Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies, Vol. 29.1, 199-344
© 2026 by Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute and Gorgias Press

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*

JACOB A. LOLLAR

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

CARSON BAY

INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY – PRINCETON (IAS)
UNIVERSITY OF AUSTIN (UATX)

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 Zuqnīn*. 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 addended 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 Josephi De Bello Judaico 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. Zwierlein, *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-Hegésippe: "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 Judaicum" (*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 (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܚܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܝܪܘܫܠܡ) may have rendered περὶ ἁλώσεως 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.vhmml.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. 63*f*)" (*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 lexica 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 Josephan 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 Zuqnīn* 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 Schreckenberg's laconic treatment.[13] Though there now exist helpful summaries of Josephus' Syriac legacy,[14] scholars aware

---

[13] H. Schreckenberg, *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. Schreckenberg, *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. Schreckenberg, "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. Kottek, *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 *BJ* 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 siriaca 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. Boustan, 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. Kottek 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 Kottek'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 Kottek is Gottheil, "Kottek'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:

ܒܫܢܬܐ ܕܫܒܥܐ ܘܥܫܪܝܢܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܐܘܪܗܝ ܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܢܗܪܝܢ ܕܡܬܟܬܒ ܗܢܐ ܣܦܪܐ ܒܝܥܩܘܒ ܣܦܪܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܢܦܫܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܐܡܝܢ

"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 ménologes 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-polictical 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,*

However, we do have the Greek text of Josephus, and it is reasonable to hypothesize that in the *Theophania* Eusebius showed the same care and concern for copying his sources as he shows in his other works.[44] Whatever the Greek text of the entire *Theophania* looked like, it is plausible that the text of Josephus preserved in direct quotation in it faithfully preserved its *Vorlage*. Therefore, when we come to this section of the *Theophania* in Syriac, we will assume that we are effectively dealing with a translation of the very same text of Josephus as that preserved in the Greek *HE*.

Historia Ecclesiastica (462)

Only a few decades later, in the fifth century, Syriac scribes copied Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*. The National Library in St. Petersburg, Russia, possesses a manuscript, completed in 462 CE, containing only the *HE* in Syriac, though it is slightly damaged and incomplete.[45] A note on fol. 1r states that the manuscript belonged to the Monastery of the Syrians (Deir al-

---

2. Hälfte: Die Theophanie: Die Griechischen Bruchstücke und Übersetzung der Syrischen Überlieferungen (Leipzig: Heinrichs, 1904).

[44] Note Lee, *On the Theophania*, vi–vii: "For our Translator, anxious to shew himself faithful in the discharge of his duty, has so closely followed his original by endeavoring to render it word for word, that his translation may occasionally be considered as obscurity personified; the Syriac very ill admitting of either inversion, or involution, of style … I think it must be sufficiently evident, that our Work is a copy of the genuine Greek work of Eusebius, so long lost."

[45] N. V. Pigulevskaya, "Katalog Siriyskikh Rukopisey Leningrada" (*Palestinskiy Sbornik* 6.69 [1960]), 95. This Russian catalog was translated by G. Kessel (unpublished) and can be accessed at: http://syri.ac/bibliography/1819386886. The colophon on fol. 123v states:

ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܫܠܡ ܒܝܪܚ ܢܝܣܢ ܫܢܬ ܫܒܥܡܐܐ ܘܬܠܬܝܢ ܡܢܝܢ

"(This book) was written and completed in the month of Nisan in 773 year (of the Greeks)."

See also W. Wright, "Syriac Manuscripts at St. Petersburg, etc." (*Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* NS X.20 [1867]) 461–62.

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] ܡܦܩܢܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ [ܕ]ܡܢܗ [ܕ]ܐܬܪܬܐ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ ܡܦܩܢܐ

[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 Peshiṭto 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 *A7a1* 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 ʿAbd-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, *Lécriture 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 Zuqnīn*, 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 Zuqnīn*, xviii–xix.

Deir al-Surian 9 (DS09)

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]

- DS09A
    - 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)
- DS09B
    - 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 *DS09* 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] *DS09*, 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 *DS09* and *A7a1* suggest a (to some extent) broad readership interested in Josephus' *BJ* 6 in particular.

The texts listed above—from *A7a1*, *DS09*, *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 Zuqnīn*, 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, & NOTES[80]

[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=0#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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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.	ܘܡܢܘܢ ܕܡܬܚܒܠܝܢ ܒܟܦܢܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܡܢܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܡܬܡܠܠܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ.

Deir al-Surian 09, fol. 14r	
And those who were being destroyed by famine could neither be numbered, nor could their sufferings be recounted.	ܘܡܢܘܢ ܕܡܬܚܒܠܝܢ ܒܟܦܢܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܡܢܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܡܬܡܠܠܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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	ܘܡܢ ܕܡܬܚܒܠܝܢ ܒܟܦܢܐ ܕܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܢܦܠ ܠܐ ܡܢܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ. ܘܡܢܘܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܗܘܐ.

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.	

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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.	ܕܡܬܒܠܥܝܢ ܡܢ ܟܦܢܐ ܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܡܬܝܡܪ. ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܠܡܬܝܡܪ ܠܟ ܕܥܢܝܘܬܗܘܢ.

Textual Notes

All four Syriac text traditions render the prepositional phrase ὑπὸ τοῦ λιμοῦ with ܡܢ ܟܦܢܐ. According to Carl Brockelmann, ܟܦܢܐ 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 .ܡܓܥܬܐ[81] R. Payne Smith explicitly lists λιμός (as well as σιτοδεία) as Greek Bible term(s) rendered in translation with ܟܦܢܐ, beginning at 4 Kingdoms 4:38 ("et passim").[82]

Overall, the translations in *A7a1* and *DS09* are quite similar. The subtle distinction between ܠܟܠܗ ...ܠܟܠܗ and ܕܠ ...ܠ ܠ is difficult to articulate in translation, as the expressions are essentially identical. The inclusion of ܕܠ by *DS09* might be slightly more faithful to the μὲν...δε 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 ܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ("in the city") for the Greek κατὰ τὴν πόλιν, and both use the verb ܢܦܠ ("to fall") to translate the Greek πίπτειν. Neither *A7a1* nor *DS09* 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, ܕܢܚ ܠܐ ܡܠܝ, 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 ܠܐ, 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." Willams 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 ܥܡܐ ("people"), *CZ* includes ܥܡܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ, 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— ܢܦܠ ܥܡܐ—as a more direct iteration of the Greek's ἔπιπτε τὸ πλῆθος.

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

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.194	
For in every house, if a shadow of food appeared somewhere there was a battle, and the best of	καθ᾽ ἑκάστην γὰρ οἰκίαν, εἴ που τροφῆς παραφανείη σκιά, πόλεμος ἦν, καὶ διὰ χειρῶν ἐχώρουν οἱ φίλτατοι πρὸς

[84] It also translates בקק in the Niphal, נבל, and נום; 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 חבל 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, moder scholarship may not fully appreciate the erstwhile חבל-φθείρειν correlation in the biblical translation tradition, whose inverse, from Indo-European back into Semitic (φθείρειν-ܫܚܠ), 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 ܫܚܠ, namely the Ethpael ܐܬܫܚܠܬ 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.

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.	ܟܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܛܠܠܐ ܕܡܙܘܢܐ ܐܬܪܐܝܐ ܩܪܒܐ ܚܕܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܠܐ. ܡܬܚܛܦܝܢ ܥܡܐ ܚܪܒܐ. ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܚܕܐ ܕܡܙܘܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ.܀

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.	ܟܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܛܠܠܐ ܕܡܙܘܢܐ ܐܬܪܐܝܐ ܩܪܒܐ ܚܕܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܠܐ ܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܛܦܝܢ ܥܡܐ ܚܪܒܐ. ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܚܕܐ ܕܡܙܘܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ.܀

Eusebius, *Theophania*	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.20 (Wright and McLean p. 125)	
For in every house where even a shadow of food appeared, a battle was taking	ܟܠ ܒܝܬ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܛܠܠ ܐܦ ܕܡܙܘܢܐ ܕܚܙܝܐ ܡܢܗ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܠܐ.

place, and friends came upon one another and they were snatching the poor provisions of life.	ܘܡܕ ܚܠ ܡܕ ܐܝܟܐ ܕܡܬܚܙܝ ܘܡܢܝܢ ܕܡܬܚܛܦܝܢ ܕܡܕܝܢܬܐ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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.	ܟܠ ܒܝܬ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܡܕ ܡܕܡܐ ܕܡܬܚܙܝ ܐܦ ܕܡܢܝܢ ܕܡܬܚܛܦܝܢ. ܘܡܕ ܚܠ ܡܕ ܐܝܟܐ ܕܡܬܚܙܝ ܘܡܢܝܢ ܕܡܬܚܛܦܝܢ ܕܡܕܝܢܬܐ.

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 ܡܠܚܡܐ ܐܬܝܗ ("a battle broke out"), the supraliner dot in the phrase used in *HE* and *CZ*—ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܠܚܡ ܐܬܝܗ—denotes the imperfect, durative ("a battle was taking place"), making it closer to the Greek. While *DS09* has no supraliner dot in its first ܡܠܚܡ, 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 χερῶν + 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 χερῶν; Sophocles, *Antigone* 916:), as does the prepositional phrase διὰ χερῶν 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" (ܚܪܒܐ) 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 ܚܪܒܐ 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 ܐܝܕܐ

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 liked a μ—an easy feat in Greek paleography—and/or the assumption of the genitive plural μαχαιρῶν (which can also take δὶα: Zenobius, *Centuria* 3.19 [with ῥίπτειν]; Posidippus 1.10 [with ἔρχομαι]).

+ ܥܡ ܚܕ ܥܡ may be read as corresponding to ἐχώρουν … πρὸς ἀλλήλους in the Greek (the rendering ܡܬܬܟܝܢܝܢ ܚܕ ܥܡܝܢܐ ܗܘܝܢ 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 ܐܝܬ 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 ܐܝܬ ܐܝܬ ܐܬܪܐ) *against A7a1* (which has only ܐܝܬ ܐܬܪܐ).[91] The insertion of ܐܦܝ, 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 που. We translate the Greek as "somewhere," but που 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 ܗܘܝܢ ܥܡ (*A7a1*/*DS09*) and the idiomatic ܥܡ ܚܕ ܥܡ ܐܦܝ (*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 Zuqnīn*, 178–79 in reading it as an enclitic. Note, however, that *A7a1* and *DS09* agree together against *HE* + *CZ* in including ܐܝܬ 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., *Hoogeven's Greek Particles* (London: A.J. Valpy, 1829), 172.

The addition of ܕܢ before ܢܢ ܚܠ ܢܢ 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 ܗܘܢ and the suffix attached to ܕܢܦܩܘܢ 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 ܢܫܠ is often paired with ܡܢ 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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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 λῃσταὶ διηρεύνων, μή τις ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔχων τροφὴν σκήπτοιτο τὸν θάνατον αὐτῷ.

[94] Double in the sense that 1) both the guttural beginning and 2) the dental endings of ܕܢ and ܢܢ appear in triplicate, turning double alliteration (ܢܢ + ܢܢ) into a kind of triplet (ܢܢ + ܢܢ + ܕܢ). 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.	

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 ܗܘܘ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܐܦܠܘ ܠܡܝܬܝܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܦܠܘ ܠܦܓܪܐ ܕܩܛܝܠܐ ܕܒܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܕܠܡܐ ܢܫܬܠܡ ܢܦܫܗ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܢ ܚܠܝܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܥܠܝܗ.

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 ܗܘܘ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܐܦܠܘ ܠܡܝܬܝܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܦܠܘ ܠܦܓܪܐ ܕܩܛܝܠܐ ܕܒܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܕܠܡܐ ܢܫܬܠܡ ܢܦܫܗ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܢ ܚܠܝܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܥܠܝܗ.

Eusebius, *Theophania* (411)	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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 ܗܘܘ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܕܢܗܘܘܢ ܡܣܟܢܐ ܠܐ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܠܢܝܢ ܕܩܛܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܒܥܝܢ ܠܡܕܥܪܐ ܕܠܡܐ ܢܫܬܠܡ ܢܦܫܐ ܕܚܕ ܡܢ ܩܛܝܠܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܕܥܠܝܗ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 110 (fol. 30r; Harrak p. 179)	
They were not believed to be impoverished, not even when they were dying, but the robbers were searching even those who were dying, lest there be something found at the breast of one of the dead.	ܗܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܡܣܟܢܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܐܦܠܘ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܦ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܬܒܥܝܢ ܐܦ ܠܡܝܬܝ ܕܡܬܒܥܝܢ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܠܡܕܡ ܕܢܫܬܟܚ. ܕܠܡܕܡ ܕܢܫܬܟܚ ܡܢ ܩܪܒܘܬ ܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

Textual Notes

The Ethpa'al ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ used by *HE* and *CZ* to render the Greek's noun + copula + dative construction (πίστις … τοῖς θνήσκουσιν ἦν) seems slightly more apt (in its passivity) than the pe'al ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ used by *A7a1* and *DS09*. A much more striking divergence is the total lack of a qualifier in *A7a1* and *DS09* regarding what it was that "they" did not trust or believe (in) concerning the dead. The object marker ܠ (in ܠܡܝܬܐ) encourages a rather ambiguous reading, like "they did not trust the dead." Conversely, *HE* and *CZ* actually do justice to the Greek's genitive ἀπορίας with the construction ܕܝܠܗܘܢ (plus the redundant ܕܠ),[95] and thus these translations alone specify what these searchers did not have faith *in*.[96]

[95] Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 637 lists ἀπορία as a Greek correlate of the ܝܢܝ word family (namely ܡܬܝܢܝ).

[96] One interesting aspect about the 'faith/belief' language in this passage is that Josephus, writing before the earliest Christian writings began to affect the vocabulary and language usage of the Roman world, uses the term πίστις in what may be called a classical sense: the term refers to trust in the basic sense often applicable to diplomatic, military, or political contexts. Consult D. R. Lindsay, *Josephus and Faith: Πίστις and Πιστεύειν as Faith Terminology in the Writings of Flavius Josephus and the New Testament*, AGJU 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1993). By the time Syriac began to develop as a *Christian* language, the term had acquired massive conceptual weight within the Christian imagination. Thus, while any

The ܘ added to ܡܬܩܛܠܘ 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 οὐδὲ.

The way that *A7a1* and *DS09* express the idea of dying at the very end of this passage—ܥܒܪ ܠܢܦܫܗ = "end his life"—constitutes flowery language, especially compared to the much more common verb ܡܝܬ used by *HE* and *CZ* at the same place in the sentence.[97] The prepositional phrase ܠܢܦܫܗ may be an attempt to convey the somewhat puzzling Greek reflexive αὐτῷ. The verb ܥܒܪ 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 ܥܒܪ 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 ܡܩܛܠܐ, "the slain

Syriac author would immediately think in terms of ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ 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 ܡܝܬ 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 ܡܝܬܢܐ, "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 λῃσταὶ, the primary actors in this scene (!), whereas *HE* and *CZ* include the transliteration ܠܣܛܝܣܐ. 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" (ܚܒܪܐ) 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" (ܒܥܝܢ ܡܬܚܙܝ) verb until the end in the second clause (just as the Greek ends with διηρεύνων). Note also the structural similarity between ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ,ܬܚܬ ܡܥܡ ܒܪܡ and ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔχων τροφὴν. Remarkably, *HE* and *CZ* neglect to offer any correlate for τροφὴν, whereas *A7a1* and *DS09* both include ܡܬܚܙܝܢ.

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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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.	μεθυόντων τρόπον καὶ ὑπ᾽ ἀμηχανίας εἰς τοὺς αὐτοὺς οἴκους εἰσπηδῶντες δὶς ἢ τρὶς ὥρᾳ μιᾷ.

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.	ܘܦܘܡܗܘܢ ܦܬܝܚܝܢ ܡܢ ܟܦܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܟܝܪܐ ܘܒܥܠܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܪܗܛܝܢ ܠܒܝܬܐ ܚܕ ܒܬܪܝܢ ܫܥܬܐ.

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.	ܘܦܘܡܗܘܢ ܦܬܝܚܝܢ ܡܢ ܟܦܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܣܟܝܢܐ ܘܒܥܠܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܪܗܛܝܢ ܠܒܝܬܐ ܚܕ ܒܬܪܝܢ ܫܥܬܐ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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	ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܒܦܘܡܗܘܢ ܦܬܝܚܝܢ ܡܢ ܚܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܟܠܒܐ ܘܣܟܠܢܐ ܗܘܘ ܡܗܠܟܝܢ ܠܒܝܬܐ ܚܕ ܒܬܪܝܢ. ܘܗܘܘ ܡܙܥܙܥܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܪܥܕܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܡܠܟܐ. ܘܗܘܘ ܡܬܙܥܙܥܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܬܙܥܙܥ ܡܢ ܕܡܐ.

drunkards, and out of the distress that surrounded them they were entering the same houses twice or three times in one hour.	ܠܬܪܝܢ ܥܕܢܝܢ ܕܢܦܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܩܬܐ ܕܐܬܟܢܫܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܬܪܝܢ ܐܘ ܬܠܬܐ ܒܫܥܬܐ ܚܕܐ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 110 (fols. 30r–30v; Harrak p. 179)	
Others, with their mouths gaping out of want of food, were rushing around like slobbering dogs. Fools were going around wandering into doors, and were shaking like drunkards, and out of the distress that surrounded them they were entering into the same houses twice or three times in one hour.	ܐܚܪܢܐ ܡܢ ܦܘܡܗܘܢ ܕܦܬܝܚܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܩܬܐ ܕܡܙܘܢܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܒܐ ܕܡܬܪܝܢ. ܐܝܟ ܟܠܒܐ ܕܡܬܪܝܢ ܡܢ ܬܪܥܐ. ܐܢܫܐ ܕܗܘܘ ܡܬܪܝܢ ܠܬܪܥܐ ܕܡܬܪܥܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܩܬܐ ܕܐܬܟܢܫܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܬܪܝܢ ܐܘ ܬܠܬܐ ܒܫܥܬܐ ܚܕܐ.

Textual Notes

The most significant detail in this section is the curious discrepancy in the Maccabean translations between ܡܪܝܐ and ܡܪܝܐ. There are two likely solutions. First, *DS09* could have made an understandable (and common) mistake between a *riš* and *doleth*, in which case it is a simple punctuational error. Such errors were regular in the copying process and thus the text could easily be amended.[101] A second possibility is that the scribe of *DS09* has chosen to use an active participle of the word ܡܪܝܐ, "to be sad/wretched." Instead of "drunkards," as in *A7a1* and the Greek, the word would be "wretches." Both solutions

[101] On this type of error see examples in G. A. Kiraz, *The Syriac Dot: A Short History* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015).

are feasible, but we have opted for "wretches" here, given that the scribe of *DS09* has also omitted the additional *doleth*.

The Eusebian translations once again render the Greek more precisely. The addition of "others" (ܐܚܪܢܐ) accounts for the ambiguity of the Greek οἱ δέ, which grammatically refers to the robbers of the previous section. The phrase ܡܢ ܥܢܕܝܐܘܬܐ perfectly captures the Greek ὑπ᾽ ἐνδείας. At the same time, this section contains some distinct differences between the two Eusebian texts, particularly the insertion of the odd term ܡܬܡܠܝ 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 ܡܬܡܠܝ in *CZ* causes a punctuational difference for the word ܥܩܪܐ, 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 ܥܕܝ 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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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 ἦγεν ἡ ἀνάγκη, καὶ τὰ μηδὲ τοῖς ῥυπαρωτάτοις τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων πρόσφορα συλλέγοντες ἐσθίειν ὑπέφερον ζωστήρων γοῦν καὶ ὑποδημάτων τὸ

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

Indeed, at the last they did not abstain from belts and shoes, and stripping the skins from their shields, they gnawed on them.	τελευταῖον οὐκ ἀπέσχοντο καὶ τὰ δέρματα τῶν θυρεῶν ἀποδέροντες ἐμασῶντο.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 324v col. 3)	
And out of their distress they ransomed all they had. And they were eating stinking carcasses of animals and their excrement. They were in the end sustained even by their girdle straps and their shoes, along with the skins of their shields [which] they were scraping off and chewing.	ܗܘܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܩܬܐ ܕܦܪܘܩܘ ܟܠ ܕܗܘܘ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܐܟܠܝܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܕܥܪܒܐ ܘܡܨܝܬܐ. ܘܐܦܝܢ ܕܥܠܘ ܠܒܘܫܐ ܕܡܬܢܐ ܘܢܥܠܐ ܘܠܚܘܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܕܬܪܝܣܐ ܕܡܬܩܛܪܝܢ ܘܡܠܚܫܝܢ.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 14v)	
And out of their distress they ransomed all they had. And they were eating stinking carcasses of animals and their excrement. And they were in the end sustained even by their girdle straps and their shoes, along with the skins of their shields [which] they were scraping off and chewing.	ܗܘܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܩܬܐ ܕܦܪܘܩܘ ܟܠ ܕܗܘܘ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܐܟܠܝܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܕܥܪܒܐ ܘܡܨܝܬܐ. ܘܐܦܝܢ ܕܥܠܘ ܠܒܘܫܐ ܕܡܬܢܐ ܘܢܥܠܐ ܘܠܚܘܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܕܬܪܝܣܐ ܕܡܬܩܛܪܝܢ ܘܡܠܚܫܝܢ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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 gleaning 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.	ܗܘܝܢ ܡܕܡܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܡܐܟܠܐ ܘܡܕܡ ܕܐܦ ܠܟ ܒܥܝܪܐ ܕܣܢܝܐ ܠܐ ܦܐܟܝܢ ܠܡܐܟܘܠ. ܡܬܟܢܫܝܢ ܘܡܐܟܠܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܫܒܩܘ ܒܣܘܦܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܠܕܐ ܕܣܪܛܐ ܕܡܫܬܡܫܝܢ ܒܗ ܘܡܦܫܛܝܢ ܠܥܪܬܐ ܕܡܬܟܣܝܢ ܡܓܢܐ ܕܬܪܥܐ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 110 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 179)	
Necessity turned anything into food, and things that even the filthiest beasts would not eat, people were gleaning 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.	ܗܘܝܢ ܡܕܡܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܡܐܟܠܐ ܘܡܕܡ ܕܐܦ ܠܟ ܒܥܝܪܐ ܕܣܢܝܐ ܠܐ ܦܐܟܝܢ ܠܡܐܟܘܠ. ܡܬܟܢܫܝܢ ܘܡܐܟܠܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܫܒܩܘ ܒܣܘܦܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܠܕܐ ܕܣܪܛܐ ܕܡܫܬܡܫܝܢ ܒܗ ܘܡܦܫܛܝܢ ܠܥܪܬܐ ܕܡܬܟܣܝܢ ܡܓܢܐ ܕܬܪܥܐ.

Textual Notes

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

Brockelmann and Sokoloff.[103] The Eusebian texts choose a native Syriac (or at least Semitic) term, ܡܓܢܐ, 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 ܟܝܢ ܐܠܗܐ in the Eusebian texts nicely corresponds to the Greek γοῦν καὶ compared to the Maccabean translation. Likewise, the use of ܐܢܐܓܩܝ, 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 ܥܠܠܗܝܢ, 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 ܐܢܐܓܩܝ), 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 ܠܐܘ ܡܬܚܫܢܝܢ ܡܬܩܝܡܝܢ ("did not refuse") instead of ܐܝܬܝܗܒܝܢ ("were sustained by") to render the Greek's οὐκ ἀπέσχοντο.

Finally, the use of ܫܠܝܢܝܢ 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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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 ἶνας 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.	ܐܟܠܝܢ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܚܫܝܫܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܡܟܢܫܝܢ ܕܚܫܝܫܐ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܡܫܬܡܫܝܢ ܡܙܘܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܣܝܡܐ.

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.	ܐܟܠܝܢ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܚܫܝܫܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܡܟܢܫܝܢ ܕܚܫܝܫܐ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܡܫܬܡܫܝܢ ܡܙܘܢܐ ܕܚܫܝܫܐ ܒܣܝܡܐ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*	
N/A	N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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.	ܕܚܝܫܐ ܕܥܬܝܩܐ ܗܘܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܡܐܟܠܐ. ܐܦ ܡܢ ܕܚܫܝܫܐ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ ܠܩܛܡܐ. ܡܢܝܢ ܕܢܫܩܠܝܢ ܠܗ ܐܪܒܥ ܣܐܬܝܢ ܕܟܠܗ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܕܐܪܒܥ ܐܣܬܪܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܀

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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.	ܕܚܝܫܐ ܕܥܬܝܩܐ ܗܘܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܡܐܟܠܐ. ܐܦ ܡܢ ܕܚܫܝܫܐ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܢܫܩܠܝܢ ܠܗ ܐܪܒܥ ܣܐܬܝܢ ܕܟܠܗ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܕܐܪܒܥ ܐܣܬܪܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ.

Textual Notes

Here, *A7a1* and *DS09* do not agree on what all non-food items are being eaten and sold, it seems: while both mention "hay" (ܚܫܝܫܐ) to render Josephus' wordier χόρτου παλαιοῦ σπάραγμα, *A7a1* then mentions what we have translated as "thin strips of animal leather," compared to *DS09*'s "thin strips of hay." The distinction comes between ܚܫܝܫܐ (*A7a1*) and ܚܫܝܫܐ (*DS09*);[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 ܐܦܢ where *DS09* has the particle ܕܡ.[110] The former is more

[108] Jennings, *Lexicon*, 165 glosses ܚܫܝܫܐ 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 ܐܦܢ and ܕܡ 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 ܐܦܢ and ܕܡ 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 are 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 γὰρ.

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 (Ἀττικῶν) τεσσάρων is replicated directly in *HE* and *CZ* (ܐܪܒܥܝܢ ܕܐܬܪܝܐ)[111]—discussed below—both *A7a1* and *DS09* have the hay (or leather?) being sold "at a heavy price" (ܒܡܐܬܐ ܡܣܝܢܬܐ). 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* (ܡܙܘܢܐ) versus *CZ* (ܡܙܘܢܐ); I-aleph verbs can easily drop their initial weak root letter.[113]

The directional/possessive preposition + pronoun phrase ܠܗܘܢ 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 ܕ 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 (ܒܡܐܬܐ ܡܣܝܢܬܐ), went, sold all that he had, and bought it." Also incidentally, the participle ܡܙܒܢܝܢ, 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.

Greek's τισὶ.[114] The presence or lack of ܠܗܘܢ does not disrupt the sentence's semantics, but it does change them by either specifying or generalizing those who were privy to the new fare. Notably, only *HE*/*CZ* reproduce the Greek's wooden (though not unusual) predicate construction in the first sentence: noun (τροφὴ) + copula (ἦν), plus the elective dative (τισὶ/ܠܗܘܢ); *A7a1* and *DS09*, alternatively, opt for the simpler ܐܟܘܠ ܡܛܠܝܢ ("they were eating"), a phrasing perhaps more graphic yet less poetic. The construction found in *HE* and *CZ*, we should note, is native to Greek but sounds odd in Syriac.

The ܗܘ that corresponds to καὶ in both *HE* and *CZ* has an odd placement in the latter. In *HE*, the particle couplet ܗܘ ܗܘ, correlated to δ' [ἦν] καὶ in *BJ*, separates the predicate phrase, which takes first place in the sentence, from the subject phrase, which comes last. In *CZ*, however, the same syntactic order is disrupted when ܗܘ divides the subject phrase, cutting off the term "wisps" (ܡܫܟܐ) from its modifier, "of old hay" (ܡܫܟܐ ܥܬܝܩܐ).[115] This unusual structure probably does not

---

[114] Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 538 notes one Greek ms with the variant τι for τισὶ, which would therefore modify σπάραγμα ("*some* fragments") instead of marking the indirect object of the copula clause.

[115] It would be tempting to see the adjective ܥܬܝܩܐ here as another case of Syriac borrowing from Latin, in this case the adjective *antiqu-us, -a, -um*. This would admittedly be a translation faux pas, as the natural Latin adjective would be *vetus* (thus *LBJ* 6.198 has *foeni vetus laceramenta*, and *DEH* 5.39.2 the superlative, and thus more dramatic, *vetustae paleae*), but such things are common in the industry of loanwords. But in fact, in this case the etymological history seems to operate the other way round: the Semitic roots of the Syriac adjective are well-attested in Hebrew (עַתִּיק), Arabic (عَتِيق), and Aramaic (עַתִּיקָא). M. de Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and other Italic Languages*, Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 45 posits that *antiquūs* goes to the Sanskrit and Gothic, whereas O. Szemerényi, "Quellen des lateinischen Wortschatzes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bedeutungslehnwörter," in *Latein und Indogermanisch, Akten des Kolloquiums der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, Salzburg, 23.-26.*

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 ܩܛܝܢܐ. Both *HE* and *CZ* slightly change the Greek's ἔνιοι ("some [people]") by translating it into the idiomatic Syriac ܡܢ ܡܢ.[116]

The gloss ܐܣܦܪܝܢ, 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 Sprachwissenshact, 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, Ἰτύκη (in Africa), is the Greek writing for עתוק" ("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 ܐܣܦܪܝܢ 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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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; εἶμι γὰρ αὐτοῦ δηλώσων ἔργον οἷον μήτε παρ᾽ Ἕλλησιν 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.	ܡܢܐܝܟ ܕܢܫܬܡܥ ܡܢܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܝܬܐ. ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝܡ ܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܡܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܒܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܒܪܒܪܝܐ ܐܦܠܐ ܒܝܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܒܪܒܪܝܐ. ܡܢ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܡܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܕܡܬܡܗ ܘܕܡܬܩܒܠ ܠܥܕܬܐ.

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	ܡܢܐܝܟ ܕܢܫܬܡܥ ܡܢܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܐ. ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝܡ ܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܡܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܒܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܒܪܒܪܝܐ.

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

not occurred among Greeks nor barbarians; for it is dreadful to tell and unbelievable to hear.	ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܪܒܪܝܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܡܬܡܪ ܠܡܚܘܝܐ.

Eusebius, *Theophania* 4.21	
And why is it fitting to speak of the shamelessness of famine which concerns those things which are not alive? Because I am going to make known a deed the like of which is not recorded among the Greeks or the barbarians, for it is dreadful to tell and unbelievable to hear.	ܡܢܐ ܕܢܫܬܡܫ ܕܚܝܢܐ ܕܟܦܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܚܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܥܒܕ ܚܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ ܒܝܢ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܟܬܒܐ ܒܝܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܪܒܪܝܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܡܬܡܪ ܠܡܚܘܝܐ.

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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.	ܡܢܐ ܕܡܬܚܝܒܝܢ ܠܡܡܠܠ ܡܢ ܕܐܬܐܝܪ ܒܟܦܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܚܝܐ: ܡܛܠ ܕܐܢܐ ܡܬܚܝܒ ܠܡܚܘܝ ܚܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܡܪ ܒܝܢ. ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܪܒܪܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܕܡܬܡܪ ܠܡܚܘܝܐ. ܕܐܡܪ ܚܕܬܐ. ܕܐܝܟ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܟܬܒܐ ܒܝܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܪܒܪܝܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܡܬܡܪ ܠܡܚܘܝܐ. ܕܐܝܟ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܡܪ ܒܝܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܪܒܪܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܕܡܬܡܪ ܠܡܚܘܝܐ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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.	ܡܢܘ ܕܡܚܝܠܢ ܠܡܡܠܠ ܥܠ ܕܥܬܝܕ ܡܥܠܬܐ ܕܒܪܥܒܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܝܬܝܢ[118] ܕܡܛܠ ܕܐܢܐ ܨܒܝ ܠܡܚܘܝܐ ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܬ ܒܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܗܘܬ ܒܒܪܒܪܝܐ ܐܠܐ ܕܡܪܝܪܐ ܗܘܝܬ ܠܡܡܠܠ ܘܠܡܫܡܥܘܬܗ ܕܥܪܝܪ.

Textual Notes

The interrogative structure of the opening sentence in *A7a1* and *DS09*––ܡܢܘ...ܠܡܠܠ ܡܢܘ (“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: ܡܢܘ ܕܡܚܝܠܢ ܠܡܡܠܠ ܥܠ (“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 Zuqnīn*, 179, who has this reading in the text, but in n. 499 says: “C[1] 111:1 and n.1 changed to ܕܡܬܥܬܝܕ (wrongly reported as ܥܒܝܕܬܐ).”

A7a1 and *DS09*,[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, *DS09*, and *Theoph* all elect to speak of ܣܝܡܬܐ ܕܟܦܢܐ, a literal rendering of τὴν…ἀναίδειαν τοῦ λιμοῦ.[120] *HE* and *CZ* instead reference "those who were afflicted by the famine" (ܕܟܦܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܬܡܫܢܐ). 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 ܒܥܠܝ ܠܐ––reminds us once more of the work Syriac translators must do to mirror the Greek's alpha privative.

DS09's placement of a conjunctive *waw* after ܕܟܦܢܐ instead of *A7a1*'s *dālet*––i.e. ܕܠ instead of ܘܠ––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 *DS09*. A distinguishing feature of *HE* and *CZ* is the consecutive ܒ-prepositional phrases toward the end of the first sentence (ܒܟܦܢܐ ܒܠܒ).

One striking disjuncture between *A7a1* + *DS09* 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 *DS09* respectively, sharing ܘܠ uniquely with *A7a1* and ܠܐ uniquely with *DS09* (instead of ܠܐܠܐ). This 90% agreement between *Theoph* and the 'Maccabean' texts confirms from the outset that *Theoph*, *A7a1*, and *DS09* belong to the same text tradition.

[120] The term ܣܝܡܬܐ 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 (חצף 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 ἀναιδεία.

periphrastic construction: ܐܝܬܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܠܐ = εἶμι δηλώσων.[121] This is a notable departure from the simple use of the verb ܡܠܐ by *A7a1* and *DS09* (ܡܢ ܡܠܬܐ) or the more complex deployment of the same verb by *HE* and *CZ* (ܡܠܝܢ ܠܝ ܐܢܐ). 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 ἱστόρηται (namely, ܬܐܪܝܟ). 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 ܐܬܐܡܝܢ ܠܡܬܐܪ. 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 ܕܐ 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 ܡܫܡܥܬܐ ("a hearing" or possibly "an ear") for the Greek infinitive ἀκοῦσαι, and an Ethpa'al infinitive (ܐܬܬܡܫܟܠ) 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.

toward dramatic flourish as well, though this remains more consistently characteristic of *A7a1* and *DS09* (and often *Theoph*).

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.200	
As for me, lest I seem to posterity to spread fables, I would gladly have left this tragedy aside had I not innumerable witnesses of those beside me. In any case, I would be doing a feeble favor to my homeland by suppressing the account of what it suffered in deeds.	καὶ ἔγωγε μὴ δόξαιμι τερατεύεσθαι τοῖς αὖθις ἀνθρώποις, κἂν παρέλειπον τὴν συμφορὰν ἡδέως, εἰ μὴ τῶν κατ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν εἶχον ἀπείρους μάρτυρας. ἄλλως τε καὶ ψυχρὰν ἂν καταθείμην τῇ πατρίδι χάριν καθυφέμενος τὸν λόγον ὧν πέπονθεν τὰ ἔργα.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 324v col. 3)	
And I, lest I appear to the rest of humanity to be making much of a tale, no doubt would gladly omit the suffering, were it not that I have, like me, many witnesses. Moreover, I would do a sorry favor to the land of my fathers were I to omit in this account what it suffered in deed.	ܘܐܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܚܙܝܢ ܠܟܠ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܢܬܝܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܨܐ ܐܬܚܕܝܢ ܕܢܫܬܩܠ. ܠܘ ܕܠܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܡܣܬܗܕܐ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܐܢܐ ܠܝ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܡܝܬ ܠܝ. ܐܦ ܕܝ. ܡܣܬܗܕܐ ܐܢܐ. ܐܦ ܠܘ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܡܝܬ ܠܝ. ܕܐܝܟ ܐܢܐ ܕܢܬܝܠ ܠܐܪܥܐ ܕܐܒܗܬܝ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ ܕܢܫܬܩܠ ܡܢ ܗܢܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܥܒܪܬ ܠܗ ܒܡܠܬܐ ❖

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 14v)	
And I, lest I appear to the rest of humanity to be offering a tale, no doubt would gladly omit the	ܘܐܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܚܙܝܢ ܠܟܠ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܢܬܝܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܨܐ ܐܬܚܕܝܢ ܕܢܫܬܩܠ ܡܢ ܠܘ ܕܠܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܡܣܬܗܕܐ ܐܢܐ.

suffering, were it not that I have, like me, many witnesses. Moreover, I would do a sorry favor to the land of my fathers were I to omit in this account what it suffered in deed.	ܐܝܟܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܝ ܡܬܩܪܐ ܕܐܢܫܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܝܬܝ ܡܣܬܟܠܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܝ ܠܐܪܥܐ ܕܐܒܗܬܝ ܐܢ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܪܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܀

Eusebius, *Theophania* 4.21	
And I, that I not appear to have expounded lies to humanity afterwards, without question would gladly have abandoned the [account of the] suffering, were it not that I have many witnesses. Such things in due time; moreover, I would do a sorry favor to the land of my fathers by abandoning in the account these things it suffered in deed.	ܐܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܟܕ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܒܢܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܐܢ ܠܐ ܐܬܪܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܝ ܠܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܪܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܝ. ܐܝܟܡܐ ܕܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܝ ܠܐܪܥܐ ܕܐܒܗܬܝ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܬܪܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܬܪܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ.

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.23 (Wright and McLean p. 126)	
But let it not be thought that I have introduced to humanity a new marvel of my own accord. For I would have gladly neglected and avoided this blemish, were it not that there are countless witnesses to it. But I would do a negligible favor to my	ܠܐ ܕܢܚܫܒܘܢ ܕܐܢܐ ܡܬܝܬܝ ܠܒܢܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܡܕܡ ܚܕܬܐ ܡܢ ܪܥܝܢܝ. ܐܡܪ ܕܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܪܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܝ ܠܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܪܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܝ. ܐܝܟܡܐ ܕܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܝ ܠܐܪܥܐ ܕܐܒܗܬܝ ܐܢ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܬܪܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ.

nation if I were to neglect from the account the thing that was perpetrated in deed.	

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 111 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 179)	
But so that it not be thought that I have introduced to humanity a new marvel of my own accord. For I would have gladly neglected and avoided this abomination, were it not that I had countless witnesses. But I would do a negligible favor to my nation if I were to neglect from the account the thing that was perpetrated in deed.	ܕܠܐ ܕܢܚܫܒܘܢ ܕܐܢܐ ܡܬܝܗܒ ܠܒܢܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܡܢ ܪܥܝܢܝ ܠܡܬܝܗܒ ܕܐܢ ܠܘ ܕܐܬܝܢ ܠܝ ܣܗܕܐ ܣܓܝܐ ܕܐܢ ܠܐ

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 τερατεύεσθαι ("to tell fables, to speak of marvelous things"). The 'Maccabean' texts use the common term ܣܝܪܐ ("story, history"), which is often used in the titles of apostolic narratives.[125] *Theoph* renders the Greek with the more overtly negative "lies/falsehoods" (ܣܟܠܐ ܕܫܘܝܐ).[126] Alternatively, *HE* and *CZ* use "marvels" (ܣܝܡܬܐ), which captures the outlandishness behind the Greek term: *LSJ* defines τερατεύομαι as "to talk marvels" or "to indulge in strange gesticulations."[127]

Theoph alone includes a correlate to αὖθις in the first clause, namely ܬܢܝܢܐ.

---

[124] *Theoph*'s 38 Syriac words find 29 matches (76%) in *A7a1* and 28 (74%) in *DS09*.

[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 παύσασθε τῶν τερατευμάτων at *Lysistrata* 762 as "enough of your horror stories," an address made to "nutty girls" (δαιμόνιαι). 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, ܣܘܝܐܢܐ ("blemish") and ܣܗܠܐܗܐ, an orthographically different form of ܣܗܠܐܗܐ ("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" (ܣܥܘܬܐ), which is a more natural translation for a term like πάθημα than for συμφορά.[130]

As with the language of faith (ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ/πίστις) mentioned above, the terminology for "martyrs" (ܣܗܕܐܐ/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 ܣܗܕܐܐ 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 μὴ): ܐܠܐ ܕܠܐ. At the same time, *A7a1* and *DS09* include the preposition ܟܕܡܐ ("such as, like"), which, along with the pronominal suffix ܝܗܝ, attempts to capture the reflexive pronoun ἐμαυτόν. At the same time, κατ' ἐμαυτόν does not necessarily convey precisely what ܟܕܡܝ 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 ܡܟܝܟܬܐ (*A7a1*, *DS09*, *Theoph*) or ܡܟܝܟܝܐ (*HE*, *CZ*).[132] The Syriac rendering of χάρις, which all five translations share—ܡܛܝܒܘܬܐ—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 καθυφέμενος ("suppressing"). *A7a1* and *DS09* opt for the same verb they use earlier in the section, ܫܒܩ ("leave out, omit"). *HE* and *CZ* use the Aphel of ܡܫܬܘ ("neglect"). *Theoph* stands apart, using an Aphel participle of ܡܫܝ ("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" (ܐܪܥܐ ܕܐܒܗܬܝ) in *A7a1*, *DS09*, and *Theoph* has a different ring and a different focus from "sons of my people" (ܒܢܝ ܥܡܝ), 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 (ܡܟܝܟܬܐ) or lack of size, quantity, or extent (ܡܟܝܟܝܐ); 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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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 τοὔνομα πατρὸς Ἐλεαζάρου 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]	ܐܝܬܬܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܫܝ ܥܒܪܐ ܕܝܪܕܢܐ ܫܡܗ ܡܪܝܡ ܒܪܬ ܠܥܙܪ. ܡܢ ܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܥܪܘܒ. ܘܗܢܐ ܡܫܪܝ ܠܚܘܠܦܗ ܕܫܡܗ ܘܠܥܘܬܪܗ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܘܬ ܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܝܪܘܫܠܡ ܥܡ ܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܐ.

[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.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 14v)	
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.	ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܐܢܫܬ ܡܬܝܒܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܪܝܢ ܗܘ ܫܡܗ ܡܪܝܡ ܒܪܬ ܠܥܙܪ ܕܡܢ ܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܥܪܒ. ܘܗܢܐ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܠܗ ܕܝܘܪܬܗ ܘܥܘܬܪܗ ܕܐܬܝܠܬ ܠܘܬ ܐܘܪܫܠܡ ܥܡ ܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܀

Eusebius, *Theophania* 4.21	
A woman from those who inhabit the farther bank of the Jordan, whose name was Maryam––famous because of her family and her wealth––had taken refuge with many others in Jerusalem and was confined with them.	ܐܢܬܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܒܝܢ ܥܒܪ ܝܪܕܢܐ. ܕܫܡܗ ܡܪܝܡ ܒܪܬ ܡܫܦܚܬܗ ܘܥܘܬܪܗ ܕܐܬܝܠܬ ܠܘܬ ܐܘܪܫܠܡ. ܘܥܡ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܐܬܚܒܫܬ ܥܡܗܘܢ.

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.24 (Wright and McLean pp. 126–127)	
A woman from the residents of the Jordan’s other side––whose name was Maryam, daughter of L‘azar of the village of Bēt-Ḥezor (which means ‘hyssop’s house’), and in lineage and wealth was a well-known woman––had	ܐܢܬܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܒܝܢ ܥܒܪ ܝܪܕܢܐ: ܕܫܡܗ ܡܪܝܡ ܒܪܬ ܠܥܙܪ ܕܡܢ ܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܚܙܪ: ܕܗܘ ܫܡܗ ܡܬܪܓܡ: ܐܙܘܒ ܕܒܝܬ ܥܪܒ: ܘܒܝܘܪܬܐ ܘܒܫܘܬܐ ܡܬܝܕܥܐ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܡܫܬܡܥܢܐ ܕܐܘܪܫܠܡ. ܕܥܡ ܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܐܬܚܒܫܬ ܠܗ.

fled with many to seek refuge in Jerusalem and she was confined therein.[135]	

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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.	ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܪܕܢܐ. ܕܫܡܗ ܡܪܝܡ ܒܪܬ ܠܥܙܪ ܕܡܢ ܟܦܪܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܚܙܘܪ. ܕܗܝܢܘ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܐܣܦܣܘܬܐ. ܘܒܓܢܣܐ ܘܒܥܘܬܪܐ ܗܘܬ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܡܫܗܪܬܐ. ܕܐܬܬܝܒܬ ܒܝܪܘܫܠܡ. ܘܐܬܚܒܫ ܒܗ ܥܡܗ ܣܓܝܐܐ.

Textual Notes

Theoph, more independent of *A7a1*/*DS09* than in the previous two passages,[136] uses the active plural particle ܕܐܝܬ to apply the verb "to live" (ܐܝܬ) to the entire group of those living across the Jordan, signaled by ܥܡܗ earlier in the first sentence, along with *HE* and *CZ*. This looks structurally more like the articular genitive plural participle in the Greek––τῶν κατοικούντων––than does the plural noun ܐܝܬܝܐ ("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 ܡܢ, 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 ܕ, 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 (ܒܪܬܐ) in place of the Greek's more strictly patrilineal label: πατρὸς. In their brevity, these 'Maccabean' texts neglect the typical Syriac double possessive marker (ܗ suffix + ܕ prefix) used by both 'Eusebian' texts—thus, ܒܪܬܐ ܠܗܘ versus ܒܪܬܐ ܕܠܗܘ ܗܘܬ—just as they drop the not-strictly-necessary verb of being (ܗܘܬ) used by the latter. The economy of language used by

[137] An interesting linguistic concurrence between textual traditions emerges here: the Syriac's ܫܡܗ ܡܪܝܡ 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 τοὔνομα) 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/*DS09* 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)" (ܫܡܗ ܗܘܐ). Once again, this goes above and beyond the laconic Greek. And once again, *A7a1* and *DS09* do not do this. They do, however, provide an ostensibly odd iteration of the place-name: *HE*'s and *CZ*'s ܒܝܬ ܙܒܥܐ is prima facie much closer to Βηθεζουβᾶ than is *A7a1*'s and *DS09*'s ܒܝܬ ܒܟܝܪ. 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 Βαθεχώρ 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, Peshiṭta and ḥarklean 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"—ܡܫܗܪܢܐ (*A7a1*; *DS09*) or ܡܫܗܪܢܝܬܐ (*Theoph*; *HE*; *CZ*)—and all five versions agree that this notoriety owed something to Maria's "wealth" or "opulence" (ܥܘܬܪܐ). 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 ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ("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 ܣܓܝܐܬܐ) over and against the texts that certainly bear some traditonary 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 ܐܣܘܦܐ 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: ܣܡܢܐ in 6.197 (*HE/CZ*); ܣܝܢܝܣ in 6.199 (passim).

vocabulary—in both cases departing from/correcting a (presumably) identical Greek *Vorlage*—within the very same passage.[144]

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.202	
The tyrants plundered all of her possessions carrying away everything she had carried from across the Peraia into the city. And the leftovers of her heirlooms, and any food was contrived [by her], the guards, breaking in day after day, kept on plundering.	ταύτης τὴν μὲν ἄλλην κτῆσιν οἱ τύραννοι διήρπασαν ὅσην ἐκ τῆς Περαίας ἀνασκευασαμένη μετήνεγκεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν τὰ δὲ λείψανα τῶν κειμηλίων καὶ εἴ τι τροφῆς ἐπινοηθείη καθ᾽ ἡμέραν εἰσπηδῶντες ἥρπαζον οἱ δορυφόροι.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 1)	
The plunderers each day were robbing this [woman's]	ܗܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܫܝܢ ܡܢܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ ܕܢܣܒܘܢ ܗܢܐ ܕܢܫܐ.

[144] Schmidt, *Josephus and Jesus*, 46–48, making several important notes: 1) Eusebius states (*Theoph* 4.37) that the *TF* in the *Theoph* was mostly a reworking of its presentation in *Demonstration of the Gospel*, the Greek of which is extant (3.5.107–108); 2) the Syriac translator *HE* does a "better job witnessing to the ambiguity of the TH" than does *Theoph*; 3) *Theoph*, however, also evinces its own distinctive reworkings; 4) both *HE* and *Theoph* tend to improve the same Greek sections, and sometimes agree verbatim in doing so, i.e. in turning "the prosaic 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ)" of the Greek "into the more profound 'truth' (ܫܪܪܐ)," though there may have been dots in the transcription history which would distinguish between the singular and plural of "truth"; 5) significantly, *HE* and *Theoph* "translate the resurrection appearance with the same grammatical syntax and vocabulary: 'he appeared to them alive' (ܗܘ ܠܗܘܢ ... ܚܝܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ)." Based on this evidence, it does indeed seem possible that *HE* and *Theoph* were somehow connected as Syriac translations.

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]	ܟܠܡܢ ܕܢܟܣܝܗ ܕܐܬܝܬ ܡܢ ܥܒܪܐ ܕܢܗܪܐ ܠܩܪܝܬܐ. ܘܫܪܝܐ ܕܡܬܪܚܝܢ ܥܡܗ ܠܡܙܘܢܐ ܕܙܥܘܪܐ ܢܗܘܘ ܡܬܒܙܙܝܢ.

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.	ܝܘܡܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܚܠܦܝܢ ܒܙܘܐ ܕܢܟܣܝ ܕܢܫܐ. ܟܠܡܢ ܕܢܟܣܝܗ ܕܐܬܝܬ ܡܢ ܥܒܪܐ ܕܢܗܪܐ ܠܩܪܝܬܐ. ܘܫܪܝܐ ܕܡܬܪܚܝܢ ܥܡܗ ܠܡܙܘܢܐ ܕܙܥܘܪܐ ܢܗܘܘ ܡܬܒܙܙܝܢ.

Eusebius, *Theophania* 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	ܕܠܐ ܕܢܟܣܝ ܡܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܐܢܬܬܐ ܕܢܗܪ ܡܢ ܥܒܪܐ ܕܢܗܪܐ ܠܩܪܝܬܐ. ܐܢܘܢ ܕܬܪܝܢ ܡܬܒܙܙܘ. ܘܫܪܝܐ ܕܡܬܪܚܝܢ ܥܡܗ ܠܡܙܘܢܐ ܕܙܥܘܪܐ ܢܗܘܘ ܡܬܒܙܙܝܢ ܩܠܝܠܐ.

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

springing forth and plundering.	

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.25 (Wright and McLean p. 127)	
And those tyrants plundered the possessions of this [woman] that she brought with her to the city from the river's other side. And the rest which was left to her, from her utensils of service to any food, if it was found on her, those clothed in armour were springing forth and entering in and plundering it.	ܡܫܠܚܘ ܕܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܪܫܝܐܝܬܐ ܕܢܫܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܝܬܗ ܥܡܗ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܢ ܥܒܪܐ ܕܢܗܪܐ. ܘܫܪܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܚܘܠ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܫܡܫܐ: ܘܐܢ ܡܕܡ ܐܫܟܚܘ ܥܠܗ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܒܫܝ ܙܝܢܐ ܕܩܡܘ ܘܥܠܘ ܘܡܫܠܚܘ ܠܗ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 111 (fol 30v; Harrak p. 179)	
And those tyrants plundered the possessions of this [woman] which she brought with her from the other side of the Jordan to the city. And the rest that was left to her, from utensils of service to food, if something was found on her, those clothed in armour were springing forth and entering in and plundering it.	ܡܫܠܚܘ ܕܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܪܫܝܐܝܬܐ ܕܢܫܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܝܬܗ ܥܡܗ ܡܢ ܥܒܪ ܝܪܕܢܐ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܘܫܪܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܚܘܠ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܫܡܫܐ: ܐܢ ܡܕܡ ܐܫܟܚ ܥܠܗ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܒܫܝ ܙܝܢܐ ܕܩܡܘ ܘܥܠܘ ܘܡܫܠܚܘ ܠܗ.

Textual Notes

By leading with the demonstrative possessive ܗܳܕܳܐ, which *Theoph* intensifies by adding the possessive particle ܕܝܠܗ, *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" (ܢܟܣܝܗ) is already appended with the possessive suffix for "her" (ܗ-), 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" (ܒܟܠ ܝܘܡܐ or ܒܝܘܡܐ) to the first sentence, whereas *Theoph* puts it (ܒܝܘܡܐ) 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 (ܛܘܪܢܘܬ) to capture the Greek οἱ τύραννοι, while the 'Eusebian' texts and *Theoph* transliterate the term).ܛܘܪܢܘܣ([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 ܟܡܐ. The ܟܠܡܕ 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 mistmatches in word order and presence or absence of ܘ.

[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" (ܥܠܘܢ), and the 'Eusebian' text doubling with "entering in" (ܡܥܠܠܝܢ), 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] ܡܐܟܠܐ, and the former with a very specific term, ܣܗܪܐ, 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" (ܡܙܘܢܐ). Concerning the snatching of said food, *HE* and *CZ* use the phrase ܐܬܝܗ + ܕܝ ܗܘܬ to account for the Greek εἴ τι … ἐπινοηθείη ("if any[thing] … was contrived by her"). Significantly, *HE* places ܐܬܝܗ in the ethpeel feminine third-person singular, while *CZ* has the masculine third-person singular. The anomalous verb ܐܬܝܗ 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 ܘ here. *HE* thus has "food" (ܡܙܘܢܐ) as the subject of ܫܟܚ, 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"—ܟܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܗ being a rather ambivalent phrase[152]—and any (kind of food), whereas *CZ* implies that she was robbed of the utensils, food, and anything (else) that was on her, the ܘ 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" (ܢܦܩܘ), "entering in" (ܥܠܘ), and "plundering" (ܫܠܝܠܘ).[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' (ܥܒܕܝܐ), a scribe seemingly having misread the base of the noun as ܥܒܕ

[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 *DS09* in this passage render the simple verb ἥρπαζον with the pe'al (ܐܫܠܝܠ) but the composite verb διήρπασαν with the pa'el (ܐܫܠܫܠ), suggesting that "Syriac translators saw composite verbs (at least in some cases) as expressing intensity, somewhat comparable to the pe'al/pe'al constrast" 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 ܢܫܩ (ܡܢܫܩܠ), while it renders the simple form of φιλέω (i.e. φίλημά) with the pe'al perfect (2ms): ܢܫܩܬ.

("bad, evil") instead of ܠܒܫ ("to be clothed") and perhaps understanding ܠ as some sort of prefix rather than a part of the consonantal root. *HE*/*CZ* give a better representation with "armored men" (ܓܒܪܐ ܕܠܒܫܝ).[154] *Theoph* still stands apart from the other text traditions with its own, arguably better, "soldiers" (ܩܠܣܐ).

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.203	
But terrible vexation entered into the woman and, with much reviling and cursing, she was provoking the plunderers against her.	δεινὴ δὲ τὸ γύναιον ἀγανάκτησις εἰσῄει καὶ πολλάκις λοιδοροῦσα καὶ καταρωμένη τοὺς ἅρπαγας ἐφ᾽ αὑτὴν ἠρέθιζεν.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 1)	
And this woman became filled with bitter rage and, as she was greatly reviling the robbers, she was provoking [them] against herself.	ܘܗܕܐ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܐܬܡܠܝܬ ܪܓܙܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ. ܘܟܕ ܡܫܬܡܥܬ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܕܠܒܫܝ ܗܘܘ ܡܩܠܩܠܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܥܠ ܢܦܫܗ ܐܬܪܓܙ ܗܘܬ

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15r)	
And the woman became filled with bitter rage and, as she was greatly reviling the	ܘܗܕܐ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܐܬܡܠܝܬ ܪܓܙܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ. ܘܟܕ ܡܫܬܡܥܬ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܕܠܒܫܝ ܗܘܘ ܡܩܠܩܠܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܥܠ ܢܦܫܗ ܐܬܪܓܙ ܗܘܬ

[154] Compare to the cognate Hebrew term לבש ("to don, put on"), often used of armor in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, for example, Goliath is described as being garbed (לבוש) in scale-armor at 1 Sam 17:5. The term is a standard gloss for describing putting on or being clothed in armor across the Semitic languages: compare the Aramaic לביש, Assyrian *labâšu*, Arabic لبس; Ethiopic ለበሰ; F. Brown, ed., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon – With an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 527.

robbers, she was provoking [them] against herself.	

Eusebius, *Theophania* 4.21	
And severe anger entered into the woman and, many times while despising and cursing the robbers, she was provoking them against her.	ܘܡܛܠ ܕܢܦܠ ܡܪܝܐ ܒܐܢܬܬܐ ܘܒܙܒܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܢ ܕܡܬܚܫܕܢ ܘܡܠܛܝܢ ܗܘܬ ܡܪܝ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܘܡܐܢ ܕܡܫܚܪܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܗܘ ܡܪܝ ܠܗ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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.	ܘܡܢ ܕܡܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܗܘ ܡܪܝ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܘܡܬܚܫܕ ܗܘ ܡܪܝ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܘܡܠܛܝ ܗܘ ܡܪܝ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܕܢܩܛܠ ܠܗ ܠܡܩܛܠ ܠܗ

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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.	ܘܡܢ ܕܡܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܗܘ ܡܪܝ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܘܡܬܚܫܕ ܗܘ ܡܪܝ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܘܡܠܛܝ ܗܘ ܡܪܝ ܠܗ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܕܢܩܛܠ ܠܗ ܠܡܩܛܠ

Textual Notes

Here the 'Maccabean' texts both have the woman (ܐܢܬܬܐ) as the subject of the first clause, while the 'Eusebian' texts omit the noun and replace it with the pronoun (ܗܘ). Between the 'Maccabean' texts, there is one small difference, however: *A7a1* includes the demonstrative pronoun ܗܢܐ, 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

A7a1's inclusion and *DS09*'s exclusion of ܐܝܬܝܡ reasonable ways of dealing with the Greek.[155]

"Bitter rage" (ܡܪܝܪܬܐ ܡܪܓܐ) is an interesting rendering of δεινὴ ἀγανάκτησις. In translation, the noun ܡܪܓܐ would more usually translate some form or derivative of ὀργή, with which it shares some alliterative affinity.[156] The comparatively rare Greek noun ἀγανάκτησις traditionally referred, per *LSJ* (ad loc.), to "physical pain and irritation," e.g. that "caused by teething"– in other words, "vexation" or annoyance.[157] The Syriac adjective ܡܪܝܪܬܐ ("bitter"), apparently a rather imprecise rendering of δεινὴ, would likely cue the Semitic reader to recall another famously bitter woman of the Bible: namely Ruth's mother-in-law, formerly called Naomi, who changed her name to Mara (מרא), that is, "Bitter."[158] The same is true of the adverb "bitterly" (ܒܡܪܝܪܬܐ) that describes Maria's grumbling in *HE* and *CZ*. Since

---

[155] On Syriac vis-à-vis definite articles, see A. D. Rubin, *Studies in Semitic Grammaticalization*, Harvard Semitic Studies 57 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 67n14, 68, 86–88 and Z. S. Solomon, "The Definite and Indefinite Articles in Assyrian Aramaic" (*Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 20.2 [2006]) 1–12, at 4–6.

[156] Cf. Jennings, *Lexicon*, 203 and the Greek and Syriac of Rom 2:5; 3:5; Eph 4:26.

[157] Plotinus *Ennead* 4.4.19 uses the term to describe the "distress" experienced by the body when cut up during surgery; in Julian *Against the Galileans* 171a the term refers to the 'wrath' or 'resentment' of God, i.e., that which he relinquished following Phinehas' famous, violent, pacifying zeal displayed in Num 25:6–13.

[158] Ruth 1:20: "[Ruth] said to them, 'Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me' (קראן לי מרא כי המר שדי לי מאד)." The latter phrase in the Peshitta: "call me 'Bitter Person', because El Shaddai has embittered me greatly" (ܩܪܝܢ ܠܝ ܡܪܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܫܕܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܪܝܪ ܠܝ ܡܐܕ). Text and translation in D. M. Walter, G. Greenberg, and E. Tully, trans., *The Syriac Peshitta Bible with English Translation –– The Book of Women: Ruth, Susanna, Esther, and Judith* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2020), 6–7, though the same Syriac text appears elsewhere in *A7a1*: see Codex Ambrosianus 7a1, fol. 437.

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 ܘ 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" (ܪܓܙܐ ܪܓܙܐ) being the subject of the verb (ܥܠܠ) 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*, ܥܠܠ ("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 εἴσειμι. 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 δὲ...ἀγανάκτησις). The 'Maccabean' texts choose "bitter rage" (ܡܪܝܪܬܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܘܝ), while *Theoph* has (probably the closest) "severe anger" (ܪܓܙܐ ܪܓܙܐ). The 'Eusebian' texts strikingly divert from the Greek the most in this sequence in a rather uncharacteristic manner, saying that *she* "grumbled bitterly" (ܐܡܪܝܪܬܐ ܐܡܪ ܡܬܚܫܫܬܐ ܒܝ ܕܡ). 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 ܡܪܝܪܐ “bitter,” while *Theoph* stands as an outlier with “severe” (ܩܫܝܐ). Here, and above with the phrase ܩܫܝܐ ܩܫܝܐ, *Theoph* corrects the Greek and provides the best, and possibly by inference the oldest, Syriac translation.

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 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.	ὡς δ᾽ οὔτε παροξυνόμενός τις οὔτ᾽ ἐλεῶν αὐτὴν ἀνῄρει καὶ τὸ μὲν εὑρεῖν τι σιτίον ἄλλοις ἐκοπία πανταχόθεν δὲ ἄπορον ἦν ἤδη καὶ τὸ εὑρεῖν ὁ λιμὸς δὲ διὰ σπλάγχνων καὶ μυελῶν ἐχώρει καὶ τοῦ λιμοῦ μᾶλλον ἐξέκαιον οἱ θυμοί 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	ܗܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܕܢܝ ܠܗ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܚܘܢܢܐ. ܘܡܠܬܐ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܬܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܪܝܐ ܠܐܚܪܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܠܗ ܚܕ ܠܡܬܒܥ ܠܡܫܪܝܐ. ܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܚܘܠܝܢ ܘܡܢ ܟܠ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܚܘܠܝܢ. ܘܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܦܢܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܚܘܠܝܢ. ܘܡܢ

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]	ܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܠܗ. ܢܦܚܬ ܠܗ ܡܥܝܢܐ ܘܟܪܣܐ ܘܥܠ ܟܠܗ ܡܠܢܐ. ܐܚܕ ܠܗ ܟܝܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ.

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.	ܕܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܪܚܡܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܩܛܠܗ. ܘܡܢ ܕܗܘܬ ܡܬܥܒܕܐ ܠܡܬܪܙܩ ܠܐܚܪܢܐ. ܘܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܟܠ ܨܕܐ ܗܘܬ ܫܘܝܐ. ܘܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܟܦܢܐ ܥܠ ܟܪܣܗ ܐܬܝܠ ܠܡܥܝܢܗ ܘܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܟܠ ܡܠܢܐ ܡܠܢܐ. ܐܚܕ ܠܗ ܟܝܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܒܗ. ܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܠܗ. ܢܦܚܬ ܠܗ ܡܥܝܢܐ ܘܟܪܣܐ ܘܥܠ ܟܠܗ ܡܠܢܐ. ܐܚܕ ܠܗ ܟܝܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ.

Eusebius, ***Theophania*** **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	ܕܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܪܚܡܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܩܛܠܗ. ܘܡܢ ܕܗܘܬ ܡܣܝܥܐ ܠܡܬܪܙܩ ܠܐܚܪܢܐ ܘܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܟܠ ܨܕܐ ܗܘܬ ܫܘܝܐ. ܘܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܟܦܢܐ ܥܠ ܟܪܣܗ ܐܬܝܠ ܠܡ. ܐܦ ܠܐܚܪܢܐ.

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

from every place it was uncertain that she would find any—and as the famine moved into her stomach and her bowels, and even more than the famine her anger burned within her, she took violence as her own counselor, along with compulsion, and she revolted against nature.	ܕܟܠ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܫܟܚܬ ܠܗ ܕܢܫܟܚ ܡܕܡܐ ܡܢܗ ܕܟܠܗ ܕܟܠ ܕܟܠ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܪܣܗ ܘܡܥܝܗ ܘܥܠ ܟܠ ܕܟܠ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܩܛܦ ܒܟܪܣܗ ܐܬܬܩܦ ܠܗ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܡܠܟܐ ܥܡ ܡܠܝܢܐ ܘܥܠ ܕܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܡܠܟܐ

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 111–112 (fol. 30v; Harrak pp. 179–81)	
And since not one of them, either because of fury or even out of genuine pity, killed her, and since even if she did find some kind of food, she labored for others—since on all sides she was bereaved of the will to find anything—and since the famine overwhelmed both womb and marrow, and more than the famine, anger was inflamed, this woman took council from threat and from necessity and she revolted against nature.	ܗܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܚܘܪܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܪܚܡܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦܠܘ ܐܢ ܡܕܡ ܡܫܟܚܬ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܐܦ ܐܢ ܡܕܡ ܡܫܟܚ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܡܕܡ ܡܬܬܥܒܕ ܠܐܚܪܢܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܡܢ ܟܠ ܨܕܘܬܐ ܐܬܬܪܝܬ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܬܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܟܚ ܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܕܟܦܢܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܬܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܟܚ

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 ܕܐ, mirroring the Greek construction (ὡς), and they all build to final clauses that use the same verb (ܡܪܕܐ), thus "she revolted against nature" (ܡܪܕܐ ܥܠ ܛܒܥܐ). 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 ܡܪܕܐ ܥܠ ܛܒܥܐ, discussed above and common to all five Syriac traditions, appears to assume the Thucydidean, 'attack' meaning of Josephus' phrase, the preposition ܥܠ being often conceptually cognate to ἐπὶ in spatial terms, and the verb ܡܪܕܐ ("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*/*DS09* 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 ἤδη καὶ τὸ εὑρεῖν) and replace it with a remark about the vanity of Maria's choices (ܡܢ ܚܠ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܬܝܗܒܐ). The use of ܡܬܝܗܒܐ ("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 (ܡܕܡ). The object of Maria's searching is ܡܙܘܢܐ in *A7a1* and *DS09* (though *A7a1* has the orthographically erroneous form ܡܙܘܢܐ) and ܡܐܟܘܠܐ 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 ἐχώρει 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 *DS09* exactly in this passage (31 of 46 words).

[164] Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary* has ܡܙܘܢܐ defined as "nourishment, victuals, provisions, means of subsistence, support" (608), while ܡܐܟܘܠܐ 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 μυελῶν ("marrow") and simply include "stomach" (ܟܪܣܐ). Only the 'Eusebian' texts catch "marrow" (ܡܘܡܐ), though these texts, in turn, prefer "womb" (ܡܥܝܐ) to "intestines" (σπλάγχνων), unlike the 'Maccabean' texts + *Theoph*, which have ܡܥܝ ("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 (ܟܦܢܐ) that worked upon Maria's innards, however these are conceived. But the verbs used to describe this action differ. *A7a1*, *DS09*, and *Theoph* used the rather banal ܫܪܐ ("to be left, remain, be found, persist"). The other two texts, *HE* and *CZ*, use ܫܠܛܝܢ, the root ܫܠܛ meaning "to have authority, dominion, power over." We have translated ܡܠܝܢ ܫܠܛܝܢ "overwhelmed," but this could also be rendered "took possession of, took control of." In any case, ܫܪܐ connotes a more locative and stative being, whereas ܫܠܛ 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, ܫܪܐ lends itself to the metaphor of a virus or germ 'moving through' or 'being (left) in' the body, whereas ܫܠܛ 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 ὀργὴν. All five texts surprisingly use the same term (ܪܘܓܙܐ) to translate θυμοί, but this vocabulary is where the similarities end. The 'Maccabean' texts prefer 'wrath' (ܪܓܙܐ) for ὀργὴν and cast it, along with compulsion (ܚܡ ܡܢܝܠܐ), as Maria's adviser/counselor (ܡܫܠܡܢܐ).[165] The 'Eusebian' texts do a better job of presenting Maria's "anger/passion" as being "inflamed" (ܪܘܓܙܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܪܓܙܐ) and, positioning Maria as the subject of the clause (ܪܘܓܙܐ ܪܓܙ ܒܗ ,ܡ), they opt for the comparatively rarer term ܪܓܙܐ to render ὀργὴν.[166] *Theoph* deviates from all four other texts by saying that Maria took "violence" (ܫܘܬܦܐ) as council. In fact, there is some reason to suppose that *HE* + *CZ*, or *Theoph*, or both are actually rendering the Greek term ὁρμήν instead of ὀργὴν, 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 ܪܓܙܐ (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 ὀργὴ but a natural rendering of ὁρμή; see below.

[167] Schwartz and Mommsen, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, 208 list ὁρμήν as a variant in this passage (*HE* 3.6.23) in five mss (A, T[1], D, M, Σ), over and against the printed ὀργὴ found in T[c], E, R, B, *Λ*, and Josephus. Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 539 reports no variant for ὀργὴν 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 ὁρμήν in place of ὀργὴν, as reported by J.-P. Migne (PG 47: 324), who retains ὀργὴν. It is very possible that ὁρμήν also

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

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" (ܥܒܕܐ) to "help" (ܥܕܪܐ), 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" (ܡܢ ܟܠ ܐܬܪܐ), and *Theoph* uses the rare and difficult term ܐܪܥܬܐ ("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 ܐܪܓܐ, which can mean "violence," only a half-step away from ὀργή, but more naturally leans toward meaning "onset, irruption, impetuosity, eagerness" (Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 122) and is in fact constantly associated with the ὁρμη- lexical family when the Greek and Syriac Bible text traditions are compared (Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1167). Similarly, the term ܡܪܡܐ can mean "assault, threat," and the verb ܪܡܐ takes on the meaning of "to rush upon, assault" with the prefix ܠܟ, making the root virtually identical to the Greek ὁρμή ("onrush, onset, assault") and ὁρμάω ("rush, attack, hasten"). See Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 67 and *LSJ* ad loc. Indeed, the Peshitta uses ܡܪܡܐ to translate ὁρμή 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.

lingering") to describe her dire straits. The term, rare though it may be, is used in Peshitta Luke 21:25 to render the Greek term ἀπορία. This may account for its use to translate ἄπορον here. Finally, in contrast to other translations, *Theoph* has a more liberal and free expression, with Maria taking "violence" (ܥܘܫܩܐ)—whether for ὀργὴ or for ὁρμή—as a counselor (ܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܡܠܟܐ), picking up the Greek σύμβουλον.

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.205	
The woman had a child, a son who was at her breast, seizing which, she said, "Miserable baby, in war and famine and sedition, for what[169] shall I preserve you?	καὶ τὸ τέκνον ἦν δὲ αὐτῇ παῖς ὑπομάστιος ἁρπασαμένη «βρέφος» εἶπεν «ἄθλιον ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ λιμῷ καὶ στάσει τίνι σε τηρήσω

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 1)	
Now she had a son who was at the breast. And she grabbed him and was saying to him, "O miserable one, in war and in famine and in sedition, for what shall I preserve you?	ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܒܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܕܝܬܗ ܗܘܐ. ܘܩܛܦܬ ܠܗ. ܐܡܪܬ ܠܗ ܡܣܟܝܢܐ ܒܩܪܒܐ ܘܒܟܦܢܐ ܘܒܣܬܘܡܐ ܠܡܢܐ ܢܛܪܝܟ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15r)	
Now she had a son who was at the breast. And she grabbed him and was saying to him, "O miserable one, in war and in famine and in	ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܒܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܕܝܬܗ ܗܘܐ. ܘܩܛܦܬ ܠܗ. ܐܡܪܬ ܠܗ ܡܣܟܝܢܐ ܒܩܪܒܐ ܘܒܟܦܢܐ ܘܒܣܬܘܡܐ ܠܡܢܐ ܢܛܪܝܟ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ

[169] The Greek τίνι and the Syriac ܠܡܢ both can be read "for whom" instead of "for what."

sedition, for what shall I preserve you?	

Eusebius, *Theophania* 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?	ܘܐܚܕܬ ܠܒܪܗ. ܕܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܛܠܝܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ. ܘܐܡܪܬ ܘܝܠܝ ܠܝ ܒܩܪܒܐ ܘܒܡܠܚܡܬܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܢܛܪܝܢ ܠܟ ܐܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ.

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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?	ܘܐܚܕܬ ܠܒܪܗ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܛܠܝܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ. ܘܐܡܪܬ ܘܝܠܝ ܛܠܝܐ. ܒܩܪܒܐ ܘܒܡܠܚܡܬܐ ܘܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܕܡܢܐ ܢܛܪܝܢ ܠܟ ܐܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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?	ܘܐܚܕܬ ܠܒܪܗ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܛܠܝܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ. ܘܐܡܪܬ ܘܝܠܝ ܛܠܝܐ. ܒܩܪܒܐ ܘܒܡܠܚܡܬܐ ܐܦ ܘܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܢܛܪܝܢ ܠܟ ܐܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ.

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" (ܒܪܐ)—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 (ܠܒܪܐ), 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 | ܛܠܝܐ, ܒܪܐ).

All five texts use the same word (ܣܠܩ) to render ἁρπάζω.[170] Likewise, all five texts use the term ܡܠܝܛܐ 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 (ܡܠܚܡܐ ܘܡܟܦܐ ܘܡܬܪܥܝܬܐ). *CZ* uniquely contains the particle (ܐܦ) 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, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.206	
On the one hand, there is slavery with the Romans,	τὰ μὲν παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις δουλεία, κἂν ζήσωμεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτούς, φθάνει

[170] An apparently standard translation, given its use to translate ἁρπάζω 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 στασιασταὶ δὲ ἀμφοτέρων χαλεπώτεροι.

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.	ܐܠܐ ܕܢܗܘܝܢ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܪܘܡܝܐ. ܐܦ ܐܢ ܢܚܝܘܢ ܩܕܡ ܕܥܒܕܘܬܐ ܟܦܢܐ ܘܠܣܛܝܣܐ ܩܫܝܐ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ.

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.	ܐܠܐ ܕܢܗܘܝܢ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܪܘܡܝܐ. ܐܦ ܐܢ ܢܚܝܘܢ ܩܕܡ ܕܥܒܕܘܬܐ ܟܦܢܐ ܘܠܣܛܝܣܐ ܩܫܝܐ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ.

Eusebius, *Theophania* 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.	ܐܠܐ ܕܢܗܘܝܢ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܪܘܡܝܐ. ܐܦ ܐܢ ܢܚܝܘܢ ܡܬܐܪܟܝܢ ܥܡܗܘܢ ܩܕܡ ܕܥܒܕܘܬܐ ܟܦܢܐ ܘܠܣܛܝܣܐ ܩܫܝܐ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ.

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.27 (Wright and McLean p. 127)	
Even if we should remain alive, it is slavery to the	ܐܦ ܐܢ ܢܩܘܡ ܚܝܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ, ܥܒܕܘܬܐ ܗܘܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܪܘܡܝܐ.

Romans. But even before slavery is famine, and more bitter than both of these are the rebels.	ܠܪܘܡܝܐ ܦܓܪ ܠܬ ܚܘܪܐ. ܘܡܢ ܡܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܡܠܝ ܡܢܝܢ ܐܠܐ ܡܪܕܥܐ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 112 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 181)	
Even if we should remain alive, it is slavery to the Romans. Even before slavery is famine, and more bitter than both of these are robbers.	ܐܦ ܐܢܢ ܢܫܬܐܪ ܢܗܘܐ. ܥܒܕܐ ܠܬ ܠܪܘܡܝܐ. ܐܦ ܠܬ ܚܘܪܐ. ܦܓܪ ܠܬ ܚܘܪܐ. ܘܡܢ ܡܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܡܠܝ ܠܣܛܝܣܐ.

Textual Notes:

In this passage, we again see a connection among *Theoph, A7a1,* and *DS09*, as the former matches the 'Maccabean' texts verbatim in its opening sentence.[173] In fact, most of the ways in which *Theoph* departs from *A7a1* and *DS09* in this passage are minor (the addition of ܕܠ as a modifier of ܡܪܕܥܐ and the further prepositional modifier ܡܢܗܠ, e.g.). The one striking difference is between *Theoph*'s ܡܪܕܥܐ and the 'Maccabean' texts' ܡܪܝܪܘܬܐ, the former being a stricter translation of οἱ στασιασταί. It is notable that *HE* alone agrees here with *Theoph* in rendering ܡܪܕܥܐ, leaving *CZ* the only text to use the transliterated loan-word ܠܣܛܝܣܐ (which here, somewhat ironically, translates a different Greek word—though its use is consistent with the mention of 'robbers' in earlier sections, e.g., 6.195; moreover, *CZ* conforms to the use of ܡܪܕܥܐ in the next section).

[173] In terms of numbers, here *Theoph*'s Syriac matches the 'Maccabean' texts at about 75% (12 of 16 words), and it happens to share the orthographic distinctive ܦܓܪ with *DS09* alone (where *A7a1* has ܠܢ ܦܓܪ).

The most immediate singularity of the 'Eusebian' texts in this passage is their beginning with the first-person plural rather than the second person singular (though the addressee need not have necessarily changed): ܡܢܘܢ ܢܚܝܐ ܐܢܢ. Remarkably, however, hereby *HE* and *CZ* become the only texts to follow the Greek's κἂν ζήσωμεν. Nevertheless, this passage once again gives a clear indication that *Theoph* and *A7a1* + *DS09* belong to the same tradition family.

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.207	
Come now, be food for me and Vengeance to the rebels and a tale for the living [*or* 'myth for the world'] which alone is lacking among the calamities of the Jews!"	ἴθι, γενοῦ μοι τροφὴ καὶ τοῖς στασιασταῖς ἐρινὺς καὶ τῷ βίῳ μῦθος ὁ μόνος ἐλλείπων ταῖς Ἰουδαίων συμφοραῖς.»

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 1)	
Come, be nourishment for me and vengeance for the rebels and a tale to the world, for this alone is lacking among the sufferings of the Jews."	ܐܬܝ ܗܘܝ ܠܝ ܡܙܘܢܐ. ܘܢܩܡܬܐ ܠܡܪܕܝܐ ܘܡܬܠܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ. ܕܗܢܘܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܚܣܪ ܡܢ ܣܓܝܐܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15r)	
Come, be nourishment for me and vengeance for the rebels[174] and a tale to the world, and this alone is lacking among the sufferings of the Jews."	ܐܬܝ ܗܘܝ ܠܝ ܡܙܘܢܐ. ܘܢܩܡܬܐ ܠܡܪܕܝܐ ܘܡܬܠܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ. ܕܗܢܘܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܚܣܪ ܡܢ ܣܓܝܐܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ.

[174] Note the accidental transposition of the ܢ and ܥ in *DS09*.

Eusebius, *Theophania* 4.21	
Come and be nourishment for me and vengeance for the rebels and a tale to the world, which alone is lacking among the sufferings of the Jews."	ܐܬܝܢܘ ܠܝ ܡܙܘܢܐ ܘܢܩܡܬܐ ܠܡܪܕܝܐ ܘܡܬܠܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܕܚܕ ܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܡܢ ܚܘܫܝ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ.

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.27 (Wright and McLean pp. 127–28)	
Come, now, be food for me, madness to those rebels, and to the whole world an example, which alone is lacking from the hardships of the Jews."	ܐܬܝܢ ܡܙܘܢ ܠܝ ܠܡܪܕܝܐ. ܘܫܓܥܬܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܘܠܟܠ ܥܠܡܐ ܡܬܠܐ ܕܚܕ ܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܡܢ ܚܘܫܝ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 112 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 181)	
Come, now, be food for me, madness to the rebels, and to the whole world an example, which alone is lacking from the hardships of the Jews."	ܐܬܝܢ ܡܙܘܢ ܠܝ ܠܡܪܕܝܐ. ܘܫܓܥܬܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܘܠܟܠ ܥܠܡܐ ܡܬܠ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܡܢ ܚܘܫܝ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ.

Textual Notes

The only difference between *A7a1* and *DS09* is ,ܡܙ versus ,ܡܙ. The difference was likely due to syntactic variation, as reflected in the punctuation in *DS09*. *Theoph* follows the syntax of *A7a1* and only differs from the 'Maccabean' translation in including the ܕ of ܡܬܠܐ/ܡܬܠܕ. *Theoph* also follows *A7a1* in including the dot over the pronominal suffix (the antecedent in this case the feminine noun ܫܘܫܝܐ), a feature which is, in any

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 ܡܠܬܐ, which is commonly used for the Greek διήγμα but also for μῦθος.[176] The 'Eusebian' texts prefer the more biblical term ܡܫܠܐ commonly used to translate παραβολή (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 ܡܙܘܢܐ, which is more

---

[175] Excepting dots and a few prepositional or conjunctive additions in *Theoph*—namely ܕ in ܕܢܫܬܠܚ and ܘ in ܘܠܡܐ—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 (ܡܢܢ and ܐܝܟ).

[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 Syriac[178] and is consistent with earlier passages (e.g., 6.195). That said, the 'Eusebian' texts are also consistent in their use of ܡܙܘܢܐ, 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, Ἐρινῦς. The Syriac traditions render the term differently: whereas the 'Maccabean' texts have the generic term for "vengeance" or "punishment" (ܡܙܡܢܐ),[179] *HE* and *CZ* prefer the term ܡܙܥܪܐ. The latter carries more the connotation of "madness" or "frenzy" or "rage," which sounds (slightly) more like a personified description of ἐρινῦς.[180]

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

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 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 υἱόν 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 ἐρινῦς 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.

guarded, keeping it hidden.	

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 1)	
And after she said these things, she killed her son and she roasted and divided him in half and ate, and the rest she concealed and guarded.	ܘܒܬܪ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܗܠܝܢ ܩܛܠܬ ܒܪܗ ܘܐܦܝܬ ܘܦܠܓܬ ܠܗ ܒܬܪܬܝܢ ܘܐܟܠܬ ܘܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܫܪܝܬ ܟܣܝܬ ܘܢܛܪܬ.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15r)	
And after she said these things, she killed her son and she roasted and divided him in half and ate, and the rest she concealed and guarded.	ܘܒܬܪ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܗܠܝܢ. ܩܛܠܬ ܒܪܗ ܘܐܦܝܬ ܘܦܠܓܬ ܠܗ ܒܬܪܬܝܢ ܘܐܟܠܬ ܘܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܫܪܝܬ ܟܣܝܬ ܘܢܛܪܬ.

Eusebius, *Theophania* 4.21	
And at the same time as she was saying these things, she killed her son. And then she roasted him and divided him in half (and) ate. And the rest she concealed and guarded.	ܘܒܗܢܐ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܡܐܡܪܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܩܛܠܬ ܒܪܗ. ܘܐܦܝܬ ܠܗ ܘܦܠܓܬ ܠܗ ܒܬܪܬܝܢ ܘܐܟܠܬ ܘܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܫܪܝܬ ܟܣܝܬ ܘܢܛܪܬ.

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.27 (Wright and McLean p. 128)	
And after she said these things she killed her son. And she roasted him and ate half of him, and the rest she concealed and guarded.	ܘܒܬܪ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܗܠܝܢ ܩܛܠܬ ܠܒܪܗ: ܘܐܦܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܬܪܬܝܢ ܘܐܟܠܬ. ܘܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܫܪܝܬ ܟܣܝܬ ܘܢܛܪܬ.

The Chronicle of Zuqnīn 112 (fol. 30v; Harrak p. 181)

And after she said these things she killed her son. And she roasted him and ate half, and the rest she concealed and guarded.	ܘܡܢ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܠܗܢܘܢ ܩܛܠܬ ܠܒܪܗ. ܘܐܦܝܬ ܘܐܟܠܬ ܦܠܓܐ ܘܫܪܝܬ ܘܛܡܪܬ ܫܪܝܢܐ.

Textual Notes

Theoph is the only translation to account for the Greek ἅμα with ܥܡܗܘܢ, an amalgam of ܥܡ and ܗܘܢ.[182] The Syriac particle is often used to translate the preposition σύν,[183] but is also used in the New Testament to render ἅμα (cf. Rom 3:12; 1 Thess 4:17, 5:10). The addition of the particle in *Theoph* helps clarify the circumstantial construction provided by ܐܡܪܬ + ܕ ܩܛܠ, 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 -ܐ 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 ܐ 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. (Wiesdaen: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 77–79.

Perhaps of slightly more significance is the lack of pronominal enclitic with ܚܠܩܐ 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*" (ܡܢܚܠܩܐ)—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" (ܩܛܠ) and "roast" (ܐܦܝܐ), 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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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 παρῆσαν καὶ τῆς ἀθεμίτου κνίσης σπάσαντες ἠπείλουν εἰ μὴ δείξειεν τὸ παρασκευασθέν ἀποσφάξειν αὐτὴν εὐθέως ἡ 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 ὀπτάω, 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 τα επιλοιπα εδωκεν αυτοις ("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.	

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 …	ܗܘ ܫܥܬܐ ܕܥܠܘܗܝ ܠܠܨܝܢܐ. ܘܥܠܘ ܠܗ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܘܫܠܦܘ ܚܪܒܗܘܢ ܘܡܬܚܪܝܢ ܠܡܩܛܠܗ. ܐܠܐ ܕܚܘܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܟܠ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܠܡܫܬܝܬܐ. ܘܐܡܪܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܦܠܘ ܐܢܐ ܩܛܠܬ ܫܦܝܪܐ ܕܒܪܝܐ ܕܒܪܝ ܠܟܘܢ. ܘܐܓܠܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܗ ܕܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܗܘܢ.

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 …	ܗܘ ܫܥܬܐ ܕܥܠܘܗܝ ܠܠܨܝܢܐ. ܘܥܠܘ ܠܗ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܘܫܠܦܘ ܚܪܒܗܘܢ ܘܡܬܚܪܝܢ ܠܡܩܛܠܗ. ܐܠܐ ܕܚܘܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܟܠ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܠܡܫܬܝܬܐ. ܘܐܡܪܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܦܠܘ ܐܢܐ ܩܛܠܬ ܫܦܝܪܐ ܕܒܪܝܐ ܕܒܪܝ ܠܟܘܢ. ܘܐܓܠܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܗ ܕܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܗܘܢ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*
N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.28 (Wright and McLean p. 128)	
And immediately, the rebels arrived at the smell of this abominable deed. Then they drew their swords and were threatening to kill her unless she declared to them whatever she had prepared. Then immediately she said to them: “I have even kept a good portion for you from what is left over of my son.” And she revealed (it) and showed them.	ܡܕܥܬܝܢ ܡܬܝܬܘ ܥܒܝܕܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܗܘܘ ܕܢܫܘܬܐ ܕܢܫܠܦܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܕܢܩܛܠܘܢ ܠܗ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܬܟܠܬ ܠܗ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܬܟܠܬ ܠܟܘܢ ܡܢ ܕܒܪܝ ܠܟܘܢ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ

hour"),[186] whereas the 'Eusebian' traditions coalesce on the more literal ܫܥܬܐ.[187] Also in the first sentence of this passage we confront the nominal distinction between *A7a1*'s and *DS09*'s ܠܣܛܝܣ (which we translate "brigands") and the ܡܪܕܘܬܐ ("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 ܡܪܕܘܬܐ in places (e.g., 6.206; 6.207; 6.209).

In the Greek rendering, the στασιασταὶ control three verbs in this passage: they show up (παρῆσαν), smell the scent of cooking (σπάσαντες), and begin threatening to kill Maria (ἠπείλουν … ἀποσφάξειν). In *A7a1* and *DS09*, the ܠܣܛܝܣ are imputed with four verbs: they show up (ܐܬܐ), find Maria (ܡܫܟܚܝܢ), draw their swords (ܫܠܦܝܢ ܘܡܫܠܦܝܢ), and get angry enough to kill her (ܡܬܚܡܝܢ ܘܡܩܛܠܝܢ ܠܗ). The 'Maccabean' traditions have here taken some liberties in their language. While ܐܬܐ may equal παρῆσαν, the Greek nowhere conveys the idea of the rebels having "found" (ܫܟܚ) 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 ܡܬܚܡ ("to burn with anger") is a good step away from the verb "to threaten" (ܐܡܪ),[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, ܐܡܪܐ, to render the Greek ὀργὴ. 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 + ܕ ܐܡܪ + 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 (ܕܢܫܠܦܘ ܒܗ ܣܝܦܐ), though here they do in fact "threaten to kill her" (ܐܡܪܘ ܕܢܩܛܠܘܢܗ). One wonders if the earlier of the two 'Maccabean' texts was influenced by a still earlier Syriac source (perhaps Eusebian) that read ܐܡܪܘܢܗ ("they threatened") here and then changed this, probably by orthographic mistake, to the morphologically similar ܐܬܚܡܘܢܗ ("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 ܡܫܠܚܝܢ ܡܢ ܪܝܚܗ ܕܐܬܪܘܢ being close to the Greek's παρῆσαν καὶ τῆς ἀθεμίτου κνίσης σπάσαντες, 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 (ܥܒܝܠܐ ܕܣܝܦܐ | ܥܒܝܠܐ ܕܣܝܦܐ ܕܝ) 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 (ܡܣܪ) 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 (ܡܫܬܪ) and plural (ܡܫܬܪܝܢ) 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 (ܐܡܪܬ), Maria "reveals" (ܓܠܝ) and "shows" (ܚܘܝ) and "holds out" (ܐܚܘܝ) 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*

and *CZ* (ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܐ). Still, one cannot help seeing a flair for the dramatic in the 'Maccabean' texts, where Maria, just like her persecutors, is credited with more action (counted in verbs) than in the Greek or the 'Eusebian' Syriac traditions.

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.210	
A shudder and shock took hold of them immediately and they froze at the sight. And she said, "This is my legitimate child and my deed.	τοὺς δ᾽ εὐθέως φρίκη καὶ παρέκστασις ἥρει καὶ παρὰ τὴν ὄψιν ἐπεπήγεσαν ἡ δ᾽ ἐμόν ἔφη τοῦτο τέκνον γνήσιον καὶ τὸ ἔργον ἐμόν.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 2)	
Then trembling and frenzy of mind seized them and they clapped their hands upon their faces. She was saying to them, "This is my own beloved child and deed of my hands.	ܗܘܐ ܕܪܥܕܐ ܘܡܫܬܐ ܕܪܥܝܢܐ ܘܡܬܚܘܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܥܠ ܐܦܝܗܘܢ ܐܡܪܬ ܠܗܘܢ. ܗܢܐ ܒܪܝ ܠܡܝܠܬܝ. ܘܥܒܕܝ ܕܝܕܝ.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fols. 15r–v)	
Then trembling and frenzy of mind seized them and they clapped their hands upon their faces. She was saying to them, "This is my own beloved child and the deed of my hands.	ܗܘܐ ܕܪܥܕܐ ܘܡܫܬܐ ܕܪܥܝܢܐ ܘܡܬܚܘܝܢ. ܠܗܘܢ ܥܠ ܐܦܝܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪܬ ܠܗܘܢ. ܗܢܐ ܒܪܝ ܠܡܝܠܬܝ ܘܥܒܕܝ ܕܝܕܝ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*
N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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.	ܡܕܪܥܐ ܕܠܐ ܫܘܝܐ ܗܘܘܢ ܘܐܬܒܗܘܘ ܒܚܙܘܬܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܗܝ ܐܡܪܬܐ ܕܒܪܝ ܗܘ ܕܢܝܚܐ. ܘܥܒܕܬܝ ܗܝ ܕܥܒܕܬ ܗܘ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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.	ܡܕܪܥܐ ܕܠܐ ܫܘܝܐ ܗܘܘܢ ܘܐܬܒܗܘܘ ܒܚܙܘܬܐ. ܗܝ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܗܝ ܐܡܪܬܐ ܕܒܪܝ ܗܘ ܕܢܝܚܐ. ܘܥܒܕܬܝ ܗܝ ܕܥܒܕܬ ܗܘ.

Textual Notes

As in the previous passage, *HE* and *CZ* translate εὐθέως with ܡܕܪܥܐ/ܗܘܘܢ, yet here *A7a1* and *DS09* elect not to translate the adverb. All four texts translate the Greek φρίκη ("shuddering," "shivering") with the equivalent ܡܕܪܥܐ ("terror," "trembling"). [190] From here, they diverge significantly. The 'Eusebian' texts have the brigands becoming "frantic" (ܒܚܙܘܬܐ)—probably reflecting φρενῶν ἔκστασις in the Greek rather than παρέκστασις [191] —and then provide a precise equivalent for "froze at the sight" (παρὰ τὴν ὄψιν ἐπεπήγεσαν) with "transfixed at the sight" (ܕܐܡܪܬ ܗܝ ܐܡܪܬܐ). 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, ܬܪܝܢܝܬܐ ܕܫܘܫܢܐ, 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" (ܢܣܒ = αἱρέω) the brigands. But this is combined with the seemingly random replacement of "they clapped their hands over [or 'beat'] their faces" (ܒܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܐܝܕܝܗܘܢ ܥܠ ܦܓܝܗܘܢ). 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 ܚܒܝܒܐ ("beloved") to render γνήσιον ("genuine, legitimate, lawful");[192] did they talk themselves into seeing τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν 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" (ܥܒܝܕܬ ܐܝܕܝܐ). On the one hand, both *A7a1* and *DS09* avoid the pleonasm used in *HE* and *CZ* (ܕܠܐ ... ܕܠܐ), 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' ἀγαπητὸν ἀποκτεῖναι ...). Niese, *De Bello Iudaico*, 540 records no variant for the adjective.

adjectival pronoun (ἐμόν). On the other hand, *DS09* attempts to account for the second Greek pronoun, but possibly with an idiomatic sense of "alone."[194] If this is the case, then *DS09* elaborates on *A7a1* to account for the second ἐμόν in Greek, establishing its own idiosyncrasy as a text within a developing tradition.

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 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."	ܟܠܘ ܓܡܝܠ ܐܢܐ ܐܟܠܬ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܘܢ ܡܪܟܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܪܚܡܢܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܡܐ. ܐܢ ܕܚܝܠܬܘܢ ܗܘܝܬܘܢ ܡܫܬܘܪܝܢ ܦܢܝܟܘܢ ܡܢ ܕܒܚܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܐܢܐ ܫܡܬܝ ܠܟܘܢ ܘܐܦ ܕܡܫܬܘܪܬܘܢ ܠܗ ܬܬܩܢ ܠܝ ܡܢܝܢ.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15v)

[194] Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, 31–32. It is possible that the translator here intends a rare use of ܝܕܝܐ (ἴδιον) for "one's own."

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."	ܟܠܘ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܟܠܝܢ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܪܟܝܟܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܐܘ ܚܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܐܡܐ. ܐܢ ܕܚܢܢܐ ܐܢܬ ܗܘܝܬ ܬܦܢܘܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܝܟܘܢ ܡܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܝ ܩܘܪܒܢܝ ܗܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܟܘܢ. ܐܢ ܕܠܐ ܨܒܝܬܘܢ ܗܘ ܕܝܠܝ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܟܘܢ. ܐܢܐ ܡܫܬܠܡ ܠܟ ܕܝܠܝ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܝ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*
N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.29 (Wright and McLean p. 128)	
Take, eat for I also have eaten. Now be neither softer than a woman nor more compassionate than a mother. But if you are indeed just then you will pardon (me) from my slaughtering; I have already eaten, and what remains I will keep for myself."	ܗܒ ܟܠܘ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܟܠܝܢ. ܗܫܐ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܪܟܝܟܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܐܘ ܚܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܐܡܐ. ܐܢ ܕܚܩܝܩܐ ܐܢܬ ܗܘܝܬ ܬܫܒܘܩ ܠܝ ܡܢ ܩܛܠܐ ܕܝܠܝ: ܐܢܐ ܟܠܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ. ܘܡܕܡ ܕܫܪܐ ܠܝ ܢܛܪ ܠܢܦܫܝ.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 112 (fol. 31r; Harrak p. 181)	
Take and eat—I also have eaten. Now be neither softer than a woman nor more compassionate than a mother. But if you are indeed just then you will pardon (me) from my slaughtering; I have already	ܗܒ ܟܠܘ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܟܠܝܢ. ܗܫܐ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܪܟܝܟܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܐܘ ܚܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܐܡܐ. ܐܢ ܕܚܩܝܩܐ ܐܢܬ ܗܘܝܬ ܬܫܒܘܩ ܠܝ ܡܢ ܩܛܠܐ ܕܝܠܝ. ܗܘ ܕܫܪܐ ܠܝ ܢܛܪ.

eaten, and what remains I will keep for myself."	ܗܘܝܠܝ ܕܥܕ ܡܬܪܡ. ܐܟܠܬ ܠܝ.

Textual Notes

All four texts use the typical term ܐܟܠ ("to eat") to translate the Greek ἐσθίω. What is striking is the divergence of *HE* and *CZ* by adding "take" (ܢܣܒ) before. This has obvious—and somewhat troubling—Gospel overtones, as the exact expression is used in the Old Syriac and Peshitta texts of Matt 26:26.[195] Here, it is not the 'Maccabean' texts but the 'Eusebian' ones that make a creative addition to the tragic scene, perhaps also suggesting an uncomfortable comparison to a Christian audience. Given that the Maria Story often served (Syriac) Christian polemics as the definitive example of Jewish depravity, it is striking that here Maria evokes Jesus' sacrificial (albeit cannibalistic) language. While cannibalistic imagery is evoked in both places, could this be an indirect juxtaposition between 'bad' Jewish and 'good' Christian plays upon this theme?

Beyond this divergence, *HE* remains closest to the Greek's use of γάρ with the Syriac equivalent ܓܪ, which is completely omitted in *CZ*. By contrast, the 'Maccabean' texts use the copula ܗܠܟ ܕ ("because," "for this reason"), which is more commonly used to translate the Greek ὅτι, διὰ τοῦτο.[196] In the very next clause, however, the situation is reversed, with the 'Eusebian' texts adding the particle ܗܫܐ ("now," "therefore"), which is unaccounted for in the Greek.

---

[195] F. C. Burkitt, *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe: The Curetonian Version of the Four Gospels, with the Readings of the Sinai Palimpsest and the Early Syriac Patristic Evidence*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 156–57.

[196] Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2077.

The next phrase is, remarkably, nearly identical in the two translations. The use of ܗܘܝܠܐ for γίνομαι is typical, but it is more interesting that both translations conjure the same terms for the comparatives "softer than a woman" (ܪܟܝܟܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܬܬܐ) and "more compassionate than a mother" (ܡܪܚܡܢܝܐ ܡܢ ܐܡܐ).[197] The verb ܪܟܝ 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 (ܡܪܚܡܢܝܐ) among you, and so delicate (ܪܟܝܟܐ) that she would not attempt to place the soul of her foot upon the ground because of her delicateness and tenderness (ܡܛܠ ܕܪܟܝܘܬܗ ܘܡܪܚܡܢܘܬܗ), 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 Peshiṭta 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" (ܪܚܡܢܝܐ), while the 'Eusebian' texts prefer "just" (ܙܕܝܩܐ). 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 (ܪܚܡܢܝܐ) 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 ܦܢܐ ("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 ܫܪܐ 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" (ܐܟܠܬ ܟܕܡ ܗܘ ܡܢܬ), and the rest can be left to her as well (ܠܟ ܐܝܬܝ ܥܒܝ ܡܬܬܝܠ). 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 (ܐܟܠܬ ܡܢܬ ܠܟܘܢ), but since they reject it (ܕܠܐ ܨܒܝܢܘܢ), they should just leave her be (ܫܒܩܘܗܝ ܠܗ ܡܢܚܐ). It is hard to determine why the translators include "I have set (it) before you" (ܐܟܠܬ ܡܢܬ ܠܟܘܢ). 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 ἥμισυ—Maria fairly claims to have eaten half).

[207] Namely: ἐσθίω, ἔδομαι/φάγομαι, ἔφαγον, <u>ἐδήδοκα</u>, 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 *DS09* 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, *Bellum Judaicum* 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 ἐξῄεσαν πρὸς ἓν τοῦτο δειλοὶ καὶ μόλις ταύτης τῆς τροφῆς τῇ μητρὶ παραχωρήσαντες ἀνεπλήσθη δ᾽ εὐθέως ὅλη τοῦ μύσους ἡ πόλις καὶ πρὸ ὀμμάτων ἕκαστος τὸ πάθος λαμβάνων ὥσπερ αὐτῷ τολμηθὲν ἔφριττε.

Codex Ambrosianus 7a1 (fol. 325r col. 2)	
After these things they left, shaken and trembling. And	ܗܠܝܢ ܡܢܝܢ ܢܦܩܘ ܪܥܝܢ ܘܡܬܪܥܕܝܢ. ܘܡܢܝܢ ܡܫܬܪܝܢ ܠܗ

[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.

with difficulty they left this food to its mother. And the whole city was filled with this tale. And every person was setting before his eyes this suffering and was trembling as if he had done it.	ܟܕ ܢܦܩܘܗܝ ܡܢܗ ܒܥܝܢܐ. ܘܟܠܗ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܠܝܐ ܗܢܐ ܣܦܘܪܐ. ܘܟܠ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܚܙܐ ܠܡܚܙܐ ܗܢܐ ܥܢܝܢܗ ܘܗܘܐ ܡܬܪܥܫ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘܐ ܥܒܕ ܗܢܐ.

Deir al-Surian 09 (fol. 15v)	
After these things they left, shaken and trembling. And with difficulty they left this food. And the whole city was filled with this tale. And every person was setting before his eyes this suffering and was trembling as if she had done it.	ܟܕܝ ܡܠܝ ܗܘ ܡܬܚܝܢ ܘܡܪܥܫ ܒܦܚܕ. ܘܟܠܗܝܢ ܡܢܗ ܒܥܝܢܐ. ܘܟܠ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܚܙܐ ܠܡܚܙܐ ܗܢܐ ܥܢܝܢܗ ܘܗܘܐ ܡܬܪܥܫ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘܐ ܥܒܕ ܗܢܐ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*
N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.30 (Wright and McLean p. 128)	
Thereafter they went out from there fearful and trembling, but they barely left this food to the woman. And immediately the whole city was filled with this abominable news and every person, setting this grief	ܟܕ ܢܦܩܘ ܡܢ ܬܡܢ ܕܚܝܠܐ ܘܡܪܥܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܠܐ ܫܒܩܘ ܗܢܐ ܡܙܘܢܐ ܠܐܡܬܐ. ܘܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܟܠܗ ܡܠܝܐ ܗܢܐ ܣܦܘܪܐ ܒܝܫܐ. ܘܟܠ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܚܙܐ ܠܡܚܙܐ ܗܢܐ ܥܝܢܗ ܘܗܘܐ ܡܬܪܥܫ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘܐ ܥܒܕ ܗܢܐ.

before his eyes, was shaken by it, as if he had done it.	

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 112 (fol. 31r; Harrak p. 181)	
Thereafter they went out from there trembling and fearful, but they barely left this food to the woman. And immediately the whole city was filled with this abominable news and every person, setting this grief before his eyes, was shaken by it, as if he had done it.	ܡܢ ܬܪܬܝܗܘܢ ܢܦܩܘ ܡܢ ܬܡܢ ܕܪܥܝܢ ܘܕܚܠܝܢ. ܐܠܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢ ܠܗܕܐ ܡܙܘܢܐ ܠܐܢܬܬܐ, ܘܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܟܠܗ ܡܬܡܠܝܐ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܒܫܘܪܐ. ܘܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܟܠܗ ܡܬܡܠܝܐ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܒܫܘܪܐ ܕܫܡܥܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܫܢܝܐ, ܘܟܠ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܣܝܡ ܠܒܘܟܝܐ ܩܕܡ ܥܝܢܘܗܝ, ܘܐܦܠܘ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܡܙܘܢܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܚܫܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܥܒܕܘ ܗܘ.

Textual Notes

In this section, both Syriac traditions, all four texts, begin with the same literal rendering of μετὰ ταῦθ’ with ܡܢ ܬܪܬܝܗܘܢ (*HE* and *CZ* adding the ܡܢ preposition). *HE* and *CZ* supplement this with the superfluous “from there” (ܡܢ ܬܡܢ), not present in the Greek but an aid to the vividness of the scene’s action.

Next, all four Syriac traditions immediately depart from the Greek by replacing τρέμοντες with not one but two Syriac participles each. Yet the ‘Maccabean’ and ‘Eusebian’ traditions in part disagree as to the verbs used. *A7a1* and *DS09* render τρέμοντες with ܡܙܥܙܥ (“shaken, tottering, trembling”)[210] and ܕܚܠ

[210] As an Aphel passive participle, the use of ܡܙܥܙܥ makes a minor departure from the active voice of τρέμοντες, though with a similar sense: thus can Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 262 define ܙܥܙܥ with the passive “shaken” and the active “tottering.” The ‘Maccabean’ texts here could just as easily have used the active participle: cf. Peshitta 2 Pet 2:10 (ܡܙܥܙܥ = “trembling”); Jennings, *Lexicon*, 65. In any case, more so than ܕܚܠ, the semantic focus of ܙܥܙܥ is on physical movement, as can be inferred from Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 193.

("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 ܙܥܥ in their translations of τρέμοντες, but they opt for the adjective instead (ܙܥܥܝ). These 'Eusebian' texts pair this with another adjective ܕܚܠ (ܕܚܠܝ),[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 ܙܥܥ 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" (ܐܙܥܥܐ ܐܠܐ ܕܚ). This is so close to the 'Eusebian' traditions' ܙܥܥܐ ܕܚܠܝ ܕܚ 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 ܐܙܥܥܐ ܐܡܪܝܡ ܐܠܬܪ (cf. 2 Cor 7:15, where the Corinthians are said to have received Titus ܐܙܥܥܐ ܐܠܬܪ). 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 ἓν τοῦτο δειλοὶ, which identifies the brigands as "cowards" in this instance only. While one manuscript (C) reads δηλοὶ in the Greek, perhaps the Syriac translators simply saw the inclusion of this detail as superfluous.

All four traditions add the temporal ܕܒ 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 (ܫܒܩܘܗܝ) Maria's 'food' "with difficulty" (ܒܥܝܢܝܐ).[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 ܡܙܘܢܐ ("food, victuals, provisions"), both 'Eusebian' texts describe what was left aside as ܡܙܘܢܐ ("nourishment, food, provisions").[216] While these terms appear to be effective synonyms, and while both are accompanied by the demonstrative ܗܢܘ, 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 ܙܥܥ 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 [ܡܙܥܙܥܐ ܡܙܥܕܐ]; Phil 2:12 [ܡܙܥܙܥܐ ܡܙܥܕܐ]; Heb 12:21 [ܡܢܝ ܕܚܝܠܐ ܡܢܝ ܙܥܙܥܐ]; 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 (ܫܒܩ), 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 ματρὶ, such that the boy's remains are said to be left "to the mother [of the boy]" (ܡܛܪܝܐ). 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" (ܐܢܬܬܐ), and this is accompanied by the typical duplicating Syriac preposition + pronominal suffix phrase denoting the indirect object ܠܗ ("it") *and* by the prepositional demonstrative phrase ܠܡܢ ("to that [person]"); thus, ܐܢܬܬܐ ܠܡܢ ܠܗ = "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 ܐܢܬܬܐ 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 ܐܝܟܢܐ 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 ܡܐܟܠܬܐ appears as a totally mundane term for "food" at several points in Jesus' teaching recorded in Matt 6:25 and 10:10. The term ܡܐܟܠܬܐ, 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 (ܡܐܟܠܬܐ ܕܠܝ ܐܢܬܘܢ) that you do not know about" and then in 6:55 where Jesus states that "my body really is food" (ܐܢܬܝܐ ܗܝ ܕܝܠܝ ܡܐܟܠܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ). 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" (ܡܠܬܐ ܗܕܐ), [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" (ܡܫܬܡܥ ܡܬܐ ܗܕܐ)—the participle ܡܫܬܡܥ, from ܫܡܥ, is indeed close to the Greek μύσος,[220] but *HE* and *CZ* still report "news" (ܡܬܐ) 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 originally[222]—but

---

[218] For ܡܠܬܐ, 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 ܡܫܬܡܥܢܐ 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" (ܩܕܡܝܗܘܢ ܡܬܬܝܡܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ). 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 ܟܐܒܐ, 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 ܟܚܟܐ, 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 ܟܐܒܐ of the 'Maccabean' texts.

In the final sentence, *A7a1* and *DS09* again draw upon the verb ܡܪܥܕ 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 ܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܪܥܕܐ ("[and each person] was trembling"), *DS09* ends with ܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܪܥܕ ("[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 ܕ at the end of ܡܪܥܕ and a final ܐ rather than final ܢ in ܟܠܗܘܢ.

Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 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 λιμωττόντων 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.	ܘܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܝܢܗܘܢ ܩܢܝܐܘܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܠܡܘܬܐ. ܘܒܪܟܘ ܠܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܢܦܠܘ ܕܠܐ ܫܡܥܘ ܘܠܐ ܚܙܘ ܠܟܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܝܫܬܐ.

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.	ܘܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܝܢܗܘܢ ܩܢܝܐܘܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܠܡܘܬܐ. ܘܒܪܟܘ ܠܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܢܦܠܘ ܕܠܐ ܫܡܥܘ ܘܠܐ ܚܙܘ ܠܟܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܝܫܬܐ.

Eusebius, *Theophania*
N/A

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 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	ܘܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܬܪܥܝܬܐ ܕܒܢܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܐܬܥܢܘ ܒܗܕܐ ܟܦܢܐ ܠܡܘܬܐ. ܘܒܪܟܘ ܠܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܢܦܠܘ ܕܠܐ ܫܡܥܘ ܘܠܐ ܚܙܘ ܠܟܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܝܫܬܐ.

died before they had heard and seen such evils as these.	

The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* 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.	ܗܘܝܬ ܚܡܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܐܬܥܢܘ ܒܗܕܐ ܟܦܢܐ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܘܐܬܝܗܒ ܒܪܟܬܐ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܝܬܘ ܩܕܡ ܕܫܡܥܘ ܘܚܙܘ ܗܠܝܢ ܫܢܝܐ ܐܠܝܢ.

Textual Notes

In the first sentence, *A7a1* and *DS09* exaggerate the claim made in the Greek that there was "zeal" (σπουδὴ) for death among the starving in Jerusalem by adding the adjective ܣܓܝܐܐ ("great, many, much") to the Syriac term ܚܡܝܪܘܬܐ.[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" (ܒܗܘܢ), 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 ܚܡܝܪܘܬܐ 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 σπουδὴ: *LSJ* ad loc.

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

not only include a parallel to the Greek's subjective genitive, τῶν λιμωττόντων, but expand on it: we no longer find "those who were starving" but now "those being tormented by famine" (ܡܬܥܢܝܢ ܒܟܦܢܐ).[228]

All of the Syriac traditions agree to translate μακαρισμὸς with ܒܪܟܬܐ, 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" (ܝܗܒܘ ܠܡܝܬܐ) a blessing, namely the surviving inhabitants of Jerusalem, to the already-deceased; *HE* and *CZ* have instead that a blessing "was given" (ܐܬܝܗܒ ܒܪܟܬܐ). Neither, of course, corresponds with the laconic Greek, where μακαρισμὸς 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 ἀκοῦσαι of the infinitive set ἀκοῦσαι καὶ θεάσασθαι is repeated in the Syriac (ܠܡܫܡܥ). 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 (ܠܡܫܡܥ ܘܠܡܚܙܐ).

---

[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" (ܡܬܥܢܝ) in his fiery postmortem fate. Is it possible that the translator of *HE* plays upon this (possibly well-known) association of hell with torment (ܥܢܝ) 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 ܥܢܝ.)

[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" (ܫܡܥܬܐ), thereby omitting the Greek's substantive adjective κακὰ. The 'Eusebian' traditions retain this important qualifier with ܒܝܫܬܐ ("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 expositional or tendential in character." [232] However, Brock notes that translations of Eusebius were among the "restrained expositional translations" of this early period.[233] We have seen above that the 'Maccabean' traditions do indeed tend to be "expositional 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" expositionally, 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 su 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 expositional 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 ܣܓܝܐܐ ("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 (ܫܡܥܝܢ ܘܚܙܝܢ)—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 *BJ*, *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 τροφὴν). 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 ܗܕܐ, 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 λιμωττόντων to refer not just to "those who were starving" but to "those being tormented by famine" (ܕܡܬܥܢܝܢ ܒܟܦܢܐ). 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" (ܥܒܕܐ) 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*, *DS09*, *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 γυναικὸς and συμπαθέστεροι μητρός (ܡܬܪܟܝܠܐ ܕܐܢܬܬܐ and ܡܪܚܡܢܝܐ ܕܐܡܐ) 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*/*DS09* and *HE*/*CZ*. Similarly, all of the traditions omit completely πρὸς ἓν τοῦτο 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" (ܡܣܟܝܢܐ), the same term *A7a1*/*DS09*/*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 (ܒܪ ܝܢܩܐ | ܝܢܩܐ ܕܐܡܐ | ܡܣܟܝܢܐ ܝܢܩܐ).

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 ܐܢܘܢ 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 ܡܬܬܩܝܐ or ܡܬܨܕܩ 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 ܐܦܘ to the beginning of the final sentence in 6.194, just as only *HE* includes ܓܪܡܐ for γάρ in 6.211. And the 'Eusebian' texts are regularly differentiated by an added or omitted particle or minor addition (as with ܕܡ 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 (ܡܫܬܥܐ) stands in qualitative relief to speaking lies or false things (ܡܫܠܚܐ)—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—ܡܫܝܢܬܐ), 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: ܡܫܝܬܐ versus ܡܫܝܚܐ for ψυχρά; ܥܡܡ versus ܡܬܡ versus ܡܬܝ for καθυφέμενος. 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]

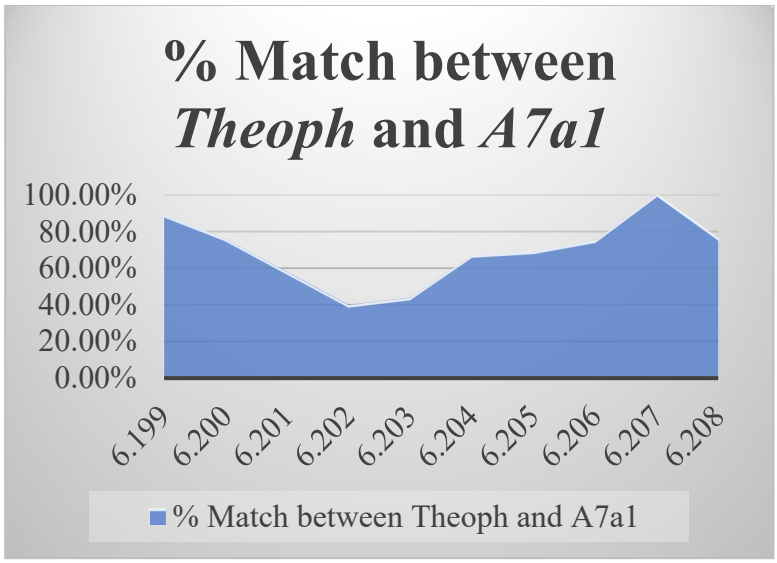
The most significant finding of our analysis above, by far, is our confirmation of a link between *Theoph* and the 'Maccabean' texts, *A7a1* and *DS09*. The extent to which these latter texts contain verbatim agreements with the text of *Theoph* demonstrates with certainty that they belong to the same 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 *BJ*)	Number of Syriac Words in *Theoph*	Number of Identical Words in *A7a1*	Rough % of *Theoph* present in *A7a1*
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 ܬܘܪܢܘܝ for τύραννοι, a Greek loanword, while the 'Maccabean' texts prefer the Syria term (ܡܠܟܐ). 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" (ܗܘܡܟܐ) 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 ܡܠܬܐ (*A7a1*, *DS09*, *Theoph*) or ܡܠܬܐ (*HE*, *CZ*), "story" or "proverb"—that this beleaguered mother had predicted (indeed, commanded).