119 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2019). The conventionally cited edition of E. Cardwell, *Flavii Iosephi De Bello Iudaico libri septem*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1837), is unreliable and highly problematic—it should be avoided. On Rufinus as an author sometimes imputed with authorship of the Latin *War*, see D. B. Levenson and T. R. Martin, "The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus, John the Baptist, and James: Critical Texts of the Latin Translation of the *Antiquities* and Rufinus' Translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* Based on Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions" (*JSJ* 45.1 [2014]) 1–79, at 4–5n6.

Christian Latin rewrite called *On the Destruction of Jerusalem* (*De excidio Hierosolymitano*), or ‘Pseudo-Hegesippus.’³ It was also apparently translated into Syriac around this time. At the very least its sixth book had been, for this text appears as the “Fifth Treatse; (written) by Josephus” in the primary manuscript of the Syriac Peshitta.⁴ This Syriac Josephus tradition, unrelated to the Latin tradition which would become so important in ensuing centuries and millennia, has received scant attention and is not well understood. A closer look at the Syriac *BJ* tradition should thus expand our knowledge of the Christian reception of Josephus, especially his *BJ*, beginning in

³ On Pseudo-Hegesippus see (with bibliography) O. Zwielerlein, *Das >Bellum Iudaicum< des Ambrosius*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 157 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024); C. Bay, *Biblical Heroes and Classical Culture in Christian Late Antiquity: The Historiography, Exemplarity, & Anti-Judaism of Pseudo-Hegesippus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023); R. M. Pollard, “The *De Excidio* of ‘Hegesippus’ and the Reception of Josephus in the Early Middle Ages” (*VIATOR* 46 [2015]) 65–100; C. Somenzi, *Egesippo – Ambrogio: Formazione scolastica e Cristiana a Roma alla metà del IV secolo*, Studia Patristica Mediolanensia 27 (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2009); D. Estève, “L’Oeuvre historique du Pseudo-Hégésippe: “De Bello iudaico”, livre I à IV” (PhD Dissertation, Université Paris Nanterre, Paris, France, 1987); A. A. Bell, Jr., “An Historiographical Analysis of the *De Excidio Hierosolymitano* of Pseudo-Hegesippus” (PhD Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, 1977).

⁴ Borrowing the rendering of R. J. H. Gottheil, “Kottek’s ‘Das sechste Buch des Bellum Iudaicum’” (*Hebraica* 3.3 [1887]), 136–51, at 137. Gottheil notes that this “mistake seems to be an old one,” citing a catalog of Syriac books by Abdisho bar Berika (d. 1318), recently treated by S. M. Stadel, *The Catalogue of Books of ‘Abdisho’ bar Brikha: Translated with an Introduction and Notes*, Eastern Christian Texts 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2025), 41–42, 65, who translates the titles of the five works that Abdisho credits Josephus with in this catalogue: “Fables (of Aesop); history of the sons of Shmuni; book of Maccabees; history of king Herod; book of the Last Destruction of Jerusalem.” The latter (ܐܬܝܚܐܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܝܪܘܫܐܝܡ ܕܠܥܝܬܐ) may have rendered *περί ἀλώσεως Ἰουδαίας*; Gottheil, “Kottek’s ‘Das sechste Buch,’” 137.

late antiquity, and elucidate an underappreciated aspect of Josephus' influence on the early Christian historiographical imagination and its varied literary expressions. At the same time, an investigation of the Syriac Josephus tradition reveals aspects of Syriac translation technique, literary taste, and syntactic and lexicographical diversity between late antiquity and the early medieval period.

To these ends, this paper examines by way of case study the existing traditions of *BJ* 6 in Syriac and assesses the Syriac translations in their surviving forms. The copy of *BJ* 6 in the sixth-/seventh-century Peshitta of Codex Ambrosianus B 21 Inf. (catalogued as ms 7a1 for the Leiden Peshitta project) (= *A7a1*) is the earliest extant Syriac version of the text. Another (mostly) complete copy survives in the ninth-century manuscript Deir al-Surian 09 (= *DS09*) from the famous Monastery of the Syrians in the Wadi al-Natrun, Egypt.⁵ Beyond these two (mostly) complete copies of *BJ* 6, fragments and portions of Josephus' works survive in Syriac through the medium of quotations from Eusebius of Caesarea's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (= *HE*) and *Theophania*, the latter of which survives only in Syriac translation.⁶ It is well known that Eusebius' quotations of

⁵ S. P. Brock and L. van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt)*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 227 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 42–48; cf. L. van Rompay, "Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* in Syriac: MS. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana B 21 INF. and Two Recently Studied Manuscripts from Deir al-Surian," in *Gli studi di storiografia: tradizione, memoria e modernità*, Orientalia Ambrosiana 6, ed. A. Fedeli, R.B. Finazzi, C. Milani, C.E. Morrison, and P. Nicelli (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana/Centro Ambrosiano, 2019), 425–41.

⁶ For the *HE* in Syriac, see the critical edition by W. Wright and N. McLean, eds., *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac Edited from the Manuscripts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), 125–28 for the Maria Story, the section of the *HE* assessed below. The *Theophania* survives in two manuscripts: the oldest dated Eusebius ms in any

Josephus are generally faithful representations of the *textus receptus* of Josephus.⁷ Therefore, the Syriac translators of Eusebius directly apprehended significant portions of Josephus' own Greek text. These portions of Josephus must be studied alongside full translations of the works, such as found in *A7a1* and *DS09*, if we are to gain as full a picture as possible of Josephus' textual *Nachleben* within the late antique and medieval Syriac milieu.

The present study's more specific aim is to profile the known techniques and traditions of translating Josephus into Syriac. A full comparison of all the textual data is beyond the scope of a

language, BL Add. 12150, copied in Edessa in 411 CE; and a modern ms, ASOM ms 40, copied in Mosul in 1941 (which can be viewed on the HMML website: <https://www.vhmm.org/readingRoom/view/135709> accessed 24 November 2023). A transcription and English translation of BL Add. 12150 was made by S. Lee, ed., *Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea. On the Theophania or Divine Manifestation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: A Syriac Version, Edited from an Ancient Manuscript Recently Discovered* (London: Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, 1842). Recent work on some Greek fragments of the *Theophania* has appeared in A. Whealey, "The Greek Fragments attributed to Eusebius of Caesarea's *Theophania*" (*Vigiliae Christianae* 69.1 [2015]) 18–29. See also a response to Whealey in H. Szesnat, "Eusebius of Caesarea's or Eusebius of Emesa's *Theophania*? Evidence from the Lemmata in *Vaticanus Graecus* 1611" (*Vigiliae Christianae* 73.5 [2019]) 507–15.

⁷ This point has been made recently, for example, regarding *BJ* 2.261–63 and Eusebius *HE* 2.21.1–2 in C. Bay, "On the Multivocality of the Latin Josephus Tradition: A Comparison Between the Latin *War*, Latin *Antiquities*, Pseudo-Hegesippus, and Rufinus Based on the Egyptian Pseudo-Prophet Episode (*War* 2.261–263, *Antiquities* 20.169–172a)" (*Medaevalia et Humanistica* 46 [2021]) 1–36. Some have also made the case that Eusebius faithfully adapted the Josephus text of the famous *Testimonium Flavianum* that was available to him: see D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, "Eusebius of Caesarea and the *Testimonium Flavianum* (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII. 63f)" (*Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 25.4 [1974]) 353–62; most recently, see now T. C. Schmidt, *Josephus and Jesus: New Evidence for the One Called Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025). We should also note here that the Greek *textus receptus* of *BJ* is not particularly unproblematic.

single article. Therefore, we have selected a particular sequence for close comparative analysis: the famous account of Maria, a beleaguered woman who reputedly killed, cooked, and consumed her infant son during the siege-caused famine within 70-CE Jerusalem. As a case study in the techniques of translating Josephus which developed and existed between the early-fifth century to as late as the ninth century, the so-called 'Maria Story' (or *teknophagia*) has particular merits, not least because the story was not restricted to translations of *BJ* but also existed in *multiple texts of Eusebius* and proved interesting enough to be included in other literature which only rarely cites select portions of Josephus' and/or Eusebius's narrative.⁸ The upshot is that the Maria Story presents a unique opportunity to trace the maximum number of Syriac Josephus traditions (so far as we know) side by side.

More than that, the Maria Story is arguably the ideological centerpoint of *BJ*, as Honora Chapman has suggested, distilling more poignantly than anywhere else in the narrative the devastation, tragedy, impiety, and horror of Jerusalem's destruction and the fate of the first-century Jews who opposed Rome between 66 and 73 CE.⁹ If this is so, then one might reasonably hypothesize that this section of *BJ* in particular would provide a fruitful window into aspects of Josephus' later reception history, namely into the Christian imaginary as it targeted the destruction of Jerusalem within its variegated

⁸ There are several sources of the *HE* used by Wright and McLean, but for the sake of this essay we rely only on the version of the text from the earliest manuscript, from St. Petersburg (dated to 462 CE).

⁹ Thus the fundamental argument of H. H. Chapman, "Spectacle and Theater in Josephus's *Bellum Judaicum*" (PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 1998), condensed in H. H. Chapman, "Josephus and the Cannibalism of Mary (*BJ* 6.199–219)," in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, vol. 2, ed. J. Marincola (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 419–26.

ruminations over the Jews. This has certainly proven to be the case with regard to the Latin and Hebrew traditions of Josephus' reception.¹⁰ The Maria Story is thus both structurally and conceptually desirable as a case study by which to examine the Syriac Josephus tradition: it is the most widespread portion of Josephus' text in Syriac, having considerable enough length to compare lexis and syntax across different translations, and the Maria Story played an unquestionably central role in how later Christians thought about Jerusalem and the Temple's destruction vis-à-vis theology, Jewish identity, history, and prophecy.¹¹ As it happens, Lucas Van Rompay has shown that this passage, given its representation in the manuscripts, constitutes an appropriate site for examining the Syriac Josephus tradition. Yet Van Rompay examined a somewhat shorter passage, in just three different Syriac traditions, which comes right after the Maria Story in *BJ* (i.e., *BJ* 6.215–19).¹² The present article follows Van Rompay's lead, taking a closer analysis of a more diverse comparative tradition a bit further afield.

Van Rompay's recent article represents the state of the art regarding the Syriac Josephus tradition. As noted, this tradition has received little and sporadic scholarly attention in rare yet valuable studies like Heinz Schreckenberg's passing treatment within his larger study of Josephus text criticism and reception

¹⁰ C. Bay, "The 'Maria Story' in Greek, Latin, & Hebrew: The *Teknophagia* Episode (*BJ* 6.201–13) in Josephus, Latin Josephus, Rufinus, Pseudo-Hegesippus, and *Sefer Yosippon* with Introduction, Texts, Translations, Notes, & Commentary" (*Judaica* 3 [2022]) 1–105.

¹¹ In addition to a full translation of the Maria Story appearing in the Syriac versions of *BJ* 6 (*A7a1* and *DS09*), it appears in Eusebius's *HE* in Syriac, in the *Theophania* as well as in the *Chronicle of Zuqnān* and is referenced by Sergius the Stylite's *Disputation Against a Jew* (XXI.8–9) and by Ps-Zechariah Rhetor (7.5.c).

¹² Van Rompay, "Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* in Syriac," 435–38.

history and Silvia Castelli's later article that catalogued Josephus' literary presence in Syriac literature in response to Schrekenberg's laconic treatment.¹³ Though there now exist helpful summaries of Josephus' Syriac legacy,¹⁴ scholars aware

¹³ H. Schrekenberg, *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche und textkritische Untersuchungen zu Flavius Josephus*, *Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums* 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 5–13; S. Castelli, "Riferimenti a Flavio Giuseppe nella Letteratura Siriaca" (*Henoch* 23 [2001]) 199–226. Even earlier and even more briefly, see H. Schrekenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter*, *Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums* 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 61–62. Further notes on Josephus' influence upon and presence within the early Christian Syriac tradition appear in H. Schrekenberg, "Josephus und die christliche Wirkungsgeschichte seines *Bellum Judaicum*," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Band 21/2: Halbband Religion (Hellenistisches Judentum in römischer Zeit: Philon und Josephus [Forts.])*, ed. W. Haase (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 1106–1217, at 1126, 1132–33, 1137–38n65, 1168, 1195. All of these studies are fundamentally catalogic rather than interpretive or especially critical or analytical. Also to be noted here is L. H. Feldman, "Flavius Josephus Revisited: the Man, His Writings, and His Significance," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Band 21/2: Halbband Religion (Hellenistisches Judentum in römischer Zeit: Philon und Josephus [Forts.])*, ed. W. Haase (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 763–862, p. 771, briefly noting the argument of H. Kottke, *Das sechste Buch des Bellum Judaicum nach der von Ceriani photolithographisch edirten Peschitta-Handschrift übersetzt und kritisch bearbeitet* (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1886), the original editor of Syriac War Book 6, to the effect that our Greek text is a modified version of the Syriac (an argument taken seriously by no one today), and that of A. P. Hayman, *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew*, CSCO 338–339 (Scrip. Syri 152–153) (Leuven: Peeters, 1973), who recognized that the Syriac was based on the Greek but had little respect for the Syriac translation, suggesting that the Syriac should be compared to the Slavonic Josephus because both were based on a similar manuscript (Hayman also thought that the entire *Bf* existed in Syriac already in antiquity).

¹⁴ See now the very good and very brief S. Minov, "Syriac," in *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission*, ed. A. Kulik, G. Boccaccini, L. DiTommaso, D. Hamidovic, and M.E. Stone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 95–137, at 112–14. See also S. P. Brock, "Josephus," in

of this milieu have tended, quite reasonably, to concentrate on the perennially controversial “Testimonium Flavianum” of *AJ* 18.63–64, another important and influential passage in Josephus.¹⁵ Most often, the mere fact of a Syriac tradition of Josephus is simply noted in passing, with a bibliography.¹⁶ What is needed now is a clearer illustration of what the Syriac

Gorgias Encyclopedia Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage, ed. S.P. Brock, A.M. Butts, G. Kiraz, and L. Van Rompay (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011), 232 and L. H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 47.

¹⁵ See recently G. Petrantoni, “Una nota sul testo del Testimonium Flavianum (*Antiquitates*, XVIII, 63–64) a confronto con le versioni siriana e araba: resurrezione o visione?” (*Mythos: Rivista di Storia delle religioni* 12 [2018]) 89–101, which begins by noting the unsettled state of the question. See further A. Whealey, “The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic” (*New Testament Studies* 53 [2007]) 573–90. The Maria Story and the Testimonium Flavianum may fairly be considered competitors for the prize of the most popular portion of Josephus’ writing among later readers and copyists. See also Feldman, “Flavius Josephus Revisited,” 829, 833–35, noting the similarity between the Testimonium Flavianum as cited by Jerome (*De viris illustribus* 13), the Arabic version, and that of the 12th-century chronicle of Michael the Syrian (discussed in Whealey). Cf. S. Pines, *An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum and Its Implications* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1971); D. Flusser, “The Evidence of Josephus on Jesus,” in *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity: Studies and Essays* (Tel-Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1979), 72–80 [Hebrew]; J. Daniélou, “Flavius Josèphe: qu’a-t-il écrit sur Jésus?” (*Les Dossiers de l’Archéologie* 10 [1975]) 56–57; E. Bammel, “A New Variant Form of the Testimonium Flavianum” (*Expository Times* 85 [1974]) 145–47; A.-M. Dubarle, “Le témoignage de Josèphe sur Jésus d’après la tradition indirecte” (*Revue Biblique* 80 [1973]) 481–513.

¹⁶ However, see H. G. Zellentin, “Jerusalem Fell after Betar: The Christian Josephus and Rabbinic Memory,” in *Envisioning Judaism: Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, vol. 1, ed. R.S. Boustani, K. Herrmann, R. Leicht, A.Y. Reed, and G. Veltri (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 319–68, at 320–21, 332, 346, 359, 361–64, who occasionally comments upon the Syriac alongside the Greek in comparing it to roughly contemporaneous rabbinic literature.

Josephus tradition is like in its linguistic, literary, and textual character and, eventually, how it compares to other strains of Josephus' reception (e.g. in Latin, Hebrew, Slavonic, etc.).¹⁷ With that in mind, this case study assesses the diverse translational techniques that pertain to Josephus' *BJ* in Syriac with an eye to the broader transformation of *BJ* within late antiquity and to Josephus' diversified literary legacy as a whole.

JOSEPHUS IN SYRIAC TRANSLATION

Of Josephus' wider corpus, the only surviving Syriac translations proper come from *BJ*.¹⁸ Because only Book 6 survives in full, the question remains open whether the entire *BJ* was ever translated and, if so, when. A. P. Hayman's *Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew* clearly demonstrated that in those places where Sergius quotes from *BJ* 6, he was dependent on the Syriac translation preserved in *A7a1*. However, Sergius also quotes from other places in *BJ*, indicating, for Hayman, that Sergius' *Disputation* is "an important witness to the existence in the Syriac-speaking church of a single, complete, Syriac version of Josephus's *War of the Jews*."¹⁹

Hayman knew only of *A7a1* for his comparative work. More recently, Van Rompay has brought *DS09* into focus and concludes that while *A7a1* and *DS09* contain the same

¹⁷ An initial foray is C. Bay, "The Semitic Josephus Traditions: Maria's *teknophagia* in Syriac, Hebrew, Judeo-Arabic, Copto-Arabic, and Ethiopic," in C. Bay, A. Ellis, J. Mania, S. Moscone, and L. Tröger, eds, *The Medieval Afterlife of Hellenistic Judaism: Reception & Reinvention in Western Europe* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2025), 385–410.

¹⁸ For an overview of Josephus in the Syriac tradition, see now J. A. Lollar, "Josephus as a Scriptural Author in the Christian East," in Bay, Ellis, Mania, Moscone, and Tröger, *Medieval Afterlife*, 371–83.

¹⁹ Hayman, *Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew*, 46–47.

translation, they “reflect different developments of the text.”²⁰ In Van Rompay’s assessment, the relationship between *A7a1*, *DS09*, and Sergius is quite complicated, but suggests the possibility of two (at least) lines of transmission going back to an original translation that, in agreement with Hayman, very likely goes back to a full translation of *BJ* into Syriac.²¹

When this full translation may have occurred is unclear. The *terminus ante quem* would be the late-sixth or early-seventh century—the date of *A7a1*. Some factors indicate, however, that it occurred much earlier. One indication is the style of the translation. The history of scholarship has regularly lamented the character of the translation, providing various explanations. Kotték regarded it as a byproduct of translating Josephus’ original Aramaic edition of *BJ*, a theory which has been disproved by the studies of Nöldeke and Hayman.²² For his part, Nöldeke attributes the translation’s poor quality to the translator’s deficiencies.²³ Van Rompay is a bit more generous and notes that the translation actually fits well within the developmental history of Greek-Syriac translations up to around the seventh century.²⁴ As we shall see, the technique of *A7a1* and *DS09* follows the *Tendenz* of a pre-seventh century style, and apparently dates to the fourth century.

A further indication that Syriac *BJ* existed no later than the seventh century is the possible existence of an Armenian

²⁰ Van Rompay, “Flavius Josephus’ *Jewish War* in Syriac,” 438.

²¹ Van Rompay, “Flavius Josephus’ *Jewish War* in Syriac,” 438–41.

²² See e.g., Hayman, *Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew*, 46.

²³ Nöldeke, “Review of Kotték’s *Bellum Judaicum*,” 882: “Der syrische Text ist eben die ganz flüchtige und fehlerhafte Arbeit eines Mannes, dessen griechische Kenntnisse auffallend mangelhaft waren und der sich mit Rathen half, wo diese verstagen.” Probably the most important critical review of Kotték is Gottheil, “Kotték’s ‘Das sechste Buch’.” Thanks to David Levenson for pointing out to us the importance of Gottheil’s review.

²⁴ Van Rompay, “Flavius Josephus’ *Jewish War* in Syriac,” 429–30.

translation of *BJ*. Several quotations of Josephus' *BJ* occur in the famous history of Armenia by Moses Xorenac'i (who probably wrote in the eighth century).²⁵ F. C. Conybeare argued that these extracts were translated into Armenian from a Syriac Vorlage (as were many of the Armenian translation corpus). However, Conybeare also noted significant overlap between the Josephan quotations in Moses and those in Eusebius, suggesting that Moses may have used a Syriac translation of Eusebius, which certainly existed by 462 CE (see below).²⁶ Nevertheless, Conybeare maintains that, by studying certain changes in the Armenian translation, "we trace the influence of the old translator of Josephus adapting to the Greek a version made from Syriac."²⁷ Conybeare's study was enough to convince Schreckenberg that a (complete?) Armenian version of Josephus' works "entwender Moses schon vorlag oder von ihm angefertigt wurde."²⁸ Thomson notes that Moses "ransacked the *Jewish Wars*, not only adapting passages out of context for literary effect but also giving Armenia an important role in Roman-Parthian history [...]."²⁹ Importantly, Thomson lists several quotations from Book 1 of the *BJ*, which was probably available in Armenian. If such an Armenian version existed and was, as Conybeare suggested, based on a Syriac *Vorlage*, then it must have predated the eighth century, when Moses composed his *History*.

²⁵ See the convincing argument for Moses' date in R. W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i: History of the Armenians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 56–61.

²⁶ F.C. Conybeare, "An Old Armenian Version of Josephus" (*Journal of Theological Studies* 9 [1908]) 577–83.

²⁷ Conybeare, "Old Armenian Version of Josephus," 582.

²⁸ Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 100.

²⁹ Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, 57.

VERSIONS OF JOSEPHUS' MARIA STORY IN SYRIAC

The Maria Story in Syriac as a case study is especially interesting since Syriac translation techniques underwent important shifts and changes between the fifth and seventh centuries,³⁰ especially around 500,³¹ and the Maria Story appears in texts that land on both sides of that divide. As a narrative, the Maria Story is one of the more vivid, disturbing scenes of the Jewish War as related by Josephus' *BJ*. It was retold later by Christian writers and historians like Eusebius and Pseudo-Hegesippus as a means of demonstrating the debauchery of the Jews and evidence of God's abandonment of them as the Chosen People.³² Eusebius' opinions had a profound influence on his

³⁰ See S. P. Brock, "Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique," in *IIIo Symposium Syriacum, 1980: Les contacts du monde syriaque avec les autres cultures (Goslar 7–11 Septembre 1980)*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 221, ed. R. Lavenant (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1983), 1–14 and, more recently, A. Schmidt and D. Gonnet, eds., *Les Pères grecs dans la littérature syriaque*, Études syriaques 4 (Paris: Geuthner, 2007); D. King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria: A Study in Translation Technique*, CSCO 626, Subsidia 123 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008); S. Brock, "Charting the Hellenization of a Literary Culture: The Case of Syriac" (*Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 3 [2015]) 98–124, esp. 98–100. Many thanks to Lucas Van Rompay for pointing us to some of these foundational studies on Greco-Syriac translation technique in late antiquity.

³¹ Lucas Van Rompay, written communication, January 3, 2024.

³² On Eusebius see S. Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context*, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), and cf. J. Ulrich, *Studien zur Rolle der Juden in der Theologie des Eusebius von Caesarea*, Patristische Texte und Studien 49 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999). On Ps-Hegesippus see C. Bay, "Writing the Jews out of History: Pseudo-Hegesippus, Classical Historiography, & the Codification of Christian Anti-Judaism in Late Antiquity" (*Church History* 90.2 [2021]) 265–85. Add to this the statement made by Isidore of Pelusium in his *Epistles* that cites Josephus as evidence that the destruction of Jerusalem/the Jews was divine retribution for their killing of Jesus, cited by Kottek, *Das sechste Buch*, 5. A quotation of Isidore's

readers. Syriac Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries were particularly interested in the writings of Eusebius and translated them quite early, continuing to copy them well into the Middle Ages. The earliest surviving copy of (some of) Eusebius' works (in any language) is found in the famous Edessene codex dated to 411/12 CE and containing Eusebius' *Theophania* and the *History of the Martyrs of Palestine*. By the fifth century, the *Historia Ecclesiastica* was translated into Syriac (by 462 CE at the latest), as apparently also was Josephus' *BJ*, at least Book 6, if not earlier. The initial translation work for the extant versions of Eusebius and *BJ* 6 appears to have taken place in Edessa. In what follows, we provide a brief description of each of the sources used in this study in the chronological order in which the manuscripts were copied.

Theophania (411 CE)

The Syriac translation of the *Theophania* comes from the oldest dated Eusebius manuscript in any language: British Library Add. 12,150. Measuring approximately 14 x 11 inches, this vellum codex consists of 255 folios and contains six distinct texts or collections. According to the colophon, it was copied in Edessa by a scribe named Jacob in the year 411/412.³³ The texts contained in the manuscript include:

Ep. 1692 also appears at the beginning of T. Kampianaki, "Perceptions of Flavius Josephus in the Medieval Greek and Latin Literary Traditions" (*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 60 [2020]) 290–316.

³³ W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the year 1838*, vol. 2 (London: British Museum, 1871), 631–33. The colophon on fol. 239v reads:

ܐܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ
ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܢ

"This volume was completed in the month of the latter Teshri in the year 723 (of the Greeks) at Urhai (Edessa), a city of Beth-Nahrin (Mesopotamia)."

1. The *Recognitions* of Clement of Rome, also known as the *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions*, in Syriac translation (fols. 1r–72r)³⁴
2. The Discourses of Titus of Bostra against the Manichaeans, in Syriac translation (fols. 72v–155v)³⁵
3. Eusebius' *Theophania* (fols. 156r–235r)
4. Eusebius' *History of the Martyrs of Palestine* (fols. 235v–250v)³⁶
5. A panegyric on martyrdom also by Eusebius (fols. 251r–252r)³⁷
6. The so-called Edessene martyrology, organized according to the Syriac calendar (fols. 252v–254r)³⁸

The year 723 is reckoned according to the Seleucid calendar, which was used by Syriac historians and writers well into the Middle Ages and beyond. See M. Debié, “Syriac Historiography and Identity Formation” (*Church History and Religious Culture* 89 [2009]) 93–114. The date 723 corresponds to the year 411/412 CE.

³⁴ Cf. F. Stanley Jones, *The Syriac Pseudo-Clementines: An Early Version of the First Christian Novel*, Apocryphes 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

³⁵ Cf. N. A. Pedersen, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God: A Study of Titus of Bostra's Contra Manichaeos. The Work's Sources, Aims and Relation to its Contemporary Theology*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 56 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

³⁶ Cf. W. Cureton, *History of the Martyrs in Palestine, by Eusebius, Bishop in Caesarea, Discovered in a Very Ancient Syriac Manuscript* (Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate, 1861); H. J. Lawlor and J. E. Leonard Oulton, eds., *The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1927–1928).

³⁷ Cf. B. H. Cowper, “The Encomium of the Martyrs: An Inedited Oration of Eusebius of Caesarea – Syriac Text” (*Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* NS V.10 [1864]) 403–408.

³⁸ F. Nau, *Un martyrologie et douze ménologies syriaques*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 10.1 (46) (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1912); S. P. Brock, “Eusebius and Syriac Christianity,” in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. H. A. Attridge and G. Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 212–34.

The manuscript is diverse, but there are some identifiable themes.³⁹ The most obvious theme is martyrdom, which occupies the latter parts of the manuscript. But Eusebian authorship is also prominent, as texts attributed to the bishop of Caesarea occupy fols. 156r–252r, nearly 200 pages of Syriac text. A more complex theme may be reflected in the presence of texts’ implicitly self-claiming of the status of “orthodox” (i.e., pro-Nicene) Christianity vis-à-vis other, competing religious groups, explicitly Manichaeans as represented by the work of Titus of Bostra, but others as well.⁴⁰ This theme is consistent with the dynamics of Edessa’s cultural and religious climate at this point in its history, very close to the time when Bishop Rabbula would take over and begin instituting his religious reforms, which would result in Edessa becoming a major hub of Christian activity.⁴¹

³⁹ On this manuscript and some questions it leaves open, see F. Millar, “Greek and Syriac in Edessa: from Ephrem to Rabbula (CE 363-435)” (*SemClas* 4 [2011]) 99–113.

⁴⁰ Behind the antagonists of the Ps-Clementines, like Simon Magus, may be the Marcionites and followers of astrology: H.-J. Klauck, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 226–29.

⁴¹ On Rabbula see R. Doran, *Stewards of the Poor: The Man of God, Rabbula, and Hiba in Fifth-Century Edessa*, Cistercian Studies Series 208 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2006); C. Rammelt, *Ibas von Edessa: Rekonstruktion einer Biographie und dogmatischen Position zwischen den Fronten*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 106 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008); R. Phenix and C. B. Horn, *The Rabbula Corpus: Comprising the Life of Rabbula, His Correspondence, a Homily Delivered in Constantinople, Canons, and Hymns*, Writings from the Greco-Roman World 17 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017). On the Pseudo Clementine *Recognitions* and their role in Edessene religio-political conflicts, see N. Kelley, *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines: Situating the Recognitions in Fourth-Century Syri*, WUNT 2.213 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), esp. 189–192; N. Kelley, “Astrology in the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*” (*Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 59 [2008]) 607–

It is also worth noting that this collection consists primarily of translations into Syriac, which is not surprising for early Syriac literary culture.⁴² The scribe was clearly interested in translating Eusebius' works, which appear to have been representative of whatever themes he sought to preserve. In the process of preserving Eusebius, the scribe also preserves (albeit indirectly) the earliest extant translation of Josephus into Syriac, whom Eusebius quotes in the *Theophania* (as well as in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*). This translated quotation is also the shortest of all those surveyed here: whereas in *HE* Eusebius quoted *BJ* 6.193–213, the entire frame of the Maria Story (see below), the *Theophania* only contains a quotation of *BJ* 6.199–208 (corresponding to *HE* 3.6.23–28a), the meat of the story, as it were. It is unfortunate that we cannot fully compare the translation to a Greek text of the *Theophania*, since no full Greek text of it has survived from antiquity. What fragments there are have been the topic of major debate, and at least one scholar has maintained that the authenticity of any of the fragments must invariably be weighed against the nature of the Syriac translation.⁴³

29; E. Fiano, "From 'why' to 'why not': Clem. Recogn. III 2/11. Fourth-century Trinitarian Debates and the Syrian Christian-Jewish Continuum" (*Adamantius* 20 [2014]) 343–65; and, most recently, L. M. Frenkel, "Peter's Dialogical Victories: Religious Leadership in the *Pseudo-Clementines* and its Syriac Reception," in *In Search of Truth in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, ed. M.J. De Vos and D. Praet, WUNT 2.496 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023), 375–93.

⁴² S. P. Brock, *An Introduction to Syriac Studies*, 2nd ed., Gorgias Handbooks 4 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 6 notes that the early translations of Greek Patristic texts took place between the fifth and seventh centuries and that many of these happen to be preserved, as in this case, in fifth-century manuscripts in particular.

⁴³ See Whealey, "Greek Fragments," and Szesnat, "Eusebius of Caesarea's or Eusebius of Emesa's *Theophania*?" On the importance of the Syriac for studying the Greek fragments, see H. Gressmann, *Eusebius Werke: 3. Band*,

Surian) in the Wadi Natrun of Egypt and was brought to the monastery by a priest from Harran named Sahlun.⁴⁶ The parchment manuscript measures 31 x 23.5 cm and contains 123 folios. The text was copied by a scribe named Isaac in a clear Estrangelā script in two columns of 29–34 lines each.

Although we cannot be sure, it is possible that this manuscript came from Edessa.⁴⁷ The second half of the fifth century was a time of burgeoning literary production in Osrhoene, particularly of translations into Syriac.⁴⁸ There are reasons to believe, however, that this 462 CE manuscript was not the first copy of *HE* in Syriac. Eusebius' work was already translated into Armenian in the early-fifth century,⁴⁹ and this

⁴⁶ See Wright and McLean, *Ecclesiastical History*, vi.

⁴⁷ W. H. P. Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Boston: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1946, repr. Piscataway: Gorgias, 2002), 54 says the name of the place of writing was erased. Wright and McLean, *Ecclesiastical History*, vi suggest that it was originally copied in Edessa. Though the note mentions Harran, there are many examples of manuscripts produced at Edessa and then moved elsewhere. See M. M. Mango, "Patrons and Scribes Indicated in Syriac Manuscripts, 411 to 800 AD," in *Akten des XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress Wien, 4.–9. Oktober 1981*, *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31–32 (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1982), 3–12.

⁴⁸ See the analysis of the period by F. Millar, "Greek and Syriac in fifth-century Edessa: the case of Bishop Hibas" (*SemClas* 5 [2012]) 151–65.

⁴⁹ A. Drost-Abgaryan, "The Reception of Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 264–339) in Armenia," in *Greek Texts and Armenian Traditions: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. F. Gazzano, L. Pagani, and G. Traina, *Trends in Classics – Supplementary Volumes* 39 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 215–30. See further M. J. Hollerich, *Making Christian History: Eusebius of Caesarea and His Readers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 47: "The impact of the *HE* may be measured by the richness of its manuscript tradition, by its quick translation into Latin, Syriac, Armenian, and perhaps Coptic, and by the way it dominated interpretations of early Christianity in both Eastern and Western Christianity for centuries to come"; see also W. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 372–73.

Armenian translation was itself likely based on an existing Syriac translation, suggesting that the first translation of the *HE* from Greek into Syriac took place at the end of the 4th century.⁵⁰ While this manuscript was likely not the first attempt at translating Eusebius into Syriac, neither would it be the last.

Eusebius copied the account of Josephus' Maria Story (*BJ* 6.193–213) directly into his *HE* (3.6.17–28),⁵¹ as he probably also did in the *Theophania* (though the latter contains a shorter quotation, as mentioned above). Curiously, as our analysis will show, the Syriac translations between these two manuscripts of Eusebius's *HE* and *Theophania* have significant differences. In particular, the Syriac account from *HE* is more elaborate in Syriac than the account from the *Theophania*. For his part, Samuel Lee, who edited the latter text in 1843, had high praise for its Syriac:

The language of this translation, [...] appears to me to be the purest Syriac, and such as might be well expected in a work of so ancient a date. I have already remarked, that its order is very greatly inverted, and its collocation involved, from its having been made servilely to follow the Greek original. Of this any one will satisfy himself, by comparing any of its sections with the places pointed out, as found in Greek, in some of the still existing works of Eusebius: which,—although it has had the effect of

⁵⁰ The *Life of Mashtots* by Koriwn mentions that Mashtots, who developed the Armenian alphabet, was in Edessa when the earliest translation activity took place. See R. W. Thomson, "L'historiographie arménienne," in *L'historiographie syriaque*, ed. M. Debié, Études syriaques 6 (Paris: Geuthner, 2009), 197–209. See especially his comments on p. 198 and 204.

⁵¹ See E. Schwartz and T. Mommsen, eds., *Eusebius Werke, Zweiter Band, Erster Teil: Die Kerchengeschichte*, GCS 6.1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 206–11, also containing Rufinus' Latin translation of Eusebius' Greek. Mommsen and Schwartz opined that "the Syriac translation showed a far superior understanding of Eusebius's Greek" than Rufinus (CCLI, XLIII), as noted by Hollerich, *Making Christian History*, 56.

giving me a great deal of trouble, as it will any reader of the Syriac text,—is nevertheless a circumstance of infinite value in other respects; and particularly, as it has preserved to our times a most *exact copy* of an original Greek word of our author, which has, no doubt, been long ago lost.⁵²

The present analysis puts Lee's comments to the test by comparing the *Theophania's* translation of the Maria Story to Josephus's Greek, side by side with the Syriac translation of *HE* containing the same episode.

Codex Ambrosianus (7a1)

The famous Codex Ambrosianus B 21 Inf. (Leiden Peshitta manuscript 7a1, hereafter *A7a1*), composed at the end of the sixth century or at the beginning of the seventh, contains a well-known collection of texts that ends with a full Syriac translation of Josephus' *BJ* 6. (Many have thought that this text represents a now-lost Syriac translation of the entire *BJ*.)⁵³ Interestingly, in the context of Codex Ambrosianus, *BJ* 6 serves as the final text of the Maccabean corpus, as noted by several scholars.⁵⁴ What

⁵² Lee, *On the Theophania*, xvii.

⁵³ Zellentin, "Jerusalem Fell after Betar," 320–21: "At least the entire *War* was translated from Greek into Syriac in the fourth or fifth century; one book of this translation, and citations of most others, survive"; see now van Rompay, "Flavius Josephus Jewish War in Syriac," 441; earlier, see Gottheil, "Kottek's 'Das sechste Buch'," 137–38; cf. Stadel, '*Abdisho' bar Brikha*,' 65–66n31. The evidence for a broader or complete Syriac translation of Josephus' *Jewish War* is derived from the many Syriac quotations from *War* in Sergius the Stylite and other texts, such as MS Deir al-Surian 28, fol. 132r–v, on which see van Rompay.

⁵⁴ W. Van Peursen, "La diffusion des manuscrits bibliques conservés: typologie, organisation, nombre et époques de copie," in *L'Ancien Testament en syriaque*, ed. F. Briquel-Chatonnet and P. Le Moigne, Études syriaques 5 (Paris: Geuthner, 2008), 202–203; P. Forness, "Narrating History Through the Bible in Late Antiquity: A Reading Community for the

is today identified as the sixth book of *BJ* is called in *A7a1* the “fifth book relating to the final destruction of Jerusalem” in the running title of fols. 328v and 329r.⁵⁵ This identification appears in several other Syriac manuscripts as well.⁵⁶

This codex measures 36.5 x 26 cm and contains 330 folios, with text divided into 3 columns of 50–70 lines each. Conveniently, Gorgias Press has recently reprinted a large facsimile edition of the entire codex published in the nineteenth century by Antonio Maria Ceriani.⁵⁷ More recently, Liv Ingeborg Lied has provided the most comprehensive codicological analysis to date.⁵⁸ The contents of Codex Ambrosianus include:

Syriac Peshitta Old Testament Manuscript in Milan (Ambrosian Library, B. 21 inf.)” (*Le Muséon* 127 [2014]) 41–76; van Rompay, “Flavius Josephus Jewish War in Syriac.”

⁵⁵ ܐܠܝܐܝܪܐ ܕܝܘܠܐ [ܐܠܐ] ܕܝܠܐ ܕܝܠܐ ܕܝܠܐ ܕܝܠܐ

⁵⁶ See the list in L. I. Lied, “2 Baruch and the Syriac Codex Ambrosianus (7a1): Studying Old Testament Pseudepigrapha in Their Manuscript Context” (*JSP* 26.2 [2016]) 67–107, at 91n84. Other Syriac manuscripts to link *BJ* 6 to the Maccabean books include BnF Ms 11 (fols. 329v & 337r) and BL Ms. Egerton 704 (fol. 351v).

⁵⁷ A. M. Ceriani, ed., *A Facsimile Edition of the Peshitto Old Testament Based on Codex Ambrosianus (7a1)* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013); earlier: A. M. Ceriani, *Translatio Syria Pescitto Veteris Testamenti ex Codice Ambrosiano Sec. Fere VI: Photolithographice Edita* (Milan: J.B. Pogliani, 1876), 660–79; earlier still, the text appears in: A. M. Ceriani, “Flavii Josephi, De Bello Judaico Liber Sextus: Syriace Versus,” in *Monumenta Sacra et Profana: Opera Collegii Doctorum Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, Tom. V – Fasc. II* (Milan: J.B. Pogliani, 1871), 181–92. See also Kottek, *Das sechste Buch* and P. Bedjan, ed., *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1905), 770–837. Both David G.K. Taylor (Oxford) and Jack Tannous (Princeton) have been rumored to be working on a text/translation of Syriac *BJ* 6 from Ambrosianus for George Kiraz’s Antioch Bible Project.

⁵⁸ See chapter one of L. I. Lied, *Invisible Manuscripts: Textual Scholarship and the Survival of 2 Baruch*, STAC 128 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022).

- Peshitta Old Testament, including Apocrypha (Gen, Exod, Lev, Num, Deut, Job, Josh, Judg, Sam, Psalms, Kings, Prov, Wis Sol, Qoh, Song of Songs, Isa, Jeremiah/Lamentations, Ep. Jer, Ezk, Minor Prophets, Daniel, Bel and the Dragon, Ruth, Susanna, Esther, Judith, Ben Sira, 1–2 Chr, 2 Baruch, Ep. Baruch, 4 Ezra, Ezra, Nehemiah)
- The Books of Maccabees (1–4)
- Josephus, *BJ* 6

Philip Forness has convincingly argued that this manuscript was one means by which a seventh-century Christian community approached the retelling of history. In particular, Forness draws attention to how the destruction of Jerusalem figures thematically in the manuscript's ordering of books. This theme likely reflects the Syriac anti-Jewish polemic so common in late antiquity.⁵⁹ It is tempting to read this manuscript and its interest in Jerusalem against the background of the sack of Jerusalem by the Sassanians in 614 CE, in which many sources implicate the Jews as collaborating with the Persians.⁶⁰ Josephus' account of Jerusalem's revolt in 70 CE would have

⁵⁹ Forness, "Narrating History," 61–62. See also Lied, "2 Baruch and the Syriac Codex Ambrosianus," 90: "it is likely that 2 Baruch was included in the Codex Ambrosianus due to its narrative focus on the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, as well as the destiny of the tribes of Israel." Another key source for this discursive context is the Syriac *Julian Romance*, written at around the same time *Aṭar* was produced and "probably reflect[ing] popular narrative traditions arising in the context of the conflict between Jews and Christians in the region of Edessa," per D. B. Levenson, "The Ancient and Medieval Sources for the Emperor Julian's Attempt to Rebuild the Jerusalem Temple" (*JSJ* 35.4 [2004]) 409–60, at 427. Thanks to David Levenson for reminding us of the importance of this source for understanding Jewish-Christian relations in late ancient Syriac.

⁶⁰ See G. Greatrex and S. N. C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: Part II AD 363–630* (London: Routledge, 2002), 190–93.

resonated with what was taking place right in front of seventh-century readers in Syria.⁶¹

The sack of Jerusalem in 614 could explain why the scribe was interested in *BJ* 6 in particular rather than the entire *Jewish War*. Book 6 specifically addresses the fall of Jerusalem, which the contents of the codex trace in different periods of history. The seventh-century reading community of the codex would then have been watching history come full circle: the manuscript documents the many times Jerusalem fell, and they were watching it happen once more. The text of *BJ* 6 would thus have been immediately salient to the events taking place at the time, serving as a historical interpretive lens for framing and comprehending current events.⁶²

The Chronicle of Zuqnīn (Vat. Syr. 162)

This universal chronicle (hereafter *CZ*) from the Vatican Syriac collection begins at creation and ends at the time of its composition in 775/776 CE.⁶³ The codex's dimensions are

⁶¹ The location where the codex was copied is not known, though some have suggested it was at one point in Takrit based on a note on fol. 330r. What is certain is that it was brought to Deir al-Surian probably in the eleventh century. It likely was taken from there to Italy, where it has been in the possession of the Ambrosian library since 1611. See Lied, "2 Baruch and the Syriac Codex Ambrosianus," 81–83.

⁶² For more on this theory, see J. A. Lollar, "Witnessing a World Crisis ... Again: 2 Baruch and Codex Ambrosianus in the Context of the Fall(s) of Jerusalem in the Seventh Century," paper presented at the conference *New Perspectives on Apocalyptic Literature: The Case of 2 Baruch*, Evangelisches Stift Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, 12–15 June 2023; Lollar, "Josephus as a Scriptural Author," 371–83.

⁶³ See A. Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn Parts I and II: From the Creation to the Year 506/7 AD*, Gorgias Chronicles of Late Antiquity 2 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2017). Most of the lone copy of the chronicle is located at the Vatican Library, while six folios are in the possession of the British Library (Add. 14,665).

approximately 23.5 x 17.5 cm. It is a palimpsest, and the text of CZ appears in a single column, although slightly mutilated especially at the beginning and end. The preface of the work has fortunately survived and reveals that it was composed in the year 1087 of the Greeks (= 775/6 CE), “in which (year) Mahdi son of ‘Abd-Allāh is ruling over Syria, Egypt, Armenia, Azarbayjān, all of Persia, Sind, Kho[rasan], as well as over the Arabs, and over the Greeks Leo son of Constantine, and over the Romans Pepin.”⁶⁴ The manuscript was purchased by the Vatican Library from the Deir al-Surian monastery in the nineteenth century, and the other six folios were purchased by the British Library between 1839 and 1842.⁶⁵

Harrak argues that this manuscript is actually an autograph by the author, whom Harrak believes to have been Joshua the Stylite of the monastery of Zuqnīn.⁶⁶ A note in the third part of CZ mentions that the codex was repaired in the ninth century by a man named Elisha at the monastery of Zuqnīn, indicating clear connections to that monastery. If Harrak is correct about all of this, then we have a clear provenance for the manuscript and must assume that it was at some point transported to Deir al-Surian in Egypt, perhaps by Mushe of Nisibis in the first half of the tenth century.⁶⁷

Important for our purposes is the chronicler’s use of sources. He mentions Eusebius many times in the chronicle and seems to have used both the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and the *Chronici canones*, a lost work that survives in a Latin translation by Jerome and in Syriac, serving as the basis for an extant

⁶⁴ Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnīn*, xi.

⁶⁵ Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, xxix–xxxi.

⁶⁶ Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnīn*, xii–xiv.

⁶⁷ On the importance of Mushe of Nisibis for manuscripts in Egypt, see S. P. Brock, “Without Mushê of Nisibis, Where Would We Be? Some Reflections on the Transmission of Syriac Literature” (*Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56.1-4 [2004]) 15–24.

Armenian translation.⁶⁸ The chronicler relies on the portions of Eusebius that contain the story of Maria. Harrak comments on his use of Eusebius:

As for Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, it covers early church history in the Chronicle from the time of Herod (year 5 AD) to Constantine the Great, including calamities befalling the Jews after the Passion of Christ, material borrowed by Eusebius from Josephus. Eusebius' *EH* is extant in Syriac, but the version used by the Chronicler differs slightly from the one published by Wright and McLean, and in any case he was selective in copying events from this largely quoted source.⁶⁹

This observation by Harrak holds more or less true for the version of the Maria story that it contains, which is evaluated below. As we show, the Maria Story of *CZ* is remarkably similar to that contained in the Syriac *HE*, over against the similar effective pair *A7a1* + *DS09*. At the same time, the vocabulary and syntax of *CZ* and *HE* do not always correspond, testifying to a variant textual tradition and/or diversity within the translation and/or transmission of the Maria Story in(to) Syriac.

⁶⁸ See M. Debié, *L'écriture de l'histoire en syriaque: Transmissions interculturelles et constructions identitaires entre hellénisme et islam*, Late Antique History and Religion 12 (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 42–43. Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnān*, xvii–xviii. A mutilated translation of the *Chronici canones* in Syriac by Jacob of Edessa has survived, so it was probably available to the chronicler in Syriac. See E. W. Brooks, *Chronicon Jacobi Edesseni* in *Chronica Minora III*, T. CSCO 5/Syr. 5, 261–330; V. CSCO 6/Syr. 6, 197–258 (Paris: CSCO, 1905–1907).

⁶⁹ Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnān*, xviii–xix.

Deir al-Surian 9 (DS9)

Syriac manuscript 9 remains in situ at Deir al-Surian in the Wadi Natrun in Egypt.⁷⁰ In its current state, the codex consists of two different manuscripts bound together at an unknown date, both measuring 18.5 x 14 cm. The two halves (DS 9A and DS 9B) contain the following texts:⁷¹

- DS9A
 - Josephus *BJ* 6 (fols. 3r–30v)
 - 3 Maccabees (fols. 31r–44v)
 - The Book of Ruth (fols. 44v–47v)
 - The Book of Susanna (fols. 47v–51v)
 - Summary of Esther (fol. 51v)
- DS9B
 - The Book of Esther (fols. 52r–59r)
 - The Book of Judith (fols. 59r–74r)
 - The Book of Thekla (fols. 74r–83r)
 - The Book of Tobit from LXX (83r–94r)

Lucas Van Rompay has provided an analysis of how the different texts relate to one another.⁷² The second manuscript, DS 9B, appears to be a form of the Syriac *Book of Women* which, in this case, included Thekla and Tobit.⁷³ The two separate

⁷⁰ For the manuscript collection at the monastery, see Brock and van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts*, and 42–48 for this manuscript. The manuscript was formerly labeled Manuscript 27 by Kamil. See Kamil's unpublished catalogue: <https://archive.org/details/KamilHandlist>.

⁷¹ A comprehensive codicological analysis of this manuscript can be found in J. A. Lollar, *Thekla in Syriac: The Acts of Thekla and its Reception in the Syriac Traditions*, STAC (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming).

⁷² Van Rompay, "Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* in Syriac," 426–27.

⁷³ On the *Book of Women* see C. Burris, "The Syriac *Book of Women*: Text and Metatext," in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. W. E. Klingshirn and L. Safran,

manuscripts may have been bound together due to their common interest in biblical women. In any case, it is certain that DS 9A began with *BJ* 6. Although the first two pages are missing, the original quire numbers confirm that this manuscript began with a copy of Book 6 of Josephus' *Jewish War*.⁷⁴

According to Van Rompay, DS 9A may be confidently dated to around 800. It contains "the same translation of Josephus' Greek text" as *A7a1*, though Van Rompay argues that "we can rule out a very close relationship between the two manuscripts." He writes further:

Ms. DS 9A was not copied from ms. B 21 inf. [Codex Ambrosianus] and neither were the two manuscripts copied from the same *Vorlage*. My initial collation of the two texts yielded about 200 variants (not including orthographical variants) – ranging from minor additions, omissions, or changes, to issues of word order, vocabulary, and minor stylistic changes. The variants are not sufficient in quantity and quality to allow us to speak of a more or less systematic revision of the text, either solely based on the Syriac, or with renewed consultation of the Greek. But we have to reckon with a process of transmission in the course of which a number of changes took place, either accidental or intentional, some of which reflect the struggle of scribes with a text that they must have regarded as difficult.⁷⁵

In DS 9A (hereafter *DS09*), then, we have the same translation as that of *BJ* 6, though the two manuscripts cannot be said to be from the same manuscript family. In our analysis below, we will offer our own opinions on the comparison

CUA Studies in Early Christianity (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 86–98.

⁷⁴ Van Rompay, "Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* in Syriac," 427.

⁷⁵ Van Rompay, "Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* in Syriac," 428.

between the two versions in conversation with previous theories about the translation of Josephus into Syriac altogether.

Since *DSog* and *A7a1* are the only two (more or less) complete, extant versions of *BJ* 6 independent of Eusebius, one last observation by Van Rompay is worth noting. The format and style of the two manuscripts differ substantially. *A7a1* is a “deluxe” manuscript, written in three columns in a clear, Estrangelā script and was probably used occasionally in the liturgy.⁷⁶ *DSog*, by contrast, is much smaller, written in a less formal style, in a Sertā script, and was likely for personal use.⁷⁷ The contrast between the forms of each manuscript indicate something about how Josephus—or at least *BJ* 6—was used by different reading communities.⁷⁸ In any case, both *DSog* and *A7a1* suggest a (to some extent) broad readership interested in Josephus’ *BJ* 6 in particular.

The texts listed above—from *A7a1*, *DSog*, *Theoph*, *HE*, and *CZ*—encompass the extant versions of Josephus’ Maria Story (*BJ* 6.201–213) in Syriac, filtered through Eusebian and biblical-translation traditions. In what follows, we go to work on these sources to bring out what can be learned from them about the Syriac Josephus tradition itself, Josephus within Syriac literature and translation, and the particular texts and manuscripts to which the extracted passages belong. In each case, we provide the Greek text (following the section markers of *BJ*) followed by the texts of the four or five different Syriac

⁷⁶ cf. K. D. Jenner, “A Review of the Methods by Which Syriac Biblical and Related Manuscripts Have Been Described and Analysed: Some Preliminary Remarks” (*ARAM* 5.1–2 [1993]) 255–66. Perhaps more convincing and more nuanced is the conclusion of Lied, *Invisible Manuscripts*, 117–25, who bases her conclusions on direct examination of the manuscript.

⁷⁷ Van Rompay, “Flavius Josephus’ *Jewish War* in Syriac,” 429.

⁷⁸ On this point see also Lollar, “Josephus as a Scriptural Author.”

versions, as the case may be, providing English translations for each. After the texts and translations in each section, we offer a close, technical analysis under the umbrella of “textual notes.” After this section, which constitutes the bulk of the article, we collate and summarize our findings within a “commentary” section, which directly precedes the conclusion. These analytical sections deal respectively with philology, syntax, grammar, linguistics, lexicography (“textual notes”) and larger literary, historical, social, and cultural issues (“commentary”), together providing an in-depth overview of the Syriac Josephus tradition as epitomized in the Maria Story.

As it proceeds, this study will clarify several tentative conclusions regarding Syriac lexicography, textology, and translational techniques at work in these texts and their interrelations. We observe a translational discrepancy between the fuller translations of *BJ* 6 (*A7a1* and *DS09*), which we label the ‘Maccabean’ translation/tradition, and the quotations of Josephus mediated through Eusebius, which we label the “Eusebian” translation/tradition.⁷⁹ In terms of evaluating these translations, their faithfulness to the Greek text of Josephus (either directly or through Eusebius) is a key factor for assessing the techniques employed by the translators. “Faithfulness” here is not intended as a measure of reliability or value of the text, but rather a benchmark for attempting to understand the translation modes. Within the ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ traditions, we pay particular attention to lexical idiosyncrasies and syntactic discrepancies that reveal the particular choices made by scribes/copyists as they wrestled with Josephus’ distinct and often difficult Greek.

⁷⁹ In both *A7a1* and *DS09* the text of *BJ* 6 is listed as a Maccabean text (note the colophon in *DS09* fol. 31r which mentions that the copy of *3 Maccabees* was written by “this same Josephus”). The various quotations of Josephus appear first in Eusebius’ *HE*, which was subsequently used by the *Chronicle of Zuqnān*, Sergius the Stylite, and Ps-Zechariah Rhetor.

Finally, for reference, this story occurs as a part of the climax of Josephus' narrative in *BJ*, an integrated prelude to Jerusalem's destruction and the Temple's burning (69-70 CE). The native population in and around Jerusalem is being pressed from all sides by the stresses of war with Rome, including civil insurrection, widespread starvation and want, and other travesties. Josephus relates in precise detail the sufferings experienced by the Judeans at this time, both individually and collectively, and is manifestly describing what he understands as the great woe of Jewish history (cf. *BJ* 1.12). In the midst of a war-torn landscape, therefore, the narrative in the text we are analyzing picks up.

(*N.b.* – Throughout this section, we refer to *A7a1* and *DS09* as the 'Maccabean' text traditions—named from *A7a1*'s "Maccabees" label within Codex Ambrosianus—and to *HE* and *CZ* as the 'Eusebian' text traditions, based as they are ultimately on a Greek text mediated by Eusebius.)

TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS, & NOTES⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Images of *A7a1* may be accessed here: <https://ambrosiana.comperio.it/opac/detail/view/ambro:catalog:28065>. For Eusebius's *HE* we relied on Wright and McLean's edition, which may be accessed here: <https://archive.org/details/WrightAndMcLeanTheEcclesiasticalHistoryOfEusebiusInSyriac/page/n131/mode/2up>. For the *CZ* we relied on the text of Harrak. For Eusebius's *Theophania* we relied on Lee's edition, which can be accessed here: https://books.google.de/books?id=38RCAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=de&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=o#v=onepage&q&f=false. The 411 manuscript had recently been uploaded by the British Library at the time of this initial writing, but was subsequently taken down. For Deir al-Surian 09 we consulted high-quality manuscript photographs. For the Greek text of Josephus we consulted the standard edition of B. Niese, ed., *Flavii Iosephi Opera, Vol. VI: De Bello Iudaico Libros VII*, editio secunda lucis ope expressa (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955 [1885]), and the Greek text and our English translation are occasionally informed by H.

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.193	
A countless multitude fell from those who were being destroyed by the famine throughout the city, and the suffering became indescribable.	Τῶν δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ λιμοῦ φθειρομένων κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἄπειρον μὲν ἔπιπτε τὸ πλῆθος, ἀδιήγητα δὲ συνέβαινε τὰ πάθη.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1, fol. 324v col. 2 [Ceriani p. 668]	
And those who were being destroyed by famine could not be numbered, nor could their sufferings be recounted.	ⲙⲉⲛ ⲉⲓⲡⲓⲡⲧⲉ ⲧⲟ ⲡⲓⲗⲏⲑⲟⲥ, ⲁⲃⲓⲛⲏⲕⲏⲧⲁ ⲉⲃⲉ ⲧⲁ ⲡⲁⲛⲏⲧⲏⲩ.

Deir al-Surian 09, fol. 14r	
And those who were being destroyed by famine could neither be numbered, nor could their sufferings be recounted.	ⲙⲉⲛ ⲉⲓⲡⲓⲡⲧⲉ ⲧⲟ ⲡⲓⲗⲏⲑⲟⲥ, ⲁⲃⲓⲛⲏⲕⲏⲧⲁ ⲉⲃⲉ ⲧⲁ ⲡⲁⲛⲏⲧⲏⲩ.

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i>	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.20 (Wright and McLean p. 125)	
Among those who were being destroyed by the famine in the city, people fell without number, and it is	ⲙⲉⲛ ⲉⲓⲡⲓⲡⲧⲉ ⲧⲟ ⲡⲓⲗⲏⲑⲟⲥ, ⲁⲃⲓⲛⲏⲕⲏⲧⲁ ⲉⲃⲉ ⲧⲁ ⲡⲁⲛⲏⲧⲏⲩ.

St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus — The Jewish War, Volume III: Books 5-7*, LCL 210 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 234–39.

not possible to describe their sufferings.	
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The <i>Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 110 (fol. 30r; Harrak p. 179)	
Of those who were being destroyed by the famine in the city, a great amount of people fell without number, and it is not possible to describe their sufferings.	ܐܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ ܕܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ

Textual Notes

All four Syriac text traditions render the prepositional phrase ὑπὸ τοῦ λιμοῦ with ܕܝܬܝܢ ܕܚܝܬܝܢ. According to Carl Brockelmann, ܕܚܝܬܝܢ is a very common way to talk about famine/starvation in Syriac, and it also appears to be the *biblical* way to do so, as opposed to the non- or post-biblical ܕܚܝܬܝܢ. ⁸¹ R. Payne Smith explicitly lists λιμός (as well as σιτοδεία) as Greek Bible term(s) rendered in translation with ܕܚܝܬܝܢ, beginning at 4 Kingdoms 4:38 (“et passim”). ⁸²

Overall, the translations in *A7a1* and *DSog* are quite similar. The subtle distinction between ܕܚܝܬܝܢ ... ܕܚܝܬܝܢ and ܕܚܝܬܝܢ ... ܕܚܝܬܝܢ is difficult to articulate in translation, as the expressions are essentially identical. The inclusion of ܕܚܝܬܝܢ by *DSog* might be slightly more faithful to the μὲν...δὲ construction in the Greek, but not enough to alter the English translations. Syriac’s

⁸¹ C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, editio secunda aucta et emendata (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1928), 340.

⁸² R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, Tomus I (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879), 1796.

inability to render Greek's alpha privative forces translators to decide on the best manner to convey negative words.⁸³

The texts of *HE* and *CZ* share much of the same content against the other two manuscripts. Both include ܠܠܝܠܝܢ ("in the city") for the Greek κατὰ τὴν πόλιν, and both use the verb ܠܠ ("to fall") to translate the Greek πίπτειν. Neither *A7a1* nor *DSog* contain either of these terms, omissions as surprising as they are substantial.

Overall, *HE* and *CZ* preserve a more polished rendering of the Greek *Vorlage*. Even their opening phrases, ܠܠܝܠܝܢ, replicates the genitive plural participial construction that begins the Greek sentence. Between *HE* and *CZ*, the latter has a

⁸³ In short, Greek alpha-privatives (also called 'N-Words') like ἄπειρον are impossible for Syriac to render with the same kind of grammatical economy. Consider the comments of P. J. Williams, "On Matching Syriac Words with their Greek *Vorlage*," in *Foundations for Syriac Lexicography I: Colloquia of the International Syriac Language Project*, ed. D. Forbes and D. G. K. Taylor, PSL 1 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 157–66, at 160–61. "The Syriac language underwent considerable shifts, especially during the fifth century and following, under the pressure to represent the technical vocabulary of Greek theological works in Syriac. Now whereas Greek puts a negative alpha at the beginning of a word to negate the word, the Syriac of the earliest translations cannot do anything similar. A negative would not only negate the word that immediately followed it, but also often subsequent words in the context. However, as can be seen from the writings of Philoxenus of Mabbog in the sixth century, by his time any noun could be negated simply by prefixing Syriac ܠܠ, as one might use the English un-. Because of the situation with Syriac negatives, when the earliest translators came across a pair of items in Greek, the first one of which had alpha privative in front, the Syriac reversed the order of the pair so that the Syriac negative would not be applied to both words in the pair." Williams then provides some examples of this phenomenon in action. See also A. Merx, *History of the Syriac Grammatical Tradition*, ed. D. King (posted unpublished on academia.edu), 127; see more broadly D. A. Walker, "The Semitic Negative with Special Reference to the Negative in Hebrew" (*The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 12.3/4 [1896]) 230–67, at 242.

clearer, more faithful connection to the Greek in one sense: while both translations have ܡܠܟܐ (“people”), CZ includes ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ, which nicely captures τὸ πλῆθος. The author of CZ seems to have known Greek. However, it is technically fair to read HE’s 3rd-person singular verbal construct—ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ—as a more direct iteration of the Greek’s ἐπιπτε τὸ πλῆθος.

It is noteworthy that all Syriac witnesses use the same verb, ܡܠܟܐ, to represent φθείρειν. This Greek verb is used to translate the Hebrew ܠܬܠܬ in the Piel at LXX Isa 54:16 and the Aramaic ܠܬܠܬ in the Ithpael at LXX Dan 2:44 and 7:14, though its usage in the Greek Jewish Scriptures more often reflects the Hebrew ܠܬܠܬ (in the Niphal, Piel, or Hiphil).⁸⁴

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.194	
For in every house, if a shadow of food appeared somewhere there was a battle, and the best of	καθ’ ἐκάστην γὰρ οἰκίαν, εἴ που τροφῆς παραφανεῖη σκιά, πόλεμος ἦν, καὶ διὰ χειρῶν ἐχώρουν οἱ φίλτατοι πρὸς

⁸⁴ It also translates ܠܬܠܬ in the Niphal, ܠܬܠܬ, and ܠܬܠܬ; E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)*, Volume II: K–Ω (Oxford: Clarendon, 1897), 1429. None of the ܠܬܠܬ passages are accounted for in J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, comp., *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, revised edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), 646, and T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Paris: Peeters, 2009) only mentions the Dan 2:44 passage (at 714). In other words, modern scholarship may not fully appreciate the erstwhile ܠܬܠܬ-φθείρειν correlation in the biblical translation tradition, whose inverse, from Indo-European back into Semitic (φθείρειν-ܡܠܟܐ), is currently under consideration. Note also that the larger Peshitta text of Codex Ambrosianus contains one other instance in which the Greek φθείρειν—namely the aorist passive indicative ἐφθάρη from LXX Gen 6:11—is translated with the Syriac ܡܠܟܐ, namely the Ethpael ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ in the sense of “to be corrupted” (fol. 4, col. 2). See J. Payne Smith, ed., *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 124.

friends came to blows (lit. moved toward one another with hands), snatching away the most meager necessities of life.	ἀλλήλους ἐξαρπάζοντες τὰ ταλαίπωρα τῆς ψυχῆς ἐφόδια.
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Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 324v cols. 1–2)	
For in every house, when a shadow of nourishment appeared a battle broke out, and friends were assailing their friends with the sword, and they were snatching from them the poor provisions of their life.	ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܝܥܠ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ

Deir al-Surian 09 (fols. 14r–v)	
For in every house, when a shadow of nourishment appeared a battle was taking place, and friends were assailing their friends with the sword, and they were snatching from them the poor provisions of their life.	ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܝܥܠ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i>	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.20 (Wright and McLean p. 125)	
For in every house where even a shadow of food appeared, a battle was taking	ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܝܥܠ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ

place, and friends came upon one another and they were snatching the poor provisions of life.	ܠܠܗܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ
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<i>The Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 110 (fol. 30r; Harrak p. 179)	
For in every house where even a shadow of food appeared, a battle was taking place, as friends came upon one another and they were snatching the poor provisions of life.	ܠܠܗܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ

Textual Notes

Lucas Van Rompay has noted a discrepancy in the ways the Syriac texts render the Greek's πόλεμος ἦν: while *A7a1* has the perfect ܠܠܗܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ (“a battle broke out”), the supraliner dot in the phrase used in *HE* and *CZ*—ܠܠܗܝܢ ܕܠܝܕܝܢ—denotes the imperfect, durative (“a battle was taking place”), making it closer to the Greek. While *DS09* has no supraliner dot in its first ܠܠܗܝܢ, it should likely be read as *HE* and *CZ* are.⁸⁵

Josephus’ strange Greek idiom διὰ χειρῶν ἐχώρουν, not a particularly common phrase,⁸⁶ may here be the source of the

⁸⁵ Lucas Van Rompay, written communication, January 3, 2024. We have amended our translation to account for this important point and are indebted to Van Rompay for the insight.

⁸⁶ The idiom constructed with the genitive plural for “hands” in particular is rare, i.e. from διὰ χειρῶν + ἔχειν or λαβεῖν. This usage, at least with the older spelling of χειρῶν with the dropped ι, appears to be peculiar to the canonical tragedians (Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 193: ἔχουσαι διὰ χειρῶν; Sophocles, *Antigone* 916:), as does the prepositional phrase διὰ χειρῶν itself: see Euripides, *Antiope* fr. 48.91; *Tragic Fragments* 10.85, 11.223.120; *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1352; *Bacchae* 733, 1071; Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes*

type of misunderstanding of the Greek mentioned by Van Rompay. To begin with, *A7a1* and *DS09* both add that friends were attacking each other “with the sword” (ܠܫܝܢܐ) on account of the famine. Where did “sword” come from? While Benedict Niese’s critical edition of Josephus’ Greek text contains no variants here,⁸⁷ and while the Latin translators do not seem to have misread the phrase,⁸⁸ it is not difficult to imagine a scribe mistaking διὰ χειρῶν for some form of μάχαιρα in the process of translation and transcription.⁸⁹ Or perhaps the Syriac translators, reading the Greek morphology correctly, simply assumed that διὰ χειρῶν χωρεῖν implied swordplay. Or, alternatively again, perhaps the original Syriac translator added ܠܫܝܢܐ for drama or entertainment value—*A7a1* and *DS09* are the more dramatic of the translations under examination here, and often depart from the Greek in this vein.

Equally interesting is the apparent absence in *HE* and *CZ* of anything corresponding to διὰ χειρῶν; both text’s uses of ܠܫܝܢܐ

433; *Agamemnon* 424–25. There it means something like “literally, to have or take *between the hands*,” per H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), ad loc., 6c. Other than this, the phrase διὰ χειρῶν appears late and idiosyncratic, restricted to Plutarch—who uses it 6x with ἔχειν, 2x with (προσ)κομίζειν—and Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae* (where it is used once, with ἐρείδειν). It may be significant that Plutarch is perhaps *the* effective contemporary of Josephus who produced a substantial Greek corpus.

⁸⁷ Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 538. However, note that none of the Greek manuscripts of *BJ* that antedate *any* of the Syriac manuscripts under discussion are still extant.

⁸⁸ It is rendered literally as *ad manus veniebant* in the Latin of *BJ* 6.194 in early manuscripts (remember no critical edition exists): Cologny Bodmer 99 (9th century), fol. 181v and St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 627 (9th century), fol. 214.

⁸⁹ Indeed, all one would need would be a δι that looked like a μ—an easy feat in Greek paleography—and/or the assumption of the genitive plural μάχαιρῶν (which can also take διὰ: Zenobius, *Centuria* 3.19 [with ῥίπτειν]; Posidippus 1.10 [with ἔρχομαι]).

+ ܐܠ ܕܐܠܐܝܢܐ may be read as corresponding to ἐχώρουν ... πρὸς ἀλλήλους in the Greek (the rendering ܐܠܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܐܝܢܐ in *A7a1* and *DS09* is clunkier and further from the Greek).⁹⁰ Could the omission of the hand phrase in these traditions stem from an interpretive *aporia* vis-à-vis διὰ χειρῶν? Or might the translators have seen the addition of the qualifier “by hand” as unnecessary? In any case, it is unusual for *A7a1* + *DS09* to retain a feature of the Greek that *HE* + *CZ* totally omit, which marks this as an exceptional circumstance.

The enclitic ܐܠܐܝܢܐ inserted at the end of the first phrase in *DS09*, *HE*, and *CZ* creates the situation of *DS09* agreeing with *HE* and *CZ* (all have ܐܠܐܝܢܐ ܐܠܐܝܢܐ ܐܠܐܝܢܐ) against *A7a1* (which has only ܐܠܐܝܢܐ ܐܠܐܝܢܐ).⁹¹ The insertion of ܐܠܐܝܢܐ, which we have translated as “even (a shadow),” emerges only in *HE/CZ* and is without a clear equivalent in Greek, though it may be attempting to articulate the combination of εἴ ποῦ. We translate the Greek as “somewhere,” but ποῦ also exhibits a widely used conjectural meaning in antiquity,⁹² something which may stem from its indefiniteness,⁹³ and thus there is no guarantee that an ancient reader would have apprehended it only in its indefinite locative sense.

⁹⁰ The difference between ܐܠܐܝܢܐ ܐܠܐܝܢܐ (*A7a1/DS09*) and the idiomatic ܐܠܐܝܢܐ ܐܠܐܝܢܐ ܐܠܐܝܢܐ (*CZ/HE*) is indeed striking, though it may be that these phrases would have appeared as virtual synonyms to ancient Syriac readers.

⁹¹ This could be read as a periphrastic participle + copula, but we follow Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnān*, 178–79 in reading it as an enclitic. Note, however, that *A7a1* and *DS09* agree together against *HE* + *CZ* in including ܐܠܐܝܢܐ in the earlier part of the first phrase.

⁹² J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 492.

⁹³ “The indefiniteness of its signification with regard to place is transferred to other things, and hence arises its conjectural use, in which it is rendered *perhaps; it may be; if I mistake not; &c.*” J. Seager, ed. and trans., *Hoogeveen’s Greek Particles* (London: A.J. Valpy, 1829), 172.

The addition of ܐ before ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ is unique to CZ here and creates a kind of triple alliteration to the phrase.⁹⁴ In addition, this particle creates a participial phrase that is not present in the Greek, rendering *HE* the most faithful Syriac translation at this syntactical juncture.

The additional and gratuitous ܐܢܐܢܐ and the suffix attached to ܐܢܐܢܐܢܐ in the final line in *A7a1* and *DS09*, not present in *HE* and *CZ*, reinforce a picture of the style of the former two translations already hinted at above: namely, by their very syntax these texts evince a more dramatic, in this case more personal, tale of woe. Of course, the verb ܐܢܐ is often paired with ܐܢ in such contexts, similar to English: we typically snatch something *from* something or someone else. But the significance of these additions here is that they are additions: the Greek syntax neither necessitates nor recommends them, which likely explains why they are not supplied by *HE* or *CZ*.

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.195	
It was not believed even of the dying that they were without resources, but thieves were constantly searching even those who were breathing out [their last breath], lest someone pretend to be dead while	πίστις δ' ἀπορίας οὐδὲ τοῖς θνήσκουσιν ἦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐκπνέοντας οἱ λησταὶ διηρεύων, μή τις ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔχων τροφήν σκήπτοιτο τὸν θάνατον αὐτῷ.

⁹⁴ Double in the sense that 1) both the guttural beginning and 2) the dental endings of ܐܢ and ܐܢ appear in triplicate, turning double alliteration (ܐܢ + ܐܢ) into a kind of triplet (ܐܢ + ܐܢ + ܐܢ). All of this may or may not have been intentional, and we mark it because literary aesthetics can be overlooked in philologically-oriented studies of translation technique and comparative textual criticism.

clutching food under the fold of his garment.	
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Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 324v col. 3)	
And they did not trust even those who were dying, but rather even the bodies of the slain they were searching, lest a person end his life while there was food on him.	ܠܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܡܬܬܚܝܒܐ ܡܢ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܠܡܬܠܝܠ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 14v)	
And they did not even trust those who were dying, but rather even the bodies of the slain they were searching, lest a person end his life while there was food on him.	ܠܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܡܬܬܚܝܒܐ ܡܢ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܠܡܬܠܝܠ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i> (411)	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.20-21 (Wright and McLean p. 125)	
They were not believed to be impoverished, not even when they were dying, but those robbers were searching even those who were dying, lest there be something found at the breast of one of the dead.	ܠܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܡܬܬܚܝܒܐ ܡܢ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܠܡܬܠܝܠ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ

The ܐ added to ܐܠܐܐ only in *A7a1* appears insignificant, though it could be meant to convey the “even” implied in the sentence and/or to capture the particle δὲ packaged within ܐܘܕܐ.

The way that *A7a1* and *DS09* express the idea of dying at the very end of this passage—ܐܠܐ ,ܡܠܝܬܐ = “end his life”—constitutes flowery language, especially compared to the much more common verb ܕܐܡܐ used by *HE* and *CZ* at the same place in the sentence.⁹⁷ The prepositional phrase ,ܡܠܝܬܐ may be an attempt to convey the somewhat puzzling Greek reflexive αὐτῷ. The verb ܐܠܐ may not be particularly unusual, but one should note its presence in the passion narrative of the Peshitta at Mark 15:37, 39,⁹⁸ where it is usually taken to constitute a somewhat ornamental way of talking about death.⁹⁹ It may be significant that there ܐܠܐ translates the Greek ἐκπνεῖν, and in this passage Josephus refers once to those who are dying as τοὺς ἐκπνέοντας (translated by *A7a1* and *DS09* with ܐܠܡܝܬܐ, “the slain

Syriac author would immediately think in terms of ܐܡܐ when confronted with the Greek πίστις, the latent potential for religious valence—what we might call ‘faith’ or ‘religious belief’—was never absent from the Syriac term (or idea, perhaps), whereas the pre-Christian Greek term looks rather more mundane in retrospect. On the development of these words and concepts following the advent of Christianity, see T. Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁹⁷ Using ܕܐܡܐ at both the beginning and end of the sentence also replicates better the Greek’s use of θνήσκειν and then θάνατος, both of which represent the same ΘΑΝ root.

⁹⁸ W. Jennings, *Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), 224. Noted also by J. Childers, trans., *The Gospel of Mark According to the Syriac Peshitta Version with English Translation* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 123n6: “‘died’: lit: ‘came to an end’ (also in v. 39).”

⁹⁹ There the English translations tend to render the Greek ἐξέπνευσεν with correspondingly ornamental language, like “(and Jesus) breathed his last” (NKJV and often thereafter) or, more literally and more famously and more flowery still, “(and Jesus) gave up the ghost” (KJV).

[ones],” whereas *HE* and *CZ* use ܡܬܬܝܬܝܢ, “those who were dying,” to render both the Greek’s τοῖς θνήσκουσιν and its τοὺς ἐκπνέοντας; neither Syriac tradition, therefore, provides a satisfactory translation of τοὺς ἐκπνέοντας).

A7a1 and *DS09* completely omit any equivalent to οἱ λησταί, the primary actors in this scene (!), whereas *HE* and *CZ* include the transliteration ܠܩܬܠܝܬܝܢ. Perhaps the omission in *A7a1* and *DS09* was made with an eye to democratizing the abominable behavior on display in this scene; a hunt for an antecedent confronts one with the “friends” (ܫܚܝܬܝܢ) who were said to have been turning on each other in the previous passage. The omission of these characters here, so central to Josephus’ narrative and particularly at this point in *BJ* Book 6, is jarring.

A7a1 and *DS09* seem here to capture the word order of the Greek better than the Eusebian traditions, e.g., by leaving the “searching” (ܡܠܬܝܢ ܡܚܝܬܝܢ) verb until the end in the second clause (just as the Greek ends with διηρεύνων). Note also the structural similarity between ܡܠܬܝܢ ܡܚܝܬܝܢ ܡܠܬܝܢ ܡܚܝܬܝܢ and ὑπὸ κόλπῳ ἔχων τροφήν. Remarkably, *HE* and *CZ* neglect to offer any correlate for τροφήν, whereas *A7a1* and *DS09* both include ܡܠܬܝܢ.

The use of pronouns in *HE* and *CZ* help to create a text up to 50% larger than that found in *A7a1* and *DS09* (the latter contain 20 Syriac words each, whereas *HE* has 31 and *CZ* 28). This feature of the Eusebian translations is not following precedent set by the Greek but is rather a “feature of idiomatic Syriac.”¹⁰⁰

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.196	
They [the thieves], gaping from want like stray dogs, staggered and stumbled into doors, shaking in the	οἱ δ’ ὑπ’ ἐνδείας κεχηνότες ὥσπερ λυσσῶντες κύνες ἐσφάλλοντο, καὶ παρεφέροντο ταῖς τε θύραις ἐνσειόμενοι

¹⁰⁰ Lucan Van Rompay, written communication, January 3, 2024.

manner of drunkards, and, being at a loss, they would burst into the same houses twice or thrice in one hour.	μεθύόντων τρόπον καὶ ὑπ' ἀμηχανίας εἰς τοὺς αὐτοὺς οἴκους εἰσπηδῶντες δις ἢ τρίς ὥρᾳ μιᾷ.
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Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 324v col. 3)	
And their mouths were gaping from famine like those of drunkards. And in their distress they kept running back again and again and entering into a house twice in one hour.	ܐܡܬ ܦܝܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 14v)	
And their mouths were gaping from famine like wretches. And in their distress they kept running back again and again and entering into a house twice in one hour.	ܐܡܬ ܦܝܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i>	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.20-21 (Wright and McLean pp. 125–26)	
Others, with their mouths gaping out of want of food like dogs and foolish people, were going around wandering into doors, and were shaking like	ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ

are feasible, but we have opted for “wretches” here, given that the scribe of *DSog* has also omitted the additional *doleth*.

The Eusebian translations once again render the Greek more precisely. The addition of “others” (ܐܘܬܪܝܢ) accounts for the ambiguity of the Greek οἱ δέ, which grammatically refers to the robbers of the previous section. The phrase ܐܘܬܪܝܢ ܕܥܠܝܐ perfectly captures the Greek ὑπ’ ἐνδεΐας. At the same time, this section contains some distinct differences between the two Eusebian texts, particularly the insertion of the odd term ܐܘܬܪܝܢ in *CZ*. This term has the sense of “putrefying” in the Peal, while the Aphel has the sense of “oozing.”¹⁰² We have followed the translation offered by Harrak, but, in noting that it is grammatically linked to the “dogs” in the context, we admit that it could be rendered as “hurling around like slobbering dogs.”

The addition of ܐܘܬܪܝܢ in *CZ* causes a punctuational difference for the word ܕܥܠܝܐ, which in *HE* clearly refers to the “dogs,” but is more ambiguous in *CZ*. The term can refer to something childish or foolish. We have opted for the latter (*contra* Harrak) since it seems to fit with the contextual usage in *HE* and the Greek. Finally, the addition in *CZ* of ܐܘܬܪܝܢ creates a slightly different structure compared to *HE*. In the passive (a la Harrak) it refers to being thrown out or cast out. Actively, as we have taken it, it refers to “throwing oneself around.”

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.197	
Necessity brought all sorts of things under their teeth, and collecting things not even acceptable to the filthiest of irrational beasts, they endured to eat it.	πάντα δὲ ὑπ’ ὀδόντας ἤγεν ἡ ἀνάγκη, καὶ τὰ μηδὲ τοῖς ῥυπαρωτάτοις τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων πρόσφορα συλλέγοντες ἐσθίειν ὑπέφερον ζωστήρων γούν καὶ ὑποδημάτων τὸ

¹⁰² Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 532.

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.22 (Wright and McLean p. 126)	
Necessity turned anything into food, and things that even the filthiest beasts would not eat, people were gleaned and eating. Nor did they abstain in the end from eating leather girdle straps and stirrups, and they were stripping the skins covering their shields to chew.	ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ

The <i>Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 110 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 179)	
Necessity turned anything into food, and things that even the filthiest beasts would not eat, people were gleaned and eating. Nor did they abstain in the end from eating leather girdle straps and stirrups, and they were stripping the skins covering their shields to chew.	ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ

Textual Notes

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this passage is the use of a Latin term by the Maccabean texts. The term ܡܠܚܥܐ or ܡܠܚܥ comes from the Latin *scutum*, according to

Brockelmann and Sokoloff.¹⁰³ The Eusebian texts choose a native Syriac (or at least Semitic) term, ܠܚܝܬܐ, instead. The use of Latin loanwords in Syriac has been traced by Aaron Butts, though in at least one study his data pool consists of original Syriac compositions, not translations.¹⁰⁴ He concludes that the use of Latin terms in Syriac reached its apogee in the sixth century, followed by a sharp decline in usage in the seventh century. The term *scutum* does not appear in Butts' catalogue, but the striking use in the Maccabean texts could indicate that the original translation of Josephus' *Jewish War* was completed at an early period when the use of Latin terms in Syriac was more common.¹⁰⁵

The use of ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܥܝܢܐ in the Eusebian texts nicely corresponds to the Greek γούν καὶ compared to the Maccabean translation. Likewise, the use of ܠܥܝܢܐ, a transliteration of ἀνάγκη, once again shows a concern on the Eusebian translator's part to represent the Greek base text as accurately as possible, and/or points to a cultural-linguistic context where this loanword had already been established as a Greek-to-Syriac transfer.¹⁰⁶ The Eusebian translation, once again, is quite literal, though we note the use of the prepositional phrase ܠܥܝܢܐ ܠܥܝܢܐ, which attempts to render the odd Greek

¹⁰³ M. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon: A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 967; cf. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 459.

¹⁰⁴ A. M. Butts, "Latin Words in Classical Syriac" (*Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 19.1 [2016]) 123–92.

¹⁰⁵ The Latin *Jewish War* 6.197 has *coriaque scutis detracta mandebant*, while *De Excidio* 5.39.2 has *detrahebant coria scutis ut cibo essent sibi quae praesidio non essent*.

¹⁰⁶ The integration of Greek terms into Syriac comprised mostly nouns and included abstract nouns (such as ܠܥܝܢܐ), as explained by A. M. Butts, "Greek Loanwords in Syriac," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics, Volume 2: G–O*, ed. G. K. Giannakis (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 124–25 (with bibliography).

prepositional phrase ὑπ’ ὀδόντας (lit. “under teeth”). The peculiarity of this Greek expression may have seemed too bizarre to translate literally into Syriac and the translators decided to provide a more idiomatic rendering. One more place here where the Eusebian translation is closer to the Greek than the Maccabean is in using ܐܡܪ ܠܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (‘‘did not refuse’’) instead of ܐܡܪ ܠܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (‘‘were sustained by’’) to render the Greek’s οὐκ ἀπέσχοντο.

Finally, the use of ܡܠܟܐ in the Maccabean texts may have biblical overtones, as in Matt 24:29 and Rom 5:3. We have traced a tendency in this translation to intensify the drama of the text, possibly targeting the reader’s emotions and capitalizing on the readerly experience of an already intense narrative. This may be a subtle attempt at moving the reader, but we should not underestimate the potency of biblical language to do more than heighten intensity for a reading community like the one behind, for example, A7a1.¹⁰⁷ The use of biblical language could enhance the perceived quality of a text, could signal intertextuality with biblical episodes, concepts, and terminology, could lend literature theological importance, etc., and thus need not be read here *prima facie* as a mechanism for boosting narrative intensity.

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.198	
Even fragments of old grass became food and it was possible for those collecting the fibers to sell a small quantity for four Drachmae.	τροφὴ δ’ ἦν καὶ χόρτου τισὶ παλαιοῦ σπάραγμα τὰς γὰρ ἵνας ἔνιοι συλλέγοντες ἐλάχιστον σταθμὸν ἐπώλουν Ἀττικῶν τεσσάρων.

¹⁰⁷ On this community see Forness, ‘‘Narrating History,’’ and Lied, ‘‘2 Baruch.’’

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 324v col. 3)	
And they were even eating hay. For many, gathering thin strips of animal leather, were selling them off at heavy prices.	ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 14v)	
And they were even eating hay. And many, gathering thin strips of hay, were selling them off at heavy prices.	ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ.

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i>	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.22 (Wright and McLean p. 126)	
For wisps of old hay became food for them, while each person was collecting stubble and selling a measure at four assarion.	ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ.

The <i>Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 110 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 179)	
For wisps of old hay became food, while each person was collecting stubble (and) selling a tiny measure at four assarion.	ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ. ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܥܝܢܝܢ ܥܝܬܝܢ ܗܝܐ.

Textual Notes

Here, *A7a1* and *DSog* do not agree on what all non-food items are being eaten and sold, it seems: while both mention “hay” (ܚܝܬܐ) to render Josephus’ wordier *χόρτου παλαιοῦ σπάραγμα*, *A7a1* then mentions what we have translated as “thin strips of animal leather,” compared to *DSog*’s “thin strips of hay.” The distinction comes between ܚܝܬܐ (*A7a1*) and ܚܝܬܐ (*DSog*);¹⁰⁸ technically, the former could refer to something animal-related, something like “that of animals.”¹⁰⁹ The words are phonetically close enough that an orthographic slip seems not out of the question, nor is it impossible that *A7a1*’s author had something like “hay” in mind—we have translated it as we have to mark the possible distinction rather than to posit a definitive translation of an ambivalent term.

In the passage’s second sentence, *A7a1* elects the particle ܐܘ where *DSog* has the particle ܐܝ.¹¹⁰ The former is more

¹⁰⁸ Jennings, *Lexicon*, 165 glosses ܚܝܬܐ as both “grass” (at Matt 6:30) and “hay” (at 1 Cor 3:12).

¹⁰⁹ Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 85. cf. also Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 50. Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon*, 170 simply has “animal” or “beast.”

¹¹⁰ W. van Peursen and T. C. Falla, “The Particles ܐܘ and ܐܝ in Classical Syriac: Syntactic and Semantic Aspects,” in *Foundations for Syriac Lexicography I: Colloquia of the International Syriac Language Project*, ed. D. Forbes and D.G.K. Taylor, PSL 1 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 63–98 argue that “the formal and syntactical equivalence of Syriac ܐܘ and ܐܝ and Greek γάρ and δέ should not lead to the assumption that they are also semantic and functional equivalents, an assumption that is pervasive not only in Syriac grammars and dictionaries, but also in modern editions of the Greek New Testament” (63). We think this argument overstated, as in the present passages under examination, as also in the Greek versus Syriac NT, these terms very often function under the auspices of such equivalencies, or are at least arguably designed to do so. While these terms are original Aramaic words, their usage gradually began to mimic the Greek equivalents, especially in religious text translated from Greek. See the argument in ch. 6 of H. Gzella, *Aramaic: A*

phonetically and transliterally appropriate vis-à-vis the Greek's γάρ.

A notable departure from the Greek in *A7a1* and *DS09* concerns precisely how much the mentioned people were selling their semi-edibles. While the Greek's (Ἀπτικῶν) τεσσάρων is replicated directly in *HE* and *CZ* (ܐܬܬܐܪܐܢ) —discussed below—both *A7a1* and *DS09* have the hay (or leather?) being sold “at a heavy price” (ܐܬܬܐܪܐܢ ܕܥܝܪܐ). Though less specific, this description is more interpretive, and arguably more poignant in context. Incidentally, the phrase “heavy price” is the same phrase used in the Peshitta to describe the “pearl of great price,” though there the word order is reversed.¹¹²

An orthographic difference distinguishes the first word, “food,” in *HE* (ܐܬܬܐܪܐܢ) versus *CZ* (ܐܬܬܐܪܐܢ); I-aleph verbs can easily drop their initial weak root letter.¹¹³

The directional/possessive preposition + pronoun phrase ܐܬܬܐܪܐܢ only appears in *HE*, which therefore alone renders the

History of the First World Language, trans. B. D. Suchard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), and cf. p. 66 for a discussion of the particles' classifications (as conjunctions, adverbs, etc.) and the rest of the article, with bibliography, for a summative discussion of these small but significant words.

¹¹¹ The Syriac preposition ܐܬܬܐܪܐܢ does the work of the genitive case in the Greek.

¹¹² Matt 13:46: “...but who, when he had found on pearl of great price (ܐܬܬܐܪܐܢ ܕܥܝܪܐ), went, sold all that he had, and bought it.” Also incidentally, the participle ܐܬܬܐܪܐܢ, used here to describe these sellers, also describes the money-changers whom Jesus confronts outside of the Temple in the Peshitta of John 2:14.

¹¹³ The dropping of the first radical in I-aleph roots is at least as old as some of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Aramaic (e.g. at 1QapGen 20:10), though “in classical Syriac, the ‘aleph is generally elided but not assimilated.” M. Morgenstern, *Studies in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Based upon Early Eastern Manuscripts* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbraus, 2011), 130.

affect meaning, but it does invite questions about the relationships between the usually identical texts of *HE* and *CZ*.

CZ alone appears to render intentionally the Greek's superlative ἐλάχιστον, with the adjective ܠܚܝܫܐ. Both *HE* and *CZ* slightly change the Greek's ἔνιοι ("some [people]") by translating it into the idiomatic Syriac ܡܢ ܡܢ.¹¹⁶

The gloss ܠܚܝܫܐ, which comes at the end of both *HE* and *CZ*, has been identified by Aaron Butts as a Syriac term borrowed from the Latin *assarius* (and also present with virtually the same pronunciation across Greek, Palmyrene, Hatra, CPA, JBA, Armenian, Coptic, and Ethiopic).¹¹⁷

September 1986, ed. O. Panagl ad T. Krisch, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft 64 (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft, 1992), 311–226 had identified it as a calque of Greek's πρέσβυς, meaning *inter alia* "more or most important" in the comparative (p. 315), which comports with de Vaan's etymological explanation. However, the phonetic correlation between the Semitic words and the Latin *antiqu-* seems suggestive. K. Vollers, "Über die lautliche Steigerung bei Lehnwörtern im Arabischen" (*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 45 [1891]) 352–56 argued that the Arabic عَتِيق, at least, had an old Semitic meaning of "high, noble, separated" yet took the meaning "old" from the Latin *antiquus* (p. 354), a suggestion with which W. Muss-Arnolt, "On Semitic Words in Greek and Latin" (*Transactions of the American Philological Association* 23 [1892]) 35–156, disagreed in a footnote when illustrating old Greek dental pronunciations, where he mentioned that "Utica, Ἰτύχη (in Africa), is the Greek writing for עִתְיוֹק" ("old town;" p. 64, with fn. 6). However, *antiquus* does not appear in Muss-Arnolt's list of Semitic-to-Latin loanwords at the end of his book-length article (pp. 155–56).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 215; Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1194; Jennings, *Lexicon*, 69.

¹¹⁷ Butts, "Latin Words in Classical Syriac," 137, who also classes this noun as one of the Latin loanwords that first appears in the Syriac New Testament (see Matt 10:29; Luke 12:6). Butts' analysis here is notable, as it has been typical of Syriac NT lexicography to implicitly trace ܠܚܝܫܐ back not to Latin but to the Greek ἀσσάριον (as one might do by inference from the present passage); e.g. Jennings, *Lexicon*, 27. Interestingly, the Latin *Jewish*

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.199	
And why is it necessary to relate the shame of famine applied to lifeless things? For I am about to recount a deed such as has never been recorded among the Greeks or the barbarians, awful to tell and unbelievable to hear.	καὶ τί δεῖ τὴν ἐπ’ ἀψύχοις ἀναίδειαν τοῦ λιμοῦ λέγειν; εἰμι γὰρ αὐτοῦ δηλώσω ἔργον οἷον μήτε παρ’ Ἑλλήσιν μήτε παρὰ βαρβάροις ἱστόρηται, φρικτὸν μὲν εἰπεῖν, ἄπιστον δὲ ἀκοῦσαι.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 324v col. 3)	
And why is it fitting to speak of the shamelessness of famine, which concerns those things which are not alive? Because I am about to reveal a deed the like of which has occurred neither among Greeks nor barbarians; for it is dreadful to tell and unbelievable to hear.	καὶ τί δεῖ τὴν ἐπ’ ἀψύχοις ἀναίδειαν τοῦ λιμοῦ λέγειν; εἰμι γὰρ αὐτοῦ δηλώσω ἔργον οἷον μήτε παρ’ Ἑλλήσιν μήτε παρὰ βαρβάροις ἱστόρηται, φρικτὸν μὲν εἰπεῖν, ἄπιστον δὲ ἀκοῦσαι.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 14v)	
And why is it fitting to speak of the shamelessness of famine and concerning those things which are not alive? Because I am about to reveal a deed the like of which has	καὶ τί δεῖ τὴν ἐπ’ ἀψύχοις ἀναίδειαν τοῦ λιμοῦ λέγειν; εἰμι γὰρ αὐτοῦ δηλώσω ἔργον οἷον μήτε παρ’ Ἑλλήσιν μήτε παρὰ βαρβάροις ἱστόρηται, φρικτὸν μὲν εἰπεῖν, ἄπιστον δὲ ἀκοῦσαι.

War of 6.198 relates that these things “were being sold for four Attic drachmae” (*quatuor atticis venundabant*).

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.23 (Wright and McLean p. 126)	
But what requires us to speak about what was afflicted by the famine on those things which are not alive? Because I have to reveal a deed the like of which is not said to have occurred among the Greeks or barbarians, but it is dreadful to tell and difficult to believe its hearing.	וְכֵן גַּם מֵחֶסֶד לֵב הָיָה: אֲנִי מְחַשְׁבֵּשׁ אֵת חֲפֵצֵי כֶּסֶם וְהֵלֶךְ נִפְעָה אִתִּי. אֲנִי לֹא יָדָע וְאִשָּׁה שֶׁבָּרָךְ. וְאֶחָד מֵהֶם שֶׁהָיָה מֵהֶם אֵלֶּי שֶׁהָיָה מֵחֶסֶד לֵב הָיָה. וְהָיָה אֵת גַּם הָיָה לֵב. אֲנִי מֵחֶסֶד לֵב לְחַסְדֵּי אֱלֹהִים.

The <i>Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 110–111 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 179)	
But what requires us to speak about what was afflicted by the famine on those things which are not alive? Because I have to reveal a deed the like of which has not happened among the Greeks, nor is said to have occurred among the barbarians, but it is dreadful to tell and difficult to believe its hearing.	ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ¹¹⁸ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ

Textual Notes

The interrogative structure of the opening sentence in *A7a1* and *DS09*—ܐܠܝܢ...ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ (“and why is it necessary/fitting...to speak”) —is a direct reiteration of the Greek καὶ τί δεῖ...λέγειν. The language shared by *HE* and *DS09* is virtually synonymous yet literally different: ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ (“what compels us to speak...?”). Particularly notable here is that the first glimpse we get of the Syriac version of the *Theophania* (hereafter *Theoph*) corresponds to the ‘Maccabean’ traditions of *A7a1/DS09*, not the Eusebian *HE/CZ*. *Theoph* shares with the former texts the language of this passage’s opening question, yet the manuscript containing this text is much, much older than either *A7a1* or *DS09*. Hereafter, *Theoph* largely agrees with

¹¹⁸ See Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnān*, 179, who has this reading in the text, but in n. 499 says: “C¹ 111:1 and n.1 changed to ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ (wrongly reported as ܠܡܬܬܝܠܠ).”

A7a1 and *DSog*,¹¹⁹ usually against *HE* and *CZ* throughout this passage, providing evidence that *Theoph* was using the text of *A7a1* (or an identical one), which he occasionally corrected against the Greek, as we shall see.

A7a1, *DSog*, and *Theoph* all elect to speak of ܡܝ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ, a literal rendering of τὴν...ἀναίδειαν τοῦ λιμοῦ.¹²⁰ *HE* and *CZ* instead reference “those who were afflicted by the famine” (ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ). This more personalized, graphic referent is something one might have expected to find in the ‘Maccabean’ traditions, prone as they are to drama and affect.

The way that all five traditions here render ἐπ’ ἀψύχοις—namely ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ—reminds us once more of the work Syriac translators must do to mirror the Greek’s alpha privative.

DSog’s placement of a conjunctive *waw* after ܡܝܬܐ instead of *A7a1*’s *dālet*—i.e. ܕܡܝܬܐ instead of ܡܝܬܐ—radically changes the sentence’s sense. Instead of “lifeless things” modifying the previously mentioned objects of discussion (the “shamelessness of famine”), these now constitute a new, other topic to be related. *Theoph* agrees with *A7a1* against *DSog*. A distinguishing feature of *HE* and *CZ* is the consecutive ܐ prepositional phrases toward the end of the first sentence (ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ).

One striking disjuncture between *A7a1* + *DSog* versus *Theoph* is that the latter repeats the Greek’s (future)

¹¹⁹ *Theoph* agrees verbatim in 25 of 28 its words (including order) with *A7a1* and *DSog* respectively, sharing ܕܡܝܬܐ uniquely with *A7a1* and ܡܝܬܐ uniquely with *DSog* (instead of ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ). This 90% agreement between *Theoph* and the ‘Maccabean’ texts confirms from the outset that *Theoph*, *A7a1*, and *DSog* belong to the same text tradition.

¹²⁰ The term ܡܝ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ is taken in the sense of “pertinacity, importunity, boldness, insolence” in relation to urgent exigencies in the Peshitta (Luke 11:8) and in biblical Aramaic (ܕܢܐܢ in Dan 2:15, 3:22); Jennings, *Lexicon*, 81. We translate it as “shamelessness,” a point on the term’s broad semantic range (Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 154) that aligns more closely to ἀναίδεία.

periphrastic construction: ܠܝܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܠܕܐܪ = εἰμι δηλώσων.¹²¹ This is a notable departure from the simple use of the verb ܠܐ by *A7a1* and *DS09* (ܠܐ ܠܐܘܪܐ) or the more complex deployment of the same verb by *HE* and *CZ* (ܠܐܘܪܐ ܕܠܐܘܪܐ). In articulating this statement, *Theoph* is the only Syriac tradition that meets the Greek verbiage where it is. The phrasing of *HE* and *CZ*, by the way, places the focus more on the author/narrator than do the other traditions: “it falls to me to reveal ...” In the same vein, in the next phrase *Theoph* alone contains an appropriate parallel to the Greek verb ἰστόρηται (namely, ܬܕܒܪܐ). Is *Theoph* here undertaking correction-by-addition, or might it be a witness to an earlier text tradition than found in the ‘Maccabean’ translations? *A7a1* and *DS09* do not even try to render this verb per se, whereas *HE* and *CZ* have the superfluously ornate ܬܕܒܪܐ ܕܬܕܒܪܐ. As with the previous phrase discussed above in these two later traditions, the Syriac appears unnecessarily wordy and complicated vis-à-vis the Greek.

A7a1, *DS09*, and *Theoph* have the same approach to the final clause in Greek, introducing the particle ܐܠܐ to account for the μὲν...δε structure of the Greek. By contrast, *HE* and *CZ* opt for a more complicated structure vis-à-vis the Greek by substituting the substantive ܠܕܐܪܐ (“a hearing” or possibly “an ear”) for the Greek infinitive ἀκοῦσαι, and an Ethpa‘al infinitive (ܠܕܐܪܐܐܠܐ) for the Greek substantive ἄπιστον. This switch again evidences the propensity of *HE/CZ* sometimes to incline

¹²¹ For the state of the art regarding verbal periphrastic constructions in ancient Greek, see K. Bentein, “Verbal Periphrasis in Ancient Greek: A State of the Art” (*Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 90 [2012]) 5–56, who notes (p. 7) *inter alia* that some research has identified a Semitic influence on verbal periphrasis in Greek (in the LXX and NT). More interesting is the comment (13n86) that the periphrastic combination of εἰμί + future participle—the construction used here—is “as good as non-existent” in ancient Greek. Cf. P. F. Regard, *La phrase nominale dans la langue du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Éditions Ernest Leroux, 1918), 112.

Greek more closely, beginning with the subjunctive prohibitive. *Theoph*, for its part, has about 75% of its language represented verbatim in the ‘Maccabean’ texts,¹²⁴ confirming its belonging to the same tradition.

There is significant variation among the translations of the Greek *τεραπεύεσθαι* (“to tell fables, to speak of marvelous things”). The ‘Maccabean’ texts use the common term ܬܪܦܬܐ (‘story, history’), which is often used in the titles of apostolic narratives.¹²⁵ *Theoph* renders the Greek with the more overtly negative “lies/falsehoods” (ܬܪܦܬܐ ܕܠܝܐ).¹²⁶ Alternatively, *HE* and *CZ* use “marvels” (ܬܪܦܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ), which captures the outlandishness behind the Greek term: *LSJ* defines *τεραπεύομαι* as “to talk marvels” or “to indulge in strange gesticulations.”¹²⁷

Theoph alone includes a correlate to αὐθις in the first clause, namely ܬܪܦܬܐ.

¹²⁴ *Theoph*’s 38 Syriac words find 29 matches (76%) in *A7a1* and 28 (74%) in *DSog*.

¹²⁵ This term is ubiquitous in the titles for apocryphal acts, such as the *History of John*, the *History of Thekla*, the *History of Philip*, the *History of Paul*, and the *History of Simeon Cephas Chief of the Apostles*. The term is a typical moniker for those narratives that are considered true and authoritative with respect to the history of Christianity (though delineating ‘true’ from ‘fictional’ narrative within late antique literature is not so black-and-white). See M. Debié, “Les apocryphes et l’histoire en syriaque,” in *Sur les pas des Araméens chrétiens: Mélanges offerts à Alain Desreumaux*, ed. F. Briquel Chatonnet and M. Debié, Cahiers d’Études Syriaques 1 (Paris: Geuthner, 2010), 63–76, esp. 66.

¹²⁶ This might also be rendered “vanities.” Cf. the range of terms related to the root in Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 83.

¹²⁷ *LSJ* ad loc. cites the tragedians in particular as frequenters of this verb. J. Henderson, trans. and ed., *Aristophanes: Birds – Lysistrata – Women at the Thesmophoria*, LCL 179 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) translates πᾶς αὐτῶν τῶν τερατευμάτων at *Lysistrata* 762 as “enough of your horror stories,” an address made to “nutty girls” (δαίμονιαι). This translation gives an idea of the term’s potential connotation of outlandish, ridiculous, and/or inconceivable ‘tall tales.’

HE and *CZ* refer to the event being referenced in this passage with two different terms for the Greek συμφοράν, ܣܡܦܘܪܐܢ (“blemish”) and ܠܥܠܡܐܬܐ, an orthographically different form of ܠܥܠܡܐܬܐ (“abomination”).¹²⁸ Alternatively, *A7a1*, *DS09*, and *Theoph* specify the rather generic Greek term (which can mean “tragedy, misfortune,” or even just “chance, event, circumstance”)¹²⁹ with the more concrete “suffering” (ܣܦܪܐ), which is a more natural translation for a term like πάθημα than for συμφορά.¹³⁰

As with the language of faith (ܥܡܬ/πίστις) mentioned above, the terminology for “martyrs” (ܠܥܠܡܐܬܐ/μάρτυρες) in this passage represents a point in the cultural lexicon where substantial development had occurred between the penning of Josephus’ Greek text and even the earliest of these Syriac narratives. Josephus, along with the Greek books of 2 and 4 Maccabees, each written within a century or two of *BJ* and covering some of the same narrative material, stands as the early core of a highly idiosyncratic Judeo-Christian discourse of martyrdom that will develop across the early centuries of the Common Era. In other words, the term ܠܥܠܡܐܬܐ will have had a technical, specified nuance to the Christian readers and writers of these Syriac texts that did not yet exist as a (pre-Syriac) concept at Josephus’ time of writing circa 75 CE.

All the Syriac texts use the same formula to capture the Greek negative conditional clause (εἰ μή): ܕܠܐ. At the same time, *A7a1* and *DS09* include the preposition ܕܠܐܝܢ (“such as, like”), which, along with the pronominal suffix ܐ, attempts to capture the reflexive pronoun ἐμαυτόν. At the same time, ܕܠܐܝܢ ܐܝܢܐ does not necessarily convey precisely what ܕܠܐܝܢ ܐܝܢܐ does (“like me”), raising the question of whether the Syriac

¹²⁸ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 617.

¹²⁹ *LSJ* ad loc.

¹³⁰ Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1391.

translators knew that Josephus was himself also a witness to these things.¹³¹ In this single instance, *Theoph* appears more closely aligned with the ‘Eusebian’ translations, presumably accidentally yet due to translational choice.

Josephus says it would be a “feeble favor” (ψυχράν...χάριν) to his countrymen to pass over the matter. The Syriac translations are divided as to how to render ψυχρά, whether with ܠܗܝܠܐ (A7a1, DS09, *Theoph*) or ܠܗܝܠܐ (HE, CZ).¹³² The Syriac rendering of χάρις, which all five translations share—ܠܗܝܠܐ—will have become a staple of the Syriac lexicon on the basis of biblical translation.¹³³

The Syriac presents three different approaches to the Greek καθυφόμενος (“suppressing”). A7a1 and DS09 opt for the same verb they use earlier in the section, ܠܗܝܠܐ (“leave out, omit”). HE and CZ use the Aphel of ܠܗܝܠܐ (“neglect”). *Theoph* stands apart, using an Aphel participle of ܠܗܝܠܐ (“leave out, neglect, abandon”). At the level of linguistic correspondence, *Theoph* agrees with the ‘Maccabean’ texts semantically, but its lexical divergence once again marks a concrete independence from the ‘Maccabean’ tradition to which it is related. The author of *Theoph* relied upon a tradition reflected in A7a1/DS09 but improved it at will, especially in certain places.

The traditions use different language to mark to whom Josephus would be doing a disservice were he to pass over the episode he is about to relate: “the land of my fathers” (ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܐܝܬܝܐ) in A7a1, DS09, and *Theoph* has a different ring and a different focus from “sons of my people” (ܕܡܝܢ ܒܢܝ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ), employed by HE and CZ. Both, however, signal native Semitic idioms for articulating (what we would call) racial, ethnic, and/or national

¹³¹ We owe this insight to Lucas Van Rompay.

¹³² The difference between the two adjectives seems to be between the idea of lack of sense or substance (ܠܗܝܠܐ) or lack of size, quantity, or extent (ܠܗܝܠܐ); see Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 52, 467.

¹³³ The term appears all over the NT, for example; see Jennings, *Lexicon*, 86.

identity that are rather distinct from the Greek's πατρίς (which they translate here) or πατριά or πάτριος (e.g.).

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.201	
There was a certain woman among those who dwelled beyond the Jordan, Maria by name, her father Eleazar, from the village of Bethezouba (which means house of hyssop), significant by means of genealogy and wealth, who, having fled with the rest of the multitude into Jerusalem, was under siege along with the rest.	Γυνή τις τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰορδάνην κατοικούντων, Μαρία τοῦνομα πατὴρ δὲ Ἐλεάζαρου κώμης Βηθεζουβᾶ σημαίνει δὲ τοῦτο οἶκος ὑσσώπου διὰ γένος καὶ πλοῦτον ἐπίσημος μετὰ τοῦ λοιποῦ πλήθους εἰς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα καταφυγοῦσα συνεπολιορκεῖτο.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fols. 324v col. 3–325r col. 1)	
A woman from the inhabitants of the other side of the Jordan—her name was Maryam, daughter of L'azar, from the village of Beth Araob, and this points out her well-known lineage and her wealth—had taken refuge in Jerusalem, along with the rest of the people. ¹³⁴	ܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ

¹³⁴ The translations for A7a1 and DS09 benefitted from corrections by Lucas Van Rompay, who raised the possibility that the Syriac translator read ἐπίσημος, which here is feminine, as masculine and therefore syntactically problematic.

fled with many to seek refuge in Jerusalem and she was confined therein. ¹³⁵	
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<i>The Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 111 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 179)	
A woman among the residents of the Jordan's other side—whose name was Maryam, daughter of L'azar of the village of Bēt- Ḥezor, (which means 'house of hyssop'), and in lineage and wealth was a well-known woman—had fled with many to seek refuge in Jerusalem and she was confined therein.	ܦܠܝܬܬܐ ܥܡ ܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ. ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ. ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ. ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ

Textual Notes

Theoph, more independent of *A7a1/DS09* than in the previous two passages,¹³⁶ uses the active plural particle ܦܠܝܬܬܐ to apply the verb “to live” (ܠܝܬܐ) to the entire group of those living across the Jordan, signaled by ܥܠܡܐ earlier in the first sentence, along with *HE* and *CZ*. This looks structurally more like the articular genitive plural participle in the Greek—τῶν κατοικοῦντων—than does the plural noun ܕܥܡܐ (“inhabitants”) used by *A7a1* and *DS09*, though the verbal connotation of that noun and the

¹³⁵ Thanks to Lucas Van Rompay for informing the final clauses of the translations of *HE* and *CZ*.

¹³⁶ Of the 19 Syriac words in *Theoph* here, 11 appear (effectively) verbatim in *A7a1* and *DS09* (a 58% match).

preposition ܐܢܝ, employed similarly in all five texts, render the semantic difference negligible.

Theoph uniquely in this passage fails to name Maria's lineage, though it precedes her naming with a ܐ, along with *HE* and *CZ*.¹³⁷ *A7a1* and *DS09* are remarkably succinct in their identical introductory formula, matching four Greek words with four Syriac ones, nevertheless citing her role as daughter (ܕܒܝܬ) in place of the Greek's more strictly patrilineal label: πατρὸς. In their brevity, these 'Maccabean' texts neglect the typical Syriac double possessive marker (ܐ suffix + ܐ prefix) used by both 'Eusebian' texts—thus, ܕܒܝܬ ܕܐܠܝܐ versus ܕܐܠܝܐ ܕܐܠܝܐ —just as they drop the not-strictly-necessary verb of being (ܐܝܬ) used by the latter. The economy of language used by

¹³⁷ An interesting linguistic concurrence between textual traditions emerges here: the Syriac's ܕܒܝܬ ܕܐܠܝܐ signals a peculiarity of the Semitic grammar of naming that is distinct from the Greek's. Thus we have "her name (was) Maria" rather than "Maria by name" (Μαρία τοῦνομα) with the accusative of respect. The Latin translation traditions (*LBJ* and *LHE*) mirror the Greek with the ablative: *Maria nomine*; see D. B. Levenson and T. R. Martin, "The Place of the Early Printed Editions of Josephus' *Antiquities* and *War* (1470–1534) in the Latin Textual Tradition," in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy*, ed. J. Baden, H. Najman, and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, JSJSup 175 (2 vols; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 765–825, p. 774n34. However, *DEH*, the *periphrastic Latin adaptation of BJ*, includes no naming formula at all, yet the first Hebrew rendition of this story, which emerges in the early-tenth century text called *Sefer Yosippon* (Chapter 86/פו) and which is clearly based upon the version in *DEH* (which itself is very different from what is found in any of the Josephus traditions proper), names Maria in a way identical to the Syriac: ושמה מרים ("and her name [was] Maria"). See Bay, "The 'Maria Story' in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew," 16, 20. It has not been shown that *Sefer Yosippon* knew any other Latin version of this story than that presented in *DEH*, its author apparently did not work with Greek sources, and it seems highly unlikely that he would have known of the Syriac traditions. Thus, what we have here is identical phraseology across languages between two totally unrelated traditions of this story facilitated by a universal norm of Semitic linguistics. See further Bay, "Semitic Josephus Traditions," 393–96.

A7a1/DSog in this opening line is more austere than the relative verbosity of *HE/CZ*, which makes it technically closer to the Greek.

Theoph also omits Maria's place of origin. *HE* and *CZ*, as with Maria's name, not only name it but do so self-consciously: "its name (was)" (ܡܪܝܡܐ). Once again, this goes above and beyond the laconic Greek. And once again, *A7a1* and *DSog* do not do this. They do, however, provide an ostensibly odd iteration of the place-name: *HE*'s and *CZ*'s ܝܡܐ ܕܥܐܝܬܐ is prima facie much closer to Βηθεζουβᾶ than is *A7a1*'s and *DSog*'s ܡܪܝܡܐ ܕܥܐܝܬܐ. The lack of a fricative ('z') is puzzling. It should be noted here that this town name is a sticking point within the broader context of ancient textual traditions in which the Maria Story appears, particularly in Greek and Latin.¹³⁸ Similar, related place-name confusion is testified across other ancient texts.¹³⁹ It should also

¹³⁸ The full range of Latin textual variants has been collected by David B. Levenson and Thomas R. Martin in their underway project on a critical edition of Latin *War Book 6*, but see already Levenson and Martin, "Ancient Latin Translations," 326 (including a short discussion of Greek, Latin, and Syriac variants a la Niese) and Levenson and Martin, "Early Printed Editions," 784, who call *Vatechor* in place of *vatezobra* as Maria's home town the most interesting difference between the 1475 Rome edition and Vatican 1992 (a reading based on Βαθεζώρ in Niese's manuscripts P, A, V, R, and C); cf. 768n1; 793; 798; 815 (the critical Latin text with textual variants)

¹³⁹ Namely regarding "Beth-abara beyond the Jordan." See J. D. Hofstra, trans., *Isho'dad of Merw: Commentary on the Gospel of John*, CSCO 672 (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), LIV–LV; cf. G. Kiraz, *A Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels Aligning Sinaiticus, Curtonianus, Peshitta and harklean Versions*, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 21 (4 vols; Leiden: Brill, 1995), IV.11. This confusion has some overlap with the disagreement of the place-name cited in John 1:28 (implicating a different Maria) discussed in L. J. Dorfbauer, "Bethania, Bethara, or Bethabara: Fortunatianus of Aquileia and Origen's *Commentary on John*, with Particular Reference to John 1:28," in *Commentaries, Catenae and Biblical Tradition: Papers from the Ninth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual*

be noted that the Greek textual tradition attests a version of the toponym without ζ.¹⁴⁰ Only the ‘Eusebian’ traditions copy the Greek’s etymology for the town as “House of Hyssop.”¹⁴¹

All five versions agree that Maria was “famous”—ܡܪܝܐ (A7ar; DSo9) or ܡܪܝܐ (Theoph; HE; CZ)—and all five versions agree that this notoriety owed something to Maria’s “wealth” or “opulence” (ܝܬܪܐ). Thus, all five texts record the Greek’s adjective ἐπίσημος and the modifying clause διὰ πλοῦτον.

The ‘Maccabean’ tradition retains the Greek γένος via transliteration (ܓܢܘܣ), which is relatively common in Syriac translations.¹⁴² By contrast, the ‘Eusebian’ texts and *Theoph* use the native Syriac ܡܫܝܚܐ (“family, stock”). There have been only a few transliterated Greek terms to this point,¹⁴³ and the use of such terms is inconsistent across the translations.

This section may provide evidence of parallelism between *HE* and *Theoph* since they agree on certain glosses (like ܡܫܝܚܐ) over and against the texts that certainly bear some traditory connection to *Theoph* (the ‘Maccabean’ ones). Whether this bespeaks similarity of translation technique, or possibly even intertextual influence, is difficult to tell; if the latter, which text influenced which is anyone’s guess; in any case, it is worth noting that these texts are near-contemporary (*Theoph* and *HE* attested by manuscripts dating to 411 and 462 respectively) and may both have come from Edessa. It is also worth noting that comparing the Syriac renditions of the *Testimonium Flavianum* found in *HE* (1.11.9) and *Theoph* (5.44) shows that these texts can agree in vocabulary *and disagree in*

Criticism of the New Testament, in association with the COMPAUL project, ed. H. A. G. Houghton (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2016), 177–98.

¹⁴⁰ Niese, *De Bello Judaico*, 539.

¹⁴¹ For ܡܪܝܐ in the Syriac NT, see John 19:29; Heb 9:19; and Jennings, *Lexicon*, 65.

¹⁴² Butts, “Greek Loanwords in Syriac,” 124.

¹⁴³ See above: ܡܫܝܚܐ in 6.197 (*HE/CZ*); ܡܫܝܚܐ in 6.199 (passim).

possessions, which she had brought with her from the other side [of the river] to the city. And the rest of the things that had remained with her for scanty food evil-doers were plundering. ¹⁴⁵	ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት
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Deir al-Surian 09 (fols. 14v–15r)	
Each day plunderers were robbing this [woman's] possessions, which she had brought with her from the other side [of the river] to the city. The rest of the things that had remained with her for simple food evil-doers were plundering.	ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i> 4.21	
The other possessions belonging to this [woman], as much as she had moved from the other side [of the river] and brought to the city, the tyrants plundered. And the rest of her treasures, which would have been sufficient for daily sustenance, the soldiers were	ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት ከከመ ሕሕረ ጽሕፈት ጽሕፈት

¹⁴⁵ Once again, the translations of *A7a1* and *DS09* were improved by insights from Lucas Van Rompay.

Textual Notes

By leading with the demonstrative possessive ܐܝܢܐ, which *Theoph* intensifies by adding the possessive particle ܕܐܝܢܐ, *A7a1* and *DS09* mirror strictly the Greek's significant word order: by beginning with ταύτης, *BJ* ties this sentence to the previous description of Maria while also accentuating her character as the center of the ensuing sentence.¹⁴⁶ The rearranged word-order in *HE* and *CZ* carries the exact same meaning, especially as “possessions” (ܡܠܝܬܐ) is already appended with the possessive suffix for “her” (ܗܪܐ), yet remains a less word-for-word reflection of the Greek syntax.

All traditions render this section with two sentences and a break in between. Interestingly, *A7a1* and *DS09* move from the adverbial modifier “daily” or “each day” (ܡܠ ܕܝܘܡܐ or ܡܠ ܕܝܘܡܐ) to the first sentence, whereas *Theoph* puts it (ܡܠ ܕܝܘܡܐ) in the second sentence, in line with the Greek (καθ' ἡμέραν). *HE* and *CZ* omit the phrase completely.

The ‘Maccabean’ texts use a native Syriac term (ܐܝܢܐ) to capture the Greek οἱ τύραννοι, while the ‘Eusebian’ texts and *Theoph* transliterate the term (ܐܝܢܐ).¹⁴⁷ The translations have been inconsistent in the use of transliterated Greek terms. In the previous section, we saw the opposite case, in which the ‘Maccabean’ texts transliterated a Greek term, while the ‘Eusebian’ texts used a native Syriac term.

Strictly speaking, only *Theoph* contains an exact replication of the Greek's ὅσην (“as much as”), namely ܡܠܝܬܐ. The ܡܠܝܬܐ of *A7a1/DS09* (“whatever”) is quite close, but distinct from the inherently comparative ὅσος.

¹⁴⁶ In this section *Theoph* is at its least similar yet to *A7a1/DS09*, whose Syriac matches only 36-40% (9 or 10 out of 25 words) of that of *Theoph*, even ignoring mismatches in word order and presence or absence of ܐ.

¹⁴⁷ See Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1513.

Taken together, these last three points strengthen the impression that *Theoph* is the oldest tradition (i.e., best Syriac translation per the Greek).¹⁴⁸

Both the ‘Eusebian’ texts and *Theoph* capture the action of “breaking in” or “leaping in” (εἰσπηδῶντες), with “springing forth” (ܦܝܥܬܐ), and the ‘Eusebian’ text doubling with “entering in” (ܦܠܥܐ), the term they used in 6.196. It is striking that the ‘Maccabean’ texts miss the opportunity on this occasion to heighten the tension of the scene with “evil-doers” who “burst in” and take the rest of Maria’s possessions, destabilizing our hypothesis about these texts’ penchant for stylistic dramatization and affect.

The Syriac texts render the Greek κειμήλια (“treasures, heirlooms”) and τροφή (“food, nourishment”) in different ways. *A7a1* and *DS09* denote the latter with a highly generic term for “food” or “sustenance,”¹⁴⁹ ܦܝܥܬܐ, and the former with a very specific term, ܦܝܥܬܐ, which Payne Smith defines as “a crescent-shaped ornament worn by women, also by camels; a necklace.”¹⁵⁰ Whence such specificity? *Theoph* is much less specific, collapsing both entities into the universal category of “nourishment” (ܦܝܥܬܐ). Concerning the snatching of said food, *HE* and *CZ* use the phrase ܦܝܥܬܐ + ܦܠܥܐ to account for the Greek εἴ τι ... ἐπινοηθείη (“if any[thing] ... was contrived by her”). Significantly, *HE* places ܦܝܥܬܐ in the ethpeel feminine third-person singular, while *CZ* has the masculine third-person singular. The anomalous verb ܦܝܥܬܐ can have multiple meanings in the ethpeel, including the active “to be present/exist” or the

¹⁴⁸ Our thinking about this has been significantly helped by the guidance and insight of David Levenson.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Acts 14:16; 27:36.

¹⁵⁰ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 115; See also L. Costaz, *Dictionnaire syriaque-français / Syriac-English Dictionary* (Beyrouth: Dar el-Machreq, 2002), 87. Cf. 1 Esd 3:6.

passive “to be found/discovered.”¹⁵¹ The two texts thus have slightly different frames of reference, separated by an all-important conjunctive **ܐ** here. *HE* thus has “food” (ܐܚܝܬܐ) as the subject of ܡܕܕ, whereas *CZ* has the genderless indefinite pronoun “some/anything” (ܡܕܡܐ) as the subject. Thus, on a literal reading, according to *HE* Maria was robbed of whatever was found on her of her “utensils of service” — ܡܕܡܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ being a rather ambivalent phrase¹⁵²—and any (kind of food), whereas *CZ* implies that she was robbed of the utensils, food, and anything (else) that was on her, the **ܐ** creating three classes of plundered products rather than just two. Aesthetically, this balances with the triple verbs at the end of both *HE* and *CZ* describing what the plunderers did: “springing forth” (ܦܝܬܐ), “entering in” (ܦܝܬܐ), and “plundering” (ܦܝܬܐ).¹⁵³

There are multiple ways the texts deal with the Greek οἱ δορυφόροι (“guards,” literally “those bearing spears”). The ‘Maccabean’ texts render these figures ‘evil-doers’ (ܡܕܡܐ), a scribe seemingly having misread the base of the noun as ܡܕܡܐ

¹⁵¹ Thus, what we have translated in the Greek “if any food was detected (or ‘perceived’)” could also be translated “and if any food was contrived [i.e., by Maria].”

¹⁵² The term often carries connotation of cult service or other forms of ministry; see Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 622; Jennings, *Lexicon*, 243. Could the idea be that these included whatever implement Maria must by implication have used to cut her son in half a few lines hence?

¹⁵³ Concerning the latter, Lucas Van Rompay (written communication, January 3, 2024) has expressed interest in the fact that *A7a1* and *DSog* in this passage render the simple verb ἡρπάζον with the pe'al (ܡܕܡܐ ܦܝܬܐ) but the composite verb διήρπασαν with the pa'el (ܡܕܡܐ ܦܝܬܐ), suggesting that “Syriac translators saw composite verbs (at least in some cases) as expressing intensity, somewhat comparable to the pe'al/pe'al contrast” and noting a parallel case in the NT text of the Vetus Syra: Luke 7:45 renders καταφιλέω (as the participle καταφιλοῦσά) with the pa'el (infinitive) of ܡܕܡܐ (ܡܕܡܐ ܦܝܬܐ), while it renders the simple form of φιλέω (i.e. φιλημά) with the pe'al perfect (2ms): ܡܕܡܐ ܦܝܬܐ.

robbers, she was provoking [them] against herself.	
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Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i> 4.21	
And severe anger entered into the woman and, many times while despising and cursing the robbers, she was provoking them against her.	ܡܢ ܕܝܡܢ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ. ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ. ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.25 (Wright and McLean p. 127)	
And she grumbled bitterly, and she was continually insulting and cursing the robbers in order to provoke them against her to kill her.	ܕܝܡܢ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ, ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ. ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ. ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ

The <i>Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 111 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 179)	
And she grumbled bitterly, and she was continually reviling them and cursing them in order to provoke them against her to kill her.	ܕܝܡܢ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ, ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ. ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ. ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܝܢܐ

Textual Notes

Here the ‘Maccabean’ texts both have the woman (ܕܡܡܝܢܐ) as the subject of the first clause, while the ‘Eusebian’ texts omit the noun and replace it with the pronoun (ܡܡܝܢܐ). Between the ‘Maccabean’ texts, there is one small difference, however: *A7a1* includes the demonstrative pronoun ܕܡܡܝܢܐ, whereas *DS09* does not. Thus, *A7a1* may be read as picking up the Greek definite article τὸ. Syriac’s lack of a true definite article makes both

the Greek gives no reasonable grounding for inserting 'bitterness' into the equation here—i.e., with some form of *πικρός* or *πικραίνω*—this passage may constitute an instance in which the earliest iteration of either the 'Maccabean' or the 'Eusebian' text tradition borrowed content from the other.

The additional conjunctive *α* added only by *A7a1* to introduce the last clause of this passage could be read as breaking the implicit causal link between Maria's reviling of the robbers and her provoking them, in which case she would be understood as doing two different things rather than effecting B by means of A.

Meanwhile, *Theoph* has the best rendering of the Greek, with "severe anger" (ܐܕܡܥܐ ܐܕܡܥܐ) being the subject of the verb (ܐܬܝܬ) and the woman as the object. In this passage, as the language gets more graphic and technical, *Theoph* remains far less beholden to the tradition it shares with the 'Maccabean' texts than it exhibited at first.¹⁵⁹ The verb used by *Theoph*, ܐܬܝܬ ("to enter"), is also found in Luke 22.3 and John 13:27 when satan "entered into" Judas Iscariot—though the Greek verb in these instances is *εἰσέρχομαι* instead of *εἰσείμι*. The agency of anger/wrath in the Greek and in *Theoph* is reminiscent of the agency of sin in the story of Cain's murder of his brother Abel (Gen. 4:7).

The different translations disagree as to how to translate the Greek emotive phrase (*δεινὴ δέ...ἀγανάκτησις*). The 'Maccabean' texts choose "bitter rage" (ܐܕܡܥܐ ܐܕܡܥܐ), while *Theoph* has (probably the closest) "severe anger" (ܐܕܡܥܐ ܐܕܡܥܐ). The 'Eusebian' texts strikingly divert from the Greek the most in this sequence in a rather uncharacteristic manner, saying that *she* "grumbled bitterly" (ܕܡܕܡܐ ܕܡܡ ܕܡܡܐ ܕܡܡ). The translators may have had difficulty finding a suitable word for

¹⁵⁹ In this passage, if one ignores some differences in orthography and syntax, *A7a1* and *DS09* each reflect 44% of *Theoph*'s Syriac (about 7 of 16 words).

the Greek ἀγανάκτησις, “vexation,” (see above) and searched the spectrum of emotive words from “rage” to “anger” to “grumbling.” For the Greek adjective δεινή, the ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ texts agree in using a form of ܠܝܬܐ “bitter,” while *Theoph* stands as an outlier with “severe” (ܠܕܝܬܐ). Here, and above with the phrase ܠܕܝܬܐ ܠܕܝܬܐ, *Theoph* corrects the Greek and provides the best, and possibly by inference the oldest, Syriac translation.

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.204	
But as no one, either being exasperated or out of pity, killed her, and since on the one hand she was weary of finding any food [that she found] for others, and on the other hand, finding it was already impossible from every side, as famine moved through her intestines and marrow and her passions were inflamed all the more, taking up as her adviser anger, along with necessity, she moved against nature.	ὥς δ' οὔτε παροξυνόμενός τις οὔτ' ἐλεῶν αὐτὴν ἀνήρει καὶ τὸ μὲν εὐρεῖν τι σιτίον ἄλλοις ἐκοπία πανταχόθεν δὲ ἄπορον ἦν ἤδη καὶ τὸ εὐρεῖν ὁ λιμὸς δὲ διὰ σπλάγχχνων καὶ μυελῶν ἐχώρει καὶ τοῦ λιμοῦ μάλλον ἐξέκαιον οἱ θυμοὶ σύμβουλον λαβοῦσα τὴν ὀργὴν μετὰ τῆς ἀνάγκης ἐπὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐχώρει.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 1)	
And since no person, out of anger or mercy, killed her, and since she was laboring to find sustenance for others, and since from every side it was vain, and since the	ܠܐ ܥܢ ܡܕܝܢܐ ܠ ܥܢ ܚܐ ܡܥܬܝܐ .ܡܠܠܐ ܡܥܬܝܐ ܕܝܡܐ ܠܬܝܐ ܠܬܝܐ ܠܬܝܐ ܕܝܡܐ ܠܬܝܐ ܡܥܬܝܐ ܠ ܥܢ ܡܥܬܝܐ ܡܥܬܝܐ ܥܢ ܬܝܐ ܠܝܡܐܐ ܠܬܝܐ ܥܢ ܬܝܐ .ܚܝܐ

famine had moved into her intestines and her stomach, and more than the famine, her anger burned within, she took as [her] adviser wrath, along with compulsion, and she revolted against nature. ¹⁶⁰	𐤀𐤏𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤏𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤏𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕
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Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15r)	
And since no person, out of anger or mercy, killed her, and since she was laboring to find sustenance for others, and since from every side it was vain, and since the famine had moved into her intestines and her stomach, and more than the famine her anger burned within her, she took as [her] adviser wrath, along with compulsion, and she revolted against nature.	𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i> 4.21	
And since no person, out of anger or having mercy on her, killed her, and since she was helping to find any food [that she found] for others—and	𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕

¹⁶⁰ Thanks to Lucas Van Rompay for helping us with a clause here (written communication January 3, 2024).

up on Maria's suffering, but they fail to integrate Josephus' play on words (his lexical 'move,' if you will). All the Syriac translations begin with a circumstantial particle ܐܢ, mirroring the Greek construction (ὡς), and they all build to final clauses that use the same verb (ܡܪܝܬ), thus "she revolted against nature" (ܡܪܝܬ ܕܠܗ ܡܪܝܬ). Concerning this final clause, it is worth noting that the 'Maccabean' translations + *Theoph* delay the verb to the end of the clause in imitation, apparently, of the Greek text of Josephus before them, whereas the 'Eusebian' translations

nature. If he meant to say that Maria was about to do something contrary to nature, to violate 'natural law' as it were, we would expect the more common phrase *κατὰ τὴν φύσιν* ("against nature") or even *παρὰ τὴν φύσιν* ("contrary to nature"), both of which Josephus uses (see, e.g., *AJ* 15.372; *BJ* 7.205). The Latin translators of *BJ* 6.204 understood something along these lines: *LBJ* 6.204 reads *adversus naturam excitatur* ("she was excited against nature")—while Cardwell, *De Bello Judaico*, 336 has *contra naturam excitatur*, this variant reading is not supported by any known manuscript—and Rufinus' *LHE* 3.6.23 reads *contra ipsa iam armatur iura naturae* ("and she armed herself against the very laws of nature"). The rendering of *LBJ* would prompt a reverse-translation of *κατὰ τὴν φύσιν*. The simplest explanation for Josephus' ἐπὶ at the end of *BJ* 6.204 is the assault metaphor discussed above. But there is one other possibility: Pindar's *Nemean Ode* 10.73 reads *ταχέως δ' ἐπ' ἀδελφεοῦ βίαν πάλιν χώρησεν ὁ Τυνδαρίδας*. If the ἐπ here, which is controlled by *χώρησεν*, is to be taken with *βίαν* and not *ἀδελφεοῦ*, then in this case *ἐχώρει* + ἐπὶ + accusative simply means "to return to x." W. H. Race, trans., *Pindar: Nemean Odes – Isthmian Odes – Fragments*, LCL 485 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 120–21 translates this line "The son of Tyndareus returned swiftly to his mighty brother." If Josephus had this meaning in mind, his phrase would mean not that Maria "attacked φύσις," but perhaps that she "returned to φύσις" in the sense that she resorted to her baser, animal instincts. The Syriac phrase ܡܪܝܬ ܕܠܗ ܡܪܝܬ, discussed above and common to all five Syriac traditions, appears to assume the Thucydidean, 'attack' meaning of Josephus' phrase, the preposition ܕܠ being often conceptually cognate to ἐπὶ in spatial terms, and the verb ܡܪܝܬ ("to assail, assault, fall suddenly on," Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 383) having a far more martial semantic base-range than the movement-based meaning-range of *χωρέω*.

have the verb first, thereby employing a Semitic syntax that is natural to Syriac, but also conforming to the slightly different word order that is present in the Greek text of Eusebius (and elsewhere).¹⁶²

It is the details in between the opening and closing clauses that are significant in this passage. The ‘Maccabean’ texts are basically identical and follow the broad structure of the Greek nicely. *Theoph* is closer to *A7a1*/*DSog* here than in the preceding few passages, especially in the first few words and the latter half of the pericope.¹⁶³ They omit the reference to food scarcity (πανταχόθεν δὲ ἄπορον ἦν ἡδὴ καὶ τὸ εὗρεῖν) and replace it with a remark about the vanity of Maria’s choices (ܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ). The use of ܠܗܝܬܐ (“vain, empty”) applies the sense of ἄπορον (“impossible, difficult”) to Maria’s lack of or pointless agency. The ‘Eusebian’ texts emphasize Maria’s lack, i.e. her inability to find anything at all (ܠܗܝܬܐ). The object of Maria’s searching is ܠܗܝܬܐ in *A7a1* and *DSog* (though *A7a1* has the orthographically erroneous form ܠܗܝܬܐ) and ܠܗܝܬܐ in *Theoph*, *HE*, and *CZ*. These nouns are synonyms,¹⁶⁴ but here

¹⁶² The text of Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 539 reads ἐπὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐχώρει, in accord with L, V, R, and C and Eusebius and John Chrysostom, but notes the variant word-order ἐπὶ τὴν φύσιν in mss P, A, and M. The readings of these latter mss fit the word order in *HE* and *CZ*, but these are manuscripts of Josephus, not Eusebius. The same word order as Niese’s Josephus text at *HE* 3.6.23 is recorded with no variants in Schwartz and Mommsen, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, 208. The same word order appears in the verbatim repeat of the Greek Maria Story in John Chrysostom’s *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life* 1.5 (PG 47: 324).

¹⁶³ About 67% of *Theoph*’s Syriac matches that of *A7a1* and *DSog* exactly in this passage (31 of 46 words).

¹⁶⁴ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary* has ܠܗܝܬܐ defined as “nourishment, victuals, provisions, means of subsistence, support” (608), while ܠܗܝܬܐ is glossed, with slightly more semantic restriction, as “nourishment, food, provisions” (374).

mark *Theoph*'s alignment with the 'Eusebian' rather than the 'Maccabean' texts.

The 'Maccabean' texts, along with *Theoph*, fail to translate *μυελών* ("marrow") and simply include "stomach" (𐤎𐤊). Only the 'Eusebian' texts catch "marrow" (𐤎𐤊𐤍), though these texts, in turn, prefer "womb" (𐤎𐤊𐤍) to "intestines" (*σπλάγχχνων*), unlike the 'Maccabean' texts + *Theoph*, which have 𐤎𐤊𐤍𐤍 ("bowels, viscera, intestines"). This minor difference could be significant, as it links the psychological and physical stress brought on by famine not only with the inner workings of Maria's body, but more specifically with the child-bearing features of her physiology. The 'Eusebian' texts create a Maria who is traumatized not just in her physicality, but in her *maternal* physicality, foreshadowing the coming scene.

Both the nouns and the verbs in this scene contribute to its being the most physiologically interesting of the story. All texts agree that it was (the) famine (𐤎𐤊𐤍) that worked upon Maria's innards, however these are conceived. But the verbs used to describe this action differ. *A7a1*, *DSog*, and *Theoph* used the rather banal 𐤎𐤊𐤍 ("to be left, remain, be found, persist"). The other two texts, *HE* and *CZ*, use 𐤎𐤊𐤍𐤍𐤍, the root 𐤎𐤊𐤍 meaning "to have authority, dominion, power over." We have translated 𐤎𐤊𐤍𐤍𐤍 "overwhelmed," but this could also be rendered "took possession of, took control of." In any case, 𐤎𐤊𐤍 connotes a more locative and stative being, whereas 𐤎𐤊𐤍 is indicative of control. Neither verb suggests the movement at the core of the Greek verbal phrase—*χωρέω* + *διὰ* = "to move through, advance through." However, like the Greek language, 𐤎𐤊𐤍 lends itself to the metaphor of a virus or germ 'moving through' or 'being (left) in' the body, whereas 𐤎𐤊𐤍 fits more neatly with an analogy to emotion or possession. Was Maria's condition one of being inhabited, or of being overtaken? Given the behavioral effects of certain states, perhaps the difference is less clear than it might appear.

The ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ translations have different ways of dealing with οἱ θυμοί and ὀργήν. All five texts surprisingly use the same term (ܐܕܪܐܝܐ) to translate θυμοί, but this vocabulary is where the similarities end. The ‘Maccabean’ texts prefer ‘wrath’ (ܐܕܪܐܝܐ) for ὀργήν and cast it, along with compulsion (ܐܕܪܐܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), as Maria’s adviser/counselor (ܐܕܪܐܝܐ).¹⁶⁵ The ‘Eusebian’ texts do a better job of presenting Maria’s “anger/passion” as being “inflamed” (ܐܕܪܐܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) and, positioning Maria as the subject of the clause (ܐܕܪܐܝܐ ܐܕܪܐܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), they opt for the comparatively rarer term ܐܕܪܐܝܐ to render ὀργήν.¹⁶⁶ *Theoph* deviates from all four other texts by saying that Maria took “violence” (ܐܕܪܐܝܐ) as council. In fact, there is some reason to suppose that *HE* + *CZ*, or *Theoph*, or both are actually rendering the Greek term ὀρμήν instead of ὀργήν, the former being a textual variant in this passage attested at least in the Greek *HE* tradition.¹⁶⁷ The

¹⁶⁵ Interestingly, the idea of anger/wrath + hunger/necessity as advisers/counselors *per se* disappears from the Latin translation tradition of *BJ* (*LBJ* 6.204 has *impetu animi ac necessitate impulsoribus aduersus naturam excitatur*) but is retained in Rufinus’ translation of *HE* 3.6.23 (*fame et ira pessimis usa consultoribus contra ipsa iam armature iura naturae*). See Bay, “The ‘Maria Story’ in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew,” 24–25.

¹⁶⁶ This term is less common than ܐܕܪܐܝܐ (e.g.) and is often translated as “assault, threat” (Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 67) or “an onset, rush” (Jennings, *Lexicon*, 46; cf. Acts 14:5), making it an odd rendering of ὀργή but a natural rendering of ὀρμή; see below.

¹⁶⁷ Schwartz and Mommsen, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, 208 list ὀρμήν as a variant in this passage (*HE* 3.6.23) in five mss (A, T^c, D, M, Σ), over and against the printed ὀργή found in T^c, E, R, B, A, and Josephus. Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 539 reports no variant for ὀργήν here, though this is proof positive of nothing (in medieval Greek manuscripts, the two terms could be confused with extreme ease by either medieval scribes or modern readers). It may be significant that Henry Savile’s Greek text of the story as it appears in John Chrysostom’s *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life* 1.5, produced in 1613, reads ὀρμήν in place of ὀργήν, as reported by J.-P. Migne (PG 47: 324), who retains ὀργήν. It is very possible that ὀρμήν also

‘Eusebian’ texts further account for the prepositional phrase with a direct transliteration (μετὰ τῆς ἀνάγκης becomes ܡܬܐ ܬܗܝ ܐܢܐܟܝܟܝܬܐ), whereas the other three texts agree on a more idiomatic rendering (ܡܬܬܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܢܐܟܝܟܝܬܐ). (A translator might have considered the preposition ܡܬܬܝܢ a more natural correlate to Greek’s μετὰ + genitive than is Syriac’s ܡܬܐ).

Theoph gives a distinct translation of this passage; though a good deal of its vocabulary matches the ‘Maccabean’ translations, its syntax and verbal aspects are occasionally idiosyncratic. The opening sequence shifts, oddly, from “labor” (ܡܬܬܝܢ) to “help” (ܡܬܬܝܢ), which may have been a corruption in a manuscript or a mistake. In any case, it creates a Maria who is helpful, rather than one who is just trying to survive.¹⁶⁸ Maria searches for food “from every place” (ܡܬܬܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܢܐܟܝܟܝܬܐ), and *Theoph* uses the rare and difficult term ܡܬܬܝܢ (“perplexity, doubt,

existed in the other Eusebian tradition under discussion, i.e. the Greek *Theophania* Vorlage. For the Syriac *Theoph*, this would help explain the use of the term ܡܬܬܝܢ, which can mean “violence,” only a half-step away from ὄργη, but more naturally leans toward meaning “onset, irruption, impetuosity, eagerness” (Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 122) and is in fact constantly associated with the ὄρμη-lexical family when the Greek and Syriac Bible text traditions are compared (Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1167). Similarly, the term ܡܬܬܝܢ can mean “assault, threat,” and the verb ܡܬܬܝܢ takes on the meaning of “to rush upon, assault” with the prefix ܡܬܬܝܢ, making the root virtually identical to the Greek ὄρμη (“onrush, onset, assault”) and ὀρμαίνω (“rush, attack, hasten”). See Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 67 and *LSJ* ad loc. Indeed, the Peshitta uses ܡܬܬܝܢ to translate ὄρμη at Acts 14:5 (Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 699).

¹⁶⁸ In fact, the idea that Maria obtained any food she did “for others” is not necessarily meant to mean that she was intentionally doing so; an arguably more natural reading is that she obtained food “for others” in the sense that the bandits were constantly stealing her food, and thus her procured provisions went to others. The wording of *Theoph* challenges this interpretation, perhaps intending to portray Maria as distinctly humanitarian in this time of crisis, the polar opposite of what she is about to become, in other words.

sedition, for what shall I preserve you?	
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Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i> 4.21	
And she grabbed her son— for she had a newborn at the breast—and she said, “O miserable one, in war and in sedition, for what shall I preserve you?	ܐܠܚܝܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.26–27 (Wright and McLean p. 127)	
And she seized the son whom she had who was suckling at her breast and said: “Miserable infant, in war, and in famine, and in sedition, why do I preserve you?	ܐܠܚܝܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

The <i>Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 112 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 181)	
And she seized her son whom she had who was suckling at her breast and said: “Miserable infant, in war, and in famine, and even in sedition, why do I preserve you?	ܐܠܚܝܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Textual Notes

The opening lines of the ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ texts vary slightly in their syntax, but both convey the Greek quite

literally. The primary difference is the placement of “son” (ܐܒܝܐ)—the ‘Eusebian’ texts stay closer to the Greek syntax, a reversal from the last section. By contrast, *Theoph* once again stands outside the other translations and alters the word-order, yet it provides first position to “son” qua direct object (ܐܒܝܐ), in line with the ‘Eusebian’ translations, all of which signals the significance of the child in the unfolding scene. At the same time, *Theoph* stands alone in providing two terms for ‘infant,’ as in the Greek (τέκνον, παῖς | ܐܒܝܐ, ܕܠܝܕܐ).

All five texts use the same word (ܐܦܝܬܐ) to render ἀρπάζω.¹⁷⁰ Likewise, all five texts use the term ܕܡܪܝܬܐ to translate ἄθλιον. The Syriac term appears in the section parallel to *BJ* 6.196, describing the demeanor of the rebels in the city.¹⁷¹ Only the ‘Eusebian’ texts, however, account for the Greek noun βρέφος, forcing the adjective to become a substantive in the other translations.

The ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ texts have the same terms for the Greek trifecta (πολέμῳ καὶ λιμῷ καὶ στάσει), and in the same order (ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ). *CZ* uniquely contains the particle (ܐܘܪ) before the third term, which may be interpreted as the Greek conjunctive καὶ functioning adverbially. *Theoph* makes the error of omitting “famine” from the list; its wording in the second half of this passage is otherwise identical to that of *A7a1* and *DS09*.¹⁷²

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.206	
On the one hand, there is slavery with the Romans,	τὰ μὲν παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις δουλεία, καὶ ζήσωμεν ἐπ’ αὐτούς, φθάνει

¹⁷⁰ An apparently standard translation, given its use to translate ἀρπάζω in Matt. 11:12 and Acts 27:15.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Rom 7:24 and 1 Cor 15:19, where the term is used to translate ταλαίπωρος and ἐλεεινότεροι respectively.

¹⁷² Overall in this passage, 69% of *Theoph*’s Syriac is present in *A7a1/DS09* (11 of 16 words).

even if we should live. But before them and slavery comes the famine. But the rebels are more cruel than both!	δὲ καὶ δουλείαν ὁ λιμός, οἱ στασιασται δὲ ἀμφοτέρων χαλεπώτεροι.
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Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 1)	
For you will be a slave to the Romans even if you should survive. But before slavery (there is) famine and the brigands are harsher than both of them.	.ᲚᲟᲙᲗ ᲚᲃᲗ ᲚᲗᲟᲙᲓ ᲗᲓᲕᲓ ᲗᲓᲙᲟ. ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲟᲙᲟ ᲚᲗ ᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗᲟ. ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲓ ᲗᲗ .ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗ

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15r)	
For you will be a slave to the Romans even if you should survive. But before slavery (there is) famine and the brigands are harsher than both of them.	.ᲚᲟᲙᲗ ᲚᲃᲗ ᲚᲗᲟᲙᲓ ᲗᲓᲕᲓ ᲚᲓ ᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲟᲙᲟ ᲚᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ. ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲗᲗ .ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i> 4.21	
For you will be a slave to the Romans even if you survive longer with them. But before slavery (there is) famine and the rebels are harsher (than) them.	.ᲚᲟᲙᲗ ᲚᲃᲗ ᲚᲗᲟᲙᲓ ᲗᲓᲕᲓ ᲚᲗᲗᲟ ᲚᲟᲙᲗᲓ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗ ᲚᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲗᲗ. ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ .ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.27 (Wright and McLean p. 127)	
Even if we should remain alive, it is slavery to the	,Ჟ ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲗᲗ ᲚᲓ ᲗᲗ ᲚᲗ. ᲚᲗᲗᲓ ᲚᲗᲗ

case, quite inconsistent in manuscripts prior to the tenth/eleventh century. Painting in broader strokes, in this passage *Theoph* is nearly identical to *A7a1* and *DS09*, confirming powerfully, once again, that these draw on a shared tradition.¹⁷⁵

The texts are divided concerning how they translate *μῦθος*. The ‘Maccabean’ texts and *Theoph* prefer ܡܬܘܨ, which is commonly used for the Greek *διήγῃμα* but also for *μῦθος*.¹⁷⁶ The ‘Eusebian’ texts prefer the more biblical term ܡܬܘܨ commonly used to translate *παράβολή* (e.g., Matt 13:18). This term can also be used for *μῦθος* (e.g., 2 Pet 1:16 Peshitta), demonstrating the flexibility of the Greek term.¹⁷⁷

The ‘Eusebian’ texts differ from the rest in several significant ways. First, the different terms used to translate *τροφή*. The ‘Maccabean’ texts and *Theoph* use ܡܬܘܨ, which is more

¹⁷⁵ Excepting dots and a few prepositional or conjunctive additions in *Theoph*—namely ܐ in ܡܬܘܨܐ and ܐ in ܡܬܘܨܐ—the Syriac of *Theoph* from its side finds a 100% match in the ‘Maccabean’ traditions here (13 of 13 words). This does not mean that all of the Syriac from *A7a1/DS09* is found in *Theoph*; the former have several (minor) words not found in the latter (ܡܬܘܨ and ܡܬܘܨ).

¹⁷⁶ Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 4249.

¹⁷⁷ The term *μῦθος* has a complicated history in Greek philosophy and philology. See L. Brisson, *Platon, Les mots et les mythes: Comment et pourquoi Platon nomma le mythe?* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1994), republished as L. Brisson, *Plato the Mythmaker*, trans. G. Naddaf (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); B. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3–18 and 19–43, concluding in the first place that, in the early Greek writings of Homer and Hesiod, “*mythos* is an assertive discourse of power and authority that represents itself as something to be believed and obeyed,” appearing nowhere in epic as meaning “‘false story,’ ‘symbolic story,’ ‘sacred story,’ or anything of the sort” (17–18). This argument is important because these latter meanings are often attached to *μῦθος*, whereas its presumed converse *λόγος* is often assumed to carry connotations of authority, trustworthiness, etc. Lincoln’s essay represents and challenge and complication to this scholarly commonplace.

commonly used to translate τροφή in Syriac¹⁷⁸ and is consistent with earlier passages (e.g., 6.195). That said, the ‘Eusebian’ texts are also consistent in their use of ܠܕܠܥܐ, which also appears in earlier sections, even as a translation for τροφή (e.g., 6.198).

The Greek ἐρινὺς can mean “vengeance, punishment of the guilty” in a general sense or can refer to the avenging deity herself, Ἐρινὺς. The Syriac traditions render the term differently: whereas the ‘Maccabean’ texts have the generic term for “vengeance” or “punishment” (ܠܕܠܥܐ),¹⁷⁹ *HE* and *CZ* prefer the term ܠܕܠܥܐ. The latter carries more the connotation of “madness” or “frenzy” or “rage,” which sounds (slightly) more like a personified description of ἐρινὺς.¹⁸⁰

Finally, the translations are divided over the term used for συμφοραῖς. *A7a1*, *DS09*, and *Theoph* all use ܠܥܡܐ (“sorrow, suffering, pain”), often used in Syriac literature for notions of πάθημα. *HE* and *CZ*, meanwhile, use ܠܥܡܐ (“suffering, affliction, tribulation”). The former is used more widely in the New Testament,¹⁸¹ while the latter is used more commonly to translate θλίψις.

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.208	
And at the same time as she was saying these things, she killed her son. Then, having roasted half she ate it and the rest she	καὶ ταῦθ' ἅμα λέγουσα κτείνει τὸν υἱὸν ἔπειτ' ὀπτήσασα τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ κατεσθίει τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν κατακαλύψασα ἐφύλαττεν.

¹⁷⁸ Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2514.

¹⁷⁹ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 351.

¹⁸⁰ Note that the Latin traditions from late antiquity translate ἐρινὺς alternatively as *furia* (*LBJ* 6.207) and *furor* (*LHE* 3.6.24; *DEH* 5.40.1). See Bay, “The ‘Maria Story’ in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew,” 28–29ff.

¹⁸¹ Jennings, *Lexicon*, 82.

And after she said these things she killed her son. And she roasted him and ate half, and the rest she concealed and guarded.	ܡܝܬܠ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ
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Textual Notes

Theoph is the only translation to account for the Greek ἄμα with ܐܡܐܐ, an amalgam of ܐܡܐ and ܐܡܐ.¹⁸² The Syriac particle is often used to translate the preposition σύν,¹⁸³ but is also used in the New Testament to render ἄμα (cf. Rom 3:12; 1 Thess 4:17, 5:10). The addition of the particle in *Theoph* helps clarify the circumstantial construction provided by ܐܡܐ + ܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ, implying that Maria's slaying of her son takes place as she is speaking, as implied in the Greek. The other translations also contain the circumstantial clause, but the exact sequence is more oblique.

Beyond the first clause, the different translations are remarkably close, with slight variations such as the inclusion of the -Δ direct object marker in *Theoph*, *HE*, and *CZ* being of less significance (proleptic in *Theoph* and *HE*).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Despite this singularity, *Theoph* is quite close to *A7a1* and *DS09* here in this last portion of its Maria Story. Allowing for minor variants within lexical agreement, 11 of 14 words in *Theoph*'s Syriac (79%) are to be found in the 'Maccabean' texts.

¹⁸³ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 15.

¹⁸⁴ This despite Nöldeke's insistence that the object-designating Δ indicates more emphatic determination. See T. Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1904), 227. Here, it is more likely a matter of difference in translation technique between the 'Eusebian' and the 'Maccabean' translations in late antiquity. Cf. T. Muraoka, *Classical Syriac: A Basic Grammar with Chrestomathy*, Porta Linguarum Orientalium 19, 2nd rev. ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 77–79.

Perhaps of slightly more significance is the lack of pronominal enclitic with ܡܠܟܐ in CZ. While this variant is not sufficient to suggest independence from HE, it is interesting that it may be a closer parallel to the Greek text. In any case, CZ is the only tradition to literally record that Maria “ate [a] portion,” leaving ‘of her son’ implicit, rather than “a portion of him” (ܡܠܟܐ)—which, with a dot above the ܡ- enclitic would mean “her portion”—as in all four other texts.

All of the Syriac traditions agree in their verbs for “kill” (ܡܠܟܐ) and “roast” (ܡܠܟܐ), the latter being the verb used in Peshitta Luke 24:42, often translated “broil,” to describe how the fish eaten by the resurrected Jesus was cooked.¹⁸⁵

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.209	
Immediately the rebels arrived and, breathing in the lawless smell, they began threatening to slay her immediately if she did not reveal that which had been prepared. But she, stating that she had kept a good portion for them,	εὐθέως δ' οἱ στασιασταὶ παρήσαν καὶ τῆς ἀθεμίτου κνίσης σπάσαντες ἠπείλουν εἰ μὴ δείξειεν τὸ παρασκευασθὲν ἀποσφάξειν αὐτὴν εὐθέως ἢ δὲ καὶ μοῖραν αὐτοῖς εἰποῦσα καλὴν τετηρηκέναι τὰ λείψανα τοῦ τέκνου διεκάλυψεν.

¹⁸⁵ 19 Jennings, *Lexicon*, 85. The Greek of Luke 24:42, in line with Josephus’ use of the verb ὀπτᾶω, employs the adjective ὀπτός (“roasted, broiled”): “They gave [Jesus] a piece of broiled/roasted fish” (οἱ δὲ ἐπέδωκαν αὐτῷ ἰχθύος ὀπτοῦ μέρος). Interestingly, whereas the primary reading in NTG 28 has 24:43 as simply καὶ λαβὼν ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν ἔφαγεν (“and taking it, he ate it before them”), two extended variant readings, present in Greek, Latin, and Syriac, add to this τὰ ἐπιλοιπα ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς (“and the remainder he gave to them”), an intriguing but probably incidental parallel to Maria here in BJ 6.208. See B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger, eds., *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013 [2012]), 290.

revealed the remains of the child.	
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Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r cols. 1–2)	
In that moment the brigands entered and found her, and they drew their swords and they grew angry so as to kill her, unless she showed them whatever she had to eat. Then she said to them, "I even kept the best part of the rest of my son for you." And she revealed [it and] she showed them ...	ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15r)	
In that moment the brigands entered and found her, and they drew their swords and they grew angry so as to kill her, unless she showed them whatever she had to eat. Then she said to them, "I even kept the best part of the rest of my son for you." And she revealed [it] and she showed them ...	ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i> N/A

hour”),¹⁸⁶ whereas the ‘Eusebian’ traditions coalesce on the more literal ܠܡܫܐ.¹⁸⁷ Also in the first sentence of this passage we confront the nominal distinction between *A7a1*’s and *DSog*’s ܠܡܫܐ (which we translate “brigands”) and the ܠܡܫܐ (‘rebels’) mentioned in *HE* and *CZ*, and not for the first time; the former word is only ever used in the ‘Maccabean’ texts, whereas all of the texts use ܠܡܫܐ in places (e.g., 6.206; 6.207; 6.209).

In the Greek rendering, the *στασιασταί* control three verbs in this passage: they show up (*παρήσαν*), smell the scent of cooking (*σπάσαντες*), and begin threatening to kill Maria (*ὑπείλουν ... ἀποσφάξειν*). In *A7a1* and *DSog*, the ܠܡܫܐ are imputed with four verbs: they show up (ܠܡܫܐ), find Maria (ܠܡܫܐ), draw their swords (ܠܡܫܐ ܕܡܫܐ), and get angry enough to kill her (ܠܡܫܐ ܕܡܫܐ ܕܡܫܐ). The ‘Maccabean’ traditions have here taken some liberties in their language. While ܠܡܫܐ may equal *παρήσαν*, the Greek nowhere conveys the idea of the rebels having “found” (ܠܡܫܐ) Maria. Rather, their finding her is implicit in their following their noses, yet the ‘Maccabean’ texts completely omit any mention of the olfactory, arguably the most poignant component of this scene. Why do they drop this detail? Finally, similar questions could be asked about the final Syriac clause mentioned above: the verb ܠܡܫܐ (“to burn with anger”) is a good step away from the verb “to threaten” (ܠܡܫܐ),¹⁸⁸ and the Greek’s verb +

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Peshitta Matt 8:5; Mark 1:42; Jennings, *Lexicon*, 228.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Peshitta Matt 3:16; Jennings, *Lexicon*, 119.

¹⁸⁸ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 67, 148; cf. *BJ* 6.204 // above, where *HE* and *CZ* use the noun form of this verb, ܠܡܫܐ, to render the Greek *ὀργή*. Since the ‘Eusebian’ texts there use a term which can mean “threat” to render the Greek word for “anger,” and here the ‘Maccabean’ texts use the verb for “be angry” to translate the Greek verb for “threaten,” it might be worth reserving judgment as to any clear, solid distinction

complementary infinitive construction stands awkwardly next to the Syriac's verb + ܐ ܥܥܡ + verb structure, if only because "to be angry" is unnatural when functioning like a modal verb.

The 'Eusebian' traditions both share in and depart from the idiosyncrasies of the 'Maccabean' texts here. On the one hand, *HE* and *CZ* also put swords into the hands of the Maria's aggressors in this passage (ܐܥܬܝܪܐ ܕܝ ܫܥܬܡܝܬܐ), though here they do in fact "threaten to kill her" (ܐܥܬܝܪܐ ܕܝ ܫܥܬܡܝܬܐ). One wonders if the earlier of the two 'Maccabean' texts was influenced by a still earlier Syriac source (perhaps Eusebian) that read ܥܬܠܝܬܐ ("they threatened") here and then changed this, probably by orthographic mistake, to the morphologically similar ܥܬܠܝܬܐ ("they burned with anger"); the awkwardness of the latter within its context in *A7a1* and *DS09*, and the early date of *HE* (462 CE), make this all the more plausible.¹⁸⁹ If so, the *HE* Syriac translation of this passage could have been connected (somehow) to *Theoph* and the 'Maccabean' tradition as an influence/source (maybe used by *A7a1*).

The most noticeable distinction between 'Maccabean' and 'Eusebian' traditions in this passage has to do with the narrative's sensory language: unlike *A7a1* and *DS09*, *HE* and *CZ* retain the role of smell in the story, the clause ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝ ܫܥܬܡܝܬܐ ܕܝ ܫܥܬܡܝܬܐ being close to the Greek's παρήσαν καὶ τῆς ἀθεμίτου κνίσσης σπάρσαντες, albeit lacking the 'smelling' verb per se. The 'Eusebian' texts, then, are like the Greek in attributing three verbs to the rebels, but they are not identical to it; the verbiage of the Greek and both Syriac traditions is distinct in the first part of the passage: the Greek has 'came/smelled/threatened (to kill),' the 'Maccabean' Syriac texts 'came/found (Maria)/drew (swords)/got angry (enough to

between the semantic ranges regarding 'anger/be angry' and 'threat/threaten' in these ancient lexica respectively.

¹⁸⁹ We dare say that if this part of the passage existed in *Theoph*, we might well have found this older, better form.

kill),’ and the ‘Eusebian’ Syriac texts ‘came/drew (swords)/threatened (to kill).’

The references to drawing swords (ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐܠܗܡ ܕܥܝܢܐ | ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐܠܗܡ ܕܥܝܢܐ) are a rather odd departure from the Greek. It is striking that it is shared between the disparate ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ translations. The change appears to derive from a common understanding of the Greek verb *σπάω*, “to draw” as a reference to weapons. The verb can—indeed, commonly does—have this sense, especially in archaic and Homeric Greek (e.g., *Od.* 22.74; *Il.* 16.473). In Josephus, it seems more to refer to drawing a breath, in this case, “breathing in the lawless smell.” Josephus’ use is less common, and it is no wonder if the initial Syriac translation took it as a reference to drawing swords; indeed, this action fits well in the context, followed by the rebels’ threats (ܠܫܡܪ) against her life. What seems probable, then, given the discussion about it, is that the Syriac *HE* translation read *σπάω* as referring to sword-drawing, thus establishing a translation that was picked up by *A7a1*, i.e., the ‘Maccabean’ texts, later on.

The slight difference between the singular (ܐܬܝܬܐܠܗܡ) and plural (ܐܬܝܬܐܠܗܡ) between *HE* and *CZ* seems to be due to idiosyncrasies of *CZ*. Here and in 6.211 *CZ* occasionally uses singular forms of the verb when referring to actions of the revolutionaries. This could be an issue of aural reception, since there is no difference in pronunciation between the third singular and the third plural.

At the end of this passage, the ‘Maccabean’ texts again show their affinity for stacking up verbs over and above what the Greek recommends. In the latter, after stating (εἰποῦσα) what she had done, Maria simply “shows” or “reveals” (διεκάλυψεν) her handiwork. In *A7a1* and *DS09*, after speaking (ܕܝܬܝܬܐܠܗܡ), Maria “reveals” (ܕܠܬܝܬܐܠܗܡ) and “shows” (ܕܠܬܝܬܐܠܗܡ) and “holds out” (ܕܠܬܝܬܐܠܗܡ) the remains of her son. Granted that the first two of these verbs work as a kind of complementary unit and also appear in *HE*

Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.29 (Wright and McLean p. 128)	
And immediately, trembling seized them and they became frantic and were transfixed at the sight. Then she said: “This is my beloved son, and the deed is mine.	ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ

The <i>Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 112 (fol. 31r; Harrak p. 181)	
And immediately, trembling seized them and they became frantic and were transfixed at the sight. But she said: “This is my beloved son and the deed is mine.	ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ

Textual Notes

As in the previous passage, *HE* and *CZ* translate εὐθέως with ܐܬܝܬܝܢ/ܡܝܬܝܢ, yet here *A7a1* and *DS09* elect not to translate the adverb. All four texts translate the Greek φρίκη (“shuddering,” “shivering”) with the equivalent ܐܬܝܬܝܢ (“terror,” “trembling”).¹⁹⁰ From here, they diverge significantly. The ‘Eusebian’ texts have the brigands becoming “frantic” (ܐܬܝܬܝܢ)—probably reflecting φρενῶν ἔκστασις in the Greek rather than παρέκστασις¹⁹¹—and then provide a precise equivalent for “froze at the sight” (παρὰ τὴν ὄψιν ἐπεπήγεσαν) with “transfixed at the sight” (ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ). By contrast, the ‘Maccabean’ texts remain structurally closer to the Greek than *HE* and *CZ* in that they give a second abstract noun as part of

¹⁹⁰ See Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 114; compare *LSJ* ad loc.

¹⁹¹ See Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 540, rendering παρέκστασις but recording παρέκτασις for P and φρενῶν ἔκστασις for “MLVRCEusebChrysSyr.”

what is responsible for arresting the brigands in the narrative: namely, ܠܚܝܕܐ ܠܕܠܝܬܐ, which almost definitely translates φρενῶν ἔκστασις rather than παρέκστασις given the genitival construction. Only *A7a1* and *DS09* have, like the Greek, two things that “seize” (ܠܚܝܕܐ = αἰρέω) the brigands. But this is combined with the seemingly random replacement of “they clapped their hands over [or ‘beat’] their faces” (ܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ). Here the translator appears to have mistaken the Greek root of πήγνυμι/ἐπιπήγνυμι for πλήγνυμι (ἐκπλήγνυμι/ ἐκπλάσσω), and then further taken ὄψις as “face.” Indeed, the context is such that striking one’s face would not be unwarranted. Nevertheless, the “Eusebian” texts seem to have read the verb correctly and interpreted Josephus’ sense more accurately. Both traditions here stay closer to the Greek in some ways and depart further from it in others.

The rest of the sequence is essentially the same in all four texts. All four texts likewise opt to use ܠܚܝܕܐ (“beloved”) to render γνήσιον (“genuine, legitimate, lawful”);¹⁹² did they talk themselves into seeing τέκνον ἀγαπητόν in the Greek (phrasing already famous, perhaps, in the Greek imagination of such contexts)?¹⁹³ Or is this simply how they would always translate γνήσιος? Or might this be a subtle shift, made easily and naturally upon the presumption of the translator’s artistic license? In any case, the most notable difference between Syriac translations in the latter part of this passage comes in *DS09*, which diverges from all other texts to refer to Maria’s act as “the work of (my) hands” (ܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܕܝܐ). On the one hand, both *A7a1* and *DS09* avoid the pleonasm used in *HE* and *CZ* (ܠܝܬܐ... ܝܕܝܐ), which itself accounts for the double use of the

¹⁹² Thanks to Lucas Van Rompay (written communication, January 3, 2024) for reminding us of both the minor oddity and the consistency of this translation across the Syriac traditions, an important point.

¹⁹³ Cf. Homer, *Od.* 5.18 (νῦν αὖ παῖδ' ἀγαπητόν ἀποκτείνει ...). Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 540 records no variant for the adjective.

adjectival pronoun (ἐμόν). On the other hand, *DSog* attempts to account for the second Greek pronoun, but possibly with an idiomatic sense of “alone.”¹⁹⁴ If this is the case, then *DSog* elaborates on *A7a1* to account for the second ἐμόν in Greek, establishing its own idiosyncrasy as a text within a developing tradition.

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.211	
Eat, for even I have eaten. Do not be either softer than a woman or more compassionate than a mother, but if you are pious and turn away from my sacrifice, I have eaten for you—now let the rest remain for me.”	φάγετε καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ βέβρωκα μὴ γένησθε μήτε μαλακώτεροι γυναικὸς μήτε συμπαθέστεροι μητρός· εἰ δ' ὑμεῖς εὐσεβεῖς καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀποστρέφεσθε θυσίαν ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμῖν βέβρωκα καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν δὲ ἐμοὶ μεινάτω.»

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 2)	
Eat, because I also have eaten. Do not be softer than a woman or more compassionate than a mother. But if you are indeed merciful then you will turn away your faces from my sacrifice. I set (it) before you, and as you have refused it, let the rest of it be for me.”	כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא כאן אכא דאף אלחא

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15v)

¹⁹⁴ Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, 31–32. It is possible that the translator here intends a rare use of אֶחָד (ἑἷς) for “one’s own.”

The next phrase is, remarkably, nearly identical in the two translations. The use of ܠܐܬܐ for γίνομαι is typical, but it is more interesting that both translations conjure the same terms for the comparatives “softer than a woman” (ܠܥܕܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ) and “more compassionate than a mother” (ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ).¹⁹⁷ The verb ܠܐܬܐ can refer to being “soft” and is occasionally used to translate μαλακιάω and its variants.¹⁹⁸ The primary difference is the alternative forms of the broader copulative negative comparison—“not *this*...and not *that*.”¹⁹⁹ The ‘Maccabean’ texts lack a second negative particle, whereas the ‘Eusebian’ texts provide more emphasis by repeating it.²⁰⁰ Moreover, the ‘Eusebian’ texts, by their repetition, capture the precision of the Greek μήτε...μήτε.

¹⁹⁷ One might reasonably expect to find the Syriac adjectives here mirroring those found in Peshitta Deut 28:56, the passage in Deut 28:53–57 being often understood as the prophetic, scriptural inspiration of Josephus’ original penning of this story. In Deut 28:56–57 we find: “The woman who is tender (ܡܪܝܬܐ) among you, and so delicate (ܡܪܝܬܐ) that she would not attempt to place the soul of her foot upon the ground because of her delicateness and tenderness (ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ), will become mean toward her husband, her son and her daughter, and toward the afterbirth that issues from between her legs, and toward the children she will bear; for she will eat them for lack of everything, in the siege and grief with which your enemy shall distress you in all your towns.” C. McCarthy, trans., *The Syriac Peshitta Bible with English Translation: Deuteronomy* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013), 159–60. None of the Syriac Josephus traditions borrows these terms for “delicate” or “tender” here.

¹⁹⁸ E.g., Gregory of Nazianzus, *De macc.* 15.4. See Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 3960.

¹⁹⁹ On the usage of the Syriac copula as it developed over the course of the first millennium (in conversation with Greek uses of ἐστίν), see A. M. Butts, *Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in its Greco-Roman Context*, Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 11 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 153–73.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, §333.

The two translations disagree on how to render εὐσεβής (“pious”). The ‘Maccabean’ texts render it as “merciful” (ܡܚܨܝܐ), while the ‘Eusebian’ texts prefer “just” (ܡܚܕܝܐ). The latter term is specifically listed in the present context by Payne Smith in the *Thesaurus Syriacus*.²⁰¹ It is often used in reference to just or pious people in Scripture (e.g., of Simeon in Luke 2:25). It thus serves as an appropriate lexeme in this context, appealing to the religious sensibilities of the revolutionaries. The former term (ܡܚܨܝܐ) is related to an Akkadian root that also has connotations with the divine.²⁰² It is used in the Peshitta of Exod 34:6 in reference to God’s mercy—though in this case it is translating the Greek ἐλέω. The ‘Eusebian’ translation is more intuitive of the Greek sense, while the ‘Maccabean’ texts seem, once again, to heighten the emotion: Maria admits her own lack of mercy with her deed and challenges the revolutionaries to scavenge whatever is left of theirs and leave her alone.

There is also disagreement on how the translators dealt with the Greek ἀποστρέφω. In this case, it seems the ‘Maccabean’ translation is more lexically straightforward with its use of the Aphel of ܠܦܝܢ (“turn, return”). By contrast, the ‘Eusebian’ texts engage in their own emotionalizing rhetoric with Maria’s plea that they “excuse” or “pardon” her actions, given the circumstances. The Ethpe’el of ܠܡܚܕܝܐ can be used in the sense of pardoning or excusing someone from military service,²⁰³ or simply to excuse oneself from a situation.²⁰⁴ (Note that the Greek word can carry the sense of dissuasion,²⁰⁵ but this is a far rarer and nuanced usage.) While the translation of “turn away”

²⁰¹ Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1662.

²⁰² Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, 1457.

²⁰³ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 554.

²⁰⁴ Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon*, 1497.

²⁰⁵ *LSJ*, 220. Mary’s statement can be read as dissuasive in a way.

in *A7a1/DS09* may be a simpler treatment of ἀποστρέφω's most commonly understood meaning, *HE* and *CZ* may also be read as proffering a legitimate translation of that term.

The 'Eusebian' sense of repudiation or conviction or exposure helps explain the final clause, where Maria submits to the depredation of her deed and offers the revolutionaries the chance to forego such a finale for themselves. She has "already eaten" (ܐܠܚܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), and the rest can be left to her as well (ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ). This captures the Greek sense of ὑμῖν βέβρωκα ("I have eaten for you")²⁰⁶ in that Maria has consigned herself to the act and seems, in a way, to be saving the revolutionaries from the same fate. Vicarious cannibalism.

The 'Maccabean' tradition, with its already heightened emotion, has Maria offer the rest to her oppressors (ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), but since they reject it (ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), they should just leave her be (ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ). It is hard to determine why the translators include "I have set (it) before you" (ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ). Perhaps this was a misunderstanding of the root-change that occurs in the fourth principal part of ἐσθίω.²⁰⁷ Or perhaps *A7a1* and *DS09* are here employing narrative expansion, aligning (however consciously) with other traditions that have Maria in this scene talk about setting out the remains of her son as she would prepare a table: in *DEH* (the late-4th century Latin adaptation of Josephus' Greek *BJ*), Maria's extended speech includes her saying "Sit quickly, I'll set the table, you have only to admire my service" (*Considite ocius, mensam adponam, mirari habetis ministerium meum*), and after that *SY* (the early-tenth century Hebrew account of Second Temple history), based on the narrative of *DEH*, has Maria

²⁰⁶ Note that ms L omits ὑμῖν, along with the Latin, according to Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 540 (Chrysostom has ἡμισυ—Maria fairly claims to have eaten half).

²⁰⁷ Namely: ἐσθίω, ἔδομαι/φάγομαι, ἔφαγον, ἐδῆδοκα, the root of the perfect looking somewhat like a form of δίδωμι, δώσω, ἔδωκα, δέδωκα, "to give".

similarly say: “Behold, I have kept your portion! Sit now and I will set the table before you” (הנה חלקכם שמרתי. שבו נא ואערכה) (לפניכם את השולחן).²⁰⁸ Whether the author of *A7a1* or *DSog* knew any such versions of this story is unlikely, and in any case impossible to demonstrate. What these comparanda show is that the ‘Maccabean’ texts are not alone in having (arguably) enhanced the scene’s tragic pathos by placing the directives of a hostess in Maria’s mouth. Maria’s statement that she has set out her oppressors’ meal for them pulls the narrative toward the absurd, adding a troubling, quasi-comic edge to Maria’s speech reminiscent of the *Thyestes* and *Medea* myths.²⁰⁹

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.212	
After this, they left trembling, cowards in this one thing, and barely leaving this food to the mother. And immediately the whole city was filled with defilement, and each person, holding the calamity before his eyes, shuddered as if he had dared [to do] it.	μετὰ ταῦθ' οἱ μὲν τρέμοντες ἐξήεσαν πρὸς ἓν τοῦτο δειλοὶ καὶ μόλις ταύτης τῆς τροφῆς τῇ μητρὶ παραχωρήσαντες ἀνεπλήσθη δ' εὐθέως ὅλη τοῦ μύσους ἡ πόλις καὶ πρὸ ὁμμάτων ἕκαστος τὸ πάθος λαμβάνων ὥσπερ αὐτῷ τολμηθὲν ἔφριττε.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 2)	
After these things they left, shaken and trembling. And	.אמא רחל ויהודה ויהודה ויהודה אמא רחל ויהודה ויהודה ויהודה

²⁰⁸ Bay, “The ‘Maria Story’ in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew,” 53.
²⁰⁹ See here generally Bay, “The ‘Maria Story’ in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew,” 40–41 with notes 95–96 (but the correlations between the Maria Story and these Greco-Roman stories has been often noticed and mentioned), and Chapman, “Spectacle and Theater” for the tragic aspects of Josephus’ Greek version.

(“trembling, shuttering”). It may be that the former is meant to record the more purely physical aspect of *τρέμω*, the latter a combination of physical shaking and psychological fear.²¹¹ *HE* and *CZ* partially agree with the ‘Maccabean’ use of the verb *אי* in their translations of *τρέμοντες*, but they opt for the adjective instead (*ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ*). These ‘Eusebian’ texts pair this with another adjective *ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ* (*ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ*),²¹² the term conveying the most purely psychological valence of “fear” or “dread” among all three Syriac verbs used to convey *τρέμοντες* in this passage.²¹³ Though they use different verbs to do it, all four Syriac texts agree that the Greek *τρέμοντες* requires a doublet of Syriac participles to do the necessary translational work.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Greek *τρέμω* and Syriac *אי* are themselves, in fact, effectively the same term. Compare the semantic ranges and combinations of shaking/shuddering + fear in *LSJ* ad loc. and Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 552.

²¹² In so doing, *HE* and *CZ* pair the same two verbs that are paired in Peshitta Mark 5:33 to describe the woman with the twelve-year hemorrhage who fell before Jesus and confessed to having touched his garment “while afraid and trembling” (*ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ*). This is so close to the ‘Eusebian’ traditions’ *ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ* in lexicon, word-order, and structure that one wonders whether the Gospel language has impacted the translators’ wording here. On doubling in general, see footnote 214 just below. Compare 1 Cor 2:3, where Paul describes himself as having been with the Corinthians *ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ* (cf. 2 Cor 7:15, where the Corinthians are said to have received Titus *ܐܝܬܝܬܝܐ*). Surely earlier Syriac commonplace phrases like these will have influenced at some level how the Syriac translators of the Maria Story chose their verbiage.

²¹³ Even “reverence” or “awe;” see Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 88.

²¹⁴ The doubling of verbs which stand in synthetic parallelism may reasonably be identified as a component of the poetics of Semitic syntax (though not absent from other languages or language families), and such a phenomenon can be easily identified in the Hebrew Bible and also in the New Testament, whose authors, while not writing in Semitic languages, drew upon backgrounds of Semitic linguistic assumptions (on Semitic doubling in the Gospels, here in reference to nouns, see R. D. Aus, *Feeding*

None of the Syriac texts record the Greek's πρὸς ἐν τούτῳ δειλοῖ, which identifies the brigands as “cowards” in this instance only. While one manuscript (C) reads δηλοῖ in the Greek, perhaps the Syriac translators simply saw the inclusion of this detail as superfluous.

All four traditions add the temporal ܠܐ to the above participle pairs, and all four traditions once again agree in the verbiage of the following clause, namely that the brigands left or abandoned (ܠܬܠܝܥ) Maria's ‘food’ “with difficulty” (ܠܬܠܝܥ).²¹⁵ What the traditions disagree on is exactly what the brigands left and to whom they left it. While both ‘Maccabean’ texts aver that the brigands left aside ܠܬܠܝܥܬܐ (“food, victuals, provisions”), both ‘Eusebian’ texts describe what was left aside as ܠܬܠܝܥܬܐ (“nourishment, food, provisions”).²¹⁶ While these terms appear to be effective synonyms, and while both are accompanied by the demonstrative ܠܐܝܬܐ, the usage of the terms in the Syriac Gospels and their deployment in earlier portions of the Maria

the Five Thousand: Studies in the Judaic Background of Mark 6:30–44 par. and John 6:1–15, Studies in Judaism [Lanham, MA: University Press of America, 2010], 74–79). Consider, for example, the superfluous doubling present in phrases like “weeping and wailing” as it appears in Jer 9:10 and Mark 5:38 (cf. Isa 15:3; 22:12). Such doubling is also prominent in poetic and/or wisdom traditions: in Psa 18:7, for example, one reads that “the earth shook and quaked” and that “the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken.” The verb ܬܠܝܥ is used in both of these phrases; W. E. Barnes, ed., *The Peshitta Psalter According to the West Syrian Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 23. This and the collocation “fear and trembling” (Mark 5:33; 1 Cor 2:3; 2 Cor 7:15; Eph 6:5 [ܠܬܠܝܥܬܐ ܠܬܠܝܥܬܐ]; Phil 2:12 [ܠܬܠܝܥܬܐ ܠܬܠܝܥܬܐ]; Heb 12:21 [ܠܬܠܝܥܬܐ ܠܬܠܝܥܬܐ]; cf. Acts 16:29) are related to the Syriac phrasing at hand and testify to this particular phenomenon—shaking and/or fearing—being one that invited verbal doubling in the Semitic syntactical imagination.

²¹⁵ Here once again CZ has the singular verb (ܬܠܝܥ), in line with this odd grammatical habit we already noted above.

²¹⁶ The definitions given in parentheses here correspond to those given in Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Lexicon*, 246 and 374 respectively.

Story suggest that shades of divergent meaning may underlay their ambivalent usage in this passage.²¹⁷

As to whom Maria's "food" is left as the brigands depart, here also differences emerge. In fact, only *A7a1* of all four Syriac traditions here follows the Greek's τῇ μητρὶ, such that the boy's remains are said to be left "to the mother [of the boy]" (ܡܬܪܐ). Whether via haplography or intentionally, *DS09* leaves out any indirect object, such that the edible remains are just 'left.' *HE* and *CZ*, for their part, record the food as having been left to a/the "woman" (ܚܝܬܐ), and this is accompanied by the typical duplicating Syriac preposition + pronominal suffix phrase denoting the indirect object ܐܠ (it) and by the prepositional demonstrative phrase ܡܠ ("to that [person]"); thus, ܚܝܬܐ ܡܠ ܐܠ = "to it, to that woman." Opting for "woman" in place of "mother" and stressing that identification could be read as playing down Maria's maternal role, the position that is in part responsible for the unthinkable nature of her act. Whether or not this was the translator's intention, opting for ܚܝܬܐ marks a striking departure from the Greek.

In the following sentence, *HE/CZ* stay closer to the Greek in certain ways, but all four Syriac texts depart from their source. First, *HE/CZ* alone includes ܚܝܬܐ for δ' εὐθέως, whereas *A7a1/DS09* forgets the adverb totally. More significantly, none of the Syriac texts sticks strictly to the Greek when reporting how word of Maria's deed spread through the city: whereas *BJ*

²¹⁷ The term ܚܝܬܐ appears as a totally mundane term for "food" at several points in Jesus' teaching recorded in Matt 6:25 and 10:10. The term ܚܝܬܐ, on the other hand, emerges in less straightforward teachings in the Gospel of John, first in 4:32 where Jesus tells his disciples that "I have food to eat (ܚܝܬܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܝ) that you do not know about" and then in 6:55 where Jesus states that "my body really is food" (ܚܝܬܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܝ, ܚܝܬܐ ܚܝܬܐ). These at first mysterious and then quasi-cannibalistic uses in John make one wonder what distinctive connotations these terms might have had for ancient Syriac writers and readers.

states that the whole city was full of “uncleanness” or “(an) abomination” or “defilement” (τοῦ μύσους), the ‘Maccabean’ texts record that the whole city was full of “this tale” (ܐܬܬܐܠܡܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ), ²¹⁸ i.e. the tale of Maria’s deed—no mention of uncleanness at all. The ‘Maccabean’ texts hereby omit a key theme of the Greek tale.²¹⁹ The ‘Eusebian’ texts, on the other hand, describe the whole city as having been filled with “this abominable news” (ܐܬܬܐܠܡܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ)—the participle ܐܬܬܐܠܡܢܐ, from ܐܠܡܢ, is indeed close to the Greek μύσος,²²⁰ but *HE* and *CZ* still report “news” (ܐܬܬܐܠܡܢܐ) as having filled Jerusalem, not uncleanness itself as in *BJ*.²²¹ Certainly, both Syriac traditions pick up the sense of the Greek correctly—it was the spread of the report of Maria’s doings that ‘contaminated’ the city in the Greek-writing mind of Josephus originally²²²—but

²¹⁸ For ܐܬܬܐܠܡܢܐ, Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 567 has “a) talk, talking, discourse; chatter. b) a tale, story, fable. c) the plot of a tragedy.” This last entry is interesting given the tragic nature, both formal and informal, of Josephus’ Maria Story. Cf. 1 Cor 15:33 for a) and 2 Tim 4:4 for b) for illustrations of Payne Smith’s definitions; Jennings, *Lexicon*, 219.

²¹⁹ S. Mason, “Pollution and Purification in Josephus’s *Judean War*,” in *Purity, Holiness, and Identity in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Memory of Susan Haber*, ed. C.S. Ehrlich, A. Runesson, and E. Schuller, WUNT 305 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 197–203.

²²⁰ See Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 462; Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2178. Cf. the noun ܐܬܬܐܠܡܢܐ in the Crawford MS of Rev 21:27 (Jennings, *Lexicon*, 127), also describing the city of Jerusalem (albeit the New Jerusalem).

²²¹ On the concept of pollution as central to the Maria Story, see Mason, “Pollution and Purification,” 181–207, esp. 197–203, which is one of the best brief treatments of the Maria Story in all of scholarship.

²²² Just after this, in *BJ* 6.217, Titus vows to bury (καλύψειν, i.e. eradicate) such an “abomination of infant-cannibalism” (τὸ τῆς τεκνοφαγίας μύσος) within the city. Thanks to David Levenson of reminding us of this reverberation of the Maria Story within Titus’ subsequent reaction. Note that Josephus generally will discuss heinous crimes in terms of μύσος (pollution) and

the Syriac writers were not willing to follow their Greek source fully into such a metaphor.

All of the Syriac texts use the same sentence structure to record how all of Jerusalem's inhabitants were "setting" the story of Maria's deed "before their eyes" (ܡܕܢܗ ܡܡܢ ܥܝܢܗܘܢ). The agreement is notable. Yet the 'Maccabean' and 'Eusebian' traditions respectively employ different terms to refer to what the Greek version calls τὸ πάθος. *A7a1* and *DS09* use ܡܕܢܗ, which can mean "pain, suffering" but also "disease, sickness" or "sadness, sorrow, morning," and can even evoke "passion, desire, ambition, affection"—in other words, a clear Syriac equivalent of πάθος.²²³ *HE* and *CZ* instead use ܡܕܢܗܐ, a term more semantically constrained to "suffering" or "pain," if often pain caused by sickness or disease.²²⁴ Were one forced to choose which word choice is better in the Syriac here, one would have to opt for the ܡܕܢܗ of the 'Maccabean' texts.

In the final sentence, *A7a1* and *DS09* again draw upon the verb ܬܪܝܠ to describe how Jerusalem's citizens were each trembling (or even "staggering, tottering") as if responsible for Maria's crime. However, a few grammatical ambiguities (e.g., participle vs. perfect verb) in *DS09* signal an incidental divergence. While *A7a1* ends with ܡܕܢܗ ܬܪܝܠ ("[and each person] was trembling"), *DS09* ends with ܡܕܢܗ ܬܪܝܠ ("[and each person] trembled").²²⁵

contamination, especially within the Herodian household dramas: *BJ* 1.81, 445, 530, 638; *AJ* 13.314.

²²³ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 160.

²²⁴ Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 201.

²²⁵ We owe our thanks to Lucas Van Rompay (written communication, January 3, 2024) here for his paleographical guidance in determining whether there was a final , at the end of ܬܪܝܠ and a final ܬ rather than final ܬ in ܬܪܝܠ.

Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> 6.213	
There was a zeal for death among those who were starving and a blessing for those who had gone first [i.e. died] before hearing and beholding such evils.	σπουδὴ δὲ τῶν λιμνωττόντων ἐπὶ τὸν θάνατον ἦν καὶ μακαρισμὸς τῶν φθασάντων πρὶν ἀκοῦσαι καὶ θεάσασθαι κακὰ τηλικαῦτα.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 2)	
And there was among them a great zeal to die. And they granted a blessing to those who had died beforehand, before they had heard of affairs such as these.	ܐܡܠ ܕܝܡܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܡܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15v)	
And there was among them a great zeal to die. And they granted a blessing to those who had died beforehand, before they had heard of affairs such as these.	ܐܡܠ ܕܝܡܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܡܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ

Eusebius, <i>Theophania</i> N/A	
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Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 3.6.31 (Wright and McLean p. 128)	
And there was an eagerness on the part of those tormented by this famine to die, and a blessing was granted to those who had	ܐܡܠ ܕܝܡܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܡܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܠܝܬܐ

died before they had heard and seen such evils as these.	
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The <i>Chronicle of Zuqnān</i> 112–113 (fol. 31r; Harrak p. 181)	
And there was an eagerness on the part of those tormented by this famine to die, and a blessing was granted to those who had died before they had heard and seen such evils as these.	ܘܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ

Textual Notes

In the first sentence, *A7a1* and *DSog* exaggerate the claim made in the Greek that there was “zeal” (σπουδή) for death among the starving in Jerusalem by adding the adjective ܡܪܬܐ (“great, many, much”) to the Syriac term ܡܪܬܐ.²²⁶ Yet it is only the ‘Maccabean’ texts that follow, to a degree, the Greek’s structure of noun + copula + qualifying prepositional phrase + subjective genitive (though not in that order),²²⁷ even if the Syriac does not mention “those who were starving,” but speaks only to what was occurring “among,” “in,” or “to” “them” (ܐܡܠܐ), i.e. every person in Jerusalem, mentioned in the preceding sentence. This structuring stands in distinction to the in some ways more natural beginning of *HE* and *CZ*, where we find subject (noun + genitive phrase) + copula + infinitive. *HE/CZ*

²²⁶ So Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon* (“care, diligence, zeal”). Gauging by Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 41, the Syriac ܡܪܬܐ focuses more on intent (“care, forethought, diligence”) than on the connotations of emotional drive and/or haste often—though not always—conveyed by the Greek term σπουδή: *LSJ* ad loc.

²²⁷ The Syriac replaces the Greek’s prepositional phrase ἐπὶ τὸν θάνατον with the infinitive ܡܪܬܐ, which the Greek could just as easily have done as well.

not only include a parallel to the Greek's subjective genitive, τῶν λιμωπτόντων, but expand on it: we no longer find “those who were starving” but now “those being tormented by famine” (ܐܠܗܝܡ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ).²²⁸

All of the Syriac traditions agree to translate μακαρισμός with ܡܚܠܝܬܐ, and the two tradition pairs are identical in their descriptions of those to whom the blessing applied. Yet *A7a1* and *DS09* record that “they gave” (ܐܬܬܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ) a blessing, namely the surviving inhabitants of Jerusalem, to the already-deceased; *HE* and *CZ* have instead that a blessing “was given” (ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܐܬܬܝܢ). Neither, of course, corresponds with the laconic Greek, where μακαρισμός is controlled purely by the copula preceding the conjunction. The meanings of all three formulations are at the same time virtually identical and subtly distinct.²²⁹

A notable absence in *A7a1/DS09* comes at the end of this section, where only ἀκούσαι of the infinitive set ἀκούσαι καὶ θεάσασθαι is repeated in the Syriac (ܡܚܠܝܬܐ). The ‘Maccabean’ traditions only mention the *hearing* of deeds like Maria’s (which the prematurely deceased did not do). *HE* and *CZ* are faithful to the Greek in mentioning hearing and seeing (ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ).

²²⁸ The participle here is reminiscent of the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich man from Luke 16 as related in the Syriac New Testament. Three times in Luke 16:23, 24, 25 the rich man is said to have been “tormented” (ܡܚܠܝܬܐ) in his fiery postmortem fate. Is it possible that the translator of *HE* plays upon this (possibly well-known) association of hell with torment (ܡܚܠܝܬܐ) to accentuate the suffering being experienced in Jerusalem at this point in the story? (For some reason Jennings, *Lexicon*, 227 has “anguished” for Luke 16:23–25, yet “was tormented” for the general Ethpa’al of ܡܚܠܝܬܐ.)

²²⁹ Interestingly, a similar situation appears in the Latin traditions that follow *BJ*: *LBJ* records that those who died before hearing about and seeing Maria’s deed “were called blessed” (*beati appellebantur*), whereas the parallel in *LHE* 3.6.28—again, relying on the same Greek text—describes the people in Jerusalem as actively “calling blessed” (*beatos dicentes*) those who so died.

Finally, *A7a1* and *DS09* refer to the news of Maria's deed as just that, "news" or "affairs" (ܐܬܬܐܪܐ), thereby omitting the Greek's substantive adjective *κακά*. The 'Eusebian' traditions retain this important qualifier with ܐܬܬܐܪܐ ܕܥܠܐ ("evils"). On two counts, then, in the final lines of the Maria Story as we have recorded it here, the texts of *HE* and *CZ* align with the Greek where the 'Maccabean' texts do not.

COMMENTARY

In general, the above translation profiles of the various manuscripts yield a few noticeable patterns. From the very first section the translations fall into two distinguishable trajectories, which we have called the 'Eusebian' and the 'Maccabean.' The Eusebian trajectory (= *HE* + *CZ*) generally aims at a meticulous and literal translation of the Greek *Vorlage*. By contrast, the Maccabean trajectory (= *A7a1* + *DS09*) is a freer, looser rendering of the Greek, which is sometimes incomprehensible enough to have invited criticism by Theodor Nöldeke and, more viciously, by A. P. Hayman.²³⁰ (Indeed, the entire early translation tradition represented *A7a1/DS09* + *Theoph* has been found wanting.)²³¹ The freer, looser style

²³⁰ T. Nöldeke, "Review of Kottek," 882: "Der syrische Text ist eben die ganz flüchtige und fehlerhafte Arbeit eines Mannes, dessen griechische Kenntnisse auffallend mangelhaft waren und der sich mit Rathen half, wo diese versagten." Hayman, *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite*, 35: "There can indeed be little doubt that the Syriac is derived from a Greek original, and that it is a very bad translation. Frequently it is almost incomprehensible as Syriac, and can only be explained by reference to the Greek text."

²³¹ Kottek and Nöldeke critiqued the translation in *A7a1*, and even Van Rompay admits (in a more nuanced and understanding manner) that the scribes must have found Josephus' Greek difficult (cf. Van Rompay, "Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* in Syriac," 429–30). Of *Theoph*, not many kind words have been said after Lee's edition. Gressmann, *Eusebius Werke*: 3. Band, 2., xxiv remarked that, when reading *Theoph* in Syriac, "Man muß

exhibited by *A7a1/DS09* is generally thought to correspond to an early period of Syriac translating (pre-seventh century), which was often characterized, in Sebastian Brock's words, as "free ... essentially reader-oriented, and ... either expository or tendential in character."²³² However, Brock notes that translations of Eusebius were among the "restrained expository translations" of this early period.²³³ We have seen above that the 'Maccabean' traditions do indeed tend to be "expository and tendential," thus corresponding to what we should expect from an early translation per Brock's argument, and we have now established that the translation represented in the 'Maccabean' texts dates to the fourth century. We might also note, per Brock's emendation, that *Theoph* appears to be rather "restrained" expositoryly, in fact correcting the 'Maccabean' text frequently in greater conformity to the Greek.

David Taylor has classified translation methods based on analysis of the unit of translation. In some early translations from Greek (e.g., the third-century Old Syriac Gospels), the base unit of translation appears to have been the individual sentence or phrase, whereas for slightly later texts (e.g., fourth-century translations of Basil of Caesarea), the base unit of translation can be as large as the paragraph.²³⁴ Brock surmises that translators may have employed different techniques depending on the material being translated. In other words, translators may have been freer or stricter in concentrating on smaller or larger units of translation based on whose work they

mehr das griechische Lexicon gebrauchen als das syrische, mehr kombinieren als konstruieren, mehr raten als übersetzen."

²³² Brock, "History of Syriac Translation Technique," 10.

²³³ Brock, "History of Syriac Translation Technique," 11.

²³⁴ D. G. K. Taylor, "Early translations in the ancient Orient: From Greek into Syriac," in *2. Teilband: Ein internationales Handbuch zur Übersetzungsforschung*, ed. H. Kittel, A.P. Frank, and N. Greiner (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 1190–93.

were translating.²³⁵ This is an important consideration for our analysis, since the Maria Story in *HE* and *Theoph* were both included in Eusebius of Caesarea's larger works. The translators of *Theoph* and *HE* were consciously and intentionally translating *Eusebius*,²³⁶ even as they knew that the Maria Story was a passage quoted from Josephus. But this does not mean that the *Theoph* and *HE* translations should be assumed to be similar.²³⁷ It may be worth asking, though, how the idea of translating Eusebius (as opposed to Josephus, or "5 Maccabees") would have influenced the translator of *Theoph* (whose author definitely knew a broader Syriac *BJ* [6] text), or of *HE*. Brock distinguishes between different attitudes a translator could adopt: on the one hand, one might assume a "self-effacing, referential attitude toward his source text," which is likely to produce a "mirror translation, where every detail of the original is, as far as possible, reproduced in the

²³⁵ Brock, "History of Syriac Translation Technique," 10–11.

²³⁶ On Eusebius in Syriac translation see J. P. Lyon, *Syriac Gospel Translations: A Comparison of the Language and Translation Method Used in the Old Syriac, the Diatessaron and the Peshitto*, CSCO 548, subs. 88 (Leuven: Peeters, 1994). On these trajectories more broadly, see the recent discussion by D. King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria: A Study in Translation Technique*, CSCO 626, subs. 123 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 11–26.

²³⁷ Since other texts in the 411 manuscript (where we find *Theoph*) actually have a more mirror-oriented style consistent with what we see in *HE*, it may be that the view of Eusebius held by the translators of Syriac *HE* versus *Theoph* was rather different. P.-H. Poirier and C. Sensal, "Du grec au syriaque: Quelques réflexions sur la version syriaque de *Contra Manichaeos* de Titus de Bostra," in *V Symposium Syriacum 1988*, ed. R. Lavenant, OCA 236 (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1990), 307–19 show that Titus of Bostra's text is quite a faithful adaptation of the Greek *Vorlage*, so it may not be a matter of wider translation technique, but more due to the attitudes toward particular authors/texts being translated. On the other hand, Poirier and Sensal admit that it is unclear if the 411 manuscript is the product of only one scribe or multiple (318–19).

translation.”²³⁸ On the other hand, a translator might have seen his role as mediator between languages, responsible for the efficient transfer of information. In this case, he would “aim at a more expository type of translation, essentially reader-oriented, where he will try to involve the reader emotionally by employing appropriate cultural equivalents.”²³⁹

Before closing, here we summarize how the studied sections bear out the inclination of the ‘Maccabean’ texts to dramatize and operate independently of the Greek and of the ‘Eusebian’ texts to follow their Greek source’s language. When, in 6.195, the texts of *A7a1*/*DS09* speak of end-of-life with ornate terminology and leave the thieves out of the narrative, the texts’ translators seem to be aiming at a type of literary product whose core values are not fully captured by strict word-for-word or phrase-for-phrase comparison to the Greek. More dramatic still is the unique addition that *A7a1* and *DS09* make to 6.197 to the effect that the starving people in Jerusalem ransomed all they had to avoid starvation. Many more such examples could be noted.²⁴⁰ In the last section studied above, 6.213, *A7a1*, and *DS09* again dramatize the Greek by adding the adjective ܠܗܝܠܐ (“great, many, much”) to describe the zeal or longing for death experienced by Jerusalem’s inhabitants upon learning of Maria’s deed. When the ‘Maccabean’ texts

²³⁸ Brock, “History of Syriac Translation Technique,” 12.

²³⁹ Brock, “History of Syriac Translation Technique,” 12.

²⁴⁰ In 6.198, the ‘Maccabean’ translations contain a rendering that is much less faithful to the Greek, an imprecision which might be made up for in clarity and narrative force. When *A7a1* and *DS09* fail to follow the Greek’s odd phraseology in the first sentence, or when they neglect to specify the amount for which the newfound foodstuffs are sold—both things which *HE* and *CZ* include—this departure allows for a shorter, sharper, and in some ways more poignant narrative: people are actually eating hay/grass, rather than its simply becoming food (personalization), and the amounts for which these things are being sold are qualitatively evaluated rather than being quantitatively repeated.

make moves like this, they are, to borrow Brock's terms again, taking a more reader-oriented tack.

Examples of the 'Eusebian' texts being more faithful to the Greek range from the mundane to the striking. In the former category, we may class instances such as that at 6.196, where *HE* and *CZ*, like the Greek, state that the staggering bandits would rush into a house three times in one hour in their search for food—*A7a1* and *DS09* have "two times."²⁴¹ A more systematic example comes in 6.204, where we find three quite different versions of the episode: the 'Eusebian' texts account for as many lexical details in the Greek original as possible, while the 'Maccabean' renderings omit and/or alter certain aspects of the passage while still keeping its basic sense. In the final section, 6.213, the 'Eusebian' texts mirror the Greek's mentioning of Jerusalem's inhabitants hearing and seeing (שמעו וראו)—in stating that those who died before 'hearing and seeing such things' were blessed—while *A7a1* and *DS09* fail to account for the seeing (θεάσασθαι). In the same vein, at the end of this passage, only the 'Eusebian' texts account for the Greek's adjective κακὰ. Thus, the 'Eusebian' texts are often more strictly accurate per the Greek.

These conclusions are generalities and are not left unproblematized by the examples provided above. There are indeed places where the 'Maccabean' texts stay closer to the Greek *Vorlage* and where the 'Eusebian' translations depart significantly from the Greek.²⁴² This occurs, for example, in

²⁴¹ The 'Maccabean' texts also omit the "dogs" metaphor there, unlike *Bf*, *HE*, and *CZ*. Here the Maccabean texts seem to portray an almost less reader-oriented story in dropping the metaphor and reducing the number of times this dramatic action is said to have taken place.

²⁴² The 'Maccabean' texts are structurally closer to the Greek in, e.g., 6.209–10 (in 6.210 by allowing for two subjects in the first sentence as that which affects the brigands). Yet we also see here a case of possible misreading,

6.195, where the ‘Eusebian’ trajectory abounds with pronouns and pronominal suffixes and thus becomes a ballooned rendering of the Greek base-text and where *A7a1* and *DS09* actually have a better reading *per the Greek* in overall structure and word order and in one lexical instance (a Syriac term corresponding to τροφήν). Likewise, at 6.199 and 6.203 (e.g.), the ‘Eusebian’ trajectory has more lengthy and intricate prose than the simpler wording of the ‘Maccabean’ texts, with *Theoph* being closest to the Greek by improving the Syriac of the ‘Maccabean’ tradition against it. At 6.202, *A7a1/DS09* seem to adhere more closely to their source in beginning with ܠܟܠܗܢ, a mirror of the Greek’s ταύτης. A final example: whereas the ‘Maccabean’ texts take some dramatizing liberties with the Greek in 6.213—discussed above—it is the ‘Eusebian’ texts that expand τῶν λιμωπτόντων to refer not just to “those who were starving” but to “those being tormented by famine” (ܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܬܬܪܝܒܝܢ). Even if the ‘Maccabean’ texts tend to be freer in their prose and the ‘Eusebian’ texts tend to be stricter translators,²⁴³ the reverse is sometimes true.²⁴⁴ Both ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ texts demonstrate the capacity to offer striking and

wherein the ‘Maccabean’ texts have the brigands clapping their hands over their faces, or perhaps even beating their faces, with their hands.

²⁴³ See 6.200, where the ‘Maccabean’ texts are much closer to the Greek than is usual, yet where the ‘Eusebian’ texts are still closer to the *Vorlage*, accurately following the Greek’s syntax and attempting to account for almost every lexeme in the Greek.

²⁴⁴ As another example, consider the way that *HE* and *CZ* reframe the author-narrator in 6.199 as the one who is obligated to tell the ensuing story, which adds a particular focus to the narrative. Similarly, the ‘Eusebian’ texts’ decided wordiness in rendering the final phrase here about the horrendous and ostensibly inconceivable nature of the “deed” (ܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܬܬܪܝܒܝܢ) soon to be recorded highlights this prefatory section of the text, setting a dramatic tone for the (indeed horrendous) tale to follow.

original readings.²⁴⁵ This qualification makes our argument for the increased dramatism of the ‘Maccabean’ traditions less useful, but it has the merit of doing justice to the richness and idiosyncrasies of the traditions and the individual texts—writings, even translations, tend to take on a life of their own—and to the complexities of their interrelations.

Another broad-spectrum set of interconnected conclusions from the above analyses must be this: all five texts studied, but especially the main four (*A7a1*, *DSog*, *HE*, *CZ*),²⁴⁶ exhibit a healthy amount of continuity in vocabulary and construction, as one would expect from a collection of texts telling the same story in the same language. One sees this particularly clearly at 6.205, where Maria begins speaking, perhaps a natural point for the traditions to align.²⁴⁷ All five texts again share substantial

²⁴⁵ At 6.211, e.g., where the ‘Eusebian’ texts add “take” to Maria’s initial imperative—she bids the brigands take *and* eat—while the ‘Maccabean’ texts have Maria claim that she has set out food for them, having prepared the table, as it were. Both additions, we may note, accentuate Maria’s role as grotesque hostess. At 6.212, *HE/CZ* record the infant’s remains as having been left not to a/the “mother,” but to a/the “woman,” thereby arguably rendering the scene in less emotional, more universal tones.

²⁴⁶ As an example, all four ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ texts provide cognate translations of the phrases *μαλακώτεροι γυναικός* and *συμπαθέστεροι μητρός* (ܡܠܚܬܐܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ and ܡܫܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܪܐ) in 6.211. In 6.212, their renderings of the initial prepositional phrase are identical, and they respectively replace the following Greek participle with two Syriac participles each, though not the same participles between *A7a1/DSog* and *HE/CZ*. Similarly, all of the traditions omit completely *πρὸς ἐν τούτῳ δειλοὶ* in the Greek. Additionally, none of the Syriac traditions aligns with the Greek in referring to the news of Maria’s deed, which ‘filled’ Jerusalem, as a “defilement,” as does the Greek; instead, the ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ traditions prefer to report something more literal, the “tale” or “news” respectively.

²⁴⁷ Here also all of the translators have Maria call her son a “wretch” (ܡܠܬܐ), the same term *A7a1/DSog/HE/CZ* use in 2.196 to describe the other people in the city, demonstrating a shared internal consistency within each text as well. Yet note that each tradition refers to the suckling child differently (ܡܠܬܐ ܡܠܬܐ | ܡܠܬܐ ܡܠܬܐ | ܡܠܬܐ ܡܠܬܐ).

lexical and syntactical agreement across 6.208 (after which *Theoph*'s account of the Maria Story ends). At the same time, the 'Maccabean' (*A7a1* + *DS09*) and 'Eusebian' (*HE* + *CZ*) pairs we have identified are unquestionably distinct, each pair possessing substantial internal coherence and unimpeachable difference from the other.²⁴⁸ *Theoph* derives from the same translation tradition as the 'Maccabean' texts, whereas any kinship it might or might not have had with the Syriac *HE* is in any event difficult to trace.

A qualifying conclusion to the points just made is that no single text assessed above is identical to its closest relative. Each of the texts we have studied evinces its own discernible idiosyncrasies. For example, *A7a1* alone drops the enclitic ܐܘܡ from the end of the first sentence of 6.194. The 'Maccabean' texts also disagree about how to spell the name of Maria's hometown in 6.201.²⁴⁹ At 6.210, *DS09* is the only text to account for Maria's twofold claim of "my" in the final sentence of the scene, in alignment with the Greek, whereas in 6.212 *DS09* distinguishes itself by alone departing from the Greek in omitting the word "mother" in marking to whom the dead boy's

²⁴⁸ For example, recall that in 6.195 only the 'Eusebian' traditions mention the thieves who figure there and account for the Greek objective genitive ἀπορίας. In 6.209 the 'Maccabean' and 'Eusebian' traditions use different words to translate the same basic Greek term (εὐθέως) and disagree in the number of verbs attributed to the brigands. More strikingly, in this passage the 'Maccabean' texts omit any mention of scent (the brigands smell what Maria has cooked in the Greek), an arguably important part of the narrative's valence and immediacy. And yet, both the 'Eusebian' and 'Maccabean' traditions somehow arrived at the same conclusion, that the brigands at this moment drew their swords when menacing Maria, a detail not in the Greek. In 6.211, the 'Maccabean' and 'Eusebian' traditions diverge on their renderings of εὐσεβής as either ܠܕܥܒܝܐ or ܠܕܥܒܐ respectively, and they also disagree there about how to translate ἀποστρέφω.

²⁴⁹ Cf. 6.207, where *Theoph* agrees in two distinct-albeit-minor places with *A7a1* over against *DS09*.

remains were left.²⁵⁰ *HE* uniquely adds ܠܐܠܐ to the beginning of the final sentence in 6.194, just as only *HE* includes ܐܠܐ for γάρ in 6.211. And the ‘Eusebian’ texts are regularly differentiated by an added or omitted particle or minor addition (as with ܐܢ in the final line of 6.201), and occasionally even at the level of vocabulary (as in 6.206). In the same vein, at 6.204 none of the Syriac texts captures all of the grammatical, lexical, and syntactical features of the Greek, yet each text in at least one place renders a better reflection of its *Vorlage* than the others. All of the Syriac iterations of Josephus studied here are discernibly singular, even if different levels of continuity characterize their interrelations overall.

Regardless of their source-critical relationships, the diversity within the above-studied texts brings to the surface the (necessarily) interpretive nature of word choice in translation. This becomes apparent in sections like 6.200: to speak of relating history or a story (ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ) stands in qualitative relief to speaking lies or false things (ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ ܐܝܬܐ)—the former (found in *A7a1/DS09*) may or may not connote ‘spinning yarns,’ as it were, but the latter (found in *Theoph*) is explicit in identifying untruth. Different yet again are marvels (or, perhaps, spectacles—ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ), the term used by *HE/CZ*, as this may prompt incredulity, but in essence intimates the transgression of the bounds of the normal. We find each of these terms represented in the Syriac Josephus traditions as ways of rendering τερατεύεσθαι. Yet each term conveys something distinct. And the same dynamic applies to several other word choices here as well: ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ versus ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ for ψυχρά; ܠܐܠܐ versus ܠܐܠܐܝܬܐ versus ܠܐܠܐܝܬܐ for καθυφόμενος. This lexical diversity reminds us of the necessary level of mutual

²⁵⁰ *DS09* has an even more notable unique reading in this section’s final line, where the incredulous horror expressed by Jerusalem’s inhabitants at hearing of Maria’s deed comes to be attributed not to the city’s men, but to its women.

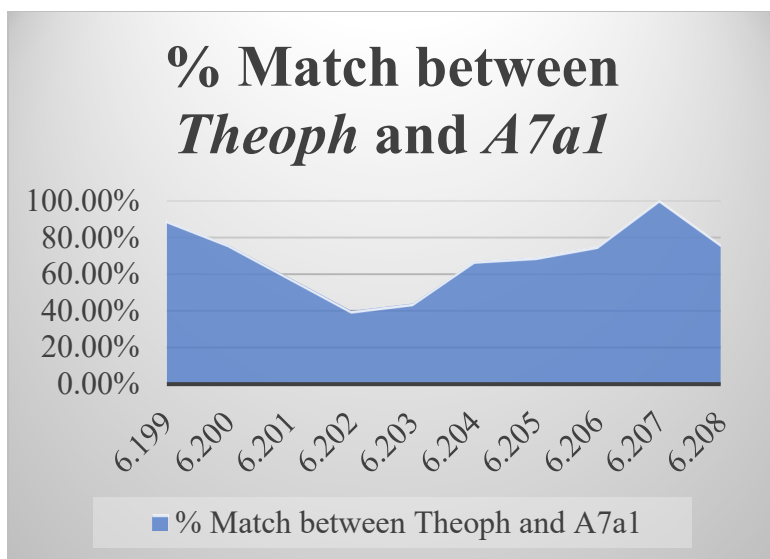
independence between all such texts inasmuch as they are unique artifacts, and is also a reminder of the choice and flexibility inherent in the exercise of translation and/or transmission, an exercise never fully divorced from interpretation; a study like this, therefore, deals not only with a translational, but also an exegetical and hermeneutical, milieu.²⁵¹

The most significant finding of our analysis above, by far, is our confirmation of a link between *Theoph* and the 'Maccabean' texts, *A7a1* and *DS09*. The extent to which these latter texts contain verbatim agreements with the text of *Theoph* demonstrates with certainty that they belong to the same translation tradition. The following table and chart expose this agreement by illustrating the relative amount of *Theoph*'s Syriac text, counted by number of words according to the (Josephus) sections that its Maria Story contains (6.199–6.208), that correspond to identical Syriac language in *A7a1* (taken here as the oldest extant representative of the 'Maccabean' text).

²⁵¹ Cf. 6.202, where all traditions do some interpretive augmentation compared to the Greek. While the 'Maccabean' traditions imagine the vague *κειμήλια* amounting to, apparently, some form of jewelry or necklaces (heirlooms?), the 'Eusebian' traditions conceive these to be some sort of tools or vessels or utensils—for what? We do not know. *Theoph*, for its part, does not even care to speculate, collapsing all of Maria's plundered goods within a catch-all blanket term for "provisions." Along similar lines, the 'Maccabean' texts interpret the spear-bearers of the Greek as simply 'bad guys,' literally "evil-doers," while the 'Eusebian' traditions envision these antagonists donned in armor, replacing their menacing implements with their imposing garb. And, once again here, *Theoph* seems not to care, happy to characterize these men simply by nominalizing their activity: "plunderers." In this passage the traditions betray varying hermeneutical tendencies and thus further reveal their respective idiosyncrasies.

Table 1: These numbers do not account for words that appear out of order or for minor orthographic variants or differences in prepositional prefixes, pronimal suffixes, etc.

Section Number (according to <i>BJ</i>)	Number of Syriac Words in <i>Theoph</i>	Number of Identical Words in <i>A7a1</i>	Rough % of <i>Theoph</i> present in <i>A7a1</i>
6.199	28	25	89%
6.200	38	29	76%
6.201	19	11	58%
6.202	25	10	40%
6.203	16	7	44%
6.204	46	31	67%
6.205	16	11	69%
6.206	16	12	75%
6.207	13	13	100%
6.208	14	11	79%
Overall	231	160	69%



The table shows that several *BJ*-sections of the Maria Story (6.199 and 6.207, and also 6.206, 6.200, and 6.208) evidence remarkable continuity between *Theoph* and *A7a1*, and the texts are never very far apart. Assuming that the author of *Theoph* was drawing upon a larger *BJ* text akin to *A7a1* (if not an entire Syriac *BJ* translation)—the reverse is hard to imagine—the chart shows that this translator followed his source closely at the beginning and end of this Jospehan passage, with a substantial dip in the middle. This dip corresponds to the heart of the Maria Story, as it were, with a crescendo in the narrative action and an uptick in the density of graphic verbs, adjectives, and nouns; in these places, the author of *Theoph* more frequently corrected the Syriac of its source, presumably against the Greek version of the Maria Story in the Greek *Theophania* (which may or may not have been identical to what is found in the Greek *HE*). In any case, in starting and ending this passage, the text of *Theoph* adheres closely to its Syriac source, a text that must have been close or identical to the

Syriac of *A7a1*; in the middle, *Theoph* saw much more occasion for improvement (with a few mistakes thrown in).

The upshot of all this is that a Syriac translation of at least *BJ* 6, and possibly of *BJ* in its entirety (if indeed this did exist),²⁵² existed already in the fourth century (or, at the very least, in the first decade of the fifth century). The *Theoph* manuscript dates to 411 CE and is demonstrably connected to the translation present in *A7a1* (and *DS09*), which means that such a translation existed by that point. If *Theoph* was also influenced by Syriac *HE*, or vice-versa, this did not result in the kind of textual agreement that would indicate this—*Theoph* and *HE* agree verbatim only very occasionally. Nevertheless, the *terminus ante quem* for the Syriac *HE* translation, i.e. the date of its earliest manuscript (462 CE), points in any case to a tradition almost as old as that testified by *Theoph*. The Syriac Josephus tradition therefore existed both in translation ('Josephan' texts) and via Eusebius (derivative texts) well before the sixth century, which is to say basically as early as the Latin tradition emerged. These findings comport with certain arguments regarding Syriac translation technique from the earliest translations through Late Antiquity toward the Early Medieval Period.

Another wider point that emerges from our analysis pertains to the literary qualities of this Syriac translation tradition. We have witnessed the use of apparently biblical language in our texts as well as the use of loanwords both Greek and Latin.²⁵³ Both features of these Syriac writings testify to the

²⁵² For arguments for a complete Syriac translation of *BJ*, see Hayman, *Sergius*, 32–47; Van Rompay, "Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* in Syriac," 425–41; Zellentin, "Jerusalem Fell after Betar," 320–21.

²⁵³ See the biblical language, e.g., in the 'Maccabean' texts at 6.198. At 6.202 *Theoph*, *HE*, and *CZ* use the Syriac transliteration ܪܥܐܝܬܐ for τῥαννοί, a Greek loanword, while the 'Maccabean' texts prefer the Syria term (ܪܥܐܝܬܐ). See the Latin loanwords that appear in the 'Eusebian' texts at 6.198.

highly Christianized environs in which they were necessarily written and to the multi-sourced linguistic landscape of late ancient (Syriac) Christianity.²⁵⁴ They may also texture the literary fabric of the narrative: for example, the biblical overtones of the ‘Maccabean’ reference to Maria’s “vain” (ܠܥܝܢܐ) labor in 6.204—cf. Phil 2:3; Rom 4:14; 1 Cor 15:10, 14, 58—add an emotional tonality and a note of Christian ethical valuation.

CONCLUSION

This case study supports several concluding arguments. First, this study shows that what we call the Syriac Josephus tradition was already widespread and diverse in late antiquity. At least part of the Maria Story existed in three discernible variations (across multiple texts/manuscripts) by the end of late antiquity, as represented here by the ‘Maccabean’ tradition, the ‘Eusebian’ tradition, and the *Theophania*. Ancient Syriac readers theoretically had access to as many distinct iterations of the Maria Story as ancient Latin readers did, even though the number of manuscripts testifying to the Syriac Maria Story tradition (five) is many times fewer than the hundreds of extant Latin manuscripts (of *LBJ*, *LHE*, and *DEH*). In fact, the small number of Syriac manuscripts makes this finding even more remarkable: there are less than twice as many manuscripts testifying to the Maria Story in Syriac as there are *versions* of the Maria Story in Syriac—a diverse tradition indeed. Moreover, we have shown through the Maria Story that *Theoph* knew the *BJ* 6 text that serves as the basis of the *A7a1* (‘Maccabean’) version, and thus that this translation existed already in the fourth century.

²⁵⁴ See Y. Minets, *The Slow Fall of Babel: Languages and Identities in Late Antique Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 25–33.

A second thing this study illustrates is that the Maria Story constitutes an ideal passage for undertaking a comparative study of the Syriac Josephus tradition.²⁵⁵ This point may be obvious, but it bears stating. Like the *Testimonium Flavianum*, the Maria Story constitutes one of the most popular portions of Josephus' writings among early Christians.²⁵⁶ However, unlike the *TF*, the Maria Story, because it exists within *BJ* 6, is found in the (para)biblical context of Codex Ambrosianus (*A7a1*). This makes the Maria Story not only an interesting case study for examining different 'types' of Syriac Josephus texts/traditions that may have existed in the minds and communities of late antique Christians, but an even more valuable tool for doing so than the *TF*.

A third conclusion that may be drawn from this study concerns the types of Syriac translation techniques and traditions that emerged in the early centuries of the Common Era. As we have discussed above, some scholars have identified in early Syriac translation traditions a free and reader-centric approach, with perhaps a more restrained tendency in translations of Eusebius' works. Our study shows that translations both within and outside of the Eusebian sphere can be both highly literal and wooden *and* free and loose. Each of the traditions we have examined exhibits surprising departures from its Greek source *and* stricter translational tendencies, even to the extent of producing awkward and unnatural Syriac constructions. Moreover, inasmuch as both *HE* and the *Theophania* are fifth-century Syriac copies of Greek Eusebius texts, we have seen that the early 'Eusebian' Syriac translation tradition is in itself highly diversified and

²⁵⁵ Again, as with the broader 'Semitic Josephus Tradition.' See Bay, "Semitic Josephus Traditions."

²⁵⁶ Again we would urge the reader to see now Schmidt, *Josephus and Jesus*, which engages and upends much of the scholarly consensus vis-à-vis the *Testimonium Flavianum*.

unpredictable in terms of literary license versus literality. The Syriac Josephus tradition, the Syriac Maria Story in particular, provide a helpful and important case study that can inform larger conversations about Greek-to-Syriac literary production in Late Antiquity.

A final and more forward-looking conclusion to be drawn from our study is that the Josephus reception tradition provides particularly valuable tools for integrating Syriac literature with the broader scholarly domain of early Christian writing, which has for so long been dominated by Greek and Latin texts (themselves not always consistently put into conversation). Josephus was an author whose work was quoted, cited, translated, paraphrased, and discussed among ancient and medieval Christians to an extent true of no other non-biblical writer. Josephus' Maria Story became a touchpoint for Christian discussions about a variety of interrelated issues, from the sacking of cities to the mechanics of divine cursing to the abandonment and suffering of the Jews and the historical-theological meaning of Jerusalem's destruction. The fact that the Maria Story finds such pronounced and variegated expression in late antique Syriac texts prompts us to take a broader view of the early Christian Josephus tradition as a discussion that transcended the bounds of Greek and Latin literature. The fate of Maria, and fate of her slain-and-eaten infant son, was written by Josephus and read and repeated by Christian readers, not only in Josephus' Greek but also in the growing host of ancient Christian linguistic registers; and that fate did indeed become the "tale" or "myth" (μῦθος) for the world—what the Syriac texts alternatively call ܡܬܬܐܠܡܐ (*A7a1*, *DS09*, *Theoph*) or ܡܬܬܐܠܡܐ (*HE*, *CZ*), "story" or "proverb"—that this beleaguered mother had predicted (indeed, commanded).