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The ‘Maria Story’ in Greek, Latin, & Hebrew: The *Teknophagia* Episode (*BJ* 6.201–213) in Josephus, Latin Josephus, Rufinus, Pseudo-Hegesippus, and *Sefer Yosippon* with Introduction, Texts, Translations, Notes, & Commentary

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Abstract: This article provides the first close comparative analysis of the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew versions of the ‘Maria Story’ or teknophagia, the account of the mother who ate her child within a besieged Jerusalem first recorded in Flavius Josephus’ Jewish War 6.201–213. Josephus wrote his original account in Greek in the first century. Within the following half-millennium, three Latin editions of the story emerged: those of 1) the Latin translation of the War, 2) Rufinus of Aquileia’s translation of Eusebius’ Church History, which contains Josephus’ Greek version of the story, and 3) the Latin adaptation of Pseudo-Hegesippus or On the Destruction of Jerusalem (De Excidio Hierosolymitano). This latter text comprises a late fourth-century Christian rewrite of the Greek War and served as the most important source for a Jewish text that would emerge five hundred years later: the so-called Sefer Yosippon, an early tenth-century Hebrew text which is arguably the first and most important installment of medieval Jewish historiography. Each of these texts has received scholarly attention, and sometimes several have been discussed together. Nor has the Maria Story itself escaped scholarly treatment. Yet the exact relationship between these texts and their renditions of the Maria Story has never been closely examined and clearly explained. This article fills this gap in the research and uses the Maria Story to explore source-critical, literary, philological, and rhetorical questions pertaining to these five versions of the Maria Story, with an emphasis upon De Excidio and Sefer Yosippon, the most understudied iterations of this ancient and medieval tradition. This

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study enhances our ability to appreciate these works as distinctive iterations of an interconnected web of tradition.

1 Introduction & Scope

The literary and traditionary *Nachleben* of the *Jewish War* (or *Bellum Judaicum* = *BJ*), a Greek work by the first-century Jewish-Roman Flavius Josephus, stands among the most extensive, significant, and variegated legacies of antiquity. Yet, for all its manifest import, this tradition is still quite imperfectly known. By examining one prominent passage as represented within one particular complex of strains of the *War*'s reception history, this article sheds light on the literary, rhetorical, philological, and source-critical questions attending to this tradition as it appeared in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew across the first millennium of the Common Era.

One of the major lacunae in the research is a clear understanding of the character of and relationships between the several Latin adaptations of Josephus' *Jewish War*. This Latin tradition of Josephus includes

LBJ: the *Latin Bellum Judaicum*, a rather literal Latin translation of the *War* which appeared in late antiquity (fourth or fifth century) and whose author-translator(s) is unknown;

DEH & PH: *De Excidio Hierosolymitano* (*On the Destruction of Jerusalem*) and 'Pseudo-Hegesippus', a Christian rewrite which condenses the *War*'s seven books into five and omits, adds, and changes Josephus' narrative at will, attributed to an anonymous author (= *PH*) and probably written around 370–375 CE;

LHE: the *Latin Historia Ecclesiastica*, i.e. Rufinus of Aquileia's Latin translation of Eusebius of Caesarea's Greek *Historia Ecclesiastica* (= *HE*) and published in 402/3 CE; inasmuch as Eusebius' *Church History* contains a number of passages from Josephus' Greek *War* repeated verbatim, Rufinus' translation of those passages effectively constitutes a Latin translation of Josephus' Greek.

The potential connections or correlations between these three Latin transformations of Josephus' *War*, as well as their respective literary, linguistic, and rhetorical characters, has yet to be firmly established within the scholarship, though some recent headway has been made in this regard.¹ In addition to these late-antique Latin traditions, in the early tenth century there appeared a Hebrew work now called *Sefer Yosippon* (= *SY*) which comprises a history of the world with a strong focus on the Second Temple period.² *SY* became an extremely popular and influential text and is, according to Steven Bowman, "to this day a Hebrew classic in the full sense of the term."³ This work, which contains a

¹ See recently Bay, "On the Multivocality of the Latin Josephus Tradition."

² See Dönitz, "Historiography among Byzantine Jews"; Dönitz, "Sefer Yosippon (Josippon)."

³ Bowman, "'Yosippon' and Jewish Nationalism," 25.

great deal of Josephan material, adopts *DEH* as its most important source (the second half of the massive work corresponds roughly to the narrative of *DEH*)⁴ and ends where that earlier Latin work does: with the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 CE and the brief aftermath of the Roman-Jewish War (66–70 CE) enacted in the famous mass Jewish death atop Mount Masada.⁵ These three Latin traditions and this one Hebrew text, taken together with Josephus' Greek *Jewish War* (reproduced in *HE*), the ultimate source for all of these, comprise the most prominent strand of the *War*'s transmission- and reception-history and encapsulate the use, alteration, and understanding of the *War* within the Western Mediterranean over the first millennium of the Common Era.⁶

Reasons for seeking a better understanding of this web of textual and narrative tradition are obvious. Josephus was the most important extra-canonical Jewish author within ancient and medieval Christendom, and thus a thorough understanding of how his work was apprehended among Latin-reading Christians constitutes a basic tenet of the study of pre-modern Christianity. Josephus' fraught relationship with post-Temple Judaism, and his eventual re-inclusion into the Jewish literary fold, is also telling: Josephus' work is conspicuously absent from almost all Jewish literature of the first millennium CE—that is, until the penning of *SY* in the early tenth century. All of this is to say that Josephus is a literary staple of our understanding of Christian (and later Jewish) culture in antiquity and the early Middle Ages, especially as those cultures understood and constructed the history of the Second Temple period. The critical and comparative study of the various 'versions' of his *Jewish War* represents a linchpin for comprehending premodern historiographical discourse among Jews and Christians and the identities and ideologies negotiated therein.

This constitutes the broader 'why' of this study. The narrower 'why' has to do with the fact that, within research on Josephus' reception history, which has ballooned in recent years, these Latin and Hebrew 'Josephus' traditions with their distinctive literary-rhetorical characters and diverse interrelations, similarities, and differences are still poorly known and rarely appreciated by scholars. Certainly nothing like a common knowledge of what these texts are and how they relate to each other exists today within the academic

⁴ On the Latin sources of *SY*, the foundational work is Flusser, "Der lateinische Josephus und der hebräische Josippon."

⁵ According to *DEH* (5.53), as in *BJ*, this is a mass suicide; but remarkably, according to *SY* 89 (ט) it is a last-ditch effort in which the Jewish rebels all die fighting the Roman forces.

⁶ The Maria Story circulated in the Eastern Mediterranean world as well, for example in the Syriac tradition, where at least five different texts contain the tale as told by Josephus and/or Eusebius. The present author is currently working on these traditions with Jacob Lollar.

guild;⁷ for indeed, the foundation upon which such a consensus could rest has yet to be built.

This study places the above-mentioned Greek, Latin, and Hebrew traditions side-by-side in order to undertake close comparative analysis. The passage with which I have chosen to compare *BJ*, *LBJ*, *LHE*, *DEH*, and *SY* is perhaps the most shocking and horrendous (by design) in all of Josephus' original work. It is a tale briefly told at *BJ* 6.201–13 amidst the woes of a Jerusalem in its death throes: during the siege of the city by Titus, with the Jews inside suffering from starvation caused by famine and from the ongoing violence and brutality practiced by various groups of Jewish rebels, a woman is caught up in the fray. This woman, named Maria, enters the city. She is an aristocrat and is thus, at the outset, well-supplied. Rebels steal all of her resources and leave her starving and bereft. Eventually, overcome by her dire circumstances, she resorts to the unthinkable: she kills, cooks, and eats her infant son, and she even saves a portion of her 'meal' for the rebels who stole her food, and offers it to them. This individual tragedy turns national travesty, and both the Jews in Jerusalem and the Romans without (represented by Titus) shudder at, mourn, and condemn such a turn of events. This passage serves as an apt point of comparison between these five text traditions for several reasons. Chief among these is the fact that this story was manifestly important for its original author, Josephus, and for later Christian readers who read a great deal into the event as evidenced by their portrayals of the story in both art and literature.

To appreciate fully the Maria Story and its legacy, one must begin with a grasp of the backdrop of cultural traditions that lay behind it. First and most important is a particular 'promise' (read: threat) present within the warnings and admonitions of Deuteronomy. Understood later as prophetic, this passage provides the most obvious subtext for the Maria Story. (In what follows, I insert key Hebrew, Greek, and Latin vocabulary from the biblical passage which re-emerges in at least one of the five later traditions.) In it Moses speaks of God's judgment in the case of Israel's breach of covenant, in the form of a foreign nation besieging the Israelites:

“It shall besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the LORD your God has given you. Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh (בשר/*carnes*) of your sons and of your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you. The man who is refined (רָד) and very delicate among you shall be hostile toward his brother and toward the

⁷ A good and recent example of general scholarly unfamiliarity with *DEH* and *SY* comes in the treatment of both in Tuval, “Flavius Josephus,” 290–292. The entries (numbered 3.2 and 3.4 respectively) reveal scant familiarity with the texts themselves and less with the current state of scholarship on each. This is not a criticism of Tuval's work or this generally excellent volume, encyclopedic by necessity; rather, it is simply a statement of the fact that these texts are not common knowledge. Far less informed than Tuval's entries are the short paragraphs dedicated to *DEH* and *SY* in Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*, 180–183. Evans' descriptions are inaccurate and evince zero familiarity with the texts themselves or the scholarship on them over the past half-century.

wife he cherishes and toward the rest of his children who remain, so that he will not give even one of them any of the flesh (בשר/*carnibus*) of his children which he will eat (κατέσθῃ), since he has nothing else left (השאיר), during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you in all your towns. The refined (רכה) and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness (*mollitiem*) and refinement (רד), shall be hostile toward the husband she cherishes and toward her son and daughter,⁸ and toward her afterbirth which issues from between her legs and toward her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of anything else, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you in your towns.”⁹

As will become clear in the analysis below, not only the general idea of a woman eating her child during the travails of siege-caused famine but also a number of thematic elements of this biblical ‘prophecy’ emerge in the Maria Story as told by Josephus and/or his inheritors: these details include the persona of an aristocratic woman, the idea of doing such a deed in secret, lack of other options as a manifest ground for *teknophagia*, and the proximity of the enemy. Such biblical precedent manifestly underlay Josephus’ initial penning of the terrible tale; indeed, in this he had been anticipated already by the Book of Lamentations, which records regarding the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem (586 BCE):

See, O LORD, and look!
 With whom have You dealt thus?
 Should women eat their offspring,
 The little ones (*paruulos*) who were born healthy?
 Should priest and prophet be slain
 In the sanctuary of the Lord?¹⁰

Then again later in the same book one reads:

The hands (ידי/*manus*) of compassionate (רחמינות/*miserordium*) women
 Boiled (בשלו) their own children;
 They became food (*cibus*) for them
 Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.¹¹

When Josephus wrote his version of the Maria Story, he was able to draw from a well of Scriptural tradition which had already codified the collocation of siege, famine, and *teknophagia* as historical evidences of God’s wrath directed at his covenant people.¹² And

⁸ Here the Vulgate reads: “... her husband in whose arms she lies on account of the flesh of [her] son and daughter” (*viro suo qui cubat in sinu eius super filii et filiae carnibus*).

⁹ Deuteronomy 28:52–57 (NASB).

¹⁰ Lamentations 2:20 (NASB).

¹¹ Lamentations 4:10 (NASB).

¹² Note, however, that Josephus’ Greek resembles that of the Greek Jewish Scriptures less than do the Latin and Hebrew versions of the Maria Story the Vulgate and Hebrew MT respectively (!). On *teknophagia* in Lamentations vis-à-vis Greco-Roman literature and theological critique, see Bosman, “The Function of (Maternal) Cannibalism in the Book of Lamentations.”

indeed, Josephus follows the Hebrew Bible's Deuteronomistic logic in explaining the destruction of Jerusalem on the whole, albeit in a way intelligible to Greek/Roman readers.¹³

When Josephus penned the Maria Story, however, he was not restricted to the Jewish Scriptures as a source of inspiration. The combined themes of child-killing and/or *teknophagia*, divine displeasure, and insanity-inducing aporias were known across the ancient Mediterranean world. They found perhaps their most natural home in tragedy. Sophocles and Euripides established such themes within the world of Greek tragedy in the *Tereus* and *Medea* respectively, the former of which, now lost, told the story of a mother who feeds her son to his father as recompense for his raping her sister,¹⁴ the latter the tale of a woman, driven mad, who slays her own children (also for revenge).¹⁵ Like the Maria Story, both tragedies revolve in part around tragic speeches by female lead characters. The latter Greek tragedy was made Roman by Seneca the Younger in the middle of the first century CE.¹⁶ Seneca is more famous for a related Latin tragedy, the *Thyestes* (written ca. 62 CE),¹⁷ where an eponymous figure of Greek mythology is tricked by his brother Atreus into eating his own children, who have been slain, cooked, and served to order. The themes that emerge in Maria Story were common fare within the culture of Flavian Rome in which Josephus wrote, and such themes found particular purchase within the tragic literary tradition, which evidently influenced Josephus' own prose.¹⁸

Such themes, however, were by no means restricted to the tragic genres. Cannibalism was a trope endemic to ancient Mediterranean practices of ethnic othering,¹⁹ and more

¹³ See Price, "Some Aspects of Josephus' Theological Interpretation"; Kelley, "The Cosmpolitan Expression of Josephus's Prophetic Perspective," 260–263. This perspective has often been attributed to Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*: see Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 62.

¹⁴ See now Finglass, "A New Fragment of Sophocles' 'Tereus,'" Fitzpatrick, "Sophocles' 'Tereus.'" The Tereus myth was reimagined by Ovid, e.g.; see Wright, "The Reception of Sophocles in Antiquity." One should look out for forthcoming work: an interdisciplinary conference on "Rape, Revenge and Transformation: Tereus Through the Ages," took place in December 2019, and contributions are slotted to appear in a volume with De Gruyter.

¹⁵ See Hopman, "Revenge and Mythopoiesis in Euripides' *Medea*"; Luschnig, *Granddaughter of the Sun*; McDermott, *Euripides' Medea*.

¹⁶ See now Slaney, *Seneca: Medea*.

¹⁷ See Tarrant, *Seneca's Thyestes*, and more recently Boyle, *Seneca: Thyestes*.

¹⁸ This has been masterfully treated in the (tragically unpublished) work of Chapman, "Spectacle and Theater in Josephus's *Bellum Judaicum*," which dedicates a fully chapter to the Maria Story (58–121). Further on tragedy as an influence upon Josephus see first Feldman, "The Influence of the Greek Tragedians on Josephus"; Shenoy, "Josephus' *Jewish War* as a narrative five-act tragedy." More recently, with bibliography, see Swoboda, "Tragic Elements in Josephus."

¹⁹ Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 207–211, who notes: "Josephus, too, is full of gory details: the mother who ate her child during the siege of Jerusalem ... Yet Josephus rather enjoyed telling it" (209).

than one first-century Hellenistic Jewish author played upon its cultural connotations.²⁰ For later authors who translated or rewrote Josephus' *Maria Story*, the cultural *koiné* encompassing this topic was broader still. A potentially important precursor to the Latin renditions of Josephus' *Maria Story* (i.e., those of *LBJ*, *LHE*, *DEH*) appears in the second- or third-century *Major Declamations* attributed pseudonymously to the great first-century CE orator Quintilian.²¹ This compilation, the only extant collection of Latin declamations surviving from classical antiquity, contains a series of generalized mock court cases regarding various legal issues. One case concerns an agent who was tasked with buying and returning with grain to a city suffering from famine. Instead, he sold the grain for twice the price to another city. In the case against this man, his accuser describes how things devolved within the city in his absence, as food supplies went from scarce to non-existent (I quote at some length):

Yet I must inform the defendant, who was far away from our people in their time of trouble, regarding how many people there were for whom his arrival was too late. Pardon us, gods and men alike, for this indeed was the most horrible crime of all. But it was yet one accompanied by a tremendous amount of anguish in its commission. (...) The dying chomped on the ground! I would have eaten my very own self if there had been nothing else! But I must confess: even without our agent's help, I didn't lack for food. After burning hunger had overwhelmed all power to endure it, after all the hope had gone which is the final refuge for those in distress, and our minds did not even dare hope for the grain futilely promised to us so many times before, then raging insanity came over us and we became slaves to our hunger. Our minds became numb because of our hardships, our mouths were paralyzed at the prospect of this strange food, and we began to envy wild animals. Nevertheless, at first in secret and within his own place of concealment each of us accepted this monstrous fair, and, had you come a little sooner, we could have denied this: if any corpse was missing from the massive heaps of bodies, we thought it was buried. But nobody informed nor did anybody get caught. Nobody followed someone else's example to do this—each person instructed himself. We all began to know, after all of us had done it. (...)

Then like wild animals we fell on the corpses, yes, with our eyes shut, as if the sight were more painful than our guilty consciences, and we devoured entire bodies, bite by bite. In the meanwhile, abhorrence for our acts, yes, disgust, self-hatred, and grief also came over us. But when we ran away from this accursed food, once again our hunger gnawed at us, and we had to gather up what we had spit out just before from our mouths. Now those details appear disgusting

²⁰ The Gospel of John may play on the same trope: see Harrill, "Cannibalistic Language." MacDonald, *The Dionysian Gospel*, 64–67 (and see 35, 115, 187n44, 207, 216) connects John 6:35, 53–58 (where Jesus speaks to his disciples of 'eating his flesh') with Euripides' *Bacchae* 114–166 as part of a larger argument that the Gospel of John is built on a kind of mimetic relationship with the earlier Euripidean work (MacDonald calls his method 'mimesis criticism').

²¹ Some of the nineteen declamations contained may well date back to the first century.

to me, now they seem detestable—the mutilated bodies, bones stripped bare, and rib cages empty inside with the external skin torn away. Now I am confronted with the vital organs pouring out, the greyish-blue flesh, the gore squeezed out by our teeth, and the marrow extracted from the bones. How small a portion of the corpse indeed did our hunger leave behind! How I shudder at those times, if ever either a hand or a face or, in short, anything else turned up which indicated a human with its own special characteristics. Now foods suggested themselves which I didn't dare put on a dinner table. For we must confess: we devoured men, indeed quite voraciously, we who for a long time had eaten nothing, and yet it was still a terribly difficult task to start doing this. But after the practice became established, after there was nobody left in the city who was ashamed to admit it, then indeed we already started taking precautions for the future and we stored up corpses in our pantries. Funeral processions were led back to their starting points. Fights occurred either around corpses or near the pyres. The heir formally accepted the corpse as his inheritance. Unless we had known what was happening, we would have had a monstrously strange and incredible phenomenon: a famine without funeral pyres. No obituary list was published: I only knew that people had died because I didn't see them among the living. (...)

... we have made our bodies tombs: we have sunk our teeth, dark red with gore, into pale and lifeless corpses; caught between revulsion and starvation, we have drawn back our lips and then bitten off chunks. Corpses are rolled down on the pyres and we come in as large numbers to funerals as we would for arriving ships. Someone is fading fast, hanging on to his last gasp; yet he holds on since he thinks another person may die before him. Each person waits for the other, and, if one is dying more slowly than their hopeful expectations, they fight over him with their teeth. Not in all cases do they just wait for death. A father feels hunger for his children, and a mother overtaken by the end of her pregnancy gives birth—but for her own enjoyment: the mangled infant returns to her belly. People shut up their homes so nobody may steal a corpse inside. The only wealth is in dead bodies. We stand over the dying just like loathsome vultures. Poor, suffering people seek hiding places and flee into the wilderness. When all hope of survival is lost, they conceal their own deaths. Those on the verge of death flee to wild animals for protection!²²

²² [Ps-Quintilian] *Declamationes Maiores* 12.8–9, 27. “The Case of the People Who Ate Corpses.” Translation from Sussman, *The Major Declamations*, 145–164. (Cited as *DM* in the remainder of this article.) The standard Latin text appears as “*Cadaveribus pasti*” in the Teubner edition of Håkanson, *Declamationes XIX*, 231–264, here citing 239–241, 262–263: (...) *at necesse est reo indicare, qui a malis publicis afuit, quam multis non ad diem is venerit. ignoscite, dii hominesque, sceleri quidem ultimo, sed tamen quod fecisse miserimum est. (...) terram morientes momorderunt. memetipsum, si nil fuisset aliud, comedissem. sed confitendum est: legati beneficio non defuit. postquam omnem patientiam vicerat ignea fames, postquam spes quoque, quae miseris ultima est, omnis abierat, et frumentum totiens sibi frustra promissum animus iam ne cupere quidem audebat, subiit furor et alienatio mentis, et tota sui arbitrii fames facta est. animus malis deriguerat, os insolitis cibis stupebat, feris invidere coepimus. primo tamen furtim et intra suas quisque latebras admisit hoc monstrum, et, si paulo citius venisses, potuisset hoc negari: si quid ex strage corporum defuerat, sepultum putabamus. nec tamen indicavit quisquam, nec*

The conceptual and lexical overlap between this text and the Maria Story as recorded in *LBJ*, *LHE*, and especially *DEH*, is immense.²³ Just as importantly: the fact that this text exists within a corpus of standard rhetorical exercises presumably representative of standard education in the Roman Empire suggests that the themes upon which it touches were, far from being unusual or obscure, common within Roman culture. Nor were such declamations necessarily *only* rhetorical: they may also be understood as literary pieces in their own right²⁴ and, significantly, may be understood as ways of navigating ethical social discourse.²⁵ Therefore, that a text like the declamation partially quoted above existed within the culture of rhetoric in the early Common Era hints that

deprehendit aliquis. nemo, ut hoc faceret, exemplo impulsus est; se quisque docuit, omnes scire coepimus, postquam omnes fecimus. / Ergo rabidi supra cadavera incubuimus et clausis oculis, quasi visus conscientia acerbior esset, tota corpora morsibus consumpsimus. subit interim horror ex facto et taedium ac detestatio sui et planctus, sed, cum ab infaustis fugimus cibis, urit iterum fames, et quod modo ex ore proiecimus, colligendum est. nunc mihi illa foeda videntur, nunc abominanda, laceri artus et nudata ossa et abrepta cute intus cavum pectus, nunc occurrunt effusa praecordia et lividae carnes et expressum dentibus tabum et exhaustae ossibus medullae. quantulum enim corporis fames relinquebat! nunc illud horreo tempus, si quando aut manus incidit aut facies aut aliquid denique, quod hominem propria nota signat, nunc cibi succurrunt, quos inponere in mensam non ausus sum. confitendum est enim: devoravimus homines et quidem avide, qui diu nihil ederamus, et tamen coepisse difficillimum fuit. postquam ius factum est, postquam nemo erat in civitate, quem confiteri puderet, tum vero iam in posterum prospicimus et funera horreis condimus. retro aguntur exequiae; aut circa (corpora) aut ad rogos pugna est. heres cadaver cernit. novum et incredibile, nisi nossemus, monstrum habuimus: sine rogis pestilentiam. mortium ratio non constitit; perisse cives scio tantum, quia inter viventes non video. / ... busta nos fecimus: nigros sanie denies pallidis cadaveribus inpressimus, et inter horrorem ac famem restrictis labris morsa abrupimus. cadavera rogis devoluta sunt, et ad funera tamquam ad naves concurrimus. deficit aliquis extremo iam spiritu pendens; tamen durat, quia prius moriturum alterum putat. invicem expectant, et, si spei figuratione tardius cadit, morsibus pugna(n)t. non in omnibus mortes expectantur: pater liberos esurit, et oppressa decimo mense mater sibi parit: redit in uterum laceratus infans. cludunt domos, ne quis funus eripiat; solae sunt divitiae mortium. velut infaustae aves supra expirantes stamus. secreta miseri petunt, in solitudinem fugiunt, et, ubi nulla spes vitae superest, mortis suas abscondunt; iam morituri ad feras confugiunt! secreta miseri petunt, in solitudinem fugiunt, et, ubi nulla spes vitae superest, mortis suas abscondunt; iam morituri ad feras confugiunt!

²³ In the Latin text printed in the footnote above the salient lexical correspondences between *DM* 12 and *LBJ*, *LHE*, and *DEH* are marked with underlining, grey background, and red text color respectively. (The terms printed in red only testify to how much *DM* 12 has in common with *DEH* in particular.) Among the general thematic correspondence between *DM* 12 and these Maria Story traditions, we may reckon minimally: a) the charge of criminality; b) the struggle of inner turmoil; c) resorting to non-food items to eat (cf. *BJ* 6.193–201); d) the oppressive agency of hunger; e) the explicit loss of hope or recourse; f) reference to minds and their being affected in the decision-making process; g) the role of insanity in deciding to condescend to cannibalism; h) the grotesque description of dead bodies as food; i) reference to marrow and bones; j) a fixation upon hands and faces; k) mention of portions and portion size; l) indication of the dinner table/mealtime; m) the difficulty of beginning the act of cannibalism; n) mention of fighting over scarce (non-) ‘food’ (cf. *BJ* 6.193–201); o) the idea of the body becoming a tomb; p) the explicit mention of mothers eating children; q) the disturbing theme of a child’s ‘return’ into its mother’s belly; r) the detail of the closing of the eyes during the act. A fuller reading of *DM* 12 in its entirety will reveal further parallels. Note in addition that *LBJ*, *LHE*, and *DEH* all identify a lack of *pietas* in Maria’s actions (*DEH* more than the others), and *DM* 12 marks how cannibalism incurs *impietas*; see Breij, “Pseudo-Quintilian’s Major Declamations,” 360n20 (the article surveys *pietas* in the *Major Declamations*).

²⁴ Stramaglia, “An International Project.”

²⁵ Beard, “Looking (Harder) for Roman Myth”; such declamations “offer an arena for learning, practicing and recollecting what it is to be and think Roman” (56).

the themes it combines—famine and cannibalism—and the graphic ways in which it combines them constituted a culturally intelligible subject matter and a discursive tone sufficient to render plays upon such themes in later literature (e.g. the Maria Story as translated/transformed in *LBJ*, *LHE*, *DEH*) at the very least unsurprising.²⁶

Even if we lacked the evidence of the *Major Declamations*, however, we could demonstrate from the earlier Christian tradition alone that by the time *LBJ*, *LHE*, and *DEH* were written (all are 4th or early-5th century texts) not just cannibalism, but maternal *teknophagia* and the Maria Story in particular had become standard tropes in certain strains of Christian discourse. In the second century *Easter Homily (Peri Pascha)* by Melito of Sardis, for example, one already finds within a discussion of humanity’s fall from grace the statement:

So all men become upon the earth either manslayers
Or parricides
Or infanticides
or fratricides.

But the strangest and most terrible thing occurred on the earth: [52]
a mother touched the flesh she had brought forth,
and tasted what she had suckled at the breasts;
and she buried in her belly the fruit of her belly,
and the wretched mother became a terrible grave,
gulping, not kissing, the child she had produced.²⁷

Heinz Schreckenberg says of this passage:

With a probability bordering on certainty, this is a reference to the *teknophagia* (devouring of children) of Maria in besieged, starving Jerusalem (*War* 6:201–213, presumably influenced by Lam 4:10). Melito could assume that his allusion to Josephus would be understood, which speaks for a certain knowledge of the Jewish historian in Christian circles.²⁸

Very early on, in other words, the Maria Story was a tradition passed around Christian circles (perhaps independently of Josephus’ work[s] as whole texts). And in fact, the details

²⁶ It may be that *DM* 12 finds a parallel in Cicero *Flacc.* 17, which mentions a certain Athenagoras who was culpable of exporting grain in a time of famine, as per Schamberger, *De declamationum Romanarum*, 75ff. However, see Håkanson, “Zu den Themata der Größeren Deklamationen,” 14. Seneca’s *De Ira* 3.20.3 is also listed as a possible source for *DM* 12 by Håkanson, “Zu den literarischen Vorbildern,” 21.

²⁷ Melito of Sardis *Peri Pascha* 51b–52. Text and translation adapted from Hall, *Melito of Sardis*, 26–29: πάντες οὖν οἱ μὲν ἀνθρωποκτόνοι, οἱ δὲ πατροκτόνοι, οἱ δὲ τεκνοκτόνοι, οἱ δὲ ἀδελφοκτόνοι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐγενήθησαν. τὸ δὲ καινότερον καὶ φοβερώτερον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἠύρισκετο· μήτηρ τις ἤπτετο σαρκῶν ὧν ἐγέννησεν, καὶ προσήπτετο ὧν ἐξέθρεψεν μασθοῖς, καὶ τὸν καρπὸν τῆς κοιλίας εἰς κοιλίαν κατάρρυσεν, καὶ φοβερὸς τάφος ἐγένετο ἢ δυστυχῆς μήτηρ, ἧ ἐκύθησεν καταπίνουσα τέκνον οὐκέτι προσλαλοῦν.

²⁸ Schreckenberg, “Josephus in Early Christian Texts,” 53–54. Cf. Schreckenberg, “Josephus und die christliche Wirkungsgeschichte,” 1123; Schreckenberg, *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche und textkritische Untersuchungen*, 13–14. Cf. Lieu, *Image and Reality*, who wonders “whether Melito was well aware of the resonances” such language had with Josephus (212). See further Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians*, 187–188n13, from Paget, “Some Observations on Josephus and Christianity,” 541–542n12.

to be found in Melito's *Peri Pascha*, even though he does not name Maria specifically, seem likely to have been inspirations for *DEH* given the two texts' similarities.²⁹ In the third century, Origen uses Josephus' description of Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE as a way of confirming a prophetic reading of the Book of Lamentations; predictably, Origen finds in the Maria Story a direct fulfillment of Lam 4:10.³⁰ Also predictably, Origen's intellectual descendant Eusebius of Caesarea not only records the Maria Story, but records Josephus' Greek text as a verbatim block quote (thus forming the basis of *LHE*, treated below).³¹ Moreover, Eusebius makes what will be an immensely influential interpretive move in the tradition by correlating the Maria Story not only with 'Old Testament' prophecies but also with those made by Jesus in the Gospels (Matt 24:19–21; Luke 19:42–44, 21:20, 23–24).³² This is "an example of how Eusebius systematically enlarges the traditional correspondence between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfillment, to include a further reference relationship between New Testament prophecy of doom for Jerusalem and Josephus' account of its realization."³³

The Maria Story and its complex of meanings, represented specifically in early Christian texts and paralleled generally in broader Roman culture, already constituted an object of discursive import before *DEH* and the other Latin Josephus traditions rewrote the episode in late antiquity. If we follow Clifford Geertz in understanding culture as a semiotic and thus in some ways 'readable' entity,³⁴ we can 'read' the social and discursive world into which the translator of *LBJ*, Rufinus, and PH all entered as Latin authors as one in which cannibalism and *teknophagia* as tropes, and the Maria Story as established tradition, were known entities and thus acceptable, perhaps expected, topics of discussion for authors drawing upon Josephus' *BJ* and/or talking about Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE. Yet this does not mean that the renditions of the tale recounted below are *prima facie* easily understood. The fact of the presence of this story within these multiple traditions is unremarkable; the form that the story takes within and between discrete traditions, however, bears significant attention.

Scholars have long recognized the importance of the Maria Story in Josephus and its prominence in Josephus' reception, where its popularity is second only to the *Testimonium*

²⁹ Namely, in addition to the mention of the child being at her breast, the idea of a woman returning to her belly what came from her belly, the idea of the mother's body becoming a grave, and the juxtaposition of kissing and eating, the normal and abnormal functions of a mother's mouth applied to her child (see analysis below).

³⁰ See his now-fragmentary *Commentary on Lamentations* (*Frag. in Lam.* 105, 109), mentioned by Inowlocki, "Josephus and Patristic Literature," 360 (see also Chapman, "A Myth for the World").

³¹ Eusebius routinely block-quoted Jewish authors like Josephus (and Philo): Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*.

³² That PH uses the Maria Story to illustrate and dramatize God's rejection/judgment of the Jews, and that Eusebius/Rufinus preserve this story from Josephus' *BJ* for the same theological-historiographical reasons, is mentioned several times in Pollard, "The *De Excidio* of 'Hegesippus.'"

³³ Schreckenberg, "Josephus in Early Christian Texts," 70, continuing: "In certain respects therefore, Josephus is included in the customary procedure for establishing scriptural proof, and thereby becomes henceforth a new basic work for Christian apologetic."

³⁴ Geertz, "Thick Description."

Flavianum.³⁵ The most important work in recent years begins with Honora Chapman's dissertation, which frames the Maria Story within Josephus' literary habits of spectacle and tragedy and shows how his telling of the story, far from lending itself to an anti-Jewish perspective, actually allows Josephus to cultivate compassion for the majority of the Jews whose sufferings he narrated.³⁶ Chapman's work remains the best treatment of the episode as it appears in Josephus, arguing compellingly that in the Maria Story—not any of the other key moments in the narrative of the *Jewish War*, e.g. the Battle of Jotapata or the Siege of Masada—one finds the conceptual center of the work: the downfall of the Jews, epitomized in Maria, is brutal, lamentable, tragic.³⁷ A more recent, updated, and much briefer distillation of Chapman's work appears in her installation in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*;³⁸ this essay should be consulted by anyone interested in this pericope. More recently, Steve Mason has also discussed the Maria Story's contribution to Josephus' construction of tragedy in his historiography.³⁹ In terms of ancient Christian adaptation of the scene, scholars dealing broadly with the early reception of Josephus routinely cite the Maria Story as an important passage,⁴⁰ though extended treatments are quite rare. As it happens, here also one of the most important contributions to scholarship has been made by Honora Chapman, yet once again the work remains unpublished: in a 2000 SBL conference paper, Chapman surveys the early Christian reception of the Maria Story. She begins by saying of the Church Fathers:

They cite the scene of Mary's cannibalism at *BJ*. 6.199–219 more often than any other from the *War* because it provides them with vivid evidence to corroborate passages in the scriptures concerning the two destructions of Jerusalem and God's punishment of his people for sin. Josephus's Christian readers also appreciate his use of tragic themes and diction in the scene of cannibalism. They choose, however, to ignore that his rhetorical purpose in this tragic passage is to encourage his readers to have compassion for the majority of Jews who suffered during the war with the Romans because of the actions of the Jewish rebels.⁴¹

³⁵ Quite recently see Goodman, "Josephus's The Jewish War," 9, 21–23, 150–152; then also, e.g., Chapman, "Spectacle and Theater," 52.

³⁶ Chapman, "Spectacle and Theater," 52.

³⁷ Chapman, "Spectacle and Theater"; this Chapman's central thesis finds support in the recent introductory essay by Mason, "Josephus' *Judean War*," who notes that the Maria Story stands at basically the precise center of *Jewish War*'s Book 6, a fact which Mason suggests points to that story's centrality (for the chapter and the work), given how the work's chapters tend to be arranged: "The nearly precise halfway point of Book 6's 12,462 words comes at the dramatic conclusion of Maria's cannibalism, itself the climax of increasingly desperate famine and brutality, with Titus's resolve to bury the city (6.219 ending 6,202 words)" (22).

³⁸ Chapman, "Josephus and the Cannibalism of Mary."

³⁹ Mason, "Pathos and passions in Josephus's *Judean War*."

⁴⁰ Following Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 11, 15, 32.

⁴¹ Chapman, "A Myth for the World," 359. In general, see Chapman here on the Maria Story in all the early Christian authors. On the emotional impact of the tragic scenes in *BJ* on early Christians see Schreckenberg, "The Works of Josephus and the Early Christian Church," 320.

DEH is perhaps the most important ancient author to capitalize upon the theological/historical *and* aesthetic aspects of the Maria Story in all of early Christian literature, cementing for future Christian tradition what would become a standard way of understanding Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE and the horrors that accompanied it. Yet, as Chapman shows, in this PH stands at the end of an already established interpretive tradition observable in authors like Melito of Sardis, as we have seen above, and also in Origen and Eusebius. *DEH*, therefore, and later *SY*, are beholden not only to their Josephan source (and its biblical background), but also to an early Christian ferment that had already interpreted the Maria Story for posterity.

The Maria Story, then, has generally been one aspect of Josephus' oeuvre to which scholarship has paid some attention.⁴² Art historians in particular have been interested in the episode, so well-represented did it become within medieval iconography.⁴³ The story as retold in *DEH* and *SY*, the primary focus of the present article, has enjoyed far less scholarly attention (this is also true of the episode in *LBJ* and *LHE*). When scholars do mention the story and even emphasize its importance for *DEH* and/or *SY*, it still almost never appears as the object of close scrutiny (Chapman's "A Myth for the World" is an exception).⁴⁴ But scholars clearly know the story. Saskia Dönitz, perhaps the most important contemporary scholar on *SY*, mentions the Maria Story in a number of her studies. Yonatan Binyam, in his recent dissertation, treats the Maria Story in the Greek of *BJ*, and more fully the Latin of *DEH* and the Hebrew of *SY*, en route to exploring the Maria Story within the Arabic, Judaeo-Arabic, and Gə'əz (Classical Ethiopic) translations and/or adaptations of *SY*; these emerged in the centuries following *SY*'s initial appearance in Hebrew.⁴⁵ While Binyam's focus is on the later

⁴² See further comments in Kampianaki, "Perceptions of Flavius Josephus," 313 and elsewhere; Kletter, "The Christian Reception of Josephus," 369.

⁴³ See Schreckenberger, "Josephus in Medieval Christian Art"; Deutsch, *Iconographie de l'Illustration*, 179; Weitzmann, *The Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, 246–247; see also Klemm, *Die ottonischen und frühromanischen Handschriften*, 197 (on the eleventh-century Gospel book of Otto II, *Monac.lat.* 4453). Several suggestions made by Fricke, "Jesus Wept!" seem to me questionable: first, that the Maria Story is an "unusual parallel" to Luke 19:41–44 as portrayed in the miniature under investigation (195); in fact, such parallels were the norm, as we see in Eusebius and elsewhere. Even more questionable is the idea that the Maria Story "can alternatively be read as a polemical paraphrase of the Christian notion of the son sacrificed by his divine father, the son who 'invents' the Eucharist to memorialize this sacrifice." If anything is invented, it is this reading. Fricke further reads the shared named "Mary" as a "typological link" between Old and New Testaments, and suggests the Eucharist as an interpretive aid in reading Maria's portrayal in the miniature gospel book she is examining. All such connections appear to me a stretch.

⁴⁴ Grundmann, "Ist nicht an einem solchen Tag der Tod besser als das Leben?" mentions *SY*'s Maria Story within a discussion of suicide in rabbinic Judaism and *SY* as evidence that violence against others was a key question in *SY*'s narrative; she mentions *BJ* and Eusebius in this discussion but, remarkably, not PH; Grundmann seems unaware that *SY*'s source for the Maria Story, and its most important source in general, is *DEH*; see also, with bibliography, Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 241–243.

⁴⁵ Binyam, "Studies in Sefer Yosippon."

(Judeo-) Arabic and especially Ethiopic texts, his work anticipates what appears below.⁴⁶ Where the present article differs from Binyam and all other previous scholarship is in its close, comparative, comprehensive approach to the Maria Story among *BJ*, the three Latin traditions of *LBJ*, *LHE*, and *DEH*, and *SY*.

Until now, detailed scholarship on the Maria Story in the four post-Greek traditions studied here is virtually non-existent—Chapman and Binyam constitute rare exceptions.⁴⁷ The research tends to mention the story briefly in passing as vaguely emblematic of some broader point or another. But the story of this story has much to tell. It is, as Josephus had said, “a myth for the world.”

2 The Maria Story: Texts, Translations, Notes, & Commentary

In the following section, each passage/section of the Maria story is presented in Greek (*BJ*), Latin (*LBJ*, *LHE*, *DEH*), and Hebrew (*SY*) along with translations of each. This synthesis allows for close comparison, which emerges in the commentary section following each passage. The commentary is a true commentary in the sense that it ranges with the ideas and intertexts suggested by the texts themselves, but does not necessarily serve a particular overarching argument; nevertheless, the commentary does allow for helpful conclusions to be drawn about each of the traditions treated and their respective interrelations.

The passage numbering is based upon that established in Josephus’ original *BJ*, though in many cases the contents encompassing one passage in (*L*)*BJ* and *LHE* are far more extensive in *DEH* and/or *SY*. Standard critical editions have been consulted for each text—*BJ*,⁴⁸ *LBJ*, *LHE*, *DEH*, and *SY*—and, where available, modern translations have been consulted.⁴⁹ Textual variants are mentioned only where interesting or important.

⁴⁶ In fact, Binyam and the present author both began their work on this passage and these broader traditions at the same place in the same period: namely, under the tutelage of David Levenson as doctoral students at Florida State University in the mid-2010s.

⁴⁷ This is not to say that many scholars have not done a great deal of thinking about it; I have benefitted more than a little from discussing the passage at length with Saskia Dönitz, who has thought about the Maria Story in *SY* a great deal.

⁴⁸ The Greek of *BJ* corresponds to the standard text of Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera*, Vol. VI, 539–541. The Latin of *LBJ* is borrowed from David Levenson and Tom Martin, who kindly provided me with the passage as it stands in their as-yet unfinished critical text of *LBJ* 6, which will hopefully appear in the near future. The Latin of *LHE* is taken from the standard edition of Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke – Zweiter Band, Erster Teil*, 209, 211 (the Latin of which is not truly a critical edition, but rather a Latin text based on a handful of manuscripts included only to supplement the critical text of Eusebius’ Greek *Church History*). The Latin of *DEH* is that of Ussani, *Hegesippi qui dicitur*. The Hebrew text of *SY* is basically that of Flusser, *The Josippon*, 406–409, though I have borrowed much of the punctuation added/emended by Börner-Klein and Zuber, *Josippon*. I thank Dagmar Börner-Klein for kindly providing me with her Hebrew text. I would also note that a new edition of the Hebrew *SY* may be needed: see Dönitz, “Josephus Torn to Pieces.”

⁴⁹ For *BJ*, my translations have been made in consultation with the ongoing translation being undertaken by David Levenson and Tom Martin to appear in Levenson and Martin, *Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary: Volume 5 – Judean War 6*. I have also paid serious attention to the translation of Thackeray, *Josephus: The Jewish War, Books 5–7*, 237, 239. My translations of *LBJ* take into account earlier translation

While I have attempted to relegate technical philological and lexicographical discussion to the footnotes, the following assessment retains a rather technical feel of its own. I attribute this to the fact that, in my analysis, I try to do justice to numerous levels of comparison and interpretation by paying attention not only to literary, aesthetic, and rhetorical patterns in each text but also to semantic and linguistic data, while likewise addressing source- and tradition-critical concerns (read: intertextuality). I see such close attention to variegated minutia as a *sine qua non* of the kind of foundational inquiry the present article seeks to be.

The notes and commentary following each set of passages reproduced below take into account all five of the text traditions under discussion, but the emphasis is deliberately concentrated upon *DEH* and *SY*. Sometimes I begin with treatment of these latter traditions, while elsewhere it has seemed expedient to start with the earlier and usually more closely-related traditions of *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE*. In addition to all this, this analysis is designed to clarify, in detail and at length, the relationships between these Greek, Latin, and Hebrew traditions of the Maria Story: at present, the only established relationships are that 1) *BJ* provides the basis for *LBJ* (and is repeated basically verbatim in *HE*); 2) *HE* provides the basis for *LHE*; 3) *BJ* provides the basis for *DEH*, and in turn 4) *DEH* provides the basis for *SY*. It is possible, but not certain, that *SY* knew *LBJ* (and/or *LHE*, maybe), which figures briefly into the following discussion.⁵⁰ Broadly speaking, this article seeks to provide a critical contribution to our understanding of the Western text tradition(s) of Josephus' *Jewish War* as it came to exist in a number of distinctive literary forms before the second millennium of the Common Era.

BJ 6.201

Γυνή τις τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰορδάνην κατοικούντων, Μαρία τοῦνομα, πατρὸς Ἐλεαζάρου, κώμης Βηθεζουβᾶ, σημαίνει δὲ τοῦτο οἶκος ὑσσώπου, διὰ γένος καὶ πλοῦτον ἐπίσημος, μετὰ τοῦ λοιποῦ πλήθους εἰς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα καταφυγοῦσα συνεπολιορκεῖτο.

A certain woman from among those dwelling across the Jordan, Maria by name, whose father was Eleazar, of the village of Bethzouba (this means house of hyssop), distinguished by birth and wealth, having fled for refuge with the rest of the multitude to Jerusalem, was confined along with them by the siege.

work done by David Levenson and Tom Martin as part of their ongoing work on *LBJ* 6. Translations of *LHE* are adapted from the recent translation of Amidon, *Rufinus of Aquileia: History of the Church*, 107–108. Translations of *DEH* and *SY* are my own, though I have consulted the German translation in Börner-Klein and Zuber, *Josippon*, 820–827.

⁵⁰ *SY*'s Latin sources are imperfectly known; Flusser, "Der Lateinische Josephus," who thinks that *SY* probably did not know *LBJ*, posited a hypothesis whereby *SY* was based upon the predecessor manuscript of one or more of four Italian manuscripts that contain *AJ* 1–16 + *DEH*. Forthcoming work by myself and David Levenson will show this creative hypothesis to have been incorrect. For an accessible introduction to *SY*, including a good, brief discussion of its sources, see now Dönitz, "Sefer Yosippon (Josippon)."

LBJ 6.201

Mulier quaedam ex plebe transiordanen habitantium incolarum, Maria nomine, Eleazari filia de uico uatezobra, quod significat domus ysopi, genere ac diuitiis nobilis, cum alia multitudine fugiens, in Hierusolima recepta cum caeteris obsidebatur.

A certain woman of the people residing across the Jordan named Maria, daughter of Eleazar, from the district Vatezobra—which means ‘house of hyssop’—a noble by birth and wealth, fleeing with the rest of the multitude, upon being received into Jerusalem was being besieged with the rest.

LHE 3.6.21

Mulier quaedam ex his, quae ultra Iordanis alveum conmanebant, Maria nomine Eleazari filia de vico Bethezob, quod interpretatur domus hysopi, genere et facultatibus nobilis cum reliqua multitudine, quae confluxerat, Hierusolymis reperta, communem cum omnibus obsidionis casum ferebat.

There was a woman who came from the folk who dwelt beyond the Jordan River and whose name was Maria, daughter of Eleazar, from the village of Bethezob, which means “House of Hyssop.” Well known for her family and wealth, she was in Jerusalem with the rest of the multitude which had gathered there, and endured the siege with all the others.

DEH 5.40.1a

Quid adoriar dicere factum Mariae, quod cuiusuis barbari atque impii mens perhorrescat? Ea erat de locupletibus feminis regionis Perea, quae trans Iordanen iacet. Belli terrore oborto cum ceteris se in Hierosolymitanam urbem contulerat, quo esset tutior.

How can I begin to recount Maria’s deed, at which the mind of any blasphemer or barbarian would bristle? She was one of the wealthy women of the region of Perea, which lays across the Jordan. When the terror of war erupted, she brought herself with [the] others into the city of Jerusalem, where she might be safer.

SY 86a (פנ)

And there was in Jerusalem a woman, one of the daughters of the nobles, and her name was Miryam. And she was from across the Jordan. And as the fighting intensified in Vespasian’s time, she went up to Jerusalem with the other pilgrims. And

ותהי בירושלם אשת אחת מבנות הנדבים ושמה מרים. והיתה מעבר לירדן. ובהתחזק המלחמה בימי בספסינוס עלתה אל ירושלם עם העולים. ותעל עם עבדיה ושפחותיה ועושר רב עמה.

she went up with her slaves, maidservants,
and great wealth.

Before even getting to the text, we should mention how this story, as it begins in the texts above, is framed within its various texts. *(L)BJ* precedes the introduction of Maria with a bleak description of how bad things were becoming in Jerusalem as the siege continued on and famine got increasingly worse. Josephus recounts in *BJ* 6.193–99 how Jerusalem’s residents were driven to eating non-food items like sandals, grass, and the leather from shields; how family members were fighting over miniscule morsels of ‘food’; how Jewish rebels were seizing food from everyone they could find, even from corpses. Finally, he says:

But why should I tell about their shamelessness in eating inanimate food because of the famine? For I am about to reveal a deed of such a kind that has never been recorded by Greeks or barbarians, awful to tell and unbelievable to hear. For my part, so that I did not seem to my future audience to be telling tales, I would gladly have left out this misfortune, if I had not had countless witnesses among my own contemporaries. Above all, I would be paying cold respect to my country if I lied in my account of the things it has suffered.⁵¹

(L)BJ thus frames the Maria Story as a universal fable of suffering embodied in the Jewish experience. Eusebius included Josephus’ entire account in the Greek of *HE* 3.6.17–28, and thus Rufinus’ *LHE* is translating the same Greek as did *LBJ*. Rufinus’ rendering reads thus:

But what need is there to explain in this way the severity of the famine, when there was an outrage committed there which has never been heard of among the Greek of any of the barbarians, horrible indeed to relate and hardly to be believed. I would gladly indeed have kept silent about the enormity, lest I be suspected of telling fables, if I did not have many men within memory who were witnesses of the crime committed. Nor do I think I would be doing my country any favor, were I to suppress the account of those evils which it endured.⁵²

⁵¹ Josephus *Bellum Judaicum* 6.199–200. Translation borrowed from Chapman, “Josephus and the Cannibalism of Mary,” 420. *BJ*’s Greek reads: καὶ τί δεῖ τὴν ἐπ’ ἀψύχοις ἀναίδειαν τοῦ λιμοῦ λέγειν; εἴμι γὰρ αὐτοῦ δηλώσω ἔργον οἷον μήτε παρ’ Ἑλλήσιν μήτε παρὰ βαρβάρους ἰστορηταί, φρικτὸν μὲν εἰπεῖν, ἀπιστον δ’ ἀκοῦσαι. καὶ ἔγωγε μὴ δόξαιμι τερατεύεσθαι τοῖς αὐθις ἀνθρώποις, κὰν παρέλειπον τὴν συμφορὰν ἠδέως, εἰ μὴ τῶν κατ’ ἐμαυτὸν εἶχον ἀπίστους μάρτυρας. ἄλλως τε καὶ ψυχρὰν ἂν καταθείμην τῇ πατρίδι χάριν καθυφέμενος τὸν λόγον ὧν πέπονθεν τὰ ἔργα. *LBJ*’s Latin reads: *Et quid opus est famis improbitatem ex rebus anima carentibus demonstrare? Factum enim relaturus sum, neque apud grecos, neque apud barbaros cognitum, et dictum quidem horrendum, auditu uero incredibile. Itaque libenter hanc calamitatem intermitterem, ne mentiri me post futuri homines aestimarent, nisi testes multos haberem, et fortasse aliquam patriae referrem gratiam, parcius ea disserens, quorum facta perpessa est.*

⁵² Rufinus *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.6.20. Translation from Amidon, *History of the Church*, 106–107. *LHE*’s Latin reads: *Sed quid opus est per haec pondus famis illius explicare, cum gestum sit ibi facinus, quod neque apud Graecos neque apud barbaros ullus accepit auditus, horrendum quidem dictum, auditu uero incredibile. equidem libenter tam immane facinus siluisse, ne quis me crederet monstruosa narrare, nisi multos memoriae nostrae uiros testes commissi sceleris habuissem. porro uero nec aliquid in hoc patriae praestare me arbitror, si subtraham eorum malorum uerba, quorum pertulit facta.*

Of course, unlike *BJ*'s narrative, in *(L)HE* this introduction appears within a continuous narrative which intermingles a series of quotations from Josephus into a monument of Christian apologetic: the literary frame of the story in *(L)HE* casts it as an example of God's divine judgment upon the Jews (for their rejection of Christ). We will return to this in the conclusion.

DEH, for its part, prefaces its version of the Maria Story with an account of devolving affairs in Jerusalem, but without the explanatory statement of *(L)BJ* and *(L)HE*. The portion of *DEH*'s narrative immediately preceding the Maria Story, reworks material from *BJ* 6.193–99:

The outside of the Temple had now been stripped bare and the hunger of the men was fierce. They lay in ambush for one another in turn, so that one might snatch food for himself. Wherever there was suspected to be sustenance, there a battle was fought for food between family members. Loved ones were slain, the dead were ripped to pieces, lest some food escape notice within their garments. Others thought to imitate the dead, lest living they be suspected of hiding some sustenance. But when the living were in fact unable to provide the gift of life [i.e. food] or to fake death, then, truly, with mouths open like rabid dogs gasping for a breath of air they stumbled around hither and thither, driven by want. Often, like drunkards, they would keep returning into the same house so as to pick through carefully that which they had already left bare. And when they could find no other relief from hunger, they ripped the leather off of shields, so that what had not proved a protection might serve as food for them. They were gnawing on shoes, nor were they ashamed to take into their mouths or lick up with their tongues what had fallen off of their feet. Even age-old chaff, which had previously been thrown out, were examined with not a little assiduity, and if anyone had discovered anything, he became a valuable target.

Nuda erat iam templi facies et saeua hominum fames. Insidiabantur sibi inuicem, quis cui raperet cibum. Vbi alimenti suspicio, ibi bellum inter domesticos pugnabatur pro cibo. Necabantur carissimi, discutiebantur defuncti, ne quis intra amictus eorum cibus lateret. Simulare aliqui mortuos aestimabantur, ne uiuentes habere aliquid alimenti suspectarentur. Sed ne uiuentes quidem aut uitae fungi munere aut mortem simulare poterant, uerum aperto ore sicut rabidi canes aurarum captantes spiramina huc atque illuc circumferebantur inopia duce. Saepe etiam quasi ebrii in eadem domicilia regrediebantur, ut iterum quae uacua reliquerant perscrutarentur. Et cum alia famis solacia non reperirent, detrahebant coria scutis ut cibo essent sibi quae praesidio non essent. Mandebant calciamentum, nec pudor erat solutum pedibus ore suscipere et lingua lambere. Vetustae quoque paleae, quae olim proiectae fuerant, non mediocri studio requirebantur et si quis reppererat, grandi pretio mutabat.⁵³

⁵³ [Ps-Hegesippus] *De Excidio Hierosolymitano* 5.39.2. Ussani, CSEL 66.1: 380–381.

In *DEH*, Josephus' "lengthy and strategically crafted preface ... does not survive the process of transmission."⁵⁴ Rather, the story is seamlessly woven into an ongoing narrative of the woes of Jerusalem in its final days, Maria implicitly the apogee of Jewish suffering at that time. We also glimpse some of PH's style and literary taste in this prefatory passage: he omits none of the terrible details found in Josephus' preceding remarks, and adds a few flourishes of his own, for example when he presents the eating of leather off shields as a trade-off, that which had not been protection (*praesidium*) becoming food (*cibus*) instead. Of all the authors who record this story, perhaps PH takes the greatest pleasure in expanding, reshaping, and exploiting it.

Because *SY*'s account is based upon *DEH*'s, apparently solely so, it is significant when material present in *DEH* is clearly absent in *SY*. We find this in the narrative preceding the Maria Story proper. In *SY*, neither the prefatory note of *(L)BJ* + *(L)HE* nor the starvation scene of *DEH* are present, but rather an account of ongoing skirmishes between the Romans and the Jews in and around the Jerusalem and its Temple. The final lines before the Maria Story read:

But again many nations joined themselves to Titus in aid of the Romans. They camped all around Jerusalem, for they said: "We will not be able to destroy Jerusalem with the sword, but rather with famine." So they besieged it from all around, and there was not one bit of sustenance within Jerusalem.

ויאספו עוד גוים רבים לעזרת רומנים אל טיטוס. ויחנו סביב לירושלם כי אמרו: לא נוכל ללכוד את ירושלם בחרב כי אם ברעב. ויצורו עליה מסביב ואין בקרב ירושלם כל מחיה.⁵⁵

Unlike the other traditions, *SY* prefaces the Maria Story with an account of Jerusalem's being surrounded and besieged, not only by Romans but also by their allies. And the enemy's plan is explicitly to overtake Jerusalem by producing famine. Thus, for *SY*, the Maria Story becomes the immediate effect of a conspiracy among the "nations" (גוים) against Jerusalem and the Jews. Rather than representing the consummation of a famine already wreaking havoc in the city, Maria represents the famine *in toto* (at least at first). In this way, to an extent not true of the other text traditions, in *SY* Maria is the Jewish predicament.

The introduction to the Maria Story proper already in its very first words shows a stylistic distinction between *DEH* and *SY*. The former begins with a rhetorical question which exaggerates the horror of the forthcoming story with comparative reference to *impii* and *barbari*, not only betraying PH's flair for the dramatic but also establishing the Maria episode within the oratorical and ethnographic registers common to *De Excidio* as a whole. *SY*, in contrast, appears much more in line with the straightforward narrative prose of *BJ* reflected in both *LBJ* and *LHE*, and its omission of a preface may be designed to downplay Maria's deed (preferring to emphasize the crimes of the rebels), as suggested

⁵⁴ Binyam, "Studies in Sefer Yosippon," 133 (also 134–135). As Thackeray (LCL 210: 234–237) notes, Josephus ignores the very close parallel to this 'unparalleled incident' during the siege of Samaria as recorded in 2 Kgs 6:28; but compare the language of Deut 28:57 and Baruch 2:2ff.

⁵⁵ *Sefer Yosippon* 85 (פרה). Hebrew from Börner-Klein and Zuber, *Josippon*, 819 (translation mine).

by Binyam.⁵⁶ In the same vein, while the very beginning of *SY*'s text is not paralleled in any of these earlier traditions, its idiomatic rendering of Maria's name (ושמה מרים) has close equivalents in *BJ* (Μαρία τοῦνομα) and *LBJ/LHE* (*Maria nomine*) but not in *DEH*. Yet *SY*'s identification of Maria as מבנות הנדבים is clearly drawn from PH's *de locupletibus*, verbiage present nowhere in the other traditions and even whose inference therefrom would require considerable creativity. Otherwise still, *SY*'s seemingly superfluous note dating this episode to the "days of Vespasian" (בימי בספסינוס) has no clear antecedent at all. Indeed, one might infer that for Josephus and the translators/adapters of the later Christian traditions naming Vespasian here would constitute the height of superfluity, he and Titus being so obviously associated with the events of 70 CE; but *SY* has a broader scope—it is a *world* history which ends with Jerusalem's destruction—and is also written for medieval Jews, probably less likely to have been immediately familiar with the Roman Emperors, perhaps even the Flavians, than a much earlier Latin-reading Christian readership. Or perhaps the author of *SY* placed this chronological marker in the story because he assumed that the Maria Story, one of the most popular substories within Josephus' corpus, might be read or known apart from the context of the work as a whole.

SY's version of the narrative follows the lead of *DEH*. Against the other three versions, *DEH* refers to the state of affairs when "the terror of war erupted" (*belli terrore oborto*), probably a Ciceronian phrase,⁵⁷ which informs *SY*'s statement that "the fighting intensified" (בהתחזק המלחמה). Whereas *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* just refer to a siege underway, *DEH* and *SY* specify exactly what was happening in Jerusalem—and things were getting worse.

Another idiosyncrasy of *SY* is that it has Maria "go up" (עלתה) with the other "ones going up" (העולים), i.e. 'pilgrims,' to Jerusalem. Contrarily, the Greek and Latin traditions depict Maria as going "into" Jerusalem (*εις/in* + accusative in *BJ/DEH*).⁵⁸ *SY*'s language is reminiscent of the so-called Psalms of Ascent (Ps 120–134), each of which is labeled a שיר המעלות, and of the themes of ascent/pilgrimage found in Ezra and Nehemiah.⁵⁹ *SY* thus conjures subtexts not discernible in the earlier traditions. *DEH*, on the other hand, uniquely adds a purpose clause explaining Maria's incentive for entering Jerusalem: for safety (*quo esset tutior*). Finally, note that PH does not overtly describe Maria as a wealthy individual (rather, she is *de locupletibus*), whereas the other three early traditions single her out as prominent 'in regard to her wealth' (*διὰ ... πλοῦτον/diuitiis/facultatibus*). *SY*, possibly drawing on (*L*)*BJ* and/or *LHE* in this and/or the following passage, extrapolates Maria's opulence by stating that she entered Jerusalem with "her servants, maidservants, and great wealth" (עבדיה ושפחותיה ועושר רב עמה).

⁵⁶ Binyam, "Studies in Sefer Yosippon," 134.

⁵⁷ See Cicero *Pro Lege Manilia* 11.30, and cf. *De Lege Agraria* 1.7.21.

⁵⁸ Effectively the same semantic work is done by the participial phrases in *Hierusolima recepta* (*LBJ*) and *Hierusolymis reperta* (*LHE*).

⁵⁹ See, e.g., "the ascent" (המעלה) mentioned at Ezra 7:9 and "the pilgrims" (העולים) who figure in Neh 7 (7:5, 61), with discussion in Day, *Psalms*, 61–64.

BJ 6.202

Ταύτης τὴν μὲν ἄλλην κτῆσιν οἱ τύραννοι διήρ-
πασαν, ὅσῃν ἐκ τῆς Περαιίας ἀνασκευασαμένη
μετήνεγκεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, τὰ δὲ λείψανα τῶν
κειμηλίων καὶ εἴ τι τροφῆς ἐπινοηθείη καθ'
ἡμέραν εἰσπηδῶντες ἤρπαζον οἱ δορυφόροι.

The tyrants plundered her other property,
as much as having packed up from Per-
aea she brought to the city. But the armed
agents of the tyrants, bursting in daily,
continued to plunder the remains of her
valuables and anything she contrived for
food.

LBJ 6.202

*Huius alia quidem bona tyranni diripuerunt,
quae ex transamnanis locis in oppidum con-
portauerat. Reliquias uero conditorum et si al-
imenta repperissent inrumpentes domum eius
cotidie satellites auferebant.*

Indeed, the tyrants seized her various
goods, which she had brought into the
city from a location across the river. Then
the remains of her savings and any food
they discovered, guards, barging into her
house, were carrying off day by day.

LHE 3.6.22a

*huius reliquas quidem facultates, quas domo
in urbem convexerat, tyranni invasere. si quid
vero reliquiarum ex magnis opibus fuerat,
quibus victum cottidianum pertenuem duceret,
inruentes per momenta praedonum satellites
rapiebant.*

The property remaining to her, which she
had brought into the city, was not only
seized by the plunderers, but the hench-
men belonging to the looters broke in
at intervals to snatch whatever was left
of her considerable resources, from which
she eked out her daily existence.

DEH 5.40.1b

*Eo quoque suas deuexerat opes, quas principes
factionum certatim invasere. Alimentorum
etiam si quid pretio quaesierat, de manibus
eruebatur.*

And she had conveyed her resources there,
which the leaders of the factions zeal-
ously plundered. If she obtained some sus-
tenance with money, it was ripped from
her hands.

SY 86b (פו)

And when famine came to Jerusalem, the
bandits searched the houses to find suste-
nance. And they came into this woman's

ויהי בהיות הרעב בירושלם ויחפשו הפריצים את
הבתים למצוא מחיה. ויבואו אל בית האשה ההיא
ויקחו את כל אשר לה מאוכל ועד מחיה.

house and took all that she had, from her food down to her basic sustenance.

The first thing to notice in this second part of the passage is how sharply *DEH* distinguishes itself from the other Latin traditions in both vocabulary and narrative detail. Instead of rendering οἱ τύραννοι as *tyranni* it speaks of *principes factionum*. And PH inserts the detail that the foodstuffs which were snatched from Maria were first acquired by her at a price (*pretio*), perhaps a reference to her aristocratic status. Rufinus, for his part, subtly shifts the comment that the *satellites* were robbing Maria's stores daily (*LBJ*: *cotidie* = *BJ*: καθ' ἡμέραν) into the more pitiable idea that Maria "eked out her daily existence" (*victum cottidianum pertenuem duceret*) by this food which was being taken from her continuously (*per momenta*).⁶⁰

Independent of the Greek and Latin traditions, *SY* here directly mentions the famine (הרעב), which is only implied in the earlier texts. Nor is Maria the subject of any active verb in the passage. In *SY* alone Maria is portrayed not as an actor, but only as someone who is acted upon. *SY* omits with *DEH* any mention of a 'daily' or 'continuous' seizure of Maria's property, but then, against *DEH* and in line (only) with *LBJ*, *SY* states that the bandits—הפריצים also matching *tyranni* (*LBJ*) better than *principes factionum* (*DEH*)—"came into her house" (ויבואו אל בית האשה = *inrumpentes domum eius*).⁶¹

BJ 6.203

δεινὴ δὲ τὸ γύναιον ἀγανάκτησις εἰσῆει, καὶ πολλὰκις λοιδοροῦσα καὶ καταρωμένη τοὺς ἄρ- A terrible indignation came upon the woman, and she kept on provoking the
παγας ἐφ' αὐτὴν ἠρέθιζεν. plunderers against her by constantly reviling and cursing them.

LBJ 6.203

Grauitur autem mulier indignabatur, proptereaque sepissime raptoribus maledicens et inprecans eos contra se uehementius irritabat, Now the woman was becoming gravely indignant, and as she kept most savagely cursing and damning her plunderers she was making them seriously irritated with her,

LHE 3.6.22b

pro quibus ingens mulierem velut insania iam quaedam ex indignatione fatigabat, ita ut in- The woman was so enraged at this that her fury wore her out to the point where she

⁶⁰ Rufinus also notes that these seized goods came from her [previously] considerable resources (*ex magnis opibus*), a detail not in *BJ* or *LBJ*.

⁶¹ Note that the Greek only reads "they were coming in" (εἰσπηδῶντες), the prefix to the participle perhaps implying that they entered Maria's abode, but not directly stating as much.

terdum praedones maledictis in necem sui et conviciis instigaret. would at times try with her curses and insults to provoke her looters to murder her.

DEH 5.40.1c

Exagitabatur a perditis, dira inprecabatur, uolebat mori, She was harassed by her plunderers and cursed them dreadfully, desiring to die,

SY 86c (פו)

And when the famine burdened her, her soul longed to die. ויהי בהכבד עליה הרעב שאלה נפשה למות.

At this point the condensing nature of both *DEH* and *SY* are on full display. Neither text repeats the verbiage by which *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* all describe Maria as being ‘enraged’ or ‘indignant.’ In fact, in the first place neither *DEH* nor *SY* allow Maria an active role: PH attributes to her a passive verb (*exagitabatur*) and only thereafter reasserts her active status (*inprecabatur*, *uolebat*). *SY* goes even further, having the famine act upon Maria in what is technically a prepositional phrase: “and in the famine’s growing heavy upon her” (ויהי בהכבד עליה הרעב). Thereupon, in the poetic argot of classical Hebrew, it is Maria’s “soul” (נפש) that longs to die.⁶²

The idiosyncrasies of *DEH* and *SY* are even more pronounced when we consider Maria as she curses her plunderers. The Greek’s participial construction, that Maria “was abusing and cursing” (λοιδοροῦσα καὶ καταρωμένη), modified by the adverb πολλάκις (“often”), is followed closely with participles (*maledicens et inprecans*) and the superlative form of the adverb (*s[a]epissime*) in *LBJ* and less strictly with instrumental ablatives (*maledictis, conviciis*) modifying the verb *instigaret* and a slightly variant adverb (*interdum*) in *LHE*. In *DEH*, however, only one verb for cursing is used (*inprecabatur*), which is combined with the more dramatically-charged adverb *dira* (“terribly,” “dreadfully,” even “ominously”). Interestingly, PH posits that Maria “was desiring to be killed” (*uolebat mori*) though neither *BJ* or *LBJ* does so; only *LHE* agrees in presenting Maria’s aim as being her own death (*in necem sui ... instigaret*). These extrapolations of *DEH* and *LHE* appear to be similar but independent and thus only accidentally related.

⁶² The language here is reminiscent of Jonah 4:8b, where the prophet, angry at Nineveh’s repentance, “asked his soul to die” (וישאל את-נפשו למות). In *DEH* the idea of ‘wanting to die/be killed’ appears in Josephus’ speech at 3.17, made in response to his Jewish compatriots at Jotapata. There it is said that Saul, before his suicide, “wanted to die” (*uoluit mori*) because he had been abandoned by God. Josephus goes on to argue that desiring death (*uult mori*) when God has not licensed it is fundamentally wrong-headed. In the same discussion he quotes a condensed paraphrase of Ps 142:6–7, where the psalmist (here *sanctus*) says “deliver my soul from bondage” (*educ de custodia animam meam*), which PH interprets: “He asked to escape, he asked to be liberated from this body as from some prison” (*Petit euadere, petit ex hoc corpore quasi de quodam liberari carcere*). This platonic discourse which creeps into *DEH*, inherited in part from Josephus, is intriguingly close to *SY*’s articulation of Maria’s longing to die.

This scene as presented in *SY* differs dramatically from its antecedents. There, it is hunger that instigates Maria's resignation, not her plunderers. Thus does *SY* introduce hunger as a causal agent earlier in the narrative than the other versions. More striking is the conspicuous absence of any mention of Maria cursing the robbers: in *SY*, as in *DEH* (and *LHE*), it is expressly stated that Maria desires to die, but unlike these Latin texts in *SY* this desire is not linked to (*LHE*) or contiguous with (*DEH*) instigating behavior that might lead there. *SY* offers an extremely brief summary of events: Maria is simply overcome by hunger, to the point of longing for death.

BJ 6.204

ὡς δ' οὔτε παροξυνόμενός τις οὔτ' ἐλεῶν αὐ-
τὴν ἀνήρει καὶ τὸ μὲν εὐρεῖν τι σιτίον ἄλλοις
ἐκοπία πανταχόθεν δὲ ἄπορον ἦν ἤδη καὶ τὸ
εὐρεῖν ὁ λιμὸς δὲ διὰ σπλάγχνων καὶ μυελῶν
ἐχώρει καὶ τοῦ λιμοῦ μᾶλλον ἐξέκαιον οἱ θυ-
μοὶ σύμβουλον λαβοῦσα τὴν ὀργὴν μετὰ τῆς
ἀνάγκης ἐπὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐχώρει.

Since no one killed her out of either rage or pity, and on the one hand she was becoming weary of finding food for others, and on the other hand finding it anywhere at all was already impossible; and since the famine was moving through her guts and marrow and, more than the famine, her passions were inflaming her, she, taking anger as her counselor alongside necessity, moved against nature.

LBJ 6.204

cum neque iratus, neque miserans eam quisquam uellet interficere [some mss: occidere], sed uictum quidem patrando aliis laborabat. Undique autem adempta iam erat ei etiam reperiendi facultas, famesque uisceribus et medullis irrepserat. Plus uero quam fames iracundia succendebat. Igitur impetu animi ac necessitate impulsoribus aduersus naturam excitatur.

Yet no one, either from anger or mercy, was willing to kill her, but rather she worked to find a little food for others. Whereas already she was incapable of finding sustenance for herself anywhere, and famine ripped through her viscera and bones. More than hunger, her anger burned. Therefore she was excited against nature by violence of soul and of necessity against her instigators.

LHE 3.6.22c–23a

verum cum neque irritatus quisquam neque miseratus eam perimeret et si quid forte cibi fuisset ab ea quaesitum, id aliis quaeretur nec iam usquam reperiendi copia fieret, fames autem dira uisceribus ipsis insisteret ac

But since no one would kill her out of annoyance or pity, and whatever food she had chanced to obtain had been obtained for others, and she no longer had the means of getting more anywhere, while

medullis et ad furorem iam perurgeret inedia, fame et ira pessimis usa consultoribus contra ipsa iam armatur iura naturae.

severe hunger attacked her very innards and vitals and starvation was now driving her mad, consulting those worst of counselors, hunger and anger, and prepared to assail the very laws of nature.

DEH 5.40.1d

sed percussorem non inueniebat. Malebant insultare diutius, adfligere grauius quam cito perdere. Putabant quamdiu uiueret praedam fore. Defecerant iam omnia et deliciis adsueta asperiora palarum vel coriorum dura non emolliebat. Saeua fames intimis se infudit medullis, exasperauit umores, mentem exagitauit.

but finding no one to strike her down. They preferred to taunt her daily, to crush fully than to overcome quickly. They hoped that she might survive as a source of plunder for a long time. Everything had already disappeared and, being accustomed to delicacies, she was not adapting to rough pieces of chaff and hard pieces of leather. Savage hunger poured itself into her inner marrows, it exasperated her humors and disturbed her mind.

SY 86d (פו)

Yet her end did not come. And the woman was left to gather from the land all that she found, of grass and even straw to eat. And there was nothing. And she had one son. And it happened as hunger prevailed upon her and descended into the inner marrow of her bones, that it transformed all of her compassion into cruelty.

ולא בא קיצה. ותחל האשה ללקט מן הארץ כל אשר תמצא מקש ועד תבן לאכול. ויהי לה בן אחד. ויהי כאשר חזק עליה הרעב וירד אל חדרי מוחות עצמותיה ויהפכו לאכזריות כל רחמיה.

This section begins the more radical departures that *DEH* and *SY* take from the standard (i.e. *L[BJ]*) form of the narrative. Here one can even see structural differences already between *BJ* and *LBJ*: the latter turns a long, continuous Greek sentence into four Latin ones. Yet the content remains the same. Rufinus here shares some key vocabulary (and clausal structure) with *LBJ*. Nevertheless, *LHE* alone follows *BJ* in presenting hunger and anger (*fames et ira*) as entities which Maria “consulted as the worst of counselors” (*pessimis usa consultoribus*).

DEH changes the content of the narrative entirely: while the other Latin traditions follow *BJ* in positing two dispositions which might have encouraged the bandits to kill Maria, but did not—those of being angry (*παροξυσμένος/iratus/inritatus*) or merciful

(ἐλεῶν/*miserans/miseratus*)⁶³—PH states simply that Maria could not find a killer (*percussor*). PH shifts any thought or emotion on the part of Maria’s would-be murderers to his next sentence, replacing the dual-motive construct of the other Greek and Latin traditions with a trifold schemata of verb + adverb describing two things the bandits wanted to do and one thing they did not want to do: their preference was to “taunt daily” (*insultare diutius*) and “crush fully” (*adfligere grauius*) rather than “overcome quickly” (*cito pendere*). Note how PH picks up the idea of daily/continuous robbing present in *BJ* 6.202 (and parallels) and transfers the notion to the slightly later description of the robbers’ intentions/preferences. PH also adds other details not found in the other traditions: that the robbers were “hoping” or “thinking” (*putabant*) that Maria would be a source of plunder for a long time (*quamdiu*); that Maria was forced to resort to eating “rough pieces of chaff” (*asperiora palarum*) and “hard pieces of leather” (*coriorum dura*), fare to which she did not adapt well (*non emolliebat*) due to her being “accustomed to delicacies” (*deliciis adsueta*). Expanding upon Maria’s biography, PH creates a more rounded character profile for Maria: she is a harassed woman of soft (aristocratic) disposition.⁶⁴ He also does this with the bandits. In *DEH* these brigands behave toward Maria in accordance with certain specified preferences and anticipated outcomes. It would not be unfair to call them sadistic.

The final sentence of *DEH* in this passage communicates the same thing as (*L*)*BJ*, and *LHE*, though in more carefully constructed Latin,⁶⁵ except that Maria does no acting but is only acted upon (she is not even the subject of a passive verb, as in *LBJ* and *LHE*), resulting in the affective agitation of her mind (*mens*). Moreover, in *DEH* Maria is not presented as acting ‘against nature’ (*aduersus naturam* in *LBJ*, *contra ipsa . . . iura naturae* in *LHE*). Instead, PH seems to focus on Maria’s physicality: his is a diagnostician’s description of a woman in travail, mind and body; any idea of the ‘unnaturalness’ of Maria’s actions is left out of the picture.

SY depersonalizes its first line in this section: whereas *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* all state that no one was willing to kill Maria, and *DEH* switches subjects to say that Maria was unable to find someone to kill her, *SY* states simply that Maria’s “end” (קיצה) did not come.⁶⁶ The terseness of this sentence anticipates the rest of the passage in *SY*. The statement that Maria had recourse at this point to eating “grass” (מקש) and “straw” (תבן) clearly illustrates *SY*’s reliance upon *DEH*—the other three traditions mention nothing

⁶³ Some mss of *LBJ*, for example Plut. 66.7, read *miseratus* here, like *LHE*. On the mss of *LBJ*, see Levenson and Martin, “The Ancient Latin Translations of Josephus.”

⁶⁴ Maria’s delicate constitution reminds one of the prophecy from Deut 28:52–57 and also of the Martha known from the Talmud (*b. Gittin* 56a) who, a rich woman of Jerusalem, died during the siege: after having unsuccessfully sent her servant to buy flour, she went out and died after dung stuck to her foot. See Rajak, *Josephus*, 24.

⁶⁵ PH, e.g., adds adjectives: *saeva* to *fames*, the latter of which already appears in *LBJ*, as does the dative plural *medullis*, to which PH adds the superfluous *intimis*. Along with this latter addition, the mention of *umores* gives an almost technical ring to the passage’s medical terminology.

⁶⁶ Cf. the language of Eccl 4:8 and 12:12, where we are told that there “is no end” (אין קץ) to human labor and the writing of books respectively.

of Maria's fare here⁶⁷—yet the idea that Maria “gathered” (לקט) food has no parallel in *DEH*. In fact, *SY*'s detail that Maria gathered food “from the land” (מן הארץ) is, if anything, an expansion of details found in *LBJ* (or else the author's own invention). *LHE* says that food was “asked for” (*quaesitum, quaeretur*) by Maria (*ab ea*), implying that she was seeking sustenance within the social sphere and *BJ* states that Maria was tiring (*ἐκοπία*) of finding (τὸ εὑρεῖν) food; *LBJ*, on the other hand, says that Maria ‘worked’ to find food (*uictum ... patrando ... laborabat*). This makes the most sense as an inspiration for *SY*'s statement, therefore, if such a statement required an inspiration at all. Hereafter, one-word and four-word sentences epitomize the brevity of *SY*'s style in this episode, a sharp departure from its often rambling Greek and Latin precursors.

It is noteworthy that, in introducing at this point in the story that Maria had a son, *SY* subtly shifts the tale's progression: none of the other traditions mention this until *after* Maria's mind has devolved into insanity. This move might be aesthetically motivated, as it allows the reader to guess what is coming before being told; it is actually a brilliant literary move, heightening the narrative progression with the tension of a horrific premonition. And one can see that *SY* inserts this detail right in the middle of a sequence established in the earlier traditions: it is preceded by mention of Maria's dire straits concerning nutrition and flows into a statement of how hunger affected Maria's mental state, a feature seen at the end of this passage in all of the earlier traditions as well. There again *SY*'s reliance upon *DEH* comes to be on display: while all traditions portray hunger (*ὁ λιμός/[saeva] fames/הרעב*) as acting formatively upon Maria, though their precise respective ways of articulating this differ, *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* all mention hunger moving through Maria's ‘guts’ and ‘marrows’ (*BJ*: διὰ σπλάγγων καὶ μυελῶν; both *LBJ* and *LHE* include *uisceribus* and *medullis*); but *DEH* speaks in terms of hunger entering Maria's *inner* marrows (*intimis medullis*), which corresponds to *SY*'s statement that hunger entered “into the inner marrows of her bones” (אל חדרי מוחות עצמותיה). Also, neither *DEH* nor *SY* add a detail about Maria's ‘anger’ or ‘passions’ (*BJ*: οἱ θυμοί; *LBJ*: *iracundia*; *LHE*: *furor*, caused by “starvation,” *inedia*) as contributing to her disturbance. *DEH* and *SY* distinguish themselves from the other traditions by reducing mention of two sets of internal organs to one, adjectivally-intensified reference to ‘inner marrows’ and by omitting any reference to Maria's rage.

Finally, the comparative interpreter of these passages must play the doctor in distinguishing the diagnoses the various authors attach to Maria. Josephus has it that Maria moved upon/against nature (*ἐπὶ τῆν φύσιν ἐχώρει*) under the influence of natural instinct (*ὀργή*) and necessity (*ἀνάγκη*). While changing the voice of the sentence's verbiage, *LBJ* interprets/translates *ὀργή* as denoting an impulse of the soul (*impetus animi*) and *ἀνάγκη* as denoting necessity caused by the rebels provoking Maria (*impulsoribus*); the author of *LBJ* may have seen the two motivating factors as linked. What the latter extrapolation does in *LBJ* is formally link Maria's action to those of her persecutors: while *BJ* allows one to read Maria's plight as being characterized by a general necessity, i.e. the necessity

⁶⁷ Rather, in the narrative lead-in to the Maria story one finds mention of *all* the people in Jerusalem resorting to eating non-edible items; see (*L*)*BJ* 6.197–198 and parallels.

to eat/stay alive, *LBJ* clarifies that necessity (apparently) as being the necessity *to provide food to the bandits*; this colors what happens later, when Maria offers part of her son to these bandits. *LHE* takes even greater pleasure in literary artistry here, following *BJ* in personifying hunger and anger (*fames et ira*) as the worst of counselors (*pessimi consultores*), upon whose advice Maria, now pictured metaphorically as a soldier, ‘arms herself’ against the very laws of nature (*contra ipsa iam armatur iura naturae*).

DEH and *SY* both take a turn away from the idea of ‘natural law.’ *DEH* speaks in a typical style of synthetic parallelism: retaining *saeva fames* as the subject, he says that it irritated her ‘humors’ (*exasperavit umores*) and tormented her mind (*mentem exagitavit*). Here *PH* seems to be playing with a kind of somatic–pneumatic dualism in which Maria’s body and mind, i.e. her entire person, is ‘drawn out’ (note the *ex-* prefixes on the two verbs). For its part, *SY* concentrates on the mental and emotional state of Maria, maintaining that the hunger which coursed through her turned all of her compassion or pity (רחמה)—note that the root רחם also constitutes the Hebrew word for “womb” or “uterus”—into cruelty (אכזריות).⁶⁸ Compared to *DEH*’s more clinical appraisal, *SY* adopts a dispositional explanation of Maria’s ‘turn.’

BJ 6.205–207

καὶ τὸ τέκνον, ἣν δὲ αὐτῇ παῖς ὑπομάστιος, ἀρπασαμένη “βρέφος,” εἶπεν, “ἄθλιον, ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ λιμῷ καὶ στάσει τίني σε τηρήσω; τὰ μὲν παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις δουλεία, κἂν ζήσωμεν ἐπ’ αὐτούς, φθάνει δὲ καὶ δουλείαν ὁ λιμός, οἱ στασιασταὶ δὲ ἀμφοτέρων χαλεπώτεροι. ἴθι, γενοῦ μοι τροφή καὶ τοῖς στασιασταῖς ἐρινὺς καὶ τῷ βίῳ μῦθος ὁ μόνος ἐλλείπων ταῖς Ἰουδαίων συμφοραῖς.”

And grasping her child (for she had a boy under her breast), she said, “Pitiful baby, for what purpose shall I preserve you in war and famine and insurrection? On the one side is slavery among the Romans, if we even survive to live under them; on the other famine, which will come quicker than slavery—and the rebels are harsher than both. Come, be food for me, an avenging spirit for the rebels, and a myth for life, which alone is lacking among the calamities of the Jews.”

LBJ 6.205–207

Raptoque filio quem lactentem habebat ‘miserum te’ ait ‘infans in bello et fame et seditione. Cui te seruabo? Apud romanos quidem etiam si uixeris seruiturus es, fames autem praeuenit seruitutem. His uero seditiosi saeuiores sunt. Esto igitur mihi cibus, et

And seizing her son whom she held nursing, she said, “You poor child, in war and famine and sedition, why do I preserve you? For if you live you will be a slave to Romans, yet famine outstrips slavery. And the seditionists are more savage than

⁶⁸ Cf. 1 Kgs 3:26 where a woman bereft of her son “yearns with compassion [or in her womb] for her son” (נכמר רחמיה על-בנה), probably a text in the mind of *SY*’s author here.

seditionis furia et humanae uitae fabula, quae sola deest calamitatibus iudaeorum.'

these! Therefore be for me food, and to the seditionists fury, and a fable of human life, which is the only thing lacking among the calamities of the Jews."

LHE 3.6.23b–24

erat namque ei sub uberibus paruulus filius: hunc ante oculos ferens: 'infelicitis,' inquit, 'matris o infelicitior fili, in bello, fame et direptione praedonum cui te reservabo? nam, etsi vita sperari posset, iugo Romanae servitutis urgemur. sed nunc ipsam etiam servitutem praevenit fames, praedones vero utraque vi graviores perurgent. veni ergo nunc, o mi nate, esto matri cibus, praedonibus furor, saeculis fabula, quae sola deerat cladibus Iudaeorum.'

She had a small son she was nursing; she placed him before her and said: "O my child, unlucky as your mother is, you are unluckier still! Amid this war, famine, and looting, for what can I preserve you? Even if we hoped to survive, the yoke of Roman slavery looms over us. But as it is, that slavery has been forestalled by famine, while the looters are a more dreadful threat than either of the other dangers. Come then, my child, be food for your mother, fury for the looters, and a tale for the ages, the only one that has been lacking among the catastrophes of the Jews."

DEH 5.40.1e–g

Habebat mulier infantulum quem genuerat. Uagitu eius excita quae se et paruulum commacerari uideret, tantis uicta immanitatibus atque inpar tam atroci calamitati affectum amisit et pietatis genitalis usu obliterato dolorem absorbit, furorem adsumsit. Conuersa itaque ad paruulum iam matrem oblita et furens animi sic ait: 'quid tibi faciam, paruule, quid faciam tibi? Saeva te circumstant omnia, bellum, fames, incendia, latrones, ruinae. Cui te moritura credam aut cui te tantillum relinquam? Speraueram quod, si adoleuisses, me pasceres matrem aut sepelires defunctam, certe, si praeuenires obitu, quod ego te pretioso tumulto meis manibus includerem. Quid agam misera? Uiuendi tibi ac mihi nullum uideo subsidium. Omnia erepta nobis, cui te reseruabo? Aut certe quo condam sepulchro ne canibus alitibus uel feris praedasis? Om-

The woman had an infant whom she had born. Excited by his crying, by which she was reminded that both she herself and her child were wasting away, and overcome by such monstrosities and unequal to such savage calamity she dismissed compassion and, with the custom of familial piety erased, she absorbed the pain and adopted madness. Then, turned toward the child, now forgetting her maternity and raging in her soul she spoke thus: "What can I do for you, child, what can I do for you? Every savage thing surrounds you: war, famine, fires, bandits, ruin. To whom could I, about to die, entrust you, or to whom could I hand you over so small? I had hoped that, if you had grown, you would care for me, your mother, or would bury me once dead, and certainly, if you

nia, inquam, erepta nobis. Potes tamen, dulcis meus, et sic matrem pascere, idoneae ad cibum manus tuae. O suavia mihi viscera tua, artus iucundi, priusquam uos penitus consumat fames, reddite matri quod accepistis, redite in illud naturale secretum. In quo domicilio sum-sisti spiritum, in eo tibi tumultus defuncto paratur. Ipsa complectar quem genui, ipsa ex-osculationem, et quod impatientia amoris habet, habeat uis necessitatis, ut ipsa deuorem meos artus non simulatis sed inpressis morsibus. Esto ergo cibus mihi, furor latronibus et uitae fabula, quae sola deest nostris calamitatibus. Quid faceres, fili, si et tu filium haberes? Fecimus quod pietatis fuit, faciamus quod suadet fames. Tua tamen causa melior et quaedam pietatis species, quia tolerabilius est quod matri dederis cibum uisceribus tuis, quam quod te mater aut occidere potest aut deuorare.’

preceded me in death, that I would have enclosed you in an expensive tomb with my own hands. What shall I do, miserable me? I see no support by which you and I could survive. Everything has been taken from us; with what will I save you? Or in what grave could I safely place you, that you not become food for dogs, birds, or beasts? All, I say, has been taken from us. Yet you are able, my sweet, to feed your mother thus: your hands are fit for food. Ah! Your viscera are sweet to me, your limbs delightful; before famine consumes you within, return to your mother what you received, re-enter that secret site of birth. In the abode whence you received your spirit, in it a crypt is prepared for you once you are dead. I myself embrace whom I bore, myself shower him with kisses, and what is thought to be impossible because of love, let it take strength from necessity, so that I myself may devour my own limbs not with playful bites, but with real ones. Be therefore food to me, a Fury to the bandits, and a fable of life, which is the only thing lacking among our calamities. What would you do, son, if you also had a son? We have done what piety required, let us do what famine urges. Yet your cause is better and has some semblance of piety, because it is more tolerable for you to have given your viscera as food to your mother than that your mother is capable either of killing or devouring you.”

SY 86e–g (פו)

And as the woman heard the voice of the lad crying for food before her—and there was none—she said: “What will I do for you, my son, since fury is all around and hunger in every corner. And outside the

וכשמוע האשה קול הנער בוכה ללחם נוכחה ואיין, ותאמר: מה אעשה לך בני כי מסביב חרון ומכל פינה רעב? ומחוץ תשכל חרב ומחדרים אימה. גם הפריצים הגבירו גם אויבינו גברו חיל. והנה שריפה והנה מפולת רעב והנה דבר. ואין לאל ידי להאכילך

sword shall bereave, and inside terror. For the rebels increase in power and our enemies are gaining strength. And behold, fire! And behold, destruction! And behold, famine! And behold, plague! And it is not in my hands to do anything for you, my son! If I die, to what will I leave you? And you are so small! I was holding out hope for you, that you would grow up and care for my later years, and in the day of my death bury me. But were you to die before me, I would bury you in glory, as a mother does the son of her womb. And now, my son, what shall I do for you, because there is no grave to bury you, and you live as if already dead? Come, and I will elect for you a grave amidst my belly, lest the dogs eat you. And I will be for you a grave, and you will be for me sustenance. And in place of the burden that was upon you, let your flesh be my burden. Let me eat it, and care for my later years before the famine eats you. Repay to your mother what she has given to you. For you have come forth from my innards, and there you return. I will bring you into the dark interior, where the spirit of life first filled your nostrils. And what emerged from under my belly from below I will return from above. Oh, apple of my eye, whom I have loved with all my strength, you will bring life to my soul and will serve as food for your mother. Moreover, you shall be an avenger to the rebels because they stole our sustenance. And now, my son, listen to your mother's voice, and support my soul, and have pity on me—your portion is in the Garden of Eden. And you will be to me both satiation and reproach; thus it will be said that 'his mother killed him and ate him.'"

בני. ואם אמות למי אעזבך? ואתה קטון! והייתי מייחלת אליך למען תיגדל ותכלכל את שיבתי וביום מותי תקברני. או אם תמות אתה לפני מותי הייתי קוברת אותך בכבוד כאם לבן בטנה. ועתה בני מה אעשה לך כי אין קבר לקברך ואתה חי נחשב כמת. לכה ואבחרה לך קבר בתוך בטני פן יאכלוך הכלבים. ואני אהיה לך לקבר ואתה תהיה לי למחיה. ותחת כבוד אשר היה עליך לכבדיני נא את בשרך וכלכל את שיבתי בטרם יאכלך הרעב. ושלם לאמך את אשר נתנה לך. כי ממעיה יצאת ושמה תבוא. ואביאך החדרה אשר שם נופחה באפך נשמת חיים. ואשר יצא ממעיך מתחת אשיבנו מלמעלה. מחמד עיני אשר אהבתיך בכל מאדי תחיה את נפשי והיית לאמך לאוכלה. וגם תהיה לפריצים לחרפה אשר לקחו מחייתנו. ועתה בני שמע לקול אמך וסעדתה את נפשי וריחמתני והיה גורלך בגן עדן. והיית לי לשובע ולחרפה למען יאמר כי: אמו הרגתו ואכלתהו.

In this section I place what are three passages according to the conventional numbering of *BJ* together. The reason is that these lines contain Maria's speech to her son before she kills him, a speech which changes and balloons in *DEH* and *SY* and which therefore does not map easily by verse between the five versions.

The most striking facet of the above comparison has to be the differences in length: *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* all contain Josephus' original, moderately-sized speech of Maria; in *DEH* and *SY* this becomes an extended soliloquy. Still, between the three former versions we already see some creative additions, particularly in *LHE*: *BJ/LBJ/LHE* all forecast Maria's speech by saying that she 'took' or 'grasped' her infant son, whom she was nursing; *LHE* adds the note that she held her son "before her eyes" (*ante oculos*), a detail which heightens the immediacy, and tragedy, of the scene.⁶⁹ *LHE* also expands the vocative beginning Maria's speech: instead of, like (*L*)*BJ*, just addressing her son as "pitiful baby" (*βρέφος ἄθλιον/miserum infans*), in *LHE* Maria begins with a reflexive self-address, against which her address to her son shifts into the comparative: "O unhappy mother! O unhappier son!" (*infelicis matris, o infelicio filii*). Maria's address implies a contest: who was the more miserable? Hereafter, *LHE* subtly changes the threefold rub of Maria's question to her son: (*L*)*BJ* have Maria pose the rhetorical question to her son of why should she preserve him "in war and famine and rebellion" (*ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ λιμῷ καὶ στάσει/in bello et fame et seditione*). *LHE* contains the same question and agrees verbatim with *LBJ* on the first two mitigating items (*in bello, fame*), but instead of then adding *seditione* *LHE* has Maria refer to the "seizures of bandits" (*direptione praedonum*). This gives Maria a more specific and personal rationale for despairing of her baby boy's prospects.

In Maria's next sentence, *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* all have her further imagine the bleakness of their situation: surviving would mean slavery to the Romans, the famine presents an even worse alternative, and the Jewish bandits are worst of all. But even here, *LHE* articulates Maria's forecasting in different terms, wondering "even if it were possible for life to be hoped for" (*etsi vita sperari posset*) rather than the more personal articulations of *BJ* and *LBJ*, which in this case disagree between themselves: *BJ* has Maria say that "even if *we* should live" (*καὶν ζήσωμεν*), this would mean slavery to Rome; *LBJ*'s Maria addresses her son in the second person: "even if *you* should live, *you* will be a slave" (*etiam si uixeris seruiturus es*).

All three of *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* articulate Maria's speech via a triple set of triplets: 1) there are three things which contextualize Maria's and her son's plight (war, famine, bandits), 2) three things that make survival unthinkable (slavery, starvation, sedition), and, finally, 3) three things that Maria bids her son to 'be': food to her, a fury to the bandits, and a moral lesson to the world writ large as an instantiation of the one calamity that was 'lacking' among those experienced by the Jews. *DEH* and *SY* do not conform to this brief, tri-fold schema.

For its part, *DEH* inserts a great deal into the narrative already before Maria even begins her speech. In all of the other traditions, including *SY*, Maria simply seizes her son

⁶⁹ Corresponding to the classical prose principle of *enargeia*; see further Chapman, "Spectacle and Theater."

and/or starts speaking. But PH describes the internal turmoil which stimulates Maria's actions: the child's crying reminded her that both she and he were "wasting away" (*commacerari*), a fact which anticipates her description as "conquered" (*uicta*) by and "unequal" (*inpar*) to her circumstances. Such dire straits lead Maria to do away with the compassion (*affectum*) she naturally has toward her progeny and to completely ignore the standards of piety that dictate appropriate interaction between family members (*pietatis genitalis usu oblitterato*). In such a state, PH has Maria do six things, none of which are the "grabbing" or "holding" of her son found in all of the other Greek and Latin traditions (cf. ἀρπασαμένη/*raptoque/ferens*): she "absorbed" her pain (*dolorem absorbit*), "adopted" madness (*furorem adsumsit*),⁷⁰ "turned" (*conuersa*) to her son, "forgot" that she was a mother (*matrem oblita*), "raged" in her spirit (*furans animi*)—a Vergilianism (*Aen.* 5.202)—and then "spoke" (*ait*). Judging by the verbs (including participles), the Maria of *DEH* is far more active than the Maria of the other traditions, rendering PH's version of the story—quite literally—more 'action-packed.'

The idiosyncrasy of PH becomes more pronounced when Maria begins speaking: rather than asking, with the other Latin traditions, "for what will I preserve you?" (*cui te [re]servabo?*), Maria in *DEH* asks, two times (with different word order): "what can [or could] I do for you?" (*quid tibi faciam?/quid faciam tibi?*). Note also that, while *LBJ* has Maria address her son as *infans* and *LHE* has her address him simply as "son" (*fili*)—though *LHE* describes him as *paruulus* shortly before this—PH has her address her son as *paruule* ("little one"). As we saw above, Rufinus also expanded Maria's short speech, but PH goes much further. In contrast to the Greek and other Latin traditions, which each had Maria cite three factors (war, famine, sedition) along with the prospect of slavery to the Romans as comprising her and her son's dire straits, *DEH* lists no less than five "savage things" (*saeva*) that "surround" (*circumstant*) her son: *bellum, fames, incendia, latrones, ruinae* ("war, famine, fire, bandits, ruin"). PH's penchant for drama again heightens narrative drama, even quantitatively.

In its framing of Maria's speech to her son, *SY* departs from *DEH* in describing Maria's mental and existential turmoil in detail yet follows it in omitting any mention of Maria grabbing or holding her son. Here also *SY*'s economy of language is on display as it adapts PH's wordiness: in *DEH*, Maria "sees" (*uideret*) that she and her son are "wasting away" (*commacerari*) after being excited (*excita*) by his crying (*uagitu*); in *SY*, Maria simply "hears" (שמוע) her son crying (בוכה).⁷¹ Note also the subtle shift in sensory experience from seeing to hearing between the two narratives. Then, rather than expatiating on Maria's internal state, *SY* succinctly articulates the problem: Maria's son is crying for

⁷⁰ *Furor* became in early Latin literature, especially associated with female behavior, portrayed as inexplicable and irrational, very often love-related; see the essays in Hardie, *Augustan Poetry and the Irrational*. Cf. Dido at Vergil *Aeneid* 4.101 where love is said to have "dragged *furor* through her bones" (*traxitque per ossa furem*). Further on *furor* in Vergil see, with bibliography, Panoussi, "Furor." *Furor* often operates in Latin poetry as an "irresistible force"; see Morrison, "Literary Reference and Generic Transgression."

⁷¹ Or rather, as the text is printed in Flusser, she hears "the lad" (הנער) crying. This fits with *DEH*'s *infantulum* (or *LBJ*'s *infans*). Some mss, however, have the reading בנה ("her son"), namely ק, י, ד, and ב, which fits better with *LHE*'s *paruulus filius*. See Flusser, *The Josippon*, 2.350.

food (ללחם); the problem is that “there is none” (אין). Thus does Maria come more quickly to her speech in *SY* than in *DEH* and, indeed, perhaps even sooner than in the other versions, which here state that 1) Maria had a son whom 2) she was nursing and 3) whom she held before her eyes before speaking (remember that *SY* transposed the detail that Maria had a son to the passage immediately before this).

Maria’s articulation of her and her son’s circumstances in *SY* is unique. Rather than PH’s “every savage thing” (*saeua omnia*), in *SY* Maria begins by identifying two overarching problems: “fury” (חרון)⁷² and “hunger” (רעב), which come “from all around” (מסביב) and “from every corner” (מכל פינה), another twofold modification of *DEH*’s *circumstant*. In fact, the poetics of *SY*’s diction here reveals itself as built upon a twofold schema (something common in *DEH*’s Latin as well) when the next line identifies, in line with Deut 32:25a (see footnote), two things that “bereave” (תשכל),⁷³ outside and inside respectively (מחוץ, מחדרים): namely, “sword” (חרב) and “terror” (אימה).⁷⁴ *SY* explicitly encases the language of Deuteronomy’s covenantal logic within the early part of Maria’s speech, rendering the entire scene ‘predicted’ and therefore understandable within a particular framework of *Heilsgeschichte*. When “sword” and “terror” are taken together with *SY*’s next sentence—which states that the rebels (הפריצים) are “gaining power” (הגבירו) and “our enemies” (אויבינו) are “growing in strength” (גברו חיל)—one finds another potential link to the non-*DEH* version of the story. Unlike PH, all three other early renditions (*BJ*, *LBJ*, *LHE*) have Maria interpret the hopelessness she feels in threefold terms: the prospects of Roman slavery (Ῥωμαίοις δουλεία/*Apud romanos . . . seruiturus es/iugo Romanae servitutis urgemur*),⁷⁵ [death by] famine (δ λιμός/*fames/ famas*), and the seditionists (or rebels/bandits) (οἱ στασιασταί/*seditionis/praedones*) coalesce into an impenetrable wall barring any hope for a future. *DEH* omits this listed articulation by reorienting it. But *SY* may be seen basically to preserve it. If we read the ‘fury and hunger’ and ‘sword outside, terror inside’ couplets as appositive pairs—where fury = the sword outside and

⁷² This term is highly suggestive in this context. In the Hebrew Bible, חרון is a term which qualifies as “fierce wrath, fury” the “anger of the LORD” (אף-יהוה) in the context of his punitive anger towards his people: Exod 31:12; Num 25:4; 32:14; Deut 13:17; Josh 7:26; 2 Kgs 23:26; 2 Chron 28:11,13; 29:10; 30:8; Ezra 10:14; Neh 13:18; Job 20:23; Ps 2:5; 69:24; 78:49; 85:3; 88:16; Isa 13:9,13; Jer 4:8,26; 12:13; 25:37–38; 30:24; 51:45; Lam 1:12; 4:11; Ezek 7:12,14; Hos 11:9; Jon 3:9; Nah 1:6; Zeph 2:2; 3:8; consult Melamed, “Biblical Phrases in Reference to God,” 6. Such a connection fits the Deuteronomistic framework that necessarily attaches to the Maria story, present in *BJ* already and exacerbated in *DEH*; *SY*, furthermore, adapts its own Deuteronomistic logic in portraying the fate of the Jews in its historical narrative.

⁷³ שכל is the Hebrew Bible’s term for “be bereaved of children, lose children, be childless, miscarry,” and is thus a technical term which has specifically to do with the (tragic) loss of the young. See Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, ad loc.

⁷⁴ As signaled by the italicization of this phrase in the edition of Börner-Klein and Zuber, *Josippon*, 820–821, this is a quotation of Deut 32:25a: “The sword will destroy without and terror within” (מחוץ תשכל-חרב) (ומחדרים אימה). Once again we find a Deuteronomistic framework implied within *SY*’s choice of language and intertexts. אימה is the term used to describe Abram’s reaction to the mysterious and terrifying covenant ceremony between him and God in Genesis 15. After the sun goes down and deep sleep falls upon Abram, at Gen 15:12b we read: “Behold, a horror of great darkness (והנה אימה חשכה גדלה) fell upon him.”

⁷⁵ Note that the first person plural in *BJ* is retained by *LHE* but is switched to the second person singular in *LBJ*.

hunger = terror inside—then one could understand Maria to follow the order of the early tradition: fury/the sword (= the Romans) and hunger/terror (= famine) are next joined by the rebels gaining power and ‘our enemies’ gaining in strength. If these latter two entities are likewise read in apposition—the rebels, i.e. ‘our enemies,’ are gaining power, i.e. are gaining in strength—then this is the last of the set of three controlling terrors of the *BJ/LBJ/LHE* tradition: Romans, famine, seditionists (though *SY* does not mention slavery to the Romans). Once again, while following *DEH*’s expansive rewriting of this episode, *SY* may retain vestiges of *LBJ/LHE*.

הפריצים and אויבינו need not, of course, be read as representing the same entity. Indeed, it is arguably a more natural reading to see הפריצים as ‘seditionists’ and אויבינו as the more obvious enemies of ‘us,’ the Romans.⁷⁶ But it is possible that *SY* is here aligning with a non-PH tradition. Even if not, it is worth noting how different *SY*’s rendering is, articulated via three pairs. Even in the following statement, where *SY* follows PH’s lead in listing off in quick succession the dangers that surround, *SY* departs from *DEH*: while the latter listed five threats—*bellum*/war, *fames*/famine, *incendia*/fires, *latrones*/bandits, *ruinae*/ruin(s)—*SY* lists only four: “fire” (שריפה), “destruction” (מפולת), “famine” (רעב), and “plague” (דבר), each evocatively introduced with the classical ejaculation, “Behold!” (הנה). *SY*’s list is not simply a shortened and reordered version of *DEH*’s; it is a new list, beginning with “fire” (not “fires”), ending with “plague” (which PH does not mention here at all), and omitting any mention of bandits or, for that matter, of what one would expect as the correlating term to the Latin *bellum*, “war,” namely מלחמה. Indeed, the only entities shared by the lists of *DEH* and *SY* here appear to be famine (רעב = *fames*) and destruction/ruin (מפולת = *ruinae*).⁷⁷ *SY* follows *DEH*, but it is not a Hebrew version of *DEH* by any stretch. In kind, *SY* has Maria tell her son that “it is not in my hands” (אין לאל ידי) to do anything for [you], an idea implicit in *DEH* but not stated explicitly there. In fact, the idiom of this statement is that of the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁸

Here we come to the bulk of the speech, the centerpiece of both *DEH*’s and *SY*’s versions of the Maria Story. The other traditions have Maria make a quick trifold statement about her dire straits followed by a tripartite directive to her son, as discussed above. *DEH* and *SY* both add expansively to this basic schema (in other words, here we enter into territory that has no corresponding material in [*L*]BJ or *LHE*). And the two accounts are clearly related in this. We see this immediately following the list of dangers mentioned just above: there PH has Maria ask her son to whom she could entrust (*credo*) or leave (*relinquo*) him, given that she is “about to die” (*moritura*) and he is “so small” (*tantillum*).⁷⁹ *SY* expresses the very same sentiment, though Maria predicts her death only in terms of possibility (“if I die” = ואם אמות) and only asks once, not

⁷⁶ The first person plural suffix is itself ambiguous, as it could refer to Maria and her son or to her people, the Jews.

⁷⁷ Though note the plural of the Latin here, which therefore could refer to multiple instances of ruin or which could still point simply to the broader abstract principle of ‘ruin.’

⁷⁸ See Gen 31:29a, where Laban is speaking to Jacob: “It is in my power (יש-לאל ידי) to do you harm ...”

⁷⁹ N.b. – *tantillum* is a masculine accusative singular corresponding to *te*, not a vocative (in which case it would have to be neuter).

twice, “to whom will I leave you?” (למי אעזובך).⁸⁰ And here Maria only points out that her son is small (קטון), Hebrew lacking the ability to convey the superlative with the same facility as Latin. In the following statement *DEH* and *SY* are likewise in concert: in each version Maria voices her disappointed wish, saying “I had hoped” (*speraueram* = והייתי מייחלה);⁸¹ in each case her hope was that her son would care for (*pascere*/כלכל)⁸² her later in life and then bury her when she died. At the very least, she says, she had hoped that if her son did die before her that she would bury him. While the language of the two accounts conforms respectively to conventions of Latin and Hebrew,⁸³ the content is effectively the same. Here the reader is (again) clued in to an impending horror, and the significant lengthening of Maria’s speech in both *DEH* and *SY* drastically heightens, by lengthening, the tension.

The next group of sentences finds *DEH* and *SY* expressing the same sentiments, though in slightly different order and idiom. This marks an impending departure wherein *SY* will take Maria’s speech in totally new directions unimagined by *PH*. *DEH* proceeds in its next five short sentences thus: question, statement, question, question, statement. Maria, pronouncing herself ‘wretched’ (*misera*), speaks in terms of lack of support (*nullum subsidium*) and repeats twice that “all has been robbed from us” (*omnia erepta nobis*). She then asks her son, by means of rhetorical question, what grave she could possibly provide

⁸⁰ Again, the doubling of cognate verbs (or terms in general) is a literary-aesthetic trademark of *DEH*, and often one finds a consequent shortening in the already shorter rewriting of *SY* when it retains merely the idea and omits the doubling of terminology.

⁸¹ Cf. Ps 33:22b for the Hebrew construction with the preposition ל-.

⁸² כלכל (“to nourish, feed”) is the *palpel* form of the verb כול (“to measure,” occurring in the *qal* only at Isa 40:12); Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, *ad loc.*

⁸³ This is, of course, generally true for *DEH* and *SY* across the board. Here, note (e.g.) the difference between the Latin’s (imperfect subjunctive, second person singular) verb + (accusative) direct object—*me pasceres*—which leaves implicit the idea that this would happen *when Maria became older/in her latter years*, and the Hebrew’s awkward שיבתי את כלכלי, “and you would take care of my latter years,” where “my latter years” is marked as the direct object (את) of the verb. We may also note in this regard the Latin’s laconic *sepelires defunctam*, “you would bury me, having died,” compared to the reverse-ordered and idiomatic “and in the day of my death you would bury me” (וביום מותי תקברני). Finally, a difference in culturo-linguistic vernaculars, presumably understood by the texts’ respective readerships, separates the Latin—“I would bury you in a precious tomb with my own hands” (*ego te pretioso tumulo meis minibus includerem*), without explaining what constitutes a *pretiosus tumulus*—from the Hebrew’s lengthy yet even more ambiguous “I would bury you in glory, like a mother the son of her womb” (הייתי קוברת אותך בכבוד כאם לבן בטנה); the question in the latter case is, how *does* a mother bury ‘the son of her womb?’ And what does the prepositional phrase בכבוד mean in this context?

for him which would not render him food for dogs, birds, and wild animals.⁸⁴ And we may note here that Maria’s reference to her belly, whence her son came, as a crypt or grave (*tumulus*), as well as her mention of kissing her son (*exosculabor*) as juxtaposed to what she is about to do, both find expression in Melito of Sardis’ earlier *Peri Pascha* (52), which may be PH’s inspiration. Much more matter-of-fact than *DEH*, in *SY* Maria makes no mention of everything having been taken from her and her son. *SY* subsumes the ideas of the *DEH* passage in two sentences—a rhetorical question preceding a statement. She simply asks her son hopelessly what she is to do given that she has no grave (אין קבר) for him and since he is ‘living as though already dead’ (וואתה חי נחשב כמת). She then states outright what she will choose (בחר) as a grave for her son—namely, “my belly” (בטני)—so that he not become food for dogs. Unlike PH, *SY* does not mention birds of prey and wild animals along with dogs as potential scavengers who would threaten a corpse. Moreover, *SY* jumps the gun: whereas PH has Maria make her statement of aporia with reference to having no grave and the threat of scavengers *before* introducing the unthinkable idea of her son be(com)ing food, *SY* retroverts this central facet of the passage already into its parallel statement of *DEH*. Narratively, the result is that in *SY* Maria moves much more quickly from exasperation to moral abomination than she does in *DEH*, where the scene’s tension is made slightly tauter by the inclusion of superfluous details, increasing the scene’s length.

Once Maria articulates the unmentionable and proffers the idea of eating her son, the versions of Maria’s speech in *DEH* and *SY* begin to diverge more radically. PH plays more heavily upon culinary tropes; the result of this, I would argue, is to bring the absurdity and horror of Maria’s cogitations to such a pitch that her complete insanity becomes the most palpable part of the passage. She begins by addressing her son as “my sweet” (*dulcis meus*),⁸⁵ playing upon the sickening double *entendre* of that vocative’s dual valence here. She tells her son that, not only is he able to feed (*pascere*) his mother, but in fact his limbs (or hands: *manus*) are ideal food for eating (*idoneae ad cibum*). She continues, following an exclamation (“O!”): “your viscera are pleasant to me, your limbs delightful” (*suavia mihi viscera tua, artus iucundi*). Maria’s horrific overtures, packaged in neat Latin, create an uneasy marriage between the aesthetic and the grotesque; the speech is artful, its content unconscionable.

⁸⁴ Ussani (CSEL 66.1: 382) reads the combination of the verb *condo* + *sepulchro* as (possibly?) signaling as intertext Vergil *Aen.* 3.67–68 (...*animamque sepulchro condimus* ...). Moreover, he notes the reference to dogs and birds as conjuring the scene around Vergil *Aen.* 9.485, where the daring Trojan hero Euryalus is mourned by his mother: “You lie in an unknown land given as prey to dogs and Latin birds” (*terra ignota canibus data praeda Latinis alitibusque iaces*; 9.485–486). This episode shares further themes and lexemes with *DEH* in ideas/terms like *misera* (9.475, 484), the idea of a mother’s ‘declining years’ (*senectae meae*; 9.481–482), mention of the deceased son’s *membra* (9.490). Further, I think it probable that Maria’s speech in *LHE*, where Maria refers to herself and her son as “unhappy” (*infelicitis/infelicio*), is drawing upon Vergil’s description of Euryalus’ mother as *infelix* (9.477) upon hearing of her son’s demise.

⁸⁵ Cf. Catullus *Carm.* 32.1–2; Lucretius *De Rer. Nat.* 2.730; cf. Vergil *Aen.* 4.314.

PH's next line does two things: "before famine consumes you within, return to your mother what you received; reenter that secret place of birth."⁸⁶ First is implied a twisted logic to Maria's thinking: her son is to become food for her before famine renders him inedible.⁸⁷ Second, this line shifts the focus of the episode away from the child's body to Maria's own body, specifically her womb, and the mother-child relationship which such maternal physiology denotes. The 'secret place' turns out to be Maria's center mass, where both womb and belly reside; the "dwelling place" (*domicilium*) whence her son received his *spiritus* becomes his "grave" (*tumulus*).⁸⁸ In a sickening, if creative, construction, Maria's son is to come full circle, from womb to tomb—and womb and tomb end up occupying, quite contrary to nature, the very same real estate. Here PH probably plays deliberately on an idea popularized by Seneca in his *Agamemnon*, the latter at one point decrying himself as one "filled with three children buried within me" (*liberis plenus tribus in me sepultis*).⁸⁹ PH may have received such an idea as mediated by Cicero's

⁸⁶ Cf. the language of *secreta naturalia* in Ambrose *Hex.* 5.10.28 (PL 14.218 § 91), which more closely mirrors language used in *DEH* 2.9.1, where *secretum* refers to the sea. In general, PH uses *secret-* language to refer to the mysterious place at which birth takes place (*DEH* 3.12.2: ... *de intima sede secreti genitalis excuteret infantem*) and, more specifically, to the place the soul (*anima*) returns after death: consider the following line from Josephus' prayer at *DEH* 3.17.1, and its proximity to the language of the Maria story in *DEH* 5.40: "But you, Omnipotent Father, who are the author and overseer of nature, bestow upon me an honest death, you, break this bond of nature, return my spirit to its secret places" (*Tu modo, omnipotens pater, qui naturae auctor atque arbiter es, honestum largire exitum, tu rumpe naturale hoc uinculum, redde animam meam secretis suis*). The idea of a secret place of before/after birth resonates strongly with Ps 139:15, though Jerome's way of describing that place as "in secret" in the different versions of VUL Ps 138:15 (*in occulto, in abscondito*) are not those of *DEH*. Also, Rufinus (*LHE* 8.12.7) refers to women's genital/womb areas as *puenda uiscerum et naturalium secreta membrorum*. Finally, Ammianus Marcellinus, a contemporary of PH and Rufinus, likewise uses *secretum membrorum* to refer to a woman's private parts (28.1.28) as "a civilized alternative for a more physical term" which "is only comparable to a few passages in Christian authors"; den Boeft, Drijvers, Hengst, and Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 63.

⁸⁷ In this the language of *DEH*—*priusquam uos penitus consumat fames*—shares significant verbiage with the Vulgate of Jer 44:27, where the LORD says: "Behold, I am watching over them for disaster and not for good. All the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine (*gladio et fame donec penitus consumantur*), until there is an end of them." This passage, which also employs the language of *fames, penitus*, and the verb *consumo*, written in the context of divine judgment for breach of covenant, might be informing PH's framing of Maria, the embodiment of a Jewish people undergoing divine punishment for the ultimate breach in covenant, the rejection and crucifixion of the Christ.

⁸⁸ Rightly does Ussani (CSEL 66.1: 383) reference Ambrose *Hex.* 5.3.7 (PL 14: 208–209 § 82) here. There Ambrose discusses mother fish and their behavior toward their young—behavior which involves allowing the young back into the mother's mouth, around her teeth, or even in the womb. Eventually, Ambrose inserts an anthropological parallel: "Many men have slain their long-wanted sons because of suspicion and hate of a step-mother. Others, during famine, as we read, have eaten the flesh of their own children (*aliae in fame, ut legimus, partus proprios comederunt*). A mother became the tomb of her own dear ones (*humanis pignoribus mater sepulcrum facta est*), whereas the womb of the parent fish serves as a sort of rampart to protect the innocent fosterlings sheltered within her womb." Translation adapted from Savage, *St. Ambrose: Hexameron*, 165.

⁸⁹ Seneca *Agam.* 26–27 (ed. Fitch, LCL 78: 130). Ussani sees Seneca's *Thyestes* as a text informing the entire Maria story in *DEH* (CSEL 66.1: 381); in *DEH* 5.41.2 Titus makes the connection between Maria and *Thyestes*.

De Officiis, as Chiara Somenzi has suggested.⁹⁰ And now Maria, like Agamemnon, begins to speak not to her son, but to and about herself.

The self-exhortations of Maria which follow constitute perhaps the most disturbing material unique to *DEH*'s rendition of the episode. But she begins with a benign statement: she embraces (*complectar*)⁹¹ the one whom she bore (*quem genui*) and plans to shower him with kisses (*exosculabor*). This seems natural enough. The reader has, however, already been clued in to what is coming. But PH leaves the outright articulation of the coming crime until the end of a long sentence, further forestalling the unholy reveal: before stating what she will do, Maria inserts another (jussive) clause justifying, or at least explaining, her reasoning: she contemplates an action which love will not suffer (*impatientia amoris habet*), but which necessity must demand (*habeat uis necessitatis*). Finally, then, Maria admits to herself the impending deed: she will devour (*deuorem*) "her own limbs" (*meos artus*),⁹² and she will do so "not with playful bites but with real ones" (*non simulat sed inpressis morsibus*). Nothing in the (*L*)*BJ* and *LHE* comes close to rivalling the emotionality of this drama. PH expands Maria's imaginary world, recalling the (many) times in the past when she must have, like any mother, playfully nibbled on her baby's hands, fingers, and arms, toes, feet, legs. This allusion to mother-child intimacy, immediately juxtaposed to its most unimaginable perversion, is a shock to the reader. PH dwells at superfluous length upon this gut-wrenching, tear-jerking scene, a scene which other and earlier authors, mercifully, kept very brief.

Here Maria returns to addressing her son, and PH returns to following Josephus' script, reproducing the trifold imperative that Maria's son be food for her, fury to the bandits, and a fable of life for the Jews. Interestingly, in *DEH* this charge is in some ways closer to (*L*)*BJ* than is *LHE*, which takes certain liberties in rewrite.⁹³ But, unlike

⁹⁰ Somenzi, *Egesippo – Ambrogio*, 48. See Cicero *Off.* 1.28.97: *natis sepulchro ipse est parens*.

⁹¹ The only other place in *DEH* this term is used is at 5.22.1, where the speaker Matthias recalls how the Maccabean mother-martyr of 2 Macc 7 and 4 Macc beheld her sons embracing one another before being slain.

⁹² The idea that Maria is essentially eating her own body when devouring her son is one upon which Titus will comment in *DEH* 5.41.2, thereby differentiating qualitatively Maria, as a woman, from men who had eaten their own children. See conclusion.

⁹³ *LHE* has Maria begin her charge with a much wordier address: "Come therefore now, of my child" (*ueni ergo nun, o mi nate*), whereas *LBJ* and *DEH* only have introductory postpositive conjunctions, *igitur* and *ergo* respectively, and the Greek of *BJ* has no introductory words at all, beginning with the imperatives "come, be" (ἔθι, γενοῦ). All three Latin traditions have Maria instruct her son to be food (*cibus*), though *LHE* has her command him to be food "for [his] mother" (*matri*) rather than "for me," as in all the other traditions. Indeed, here the four-word clause of *DEH*—*esto ergo cibus mihi*—is all but identical to *LBJ* (*esto igitur mihi cibus*), only disagreeing in the order of *cibus* and *mihi*, where *LBJ* more slavishly follows the exact word-order of the Greek *BJ* (γενοῦ μοι τροφή), 'be to me food' rather than 'be food to me.' Both *LHE* and *DEH* have Maria tell her son to be *furor* to the bandits, whereas *LBJ* has *furia*, but more interesting are the three different terms the traditions use to describe the bandits/seditionists: *LBJ* = *seditionis*, *LHE* = *praedones*, *DEH* = *latrones*. In Maria's telling her son to be a 'life fable,' *LBJ* and *DEH* share the language of *uitae fabula*, whereas *LHE* has *saeculis fabula*. In the final phrase—[a fable] "which is the only thing lacking from the Jews' calamities"—*LBJ* and *DEH* differ in only one word: *LBJ* = *quae sola deest calamitatibus iudaeorum* / *DEH* = *quae sola deest nostris calamitatibus*. *LBJ*'s preference for *iudaeorum* clearly follows *BJ*'s (anarthrous) Ἰουδαίων, whereas *DEH*'s preference (*nostris*) naturalizes Maria's discourse: she refers to 'our calamities' rather than

these other Latin traditions, *DEH* does not move from this final charge to describing Maria's action; no, PH first inserts, in yet another unnecessary-yet-artful extension of Maria's discourse, one which again rationalizes (in a way) Maria's coming deed and highlights the instability of her mind: Maria asks her son what *he* would do if *he* had a son, playing on the noun *filius* with parallel presentations in the vocative and accusative. She then marks a chronological divide between past and future: the former was guided by piety (*fecimus quod pietatis fuit*), whereas the latter must needs give way to the dictates of famine (*faciamus quod suadet fames*).⁹⁴ It is unclear what Maria understands as having been done which was 'of piety' (*pietatis*), but what is clear is that at some point previously *pietas* has directed her actions, whereas now *fames* has overcome and will 'demand' or 'persuade' (*suadet*) her to a certain course of action. Finally, Maria distinguishes between the two sets of responsibility in the forthcoming scene: the role of Maria's son, which she refers to as 'your cause' (*tua causa*), is to give his body (*uiscribus tuis*) as food (*cibum*) to his mother, something which Maria characterizes as better (*melior*) and more tolerable (*tolerabilius*) than what she is about to do. Indeed, further betraying a twisted state of mind, Maria even recognizes in her son's (unwilling) sacrifice a semblance of piety (*pietatis species*). Not so for her.

In PH's version of this story, Maria appears almost unable to stop talking about her unspeakable plans. Clearly having lost her mind by this point, and hard pressed by *fames* and *necessitas*, Maria in *DEH* waxes eloquent and at length over the abomination which is to come. She gives reasons for her action, but literarily these do more to highlight its terror than to justify its consideration. The fact of Maria's grotesque logic and extended speech, and the consequent highlighting of the scene's horror, especially vis-à-vis the mother-child relationship which comprises its social context, renders obvious and unavoidable intertexts for the episode: namely, two tragedies of Seneca the Younger, the *Medea* and *Thyestes*. Inasmuch as the former records a mother's merciless and insane murder of her children,⁹⁵ the latter the horrific (albeit unknowing) consuming of children

the 'calamities of the Jews,' for she is, of course, a Jew, and PH wants to connect Maria and the Jews more strongly, as we have seen at several places heretofore already. *LHE* uses *Iudaeorum* as well, but refers to their *cladibus* as an effective synonym of *calamitatibus*.

⁹⁴ It is interesting to take heed of Maria's psychological state here: by retaining first person plural verbs in both clauses of this sentence, Maria might be seen to displace full responsibility for what is happening, as it is presented as something that 'we' must do or are going to do, which is of course not the case.

⁹⁵ Too many to list exhaustively, here I point out a few correspondences between the *Medea* and the Maria Story in *DEH*, details in addition to the general theme of a mother killing her own child(ren): in both stories audacity and ability become gendered: the idea that women are unable to do terrible things is challenged (*Med.* 42); both stories refer to the primary illicit action as a crime (*scelus*; cf. *Med.* 50; 55); both stories play upon the notion of insanity as a catalyst for the central crime (*Med.* 123; 174); the central deed is gauged in reference to barbarians (*barbarae*; cf. *Med.* 127); killing with the sword and boiling the deceased are features of both stories (*Med.* 130–134); *aporia* is a central notion driving both storylines; both stories describe dismemberment (*Med.* 259–260); both stories mention a mother's final kisses to her child(ren) (*Med.* 289); both stories contain long speeches by the crazed, murderous mother. This list of similarities, as with *Thyestes* (see below), could go on; suffice it to say that Seneca's *Medea* and PH's Maria have much in common.

by a father,⁹⁶ the Maria Story reads like a combination of these tales. Honora Chapman pointed out some time ago manifest correlations between the apogees of these Senecan tragedies and the Maria Story as told by Josephus, who was a younger contemporary of Seneca; the literary connection applies doubly to *DEH*, and any ancient reader with a knowledge of the Latin classics would have understood these works of Seneca as the apparent and unavoidable cross-references informing PH's Maria Story's vocabulary, structure, and tone. And as with these tragedies, the overall effect of the story in *DEH* is to present an extended scene both fascinating and terrifying, which the reader is simultaneously prompted to turn away from and to gaze at, fixated upon what must come next. Of all the narrative sites on which to construct a kind of extended *ekphrasis*, the Maria Story seems the least advisable. Yet this is just what PH does, for rhetorical and perhaps also aesthetic reasons.

PH has Maria say that, if her son had preceded her in death, as is natural, she would have buried him (*includerem*) in a 'precious tomb' with her own hands (*pretioso tumulo meis manibus*).⁹⁷ In *SY*, on the other hand, Maria tells her son that she would have buried him "in glory" (בכבוד),⁹⁸ "like a mother [does for] the son of her womb" (באם לבן בטנה). More than approximating the idea introduced by *DEH*'s Latin, *SY* presages the approach of a play on words by its employment of the word "glory" (כבוד). Several sentences later, *SY* will have Maria employ this term again, but now in the sense of "weight" or "burden": she bids her son displace 'the burden which was upon you' (כבוד אשר היה עליך) by allowing his own flesh (בשר) to become her ("my") burden (לכבדיני). This wordplay signals the independence and creativity of *SY*'s version—its aesthetics and poetics are not beholden to their Latin source.

SY's Hebrew also condenses some ideas present in the Latin. *DEH* expands at length upon Maria's son as food for her, and then on Maria's belly as a grave for her son, and finally puts the two together in Maria's final statement. *SY* condenses this to one short phrase, where Maria says: "I will be for you a grave (קבר), and you will be for me sustenance (מחיה)." *SY* does retain the detail from *DEH* whereby Maria bids her son become food for her before the famine decimates his body; both *DEH* and *SY* use the

⁹⁶ In comparing the *Thyestes* to PH's Maria Story, we find many overlaps beyond the basic theme of a parent eating his or her children; for example: just as food (*cibus*) and famine (*fames*) are key themes driving the Maria Story (as we have seen), so these are focal points of the *Thyestes* from its beginning (at 1 and 5 respectively); in both stories, the notion of *pietas* acts as a gauge of the horrors recounted (the *Thyestes* presents itself as being about 'impious things/deed', i.e. *impia*; 21); *furor* holds a central place in the narrative's treatment of horror (*Thy.* 27, and indeed, there the character speaking is *Furia*); just as *DEH* (like *LBJ* and *LHE*) speaks of Maria's deed as a crime (*scelus*), so does Seneca of Atreus' deed (25; 95; 203); just as the Maria Story occurs in a context of starvation and recourse to eating the inedible, so appears Tantalus in the *Thyestes* as one who is starving and who eats dust (152–75). This list could go on at length, discussing how both stories involve swords, both fixate upon body parts (mouths, limbs, etc.), both involve the perpetrators soul (*animus*), etc.

⁹⁷ Perhaps another nod to Maria's high-class status: the tomb purchased would have been costly.

⁹⁸ The ב- prefix + כבוד is found in the Hebrew Bible, but is uncommon: it appears only three times, at Ps 149:5 (in reference to the 'saints,' חסידים), Isa 14:18 (in reference to 'the kings of the nations'), and Ezek 31:18 (in reference to the Egyptians, embodied in Pharaoh).

imperative to characterize this as a form of ‘repayment’ (*reddite* = שלם).⁹⁹ (Though note *DEH*’s play on the twin imperatives *reddite* [from *reddo*: “to return, give back”] and *redite* [from *redeo*: “to return, go back”]).

When *SY* makes the physiognomic shift to discussing Maria’s body as the site whence her son came and whither he goes,¹⁰⁰ the biblicalty of *SY*’s language becomes even more pronounced. While *PH* has Maria bid her son to ‘reenter’ (*redite*) the place where he was born, *DEH* does not anticipate *SY*’s language of ‘coming from’ and ‘going to.’ In the latter, Maria tells her son that where he has ‘come forth’ (יצא) from is where he is returning (בוא), namely from/to her ‘innards’ (מעיה).¹⁰¹ I suggest that one resonance such language has is with that found in Gen 3:19, where the LORD tells Adam, representing humankind, that where he has come from he will also return—namely, the ground (האדמה)—though there the verbiage is that of ‘being taken from’ (לקח) and ‘returning’ (שוב) rather than *SY*’s יצא and בוא, which more readily conjure simply ‘coming [forth] and going.’ Does such a correlation soften the coming deed by making it a microcosm of the human experience? The same question arises regarding another apparent intertext informing this passage in *SY*, one which uses יצא and בוא, like *SY*, and שוב, like Gen 3:19: namely, Qoh 5:15. There we read concerning the everyman: “Even as he came forth from his mother’s womb naked, he will return to go even as he came” (כאשר יצא מבטן אמו ערום ישוב ללכת כשבא). The idea of ‘coming forth’ (with יצא) from a mother’s womb also appears at Job 3:11, where the famous sufferer ponders why he did not die at birth, “come forth from the womb (מבטן יצאתי) and expire?”¹⁰² Whatever such literary background may imply about our reading of *SY* here,¹⁰³ at the very least we can say that Maria’s reasoning in *SY* is, compared to *DEH*, less fanatic and more biblical in its language, if no less criminal in its intent.

⁹⁹ The proximity of שלם to the well-known Hebrew word for wholeness, well-being, and peace, which also operates as a form of address—שלום—could be an intentional irony.

¹⁰⁰ This theme is already anticipated in *SY* Chapter 15 (טו), which records the death of the Maccabean mother-martyr and her seven sons known from 2 Macc 7 and 4 Macc 8–17. There, on the brink of her seventh and final son’s murder, the mother makes a speech to all her sons in which she states: “I know that you have come forth from my womb” (ידעתי איך נוצרתם בבטני), and goes on to discuss how this was done, by God, without her knowledge. The chapter plays on themes of burial, mutual mother-son obligations, death, and life after death, just as *SY*’s Maria Story does. My thanks to Saskia Dönitz for pointing out this very important parallel to me.

¹⁰¹ For מעיה as womb cf. (e.g.) Ruth 1:11.

¹⁰² Cf. Job 38:8 and 38:29 (referring to the natural elements); and also 10:18a, where Job asks God, “Why have you brought me out (הצאתני) of the womb?” Cf. also Jer 28:18a. Significantly, the idea as found in Job 3:11 and 10:18a emerges in Josephus’ speech at *DEH* 3.17.1, which has its parallel in *SY* 67 (סז).

¹⁰³ It is also possible that John 3:4 provides some kind of background here. There the Pharisee Nicodemus asks Jesus, upon being told that he must be ‘born again’: “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” It is difficult to say what *DEH* and/or *SY* might be doing in reference to such a verse, if indeed it was in the mind of either author, but the idea of re-entering a mother’s womb, appearing as it does in so prominent a place in early Christian tradition, was almost certainly known to *PH* and probably the author of *SY* as well.

Equally ‘biblical’ in configuration is what *SY* does with the detail in *DEH* where Maria says that her son ‘assumed his spirit’ (*sumo + spiritum*) in her womb.¹⁰⁴ In *SY* this becomes the ‘inner chamber’ (חדרה)¹⁰⁵ wherein the ‘spirit’ or ‘breath of life’ (נשמת חיים) was first breathed (נופחה) in “your nostrils” (באפך). *SY* is repeating language found in Gen 2:7 verbatim:

And the LORD God formed [the] man of dust from the ground and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man become a living being.

וייצר יהוה אלהים את-האדם עפר מן-האדמה ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים ויהי האדם לנפש חיה.

This reference strengthens the connection between this episode and the creation saga of Gen 2:4b–3. Just like Adam or ‘man’ came from the ground and returned thence, so Maria presents her son’s impending ordeal in mythical and cosmic terms as somehow reflected in the larger ‘circle of life.’ There is a certain poetics to Maria’s speech here. While not self-exonerating per se, Maria mediates between an unthinkable deed and the larger world of human experience which the Hebrew Bible creates, one in which—(only) somewhat similar in its harshness—death is ultimately “the end of every person” (Qoh 7:2b).

The ‘circle of life’ image is again present, almost disturbingly, in the next line too. There Maria states that what emerged from her belly ‘from below’ (מתחת) she will return ‘from above’ (מלמעלה). While this statement has no biblical parallel of which I am aware—though Job 18:16 also plays on these bi-polar prepositions¹⁰⁶—it does connect to the passage’s Genesis intertexts inasmuch as it provides almost a diagram of how the human life-cycle, which begins and ends in the same place, is to be acted out (grotesquely) on the stage of Maria’s body. The corporeal aspect of Maria’s *teknophagia* as anticipated in her speech becomes suffused with biblical ideas that transcend individual experience. Rather than the insane mother saying insane things which we saw in *DEH*, we find in *SY* a mother contemplating in biblical language an unthinkable, but apparently inevitable, turn of events.

Amidst this contemplation, Maria continues her deployment of biblical idiom: she addresses her son as the “apple,” or perhaps “desire of my eye” (מחמד עיני).¹⁰⁷ Rather than using the usual Hebrew term for ‘apple’ (אישון), which appears several times in the Hebrew Bible to refer to the ‘apple of the eye,’¹⁰⁸ *SY* has Maria speak in terms of

¹⁰⁴ See again the same theme in *SY* 15 (טו).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Deut 32:25, which is in the author’s mind here.

¹⁰⁶ Job 18:16, where Bildad is speaking of “the wicked” (רשעים): “His roots dry up from below and his branches wither from above” (מתחת שרשיו יבשו וממעל ימל קצירו).

¹⁰⁷ This may be a play upon the Hebrew idea of the “evil eye” which Deut 28 says that a man will have toward his brothers and wife (תרע ענו; 28:54) and that a woman will have toward her husband, son, and daughter (תרע ענה; 28:56), when they are driven to eat their own children, greedily and without sharing, during time of siege.

¹⁰⁸ Ps 17:8 (“like an apple of the eye” = באישון בת-עין; Prov 7:2 (“like [the] apple of your eyes” = באישון עיניך). Compare the phrase בת עינו, referring to the “apple of the eye” or the “gate of the eye,” appearing at Zech 2:8b, where the LORD says through the prophet of the nations who come against Israel: “for he who touches you, touches the apple of his [the LORD’s] eye (בבת עינו).” The translation of ‘apple of his eye’ is

מחמד. I do not think this lexical choice is accidental. *SY* seems to be hearkening Ezek 24:21, a passage in which the LORD speaks to his people Israel concerning his coming judgment:

Speak to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am about to profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire/apple of your eyes and the delight of your soul (מחמד עיניכם ומחמל נפשכם); and your sons and your daughters whom you have left behind will fall by the sword."

Here Ezekiel, playing upon the similarity between the near-identical terms for 'desire' (מחמד) and 'delight' (מחמל), articulates for the LORD his coming judgment upon his people. They had rejected their covenant with him, which is of course also the literary-narrative-historical context for the Maria Story in Josephus and all of its later iterations. The fact that Ezekiel also mentions children ("sons and daughters") and "swords," though in more general terms, would also seem to link this passage thematically with the Maria Story in *SY*. Finally, this pronouncement's couching within the more general stated intention of the LORD to 'profane his Temple' resonates strongly with the framework of *SY* and its precursors (from *DEH* back to *BJ*). In having Maria employ language found in Ezek 24:21, therefore, *SY* conjures biblical and prophetic language relating both to the profanation of the Temple and to the tragic loss by the people of Israel of the things they loved most, including children. Unlike the tragic justification that is Maria's speech in *DEH*, in *SY* Maria's discourse becomes biblical lament.

The tragic nature of Maria's speech, however, is by no means lost on the author of *SY*. *SY* arguably heightens the intimacy portrayed between Maria and her son. In *DEH* Maria tells her son that 'they' have done what was indicative 'of piety' (*pietatis*)—a Roman way of signaling the claims of filial affection, devotion, and duty—and elsewhere speaks of kissing her son and what love requires. In *SY* Maria makes a more personal and affective statement to her son: "I have loved you with all my strength" (אהבתוך בכל מאדי). It is in consequence of this, then, that she says to her son in a paired-statement of synthetic parallelism: "[1] you will bring life (תחייה) to my soul (נפשי) and [2] you will serve as food (לאוכלה) for your mother (לאמך)."¹⁰⁹ This statement begins *SY*'s reformulation of the trifold charge to her son which in all the other traditions has Maria succinctly command her son to be 'food for me, a fury to the bandits, and fable for Jewish history.' Instead of this construction, *SY* begins by Maria addressing her son as the 'apple of her eye'

retained here in English in the KJV, NKJV, NIV, ESV, NASB, RSV, ASV, and other translations, whereas elsewhere one will find renderings such as "his most precious possession" (NLT), "pupil of my eye" (CSB), "pupil of his eye" (NET), "daughter of his eye" (YLT). Jerome apparently understood "pupil" to be meant, translating this as *pupillam* (*pupilla* can also mean 'young woman, orphan girl'; Lewis & Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, *ad loc.*), whereas the LXX apparently understood "daughter" or "girl" (from בת) in its rendering of κόρη. See further Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, *ad loc.*

¹⁰⁹ The idea of the sacrifice of another allowing the 'soul' to 'live' may signal a nod to Gen 12:13b, where Abram bids his wife Sara to claim that she is his sister, so that, he says, "my soul shall live" (חיתה נפשי). The collocation of references to 'life,' 'soul,' and 'food' finds a (probably incidental) correlate in Job 33:20, where the human person's existence is described as unpleasant "So that his life (חיתו) loathes bread, and his soul (נפשו) its favorite food (מאכל תאוה)."

and then recounting how she has loved him before bidding him to be(come) food to sustain the soul of his mother. Next, she tells him that he will be a ‘reproach to [the] rebels’ (לפריצים לחרפה), adding an explanatory gloss which none of the other traditions include at this point: these are the rebels “that stole our sustenance” (אשר לקחו מחייתנו). Not only does SY expand the tripled injunction of the earlier traditions, it has Maria mediate, mitigate, and explain the aptness of each as it emerges. She bids her son to become food for her *because she has loved him with all her strength*; she then charges him with being a reproach to the rebels *because they stole their sustenance*.

SY’s most creative formulation comes in its lengthy reorientation of the final charge, which in the earlier traditions is simply that Maria’s son be ‘a fable for life,’ which is said to be the only thing lacking from the Jews’ afflictions. In SY, Maria prefaces this statement with several others that appear nowhere in the earlier traditions. First, she bids her son: “listen to your mother’s voice” (שמע לקול אמך). This injunction, begun with a traditional vocative—“And now, my son” (ועתה בני)—naturally hearkens several literary contexts to the reader versed in the Hebrew Scriptures: first, the charges made by the patriarch Isaac to his son Jacob immediately before and after making his prophetic blessing upon him (Gen 27:8 and 27:43), which each begin: “And now, my son, listen to my voice” (ועתה בני שמע בקולי).¹¹⁰ In this same context, perhaps even more significantly, Jacob’s mother Rebekah commands him: “My son ... listen to my voice” (בני ... שמע ... בקלי). Second, such language recalls several gnomic addresses in Proverbs (5:7a; 7:24a; 8:32a): “And now, my sons, listen to me” (ועתה בנים שמעו-לי). The general valence of this traditional freight which Maria’s injunction carries accrues to render Maria’s statement as *the kind of command that parents in Scripture give to their children, commands which are conventionally obeyed*. Thus, when Maria proffers the content of her command—“support my soul, and have pity on me” (וסעדתה את נפשי וריחמתני)¹¹¹—the abhorrent meaning of the command may be offset by her recalling the norms of deference, obedience, and honor uniformly accorded to parents by children throughout the Jewish Scriptures.¹¹² Maria is a biblical mother—she cites her own motherly devotion as grounds for what she is asking of her son.

To the end of this charge SY has Maria append a statement regarding her son’s fate. She says: “your portion is in the Garden of Eden” (והיה גורלך בגן עדן). Here the

¹¹⁰ The Hebrew idiom ‘listen to the voice’ (שמע + קול) is common and appears already in the speech of Lamech to his two wives in Gen 4:23 where he says: “Listen to my voice” (שמעו קולי).

¹¹¹ The relatively rare term סעד (‘refresh, comfort, nourish’) usually refers to physical nourishment (i.e. with food) and often denotes the giving of food from one to another, i.e. hospitality: see Gen 18:5; Judg 19:5; 1 Kgs 13:7. Cf., however, uses such as that at Prov 20:28b. Maria’s call for her son to ‘have pity on me’ may be designed to recall, ironically, the reference to ‘compassionate women’ in Lam 4:10, one of the few biblical passages which mention women eating their children as a part of God’s judgment upon his people, realized in the destruction of Jerusalem: “The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food during the destruction of the daughter of my people” (ידי נשים רחמניות בשלו ילדיהן היו) (לברות למו בשבר בת-עמי (בשל)). Indeed, not just the language of pity/compassion appear with SY, but also that of ‘boiling’ (בשל), as we will see.

¹¹² In reference to mothers in particular, see Exod 20:12,15,17; Lev 19:3; 20:9; Deut 5:16; 27:16; Prov 1:8; 6:20; 10:1; 15:20; 19:26; 20:20; 23:22,25; 30:11,17.

author of *SY* betrays knowledge of (perhaps popular) Jewish traditions concerning the afterlife, which are then retrofitted to Maria's character in this episode. *SY* was very likely written during the lifetime of Sa'adia Ga'on (882–942 CE), one of the most important Jewish philosophers of the early Middle Ages. Among other things, Saadia in his *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (completed 933 CE) dealt at length with Jewish ideas of the afterlife, eternal reward and punishment, and the relationship between body and soul, during the course of which discussions he posited that the righteous will be rewarded in the Garden of Eden in the afterlife, the wicked in Gehenna.¹¹³ *SY* seems to be entering into this discussion. (Incidentally, Sa'adia Ga'on apparently knew and even cited *SY* in his *Chronicle and Commentary on Daniel*, which is one reason why Flusser's dating of the text's writing to 953 CE is problematic.)¹¹⁴ Relatedly, as a text in conversation with Christian ideas and history, *SY* will have contributed to the ongoing Medieval Jewish dialogue about the afterlife, a discourse which Micha Perry has recently shown to have been deeply engaged with Christian texts and ideologies.¹¹⁵

Within the narrative of *SY*, Maria's final comforting reminder to her son acts to soften her character and to ameliorate the starkness of her impending deed; her son is going to a better place. This frames Maria's final pre-action statement, where *SY* totally reorients an idea found in the earlier traditions. In *(L)BJ*, *LHE*, and *DEH*, Maria tells her son to be food for her, a fury to the bandits, and a fable (*μῦθος/fabula*) of life for the Jews. In *SY*, this stylized and mechanized list is, as we have seen, expanded, and at the end Maria does not refer to a 'fable,' but rather describes the emergence of one: claiming that her son will be both "satiation" (*שובע*) to her and a "reproach" (*חרפה*)¹¹⁶—a profound and deeply complicated semi-contradiction—, Maria dictates what 'will be said' (*יאמר*)¹¹⁷ of her son for that reason: "his mother killed him and ate him" (*אמו הרגתו ואכלתהו*). Without

¹¹³ Ga'on, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, 333–341.

¹¹⁴ See Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 10–11 (with n44; cf. 78n227); Malter, *Saadia Gaon*, 51; Sela, "The History of the Hasmonean Period," 22–24; Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, 89–110; Alobaidi, *Book of Daniel*.

¹¹⁵ Perry, "Jewish heaven, Christian hell."

¹¹⁶ The classical Hebrew idea of 'reproach' was often treated as having a social-pedagogical affect and functioned as a kind of public moral lesson, thus the idea of a 'reproach upon all Israel' (*חרפה על-כל-ישראל*) as at 1 Sam 11:2; similarly, see Jer 29:18; 44:8; Ezek 5:14; 22:4. It is unclear whether in *SY* 'reproach' with object marker ל (lit. 'as/for a reproach') should be taken along with לשובע to refer to something specifically applicable to Maria (לי) or a kind of 'general reproach' discernible and perhaps applicable to the people of Jerusalem, and thus standing in apposition to the common statement ('it will be said') which follows. Biblical usage could suggest the latter.

¹¹⁷ The same language is used regarding Judah's destruction in Jer 4:11.

recourse to a nominalization for ‘fable,’¹¹⁸ as the earlier traditions render it, in *SY* Maria imagines a (near) future in which her son will be talked about as a life lesson; instead of telling her son to ‘be(come) a fable,’ Maria tells a story depicting what kind of fable he will be. In *SY*, Maria does not simply rattle off a tripartite command to her son—she thinks through the implications of her actions, and those ruminations are conveyed by the vehicle of biblical language.

Rather than the insane murderer reminiscent of Roman tragedy, Maria here appears as a biblical mother forced into an impossible decision, the implications of which she understands and is capable of articulating. She has a complex idea of the afterlife, a notion of ‘soul’ versus ‘flesh,’ and a biblicized understanding of what is happening and how that is to be understood. We begin to see here that the Maria and the Maria Story of *SY* are not those of *DEH* or of other earlier traditions; rather, both character and narrative are newfound literary realities which improve considerably upon their traditionary foundations.

BJ 6.208

καὶ ταῦθ' ἅμα λέγουσα κτείνει τὸν υἱόν, ἔπειτ' ὀπτήσασα τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ κατεσθίει, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν κατακαλύψασα ἐφύλαττεν. And as she said this she killed her son, and then, having cooked him, she ate half, and the rest she covered up and guarded.

LBJ 6.208

Et hoc simul dicens occidit filium, coctumque medium comedit, adopertum autem reliquum reseruauit. And as she was saying this she killed her son, and she ate half of him when he had been cooked, but she preserved the remainder hidden.

LHE 3.6.25a

et haec cum dixisset, simul filium iugulat, tum deinde igni superpositum torret et medium And with these words she killed her boy, put him over the fire, roasted him, at half of

¹¹⁸ The author of *SY* would have had many such terms at his disposal. In Deut 28:37, for example, within an extended passage describing the curses which would/will attend Israel’s breach of contract with the LORD—the same passage in which women eating their own children during siege is prophesied as part of God’s future judgment (28:52–57)—we find three apt terms for ‘parable’ appropriate to this context, terms which were likely on the mind of the author of *SY* when writing the siege of Jerusalem (with Deut 28 as background): “You shall become a horror (שמה), a proverb (משל), and a taunt (לשיגירה) among all the people to whom the LORD drives you.” Such an idea is commonplace in the Hebrew Bible; cf. similar notions of ill-fated people(s) becoming ‘proverbs’ and/or ‘bywords’ in 1 Kgs 9:7b; 2 Chr 7:20b; Job 17:6; 30:9; Ps 44:14; 69:11; Ezek 23:10; Joel 2:17b. *SY* did not fail to follow the language of *DEH* because it had no recourse to appropriate language; rather, its author made a conscious decision to articulate things a particular way.

quidem consumit, medium vero seruat obtectum. him, covered the rest of him, and set him aside.

DEH 5.40.1h

haec dicens auerso uultu gladium demersit et in frustra filium secans igni imposuit, partem comedit, partem operuit ne quis superueniret. As she was saying these things, her face turned away, she sunk her sword and, carving up her son into pieces, she placed him on a fire, ate part, and covered part, lest anyone come upon [him].

SY 86h (פו)

And so it happened that, as she was saying these things to her son, she took the lad in her hand, turned away, cut him up with a sword and killed him. Her face was turned away and her eyes did not see [it]. And she took the lad's body and cut it in pieces. And she roasted it and cooked it and ate, and the remainder she kept to preserve.

ויהי כדברה אל בנה כדברים האלה, ותאחז את הילד בידה ותפן אחור ותכרתהו בחרב ותמיתהו. ופניה אחורנית ועיניה לא ראו, ותקח את נבלת הילד ותנתחהו. ותצלהו ותבשלהו ותאכל, והנשאר שמרה למשמרת.

Here Maria's fateful speech gives way to fated deed, and the narrative of the Maria Story takes its dark turn. In terms of comparing the different versions of this deadly development, there is much to be said. We may begin this time with *BJ* versus *LBJ* as a means of showing how this tradition testifies to the difficulty that Latin translators have with Greek even when attempting a strict and literal reiteration. The first clause of the passage—seven words in Greek, six in Latin—is identical between *BJ* and *LBJ*, save only the article (τὸν), which Latin does not have. However, the next clause in the Greek begins with a participle that describes Maria, the sentence's subject (δραστήσασα), while the Latin has a participle indicating Maria's (cooked) son (*coctum*), the sentence's object. This, of course, is merely a reminder of the syntactical preferences of Greek and Latin, but it is noteworthy that such a difference changes a feature of the story: instead of having Maria 'cooking,' as in *BJ*, the Latin of *LBJ* only ever refers to that which was cooked, i.e. Maria's son. Grammatical capacity drives narrative focus.

This difference is here doubly interesting because Rufinus, working from an identical Greek text,¹¹⁹ does not slip into this switch of focus. Nor, for that matter, is *LHE*'s opening line a slavish copy of the Greek, but rather begins with a smoother pluperfect temporal clause (*et haec cum dixisset*). Thereafter, *LHE* references both the sentence's subject and object in the cooking clause, unlike either *BJ* or *LBJ*: after using the more

¹¹⁹ Again, the Greek of Eusebius is identical to that of *BJ*.

graphic “she slaughtered” (*iugulat*; cf. *LBJ*’s *occidit*)¹²⁰ to describe Maria’s killing action, Rufinus describes Maria, the actor, as roasting (*torret*) her son, and Maria’s son, the acted upon, as being placed above a fire (*igni superpositum*) for roasting.¹²¹ In the remainder of the verse, Rufinus continues to make lexical and syntactical choices that set *LHE* apart from *LBJ*, though why this is done in each case is not necessarily clear: saying that Maria ‘ate half, saved half’ (*medium ... medium – LHE*) rather than that she ‘at half, saved the rest’ (*medium ... reliquum – LBJ*) may have seemed to Rufinus a more natural and aesthetically acceptable rendering, whereas *LBJ*’s shifting vocabulary is again beholden to the Greek (τὸ ἥμισυ ... τὸ λοιπὸν); Rufinus’ rendering of *consumo* (‘to devour’) in contradistinction to *LBJ*’s *comedo* (‘to eat’) could be read as highlighting the brutality of the act; the difference between *LBJ*’s and *LHE*’s renderings of how Maria preserved the remaining half of the body covered up—*adoptertum ... reseruauit* on the one hand, *seruat obtectum* on the other—seems merely incidental.

The beginning of *DEH*’s rendering of this passage, which begins with a condensed version of *LBJ*’s vocabulary (*haec dicens*), belies the stark idiosyncrasy of PH’s account. First, in *DEH* Maria undertakes her killing with her face turned away (*auerso uultu*), a tragic (and probably realistic) detail which heightens the emotional pitch of the scene. (We might note also that, in Seneca’s *Medea*, Medea’s face, *uultus*, is a focal point in the narrative.)¹²² Much more striking is the fact that, in *DEH*, Maria appears with a sword (*gladius*)! Rather than ‘killing’ her son, Maria plunges her sword (*gladium demersit*) into him; rather than simply placing him over a fire, Maria cuts him up into pieces (*in frusta ... secans*), a brutal scene recalling Seneca’s *Thyestes*.¹²³ The medieval artistic portrayal of this scene, usually couched within larger portraits of Jerusalem’s demise, usually convey one or both details (sword, turned face).

Like Rufinus, PH uses the same term twice to refer to the two parts of Maria’s killed-and-cooked son, that which was eaten and that which was saved (*LHE* = *medium ... medium*; *DEH* = *partem ... partem*). To describe Maria’s eating *DEH* shares its language with *LBJ* (*comedit*). But *DEH* does not, like (*L*)*B**J* and *LHE*, state specifically that Maria preserved/saved the uneaten portion of her son; rather, PH only says that Maria ‘covered’ (*operuit*; cf. *LBJ*’s *adoptertum*) the other half “lest anyone come upon it” (*ne quis superueniret*). As is usual for PH, he is interested in relating Maria’s thought process throughout the action of the story. In the end, therefore, *DEH*’s version of this scene, while hardly longer than the other Latin traditions,¹²⁴ is very different. Maria does not just ‘kill’ her son—she turns her face away and sinks her sword into him; she does not

¹²⁰ More graphic as a present active indicative rather than a perfect verb, and more graphic in its more literal connotation ‘cut the throat’ (Lewis & Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, *ad loc.*), compared to *occido*, ‘kill, strike down.’

¹²¹ Note how Amidon’s translation hints at how difficult a detail this is to do justice to in translation.

¹²² See Seneca *Med.* 446; 853; cf. 396; 751; 788.

¹²³ See Seneca *Thy.* 144–148, which shares many details found in *DEH*’s Maria Story: Thyestes’ son meets the sword (*gladio*; cf. Maria’s *gladium demersit*) as he runs for his father’s kiss (*osculum*; cf. Maria’s *exosculabor*, a *hapax legomenon* in *DEH*). Then the dead boy is divided (*diuisus*) by Tantalus (cf. Maria’s *in frusta secans*).

¹²⁴ By word count: *LBJ* = 13, *LHE* = 20, *DEH* = 20.

just ‘cook’ him—she cuts him up first; and she does not just eat half and save half—she preserves the remainder *so as to avoid anyone else coming upon his remains*. The killing scene of *DEH*’s Maria Story is more graphic, more emotional, and more detailed than what we find in *(L)BJ* and *LHE*.

SY introduces its version of this scene with the commonplace past-tense Hebrew copula ויהי (“and so it was, and so it came to pass, and so it happened”)¹²⁵ followed by an emphasis on Maria’s speech (דברה; כדברים), subtly signaling to the reader that the narrative is about to turn from speech (דבר) to action. In describing this action, *SY* includes most of the details found in *DEH*, but reorders these and adds some of its own. Thus, *SY* does not state that Maria’s face was turned away (פניה אחרנית) until after describing the killing, and it notes superfluously the consequence of Maria’s turning away: “her eyes did not see” (ועיניה לא ראו) the moment of her son’s death. This emphasis upon Maria’s blinding herself to her actions recalls well-known biblical scenes: lexically, *SY*’s statement that Maria turned her face away repeats precisely the language used of Shem and Japheth in Gen 9, when they turned their faces away from seeing their father’s ‘nakedness;’¹²⁶ thematically, *SY*’s statement that Maria’s ‘eyes did not see’ the death of her son recalls the pitiful plight of Hagar in Gen 21 (while employing the language of Deut 21:7b),¹²⁷ where the spurned handmaiden refuses to watch her son die.¹²⁸ Once again, in *SY* Maria’s character and story are defined by scriptural language. And Maria’s non-seeing of her crime is highlighted further by the fact that she “turned away” (ותפן אחר) before stabbing and killing him. Not once, not twice, but thrice does *SY* insist upon the fact that Maria did not, *would not* look at the terrible thing she was doing.

When examining the murder itself in *SY*, one notices that the first detail is unique among the five accounts examined here: as she prepares to kill him, we read that Maria seized her son in her hand (תאחז את הילד בידה). This added detail, like other details we have seen in *SY*, increases the scene’s emotion and plays up the intimacy of the mother-child relationship which is about to be profaned. It may be that *SY* had in mind here the (in)famous Aqedah story in which Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son Isaac. There we also find preparations for the burning/cooking of the child-to-be-killed; Abraham “takes in his hand” (יקח בידו) not his son, but the fire with which to undertake his sacrifice of

¹²⁵ Recall that the Maria story begins in *SY* 86 with the feminine version of this verb (ותהי); this is a relatively common way for *SY* to begin (and perhaps mark) certain sections, chapters, or scenes within its narrative.

¹²⁶ At Gen 9:23b, after their brother Ham shows them their drunk father (Noah) passed out in his tent, Shem and Japheth walk backwards with a garment on their shoulders to ‘cover their father’s nakedness,’ and “their faces were turned away (פניהם אחרנית) so that they did not see their father’s nakedness.”

¹²⁷ In dictating how Israel is to deal with a slain person found in a field, Deut 21 mandates that, among other things, the elders of the city nearest to where the slain man is found must say: “Our hands did not shed this blood and our eyes did not see it (ועינינו לא ראו)” (21:7b). This is a standard Hebrew idiom: ‘the eyes’ see or do not see.

¹²⁸ Sent into the desert with her son Esau, Hagar leaves her son under the bushes after their water runs out (Gen 21:15). She sits down some way away and says: “Do not let me see the boy die (אל-אראה במות הילד)” (21:16).

him (Gen 22:6).¹²⁹ While the link to the Aqedah is not ironclad, we should note that Steve Bowman has emphasized how prominent the Aqedah story is in *SY*'s narrative: the author explicitly reinterpreted PH's 'Christianized' version of the story as found in the Masada scene (*DEH* 5.53.1; *SY* 89 [פט])¹³⁰ and, moreover, potentially rewrote the saga of Herod's suicide as a kind of "mock *Aqedah*."¹³¹ Even more to the point, *SY* will have occasion to rewrite another treatment of the Aqedah in *DEH* right after the Maria Story, within Titus' response to hearing of the horrible event.¹³² All of this is to say that the Aqedah was an important part of the conception of history for the author of *SY* and it was *on his mind as he was penning the Maria Story*. This may explain why *SY* adds the detail that Maria 'took her son in her hand' before killing him.

Maria's killing act itself is 'maximally' depicted in *SY*, by which I mean that *SY* includes the details both of (*L*)*BJ* + *LHE*, which all say that Maria 'killed' her son, and the account of *DEH*, which has it that Maria 'sunk her sword' into her son: *SY* is the only version to state that she both "cut him down with the sword" (תכרתהו בחרב) and "killed him" (תמיתהו). To say that a person 'struck down [with the sword] and killed' is an idiom familiar to the Hebrew Scriptures.¹³³ Hebrew style becomes particularly apparent here in the doubling-down of verbs and phrases regarding Maria's killing of her son ('she struck him down and killed him) and her refusal to witness the scene ('she turned her face away and her eyes did not see). This is continued in the last line of the scene, where we read that Maria roasted (צללה) and cooked (בשל) her son before she ate him and, in a way, in the final line, where we read regarding the remains of Maria's son

¹²⁹ Cf. the 'taking in hand' of a deadly instrument by an infamous female personality from the Bible in the character of Jael, an action which precedes an act almost as gruesome as Maria's (driving a stake into a man's temple while he sleeps). Jael "took a tent peg and seized a hammer in her hand" (את-יתד האהל ותשם) תקח ... (את-המקבת בידה) in order to do this (Judg 4:21). The importance of this 'seizing' scene is highlighted by the fact that it is stylized in the poetic recapitulation of this scene in Judg 5:26a: "She reached out her hand for the tent peg, her right hand for the workman's hammer" (ידה ליתד תשלחנה וימינה להלמות עמלים).

¹³⁰ Bowman, "Jewish Responses to Byzantine Polemics." Bowman's description of PH's vision of immortality as "neo-Platonic," and his simple reading of *DEH*'s treatment of the Aqedah here as simply "Christianized" need revising; PH is constructing for a Jewish character within his narrative a speech which he believes realistic and thus historically feasible; while his historical prose is informed by Christian ideology, calling his treatment of the Aqedah at the Masada scene 'Christian' or 'Christianized' does not to justice to the complexity of the issue. See further Bay, "Exemplarity, Exegesis, & Ethnography."

¹³¹ Bowman, "Mock *Aqedah* or *Mashiah*?"

¹³² *DEH* has the Roman conqueror refer to the Aqedah story as something which explains the Jews' continued infighting and willingness to die: Abraham, the inventor of Jewish culture, was willing to kill his own son, so no wonder the Jews are okay with death, even the death of their own children; see Bay, "Exemplarity, Exegesis, & Ethnography." *SY*, allowing the same idea to remain, puts this interpretation of the Aqedah not directly into the mouth of Titus, like PH does, but indirectly into the mouths of the Jews who continue to rebel against Rome; in other words, *SY* imputes to the Jews who ultimately become responsible for Jerusalem's destruction an interpretation of the Aqedah whereby Abraham's willingness to kill his own son becomes a prescriptive example.

¹³³ Though usually with the verb נכה ("to strike") and then the Hiphil of the verb מות (המית) or the verb הרג. Cf., e.g., 1 Sam 17:35,50; 2 Sam 12:9; 18:15; 21:17; Est 9:5; Jer 41:2; Ezek 23:10.

that “she kept it to preserve it” (שמרה למשמרת), implementing a doubling of the root שמר (‘guard, watch, keep’).¹³⁴

The final thing to note about this passage in *SY* is the interpretive work it does with the material in *DEH*. *DEH* alone includes the detail that Maria ‘cut her son up into pieces’ (*in frusta filium secans*); *SY* specifies and perhaps softens this in saying that Maria took the *corpse* of her son (נבלת הילד) and cut it up (תנתחהו); Maria did not so much cut up her son as that *which was once her son* (but is now just a carcass). The Hebrew account of *SY* is in this case lengthier and more detailed than its precursors. The imagery is more specific and intentional, the action emphasized. Playing upon the elements of *pathos* introduced by *PH*, *SY* superimposes biblical language and ideas onto the scene of Maria’s killing, in particular emphasizing Maria’s distancing of herself from the crime. This bolsters the portrait of Maria already under construction in *SY*, where she is a pious, pitiable, and put-upon mother, not the crazy Medea of *DEH*.

BJ 6.209

εὐθέως δ’ οἱ στασιασταὶ παρήσαν, καὶ τῆς θεμίτου κνίσης σπάσαντες ἠπειλουν, εἰ μὴ δεῖξειεν τὸ παρασκευασθέν, ἀποσφάξειν αὐτὴν εὐθέως. ἢ δὲ καὶ μοῖραν αὐτοῖς εἰποῦσα καλὴν τετηρημέναι τὰ λείψανα τοῦ τέκνου διεκάλυψεν.

Immediately the rebels appeared and, smelling the unnatural [or holy] scent they threatened to kill her immediately if she did not show them what she had prepared. But she, telling them that she had kept a good portion, uncovered the remains of her child.

LBJ 6.209

Ecce autem aderant seditiosi et contaminatissimi nidoris odore capti mortem ei statim nisi quod parasset ostenderet minabantur. Illa uero partem se bonam reseruasse respondens, aperit filii reliquias.

Suddenly the seditionists arrived and, captivated by the scent of a most hideous odor, threatened death immediately unless she showed what she had prepared. Replying that she had actually saved a good portion, she uncovered her son’s remains.

LHE 3.6.25b

et ecce confestim praedones inruunt obstatae carnis nidore concepto, mortem minantur, nisi sine mora cibos, quos paratos senserant demonstraret, tum illa: ‘equidem partem,’ inquit, ‘vobis optimam reservavi.’ et continuo

The looters burst in as soon as they smelled the burnt flesh, and threatened to kill her if she did not show them immediately where the food was which they could tell she had prepared. She replied: “I have in fact saved

¹³⁴ The doubling of terminology for emphasis in classical Hebrew is so common as to need no explanation.

quae superfuerant membra retexit infantis.

the best part for you.” And she uncovered at once the parts of the baby which were left.

DEH 5.40.2a

Sed nidor incensi peruenit ad principes seditionis continuoque odorem secuti introierunt mulieris hospitium minantes necem, quod ausa esset ipsis ieiunantibus edere atque eos exortes facere cibi quem repperisset. At illa: ‘partem,’ inquit, ‘uestram uobis seruauit, non fui auara nec inhumana. Nolite indignari, habetis quod et uos edatis. De meis uobis uisceribus cibum parauit. Considite ocius, mensam adponam, mirari habetis ministerium meum, iudicare quod talem nullius inueneritis mulieris affectum, quae uos nec dulcis filii fraudaret gratia.’ Simul dicens redoperuit ambusta membra et epulanda obtulit ...

But scent of burning reached the chief bandits, and following the odor immediately they entered the woman’s abode threatening death, because she had dared to eat with them themselves going hungry, and to exclude them from the food she had found. But she said, “I have saved your part for you; I have been neither greedy nor inhumane. Be not indignant, you have something you can eat. I have prepared food for your innards from mine. Sit quickly, I’ll set the table, you must marvel at my service, and judge whether or not you have found such goodwill in any other woman [than she] who has not deprived you the gift of her sweet son.” While she was speaking she uncovered the scorched body parts and offered them for eating ...

SY 86i (פו)

And the scent of the lad’s flesh travelled into the street and the people smelled it and said: “What’s this? A scent of roasted flesh?” And the scent travelled to the chief bandits, and they came to the woman’s house, furious, and said to her: “Why should you eat while we die of hunger?” And the woman answered and said to them: “Be not angry with your maid-servant! Behold, I have kept your portion! Sit now and I will set the table before you. And eat the portion that I have kept for you.” And she set the table before them.

וריה בשר הילד הולך ברחוב ויריחו העם ויאמרו: מה זה [?] ריח בשר צלי? וילך הריח אל שרי הפריצים ויבואו אל בית האשה בחרי אף לאמר אליה: מדוע את תאכלי ואנחנו נמות ברעב?! ותען האשה ותאמר להם: אל נא יחר אפכם באמתכם! הנה חלקכם שמרתי. שבו נא ואערכה לפניכם את השולחן. ואכלתם חלקכם אשר אצלתי לכם. ותערוך לפניהם השולחן.

Here we come to the second scene which *DEH*, and later *SY*, use to introduce an extended speech of Maria, ballooning their accounts to many times the size of those in

(L)BJ and LHE. These earlier accounts present a rather straightforward narrative: the bandits arrive, having smelled Maria’s ‘food.’ They threaten her, and she reveals what she has saved.

Comparison between (L)BJ and LHE reveals the usual discrepancies and similarities. Rufinus takes slightly greater liberties with his Latin, for example in emphasizing more the physical movement of the bandits—οἱ στασιασταί, whom Rufinus again calls *praedones* instead of LBJ’s *seditioni*—by preferring *inruunt* (“they ran in”) to LBJ’s more literal rendering of the Greek’s *παρῆσαν* with *aderant* (“they were present”). More interesting here is that Rufinus alone provides a strictly adequate rendering of εὐθέως (“immediately”) with *confestim*, but he also adds the ejaculatory *ecce* (“Behold! Look! See!”) in common with LBJ. It is unusual for LBJ to provide a loose rendering of BJ’s Greek at the same time as LHE provides a more literal translation, and more unusual still for LHE to do the latter *and* to include the language of LBJ; it is not impossible that Rufinus knew both versions.

Hereafter we find LBJ striking a balance between conventionality and ingenuity. In saying that the seditionists were ‘captivated’ (*capti*) by an odor, LBJ spices up the more humdrum Greek, which has them “smelling” an unnatural scent (σπάσαντες);¹³⁵ in this LBJ may be drawing upon the inherent physicality of σπάω as a verb for ‘smell,’ which literally refers to ‘drawing/sucking in breath.’ Yet LBJ includes two nouns and an adjective to describe the scent, whereas BJ only has one of each; LBJ’s third terms thus corresponds to the verb in the Greek: τῆς κνίσης = *nidoris*; θεμίτου = *contaminatissimi*;¹³⁶ σπάσαντες = *odore [capti]*. LBJ shows its general commitment to producing a word-to-word, faithful edition of the Greek BJ, as far as the Latin language will allow. Rufinus is even more specific regarding the smell: he has that the bandits “were gripped by the smell of burning flesh” (*obustae carnis nidore concepto*).¹³⁷ (L)BJ do not specify the ‘unnatural’ smell as that of ‘burning flesh,’ but it is true that the Greek term κνίση is technically a term referring not just to a general ‘odor’ but rather to the steam/smell/savor of burnt fat specifically, i.e. of the kind produced by animal sacrifices.¹³⁸ Rufinus may well have based his terminology on knowledge of such vocabulary.

As for the threat made by the bandits to Maria, BJ and LBJ are cognate. For its part, LHE makes a few (apparently stylistic) changes: unlike BJ and LBJ, which have the bandits threaten to kill Maria *immediately* (ἀποσφάξειν αὐτήν εὐθέως/*mortem ei statim* . . . *minabantur*) if she does not produce the food she has prepared, LHE has the bandits threaten to kill Maria if *she does not immediately produce the food* (*nisi sine mora cibos* . . . *demonstraret*); the relative application of immediacy either to the threatened killing or

¹³⁵ I think it significant that Josephus in his telling never refers to “flesh” (κρέας or σάρξ), which the Greek of Deut 28, or the Hebrew for that matter (בשר), would have recommended; Josephus did not make the scene as graphic or grotesque as he could have. In fact, κρέας only ever appears in the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus, never in BJ—and it manifestly carries ritual connotations: Rengstorf, *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*, 2.530.

¹³⁶ LBJ has no qualms about upping the ante by rendering an indicative adjective as a superlative.

¹³⁷ In general, Rufinus is more comfortable using the ablative absolute than is the translator-author of LBJ.

¹³⁸ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, *ad loc.*

to what Maria is commanded to do represents a minor narrative difference between these accounts. Further, Rufinus does not just have the bandits demand that Maria produce “what she had prepared” (τὸ παρασκευασθέν/*quod parasset*), like (*L*)*BJ*, but that she produce “that which they had sensed had been prepared” (*quos paratos senserant*). These minor alterations, which testify to Rufinus’ freedom as an author, continue as Rufinus records Maria’s brief speech at the end of this passage in *oratio recta* (in a smooth transition introduced by *tum illa*) rather than the *oratio obliqua* established by *BJ*’s Greek and followed in *LBJ*. It is difficult in this not to see Rufinus’ version as literarily superior. In the same vein, one might reasonably prefer Rufinus’ *partem optimam* as an idiomatic rendering of *BJ*’s μοῖραν καλήν, referring to the “good/best portion” of the ‘meal’ that Maria had reserved for her plunderers, to *LBJ*’s somewhat odd-sounding, albeit more literal *partem bonam* (“good part”).

Perhaps the most striking idiosyncrasy of Rufinus’ rendition of this scene comes in the last sentence. There *LBJ* reproduces again the exact wording of *BJ*:¹³⁹ “Maria uncovered the remains of her son.” *LHE*, on the other hand, provides a gratuitous and graphic description of exactly what Maria uncovered: Rufinus says that Maria “immediately” (*continuo*) uncovered the “members of the infant” (*membra infantis*) “which had survived” (*quae superfuerant*), i.e. which Maria had not eaten. Heightening the *pathos* of the scene by speaking of a baby (*infans*) rather than a son (*filius*), Rufinus also points out that we are here talking not just about ‘remains,’ but about body parts, and he takes time to specify that this refers only to *some* of the body parts of this child, namely those parts which had not yet been eaten. *LHE*’s account of this scene is more jarring in its detail than what appears in *BJ* and *LBJ*.

If Rufinus’ presentation of this scene is jarring, that of PH is downright shocking, if for no other reason because of its considerable (and unnecessary) length. But in fact, the account of *DEH* is striking for a number of reasons. One of these is that, from the beginning of the scene, the bandits are not the actors—the “scent [of burning]” (*nidor* [*incensi*]) is.¹⁴⁰ It is *nidor*,¹⁴¹ then, which “made its way through” (*peruenit*) to the bandits, now no longer the generic *latrones* referred to previously but (apparently) a more specific group, the *principes seditionis* (“leaders of the sedition”). It is in response, therefore, to the ‘action’ of *nidor* that these chief bandits, ‘following’ the *odor*, come immediately

¹³⁹ The only differences are in the word order and in the Greek’s definite articles: τὰ λείψανα τοῦ τέκνου διεκάλυψεν = *aperit filii reliquias*.

¹⁴⁰ The use of *incensum* here as a modifier for *nidor* is an interesting choice, because of the former term’s connotations, which are heavily weighted towards the idea of burning incense (in *Lewis & Short* it appears as an exclusively Christian term). See Ambrose *Virg.* 3 (“hour of incense,” *hora incensi*); Sulpicius Severus *Chron.* 1.47.4; cf. Tertullian *Adv. Iud.* 5; and Jerome’s Vulgate translation of the Wisdom of Solomon (18:21), where *incensum* appears, along with prayer (*oratio*), as a means of effecting propitiation (*deprecatio*). PH may be playing here upon the fact that Jerusalem and its Temple were in the Jewish world the quintessential place associated with burning incense, whereas now in Jerusalem a very different ‘scent of burning’ is apprehended. On the ‘olfactory rhetoric’ of *DEH*, i.e. its use of scent/smell and its vocabulary as a means of talking in anti-Jewish terms about Jerusalem’s and the Temple’s destruction, see Bay, “The Bible, the Classics, and the Jews,” 231–242 (and *DEH* 5.2). For *incensi* see McCormick, *Nominal Syntax*, 157.

¹⁴¹ On *nidor* as part of PH’s vocabulary see Dwyer, *Vocabulary of Hegesippus*, 79.

into the woman's home (which is dubbed her *hospitium* rather than her *domus*, playing up the context of entertainment and the hostess-hosted relationship which defines the following action). Once there, unlike in the other early versions, the bandits do not threaten death *unless* Maria gives them the food she has prepared; rather, they threaten to murder her (*minantes necem*) because of what she has *already* done, namely 'dare' (*ausa esset*) to eat something while they were going hungry and to exclude them (lit. 'make them outsiders,' *eos exortes facere*) from food (*cibus*) which she had 'found' (*repperisset*), not food which she had, as in the other versions, 'prepared.' The scene in *DEH* is distinctive: rather than receiving a death threat designed to spur her to action, Maria receives a death threat based on her past action; the bandits are incredulous that Maria had 'dared to eat' anything without them, to exclude them (PH hereby attributes greater agency and influence to Maria as able to decide who did and did not get to eat); and the food under question is not depicted as something Maria 'made' but as something that she 'discovered.'

At this point, all of the previous accounts have Maria quickly uncover her son and succinctly explain her actions. Not so PH. He gives her a somewhat lengthier speech, as is his habit across *DEH* as a work, introducing her response: *at illa*, "but she [said]" (cf. *LHE's tum illa*). Maria refers to the portion of her son that she saved for the bandits as 'your part' (*partem uestram*), rather than the "good" (*bonam*) or "best" (*optimam*) portions cited in *LBJ* and *LHE* respectively (all three accounts use some form of *(re)seruare* as the verb, however). To these she adds the comment that she has not been greedy (*auara*) or inhumane (*inhumana*)¹⁴² in her dealings. This statement reinforces a conceptual current whose presence in *DEH* we have already noted: this woman is insane. Her saying that she is not only makes it all the more obvious. Further, PH has Maria defend her apportioning of her murdered infant in terms of equity and moral norms, as if she were defending her position in a business deal (thus the reference to 'their' portion of the proceeds): the shares assigned to herself and her 'business partners' were proportional and fair, and her actions have been fair-minded (not *auara*) and kind-spirited (not cruel, i.e. *inhumana*). The irony of Maria's statement in context is deafening. She has manifestly preferred her own life over the life of her son and has effected one of the most cruel actions imaginable upon another human being: Maria is the very embodiment of *auara* and *inhumana*. Yet PH has her casually defending her actions to her plunderers in these same terms. At the very center of *DEH's* shocking narrative stands the personality of Maria, a character who has gone completely out of her mind, as PH is at pains to show.

Maria's insanity continues to show through in her speech. Her charge to the bandits to "be not indignant" (*nolite indignari*) is almost laughable, whether read as a command whose grounds have just been given or as a plea made in the context of negotiation. Less laughable is Maria's following statement to the bandits to the effect that 'they have

¹⁴² PH may be drawing upon the language/ideas of Seneca *Ben.* 3.10.3; *Ep.* 7.3; 99.15–16,26. The term here is a *hapax legomenon* within *DEH*.

something which they can eat,¹⁴³ returning the story's focus to its greatest travesty, embodied in a half-eaten infant's corpse. As if to outdo herself for horror, Maria does not stop here, but implicates her own body within the grotesque scenario, claiming to have prepared food (*cibum paravi*) from her own *viscera*. This begins the Thyestan theme which PH will continue in his account of Titus' response to hearing of the Maria Story in the next chapter (*DEH* 5.41.2): there Titus states that the atrocity of Maria's crime is heightened by the fact that, unlike Thyestes, Maria is a woman and therefore in eating her children she is effectively eating part of her own body. The idea, especially coming from Maria's own mouth, is nothing short of disturbing. And I suggest that the very syntax of *DEH* here comes to reflect the mixed-up nature of the scene. When Maria tell her persecutors that she has prepared food "from my viscera for you" (*meis uobis uisceribus*), the dative plural pronoun sandwiched between ablative plurals causes a small bit of work for the Latin reader: one must disentangle the grammatical cases from their orthographically identical forms. Just as the 'food' which Maria has made has come from her own body, and now re-enters her body, but is also designed to enter the bodies of these others, so also the Latin syntax suggesting this intermixing is itself confusing.

The 'disturbia' concocted by PH continues from here in a different form. Following up on PH's introduction of Maria's abode as her *hospitium*, Maria dons the mantle of an anxious hostess (or doting mother?) and tells her 'guests' to "sit quickly" (*considite ocius*) while she sets the table (*mensa*). Here it would be difficult for the classically-versed reader to avoid recollection of Seneca's *Thyestes*, where the *mensa* is a focal point illustrating the tragedy's troubling action;¹⁴⁴ the kind of 'table' to which Maria bids her 'dinner guests' approach had, long before *DEH*'s writing, been known to the Roman world in the form of the table at which Thyestes unwittingly dined upon the *membra* and *partes* of his own children.¹⁴⁵ Within this Thyestan scene, Maria bids her visitors marvel at her service (*ministerium*)¹⁴⁶ and to judge whether or not they have ever found such *affectum* in any other woman.¹⁴⁷ The latter charge is doubly ironic: taking the meaning of *affectus* as 'love, compassion, sympathy,' one could not possibly impute this to a woman who had just killed her own baby; conversely, if one understands *affectus* here to signify 'low, ignoble passion or desire'—a definition specifically associated with Seneca, by the

¹⁴³ One wonders whether or not PH means to play on the two possible meanings of the verb *edo* here, "to eat, consume" and "to give forth, produce, raise." If one took the latter as the subjunctive *edatis*, Maria would be saying: "You have what you have brought forth," an idea which is explicitly stated again toward the end of this episode, when Maria charges the bandits with the accusation, "you have caused a mother to eat like this" (*uos sic epulari matrem fecistis*). PH could intend one or both meanings. He employs the verb *edo* in this second sense somewhat frequently (cf. *DEH* 5.44.1 [x2]; 5.46.1; 5.50.1, etc., and Dwyer, *Vocabulary of Hegesippus*, 134).

¹⁴⁴ Seneca *Thy.* 64; 145–49 (where is also the language of hospitality [*hospites*], hunger [*fames*], and food [*cibus*]); 272 (there characterized as being set within the *domus*; cf. 263); 452; 916; 989.

¹⁴⁵ Seneca *Thy.* 60–64.

¹⁴⁶ The term's classical and late antique heritage is broad; see Dwyer, *Vocabulary of Hegesippus*, 78. Dwyer classifies this as a 'poetic' word and the one which is most popular in *DEH*, "appearing at least twenty-five times" (94). In fact, the gloss appears thirty-four times within *DEH*.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Seneca *Med.* 193–94.

way—the question becomes absurd, given that this is clearly not what Maria is asking *but does in fact denote the more appropriate understanding in context*:¹⁴⁸ Maria is visibly both lacking in ‘compassion’ and driven by ‘wild desire,’ ideas both of which *affectus* can be used to denote. Maria is a horror posing as a harried hostess.

The final line of this speech of Maria’s drives home once again her mental instability as she boasts of her generosity in not depriving the bandits of “the gift of her sweet son” (*dulcis filii ... gratia*). The gustatory language of ‘sweetness’ here is disgusting, yet it presages subsequent developments within *DEH*’s expansion of the scene. Maria’s comment plays upon the capacity of the adjective ‘sweet’ to describe personality/disposition and thus function as a term of affection,¹⁴⁹ and its more literal ability to denote sweetness of taste.¹⁵⁰ Over the course of the story so far, we see that Maria’s son has shifted from embodying the relational sweetness of filial intimacy to representing sweetness in a way that no human being ever should.

In *DEH*, it is only after this lengthy speech—in fact, while she is speaking (*simul dicens*)—that Maria uncovers what are here described as the “charred members” (*ambusta membra*) of her son’s remains. It is this longer and therefore more grotesque account of *DEH* which forms the basis for what we find in *SY*.

The first thing to notice about *SY*’s account of this portion of the story is that it begins, like *DEH*, with “scent [of the boy’s flesh]” (ריח [בשר הילד]) as the agent. But in *SY* we read that, before anything else, this scent traveled into “the street” (ברחוב), i.e. the common area of the city, and thus first became publicly known to “the people” (העם). Unlike all earlier versions, in which Maria’s tragedy remains a relatively private one up to this point in the narrative, in *SY* Maria’s crime becomes already a matter of common knowledge; in depicting a horror that affects all of Jerusalem’s inhabitants, *SY* presents Maria’s story now not as a tale of personal tragedy but as a social problem among the Jews (of the narrative) and thus as a slightly different kind of moral lesson (which fits with *SY*’s habit of referring to Maria vaguely as “the woman,” האשה). Indeed, by so associating Maria’s deed with ‘the street,’ or, perhaps better, the city’s public square, *SY* hearkens several infamous biblical episodes in which terrible things took

¹⁴⁸ Thus does Dwyer, *Vocabulary of Hegesippus*, 67 read it as denoting “feeling, state of mind” (and he associates the term especially with Ambrose) or as denoting “love, devotion” (69).

¹⁴⁹ See, e.g., Horace *Ep.* 1.7.12 (*dulcis amice*).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. the verb *dulcescere* (*DEH* 4.17; 5.41), recorded in Dwyer, *Vocabulary of Hegesippus*, 128, and identified as a rare classical term (164).

place in the public square, things which came to serve as object lessons.¹⁵¹ By moving the narrative focus “into the street/square” (ברחוב), SY taps into a biblical background to hint at inauspicious things to come. By the same token, the (often rhetorical) question “what is this?” (usually ממה-זאת?) in the Jewish Bible often carries accusatory overtones and concerns the previous commission of some crime, beginning with what might be considered ‘the crime’ of Adam and Even in Gen 3.¹⁵² SY prepares the coming scene in its own unique way.

Next the ‘scent of burning flesh’ finds its way to the chief bandits (שרי הפריצים = the *principes seditionis* of DEH). This causes them to come to Maria’s house, and SY is the only version of this story which describes them as doing so “in fierce anger” (בחר אף; cf. Lam 2:3). SY also renders the bandits’ address to Maria in direct discourse, unlike DEH, and has them ask a simple form of (only) the first (of two) question proffered in DEH: “why do/should you eat while we are dying of hunger?”¹⁵³

Maria’s answer to the bandits in SY carries connotations of deference which stem from the classical Hebrew vernacular and which thus are not (as) present in DEH: Maria employs the traditional Hebrew particle of entreaty, נא (“Please! Come now!”), and refers to herself as “your maidservant” (אמתכם) before the bandits to whom she pleads, ‘do not be angry with me.’ This language classes Maria together with pious female figures like Ruth and Hannah, who likewise reflexively refer to themselves as ‘your maidservant’ when addressing God or others.¹⁵⁴ After this Maria, as in DEH, says to her plunderers that “I have preserved your portion (חלקכם),” telling them to “sit now” (שבו נא = *considite ocius*) while she prepares their table.

Maria’s statement to the bandits, “I will set the table before you” (אערכה לפניכם את), realized two lines later in the narrative description, “and she set the table before them” (ותערוך לפניהם השולחן), seems unavoidably to recall one of the most famous psalms

¹⁵¹ Namely, Gen 19 where two angels sent by God arrive at Sodom, where Abram’s nephew Lot lives, and state their intention to “remain in the square (ברחוב) all night” (19:2b). Lot dissuades them, and it becomes clear why: the city is full of sexual reprobates, hence God’s impending destruction of it. In Judg 19 we find the story of the Levite and his concubine: coming to Gibeah, he and his servant and his concubine “sat down in the open square (ברחוב) of the city” because no one invited them in to spend the night (19:15). Eventually, the man escapes into a stranger’s house but his concubine is left outside and raped all night long. The Levite cuts her up into twelve pieces and sends them to the twelve tribes of Israel as a sign of how immoral Israel had become. These are the first two instances in the Hebrew Bible where the prepositional phrase ברחוב locates the narrative’s focal point. Conventionally, little good happens in the street/square: Ezra 10:9; Isa 59:14 (though cf. Est 6:9,11; Job 29:7).

¹⁵² At Gen 3:13a, after Adam and Eve had eaten fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and after Adam has foisted the blame for the misdeed upon his wife, the LORD God asks Eve: “What is this (מה-זאת) that you have done?” In a similar vein, cf. Gen 12:18; 26:10; 29:25; 37:10; 42:28; 44:15; Exod 14:5; 18:14; Josh 22:16; Judg 2:2; 8:1; 20:12; 2 Sam 12:21; and so on. A preponderance of evidence shows that the Hebrew Bible evinces such language as part of its vernacular for conveying interrogatory accusation, perhaps akin to the modern English query, ‘What the hell?’ (which often is short for ‘what in the hell have you done?’).

¹⁵³ Possible intertexts here include Gen 25:32, where Esau proclaims himself ‘about to die [from hunger]’ and and 2 Chr 32:11, where the exact phrase ‘to die of hunger’ (למות ברעב) appears.

¹⁵⁴ Ruth 2:13; 1 Sam 1:11,16; this language is even more prominent with the righteous figure of Abigail, who becomes King David’s wife (one of them): 1 Sam 25:24–25,27–28,31,41; cf. 1 Sam 28:21–22 *et alia*.

of the Hebrew Scriptures: Psalm 23. At Psalm 23:5a, the psalmist addresses the LORD with the line: “You prepare a table before me (תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי שַׁלְחֵךְ) in the presence of my enemies.” The distinctive language of this line, moreover, which Psalm 23 emblazoned upon the exegetical imagination of subsequent Jewish (and Christian) tradition, was distinctively present in *SY*’s main source, *DEH*: earlier in the narrative at *DEH* 5.9.4, PH quotes Psalms 23:5a in describing the interior of the Jerusalem Temple and particularly the table (*mensa*) of shewbread therein;¹⁵⁵ this scriptural quote of King David is conspicuously absent in *SY*’s rendition of the same passage, which prefers to highlight different aspects of the Temple’s symbolic interior.¹⁵⁶ Suffice it to say that the author of *SY* knew well the contents of Psalm 23—indeed, we might have safely assumed this in any case—and thus the (repeated) language of Maria’s ‘setting the table’ here in *SY* can hardly have been accidental. What such an allusion might be intended to convey is difficult to discern. Irony alone seems an appropriate hermeneutic: whereas the psalmist refers to God’s provision amidst the threat of enemies, Maria prepares a table *for* her enemies in the face of (already realized as well as continuous) threat. The comfort evinced by Psalm 23 makes a mockery of Maria’s plight, though perhaps in order to offer some theological insight into *SY*’s version of the narrative.

Overall, this portion of the story reinforces the portrayals of Maria already noted: *DEH* presents an unhinged Maria whose words and actions are increasingly shocking and disturbing; *SY* presents a Maria whose persona recalls biblical personalities, whose words and actions carry scriptural undertones, and whose desperate crime is as much a marker of Jerusalem’s sad state of affairs as of Maria’s (representative?) instability per se.

BJ 6.210

<p>τοὺς δ’ εὐθέως φρίκη καὶ παρέκστασις ἤρει καὶ παρὰ τὴν ὄψιν ἐπεπήγεσαν. ἡ δ’ “ἐμόν,” ἔφη, “τοῦτο τέκνον γνήσιον καὶ τὸ ἔργον ἐμόν.</p>	<p>Immediately horror and paralysis seized them and they were frozen by the sight. And she said, “this is my very own child and my work.</p>
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LBJ 6.210

<p><i>Illos autem confestim horror cepit atque dementia, uisusque ipso diriguerunt. At mulier, 'et hic meus inquit est uere filius, et facinus meum.</i></p>	<p>Immediately horror and paralysis seized them, and they stood frozen by the sight itself. And the mother said, “This is truly my son, and my crime.</p>
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¹⁵⁵ *DEH* 5.9.4: “...whence David also said, ‘You have prepared a table in my presence’” (... *unde et David dicit parasti in conspectus meo mensam*). See Bay, “A New King David for Late Antiquity.” The fact that PH knew the verbiage of Ps 23:5a and chose *not* to use it within Maria’s speech shows that he did not intend to recall this psalm within Maria’s speech; the allusion is a novelty of *SY*’s version of the story.

¹⁵⁶ See Bay, “The Jerusalem Temple and Jewish Identity.”

LHE 3.6.26a

at illos repente ingens horror invasit et inmanes quamvis animi deriguere, vox faucibus interclusa est. illa vero truci vultu et ipsis iam praedonibus truculentior: 'meus,' inquit, 'hic filius, meus est partus, et facinus meum est.

An immense horror gripped them immediately and, savage at heart though they were, they stood frozen, unable to utter a sound. She, however, her face grim, spoke now more grimly even than the looters themselves: "This is my son, my offspring, and my crime.

DEH 5.40.2b

... cum adhortatione huiusmodi sermonis: 'hoc est prandium meum, haec uestra portio, uidete diligentius ne uos fraudauerim. Ecce pueri manus una, ecce pes eius, ecce dimidium reliqui corporis eius, et ne alienum putetis, filius est meus, ne alterius opus arbitremini, ego feci, ego diligenter diuisi, mihi quod manducarem, uobis quod reseruarem. Numquam mihi dulcior, fili, fuisti. Tibi debeo quod adhuc uiuo. Tua suauitas animam tenuit meam, produxit matri miserae diem mortis. Subuenisti in fame, tu munus supremae senectae, tu percussorum repressor. Uenerunt necaturi, conuiuiae facti sunt. Habebunt et ipsi quod tibi debeant, cum epulas meas sumserint. Sed quid refertis gradum, quid horrescitis animo? Cur non epulamini quod mater feci? Possunt et uos delectare quae matrem exsaturarunt. Non esurio iam, postquam me filius meus pauit, abunde exsatiata sum, famem nescio.

... with a hortatory speech of this kind: "this is my lunch, this your portion, look carefully whether I have beguiled you. Behold, one hand of the boy! Behold, his foot! Behold, half the remains of his body! And lest you think him not mine, it is my son; lest you consider it another's work, I did it, I carefully divided, ate what was mine and reserved what is yours. Never have you been sweeter to me, son. I owe it to you that I still live. Your sweetness upheld my spirit, rescued a miserable mother from the day of death. You have relieved [me] in famine, you, gift of very old age, you, repressor of assassins. They came to kill, and have become guests. And what they themselves will have they owe to you, since they have laid hold of my food. But why do you step back, why do you bristle in your soul? Why should you not feast since I, the mother, have made [this]? That which satisfied a mother can be good enough for you too. Now I hunger not, after my son has fed me, I am abundantly satisfied, I do not know hunger.

SY 86j (פו)

... and said: "Eat your meal. And behold, your portion which I have kept for you. Behold, the boy's hand! Behold, his foot!

... ותאמר: אכלו ארוחתכם! והנה חלקכם אשר שמרתי לכם. הנה יד הילד והנה רגלו והנה נתחיו לפניכם. ואל תאמרו כי ילד אשה אחרת הוא כי

And behold, pieces of him for you! And do not suppose him to be the son of another woman, for he is my son! I bore him and I ate him, and moreover I saved your portion! And the woman lifted up her voice in bitter lament and weeping, and she wept for her son and said: My son, my son, how sweet you were to me in your living days, and in your death it is sweet to me that you took care of me in famine and have given life to my soul. Moreover, you have provided for my old age and also have saved me from murderers who came upon me in fierce wrath, and now they are to me comrades because they have come to eat at my table.”

בני הוא! ואנכי ילדתיהו ואנכי אכלתיהו וגם אנכי שמרתי חלקכם! ותשא האשה את קולה במר נהי ובכי ותבך על בנה ותאמר: בני בני מה מתוק היית לי בהיותך חי ובמותך מתקתה לי כי כלכלתני ברעב ואת נפשי החייתה. ותטרף את שיבתי וגם הצלתני מחמת הרוצחים אשר עלו עלי בחרי אף ועתה הנם לי לעמיתים כי ישבו על שולחני.

This section of the story comprises the bulk of Maria’s latter speech in *DEH* and *SY*. Here she waxes eloquent about her son’s nutritional provision, confirms the identity of the mutilated corpse as her own progeny, and reflects upon her own predicament and that of her plunderers. The most obvious, and by this point most characteristic, observation to be made *ab initio* is that *DEH* and *SY* here lie on a trajectory completely independent of the earlier traditions. Yet even within the comparatively laconic accounts of *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* we find some diversity.

As is often the case, *LBJ* follows *BJ* slavishly even in word order: *illos autem confestim horror* = τοὺς δ’ εὐθέως φρίκη. *LHE* not only stirs things up in terms of word order (beginning with the conjunction *at*) but also adds adjectives: the *horror* which seized the bandits in *LBJ* becomes *ingens horror*. Further still, Rufinus replaces the second of the two conceptual entities which are said to have captivated the bandits in *BJ* and *LBJ*—φρίκη/*horror* + παρέκστασις/*dementia* = “horror and paralysis”—with a description of the bandits’ own disposition: they were “savage of heart” or “monstrous of soul” (*inmanes animi*).¹⁵⁷ Unlike in (*L*)*BJ*, however, where the bandits are stunned “by the sight” (παρὰ τὴν ὄψιν = *uisoque ipso*) of Maria’s dead and cooked son, in *LHE* we are not told explicitly the reason for their shock, only that their “voices were blocked up in their throats” (*vox faucibus interclusa est*). Whereas (*L*)*BJ* emphasize the *cause* of the bandits’ being stunned, Rufinus highlights its *effect*.

¹⁵⁷ Note, however, that the verb for being ‘frozen’ or ‘nonplussed’ or ‘dumbstruck’—πήγνυμι—, whose pluperfect form looks like a prepositionalized verb with ἐπι, is represented in both *LBJ* and *LHE* with *dirigo/derigo* (*dil/de* + *rigo*, lit. ‘to be set straight’).

Rufinus adds several more details in introducing Maria's final line: namely, that she speaks "with a grim face" (*truci vultu*);¹⁵⁸ in fact, not just grim, but "grimmer" (*truculentior*) than the bandits who are beholding her and her child's mutilated remains. In a final extension and pathetic heightening of the scene, *LHE* has Maria add to her avowal that "this is my son (*filius*)" and "this is my crime (*facinus*)" in that she also says: "this is my offspring (*partus*)."¹⁵⁹ This scene is again more troubling in Rufinus than in (*L*)*BJ* by a matter of degree, inasmuch as the scene is slightly longer and slightly more detailed.

But Rufinus' improvements of this short scene are nothing compared to those of *DEH* (and then *SY*). What the reader first notices—or rather, does not notice, depending upon what one is reading—is that in *DEH* Maria's speech and actions are not paused for a glimpse at the reactions of the bandits. *PH* retains a steady focus on Maria, who is speaking until the passage cited just above, during which she, "while speaking" (*simul dicens*), uncovers her son and then immediately continues with her exhortation. Again, for *PH*, Maria, her agency, her words are the focus, and thus the bandits, unlike in (*L*)*BJ* and *LHE*, remain in the background. Just as indicative of Maria's centrality in *DEH*'s version of the story is the sheer length of her speech. In this passage alone, which I have artificially separated here from the ensuing speech which continues at length (to bring it in line with the numbering of *BJ*), Maria speaks more words than she does in the entire Maria Story as told by Rufinus, whose direct discourse is already 25% longer than that of *LBJ*.¹⁵⁹

The content of Maria's speech as related by *PH* is highly dramatized; it increases the tragedy of the scene significantly. Maria begins by stating directly that she allocated portions of her child for herself and for the bandits; the only other early tradition to put this into direct discourse is *LHE—BJ* and *LBJ* downplay the statement by expressing it in indirect discourse. But *PH*'s Maria is far more graphic in what she describes. She refers to her son's remains as her *prandium*, a term not just denoting a meal but a specific meal, namely a "late breakfast" or "luncheon."¹⁶⁰ Such terminology gives Maria's presentation a certain *faux-genteel* quality, as though she were serving her plunderers a cultured

¹⁵⁸ Drawing, it would seem, upon Horace *Epod.* 5.3, where *vultus truces* describes the menacing female glance; this *Epode*, which involves the mangling of a boy by witches, also mentions Medea and her furious revenge in the murder of her children, references "Thyestean imprecations" (*Thyestean preces*), and mentions birds eating corpses and parents surviving their dead children, all themes in the text and/or subtext of the Maria Story. However, the idea of a menacing 'grim look' is a trope, yet the contexts in which it often appears render it fitting, even obvious, for use within the Maria Story; see, e.g., Ovid *Her.* 4.71; Valerius Maximus 6.8.6; 8.1.3; Seneca *Ag.* 949; *Herc.* 371; *Phaed.* 689; *Thy.* 635; *Tro.* 1148; Petronius *Sat.* 5.4; 79.11; Ps-Seneca *Oct.* 18; 436; Tacitus *Ann.* 4.34.2; 6.46.4; Ps-Quintilian *Decl. Maior.* 2.23. An early Christian parallel is Lactantius *De Mort. Pers.* 9.8.

¹⁵⁹ According to my reckoning, in *LBJ* Maria speaks a sum total of 84 Latin words; in *LHE*, she speaks 103 words; in just this one portion of *DEH* (what I have called 5.40.1j), Maria speaks no less than 124 Latin words.

¹⁶⁰ Lewis & Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, *ad loc.*: "Usually taken at or soon after noon, composed of bread, fish, cold meats, etc." See further Matz, *Daily Life of the Ancient Romans*, 23–24; Cowell, *Life in Ancient Rome*, 80. For the *prandium* as public meal, see Donahue, *The Roman Community*, 10–11 *et alibi*. It is baffling to me that *prandium* does not appear in the indices of McCormick, *Nominal Syntax* or Dwyer, *Vocabulary of Hegesippus*.

brunch.¹⁶¹ Within this incongruous matrix Maria inserts (not for the first time) an iteration of her terrifying logic and self-justification. She invites the bandits to “examine diligently” (*uidete diligentius*) whether or not she is defrauding (*fraudo*) them. Maria wants to be clear that her mealtime allotments are ‘above-board.’ What we have seen of *DEH* so far would suggest that PH expects his reader to be able to appreciate the absurdity, not only of Maria’s talking about her son as an ‘early lunch,’ but also of her feigning concern for what is fair, right, and just.

Hereafter PH plays on the short statement Maria makes in the earlier traditions to the effect that what she is presenting her plunderers with is indeed (the remains of) her son. Unsatisfied with the brief statement recounted by Josephus, PH has Maria go into detail: she points out a hand (*manus una*) and his foot (*pes eius*); then the reason for specifying only *one* hand (*una*) becomes clear: she is pointing to half of what remains of his body (*dimidium reliqui corporis eius*)—that is to say, half exactly. Maria punctuates this performance with a triple demonstrative—*Ecce ... Ecce ... Ecce ...*—which essentially bids the reader adopt the perspective of the bandits. The reader is bid to “Look! Look! Look!” and is thereby invited to ‘see’, to imagine, the infant’s mutilated remains.¹⁶² In the same vein, Maria waxes eloquent about her ownership of the boy (*filius*) and the deed (*opus*); she claims to have committed the act of murder/cooking (*ego feci*) and to have diligently divided it (*ego diligenter diuisi*), the latter comment again indicative of a ridiculous farce (as if someone were going to challenge whether or not Maria committed this heinous deed ‘diligently’ or not). She furthermore claims only to have eaten (*manducare*) what was hers, and to have saved (*reseruare*) what was due to her plunderers. Taking a cue from the absurdity of Maria’s words, PH expands the portions of her speech in which she explains her actions, presenting the ludicrous portrayal of a mother who, having killed, cooked, and eaten (part of) her son, not only understands what she has done but is able and willing to present her behavior in exculpatory, almost self-congratulatory, terms.

An even more grotesque aspect of Maria’s speech here picks up the creative interplay between the gustatory and the familiar. Just as Maria had previously addressed her son as “my sweet” (*dulcis meus*) while exhorting him to become food for her, so again here: Maria moves from addressing the bandits to addressing her now-dead (and half-consumed) son (*fili*) by saying “never have you been sweeter to me” (*numquam mihi dulcior fuisti*). Whereas Maria’s previous ‘sweetness’ statement had precipitated her horrible act, the present statement confirms it. The reader is meant to recognize (in terror) that Maria now speaks from experience, no longer anticipating her son’s ‘sweetness’ but having just tasted it, literally. It is to this tasting that Maria attributes the fact that she is still alive (*tibi debeo quod adhuc uiuo*): still addressing her absent infant, she maintains that his “sweetness” (*suauitas*) has sustained (*tenuo*) her soul (*anima*) and saved her (*produco*) from

¹⁶¹ Cf. the use of the term in Cyprian of Carthage *Ad Quirinum* 3 (CCL 3:80–89), especially at line 30: *Hunc adduc et manducabit pariter me cum prandium hoc: ecce sustineo te, fili, donec uenias.*

¹⁶² On parallels in *Christus Patiens* and Euripides’ *Bacchae*, where body parts also figure prominently, consult Chapman, “By the Waters of Babylon,” 144.

death. At this point Maria continues in her maternal address to recap recent events. She proclaims to her son that “you have relieved me in famine” (*subuenisti in fame*) and dubs him a gift of old age (*munus supremae senectae*) and a “repressor of assassins” (*percussorum repressor*). Rather than being a mere tool for survival and retribution, the second-person verb and the twofold address with *tu* here retains, or rather resurrects, Maria’s son as a kind of actor in the story. Whereas in reality Maria has killed, cooked, and eaten her son, she presents him as having saved, fed, and avenged her. One should note just how superfluous these details are from the reader’s vantage-point: Maria’s extended soliloquy adds no narrative content. Rather, it reframes and infuses with horror an already horrible narrative, coloring Maria’s character in shocking hues and testifying to PH’s ability, willingness, and apparent desire to augment the scene, its characters, and its various levels of meaning and effect, whether narrative, literary, theological, rhetorical, or tragic (even comic).

Next Maria moves to a third-person discussion of the bandits, the very people to whom she began to address her speech in the second person (i.e., those who are in actuality in Maria’s presence and thus the audience to whom she is still effectively speaking). It is as if Maria is standing across from her plunderers and showing them to the ghost of her dead son, whom she is putatively addressing. She states that they came to kill (*necatari*) but have become guests at her table (*conuiuiae*). Still speaking to her son, she avers that what these bandits will gain (*habebunt*) “they owe to you” (*tibi debeant*), inasmuch as they have taken and will take Maria’s own meals (*epulae*). In other words, the bandits really have Maria’s son to thank for their sustenance, inasmuch as he, who is himself that food, constitutes its ultimate source. Here, again as before, Maria has moved from a discussion of taste to a discussion of guest-host relations. Having established that the food is sweet (*dulcior, suavis*), Maria presents her enemies as *conuiuiae* and the food which she is presenting as *epulae*. The language is reminiscent of the crux in Seneca’s *Thyestes*, where Fury calls to the ghost of Tantalus, presaging the impending scene in which Atreus will trick Thyestes into eating his own children:

Now let cauldrons foam with fires lit beneath them, let rent limbs go piece by piece, let blood pollute the ancestral hearth, let banquet-meals (*epulae*) be furnished. You will join the diners (*conuiuia*) at a crime that is not new to you. We have given you a day of freedom, and released your hunger for this meal: fill up your fasting! Let blood mingled with wine be drunk while you watch. I have found a dinner that even you would run from. Stop, where are you rushing wildly?¹⁶³

And indeed, the language of dinner guests and meals is not the only feature linking PH’s Maria Story to Seneca’s *Thyestes* here. The language of limbs (*membra*), crime (*scelus*),

¹⁶³ Seneca *Thyestes* 59–67. Text/translation adapted from Fitch, LCL 78: 236–37. In this tragedy, Tantalus is recalled from the underworld and forced to pave the way for the tragedy to come, in which his grandsons Atreus and Thyestes will act out the horrible scene.

and other terms are also held in common between the stories.¹⁶⁴ Even more telling, however, are the questions at the end of the Senecan passage cited above as compared to the questions which Maria next poses to the bandits. Fury's speech in the passage cited above, which is actually driven by rhetorical questions implicating the grotesque, ends with the query: "Stop, why are you rushing away wildly?" (*siste, quo praeceps ruis?*); this question is tantamount to the one Maria asks to the bandits: "But why do you step back?" (*sed quid refertis gradum?*). In both cases, the speaker addresses a party horrified by the spectacle of an unholy meal made of children. PH constructs a thoroughly tragic Maria, whose provocative questions to her persecutors resonate the ill-boding voice of the *Thyestes'* Fury.

The last of Maria's three questions turns back again from pure rhetorical questioning to a kind of argumentation. After asking why the bandits are stepping back and are horrified "in soul/mind" (*animo*),¹⁶⁵ Maria asks why the bandits do not feast (*cur non epulamini*), because (*quod*), she says, "I, the mother, have made/done it" (*mater feci*). Maria's return to persuasions and exhortation seems here to insinuate a logic whereby eating a child is licet in a situation where its own mother has killed, prepared, and offered it. She reasons that those things which have satisfied the mother (*quae matrem exsaturarunt*) can "delight" (*delectare*) the bandits as well. This entire line of questioning, a kind of extroverted musing on Maria's part, constitutes an extrapolation on the much shorter tradition of (*L*)*BJ* and *LHE* where Maria's charge to the bandits to 'eat' is justified by her confirmation that the child is hers, that she killed/prepared it, and that she has already eaten her share. This also anticipates the final charge present in those traditions, which *DEH* will likewise extend, where Maria accuses/exhorts her plunderers not to refrain from eating the child given that its own mother has already done so.

The final statement made by Maria in this section of *DEH* is beyond gratuitous. She is made to reiterate three consecutive times that she is not hungry; she is 'full,' fed by her son, completely satisfied—she "knows not hunger" (*non esurio ... abunde exsatiata sum ... nescio famem*).¹⁶⁶ The stylized ways in which Maria regurgitates this sentiment suggest PH's concern with literary aesthetics in writing this speech. Narratively, the sequence prolongs *ad nauseam* the reiteration of precisely what horrible thing has occurred: Maria is, by her own admission, 'full ... full ... full,' and the reader knows only all too well what it is that she is full of. In literary sophistication and in tragic effect, *DEH*'s long

¹⁶⁴ Note also Maria's statement that her son delivered her from "the day of death" (*diem mortis*) and Fury's claim of having granted Tantalus a "day of freedom" (*liberum ... diem*), and Tantalus' calling himself miserable (*miser*), just as Maria calls herself a miserable mother (*mater misera*).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Seneca *Thy.* 281–84, where Atreus addresses his own soul in terms much like those which Maria poses to her plunderers: "why take fright again, my spirit, and slacken before the event?" (*anime, quid rursus times et ante rem subsidis?*). This also is a scene anticipating the presentation of the meal to its intended recipient and rationalizing why it must be done.

¹⁶⁶ The rare participle *exsatiata* has a gory connotation in classical Latin: in Silius Italicus *Punica* (16.540–41) it describes shades (*umbra*) who had been "glutted with abundant bloodshed" (*multoque cruore exsatiata*), and the same phrase is used of men at 7.534–35. At Ovid *Metamorphoses* 8.543 it describes Diana's being satisfied with the fall (*clades*) of Parthaon's house. The term usually conveys overeating or 'gorging' (see Livy 40.28.2).

version of this portion of Maria's speech stands out. It allows PH further to shape Maria's character, to configure the relationships at play, and to tease out previously unexplored possibilities within the troublesome tale.

SY's version of this portion of Maria's speech follows *DEH* in going far beyond the one-sentence statement in *(L)BJ* and *LHE*. But *SY* begins differently, with an imperative that immediately accentuates the agency (and culpability) of Maria's plunderers instead of her:¹⁶⁷ it is a statement that one might expect a mother to make to her children ("eat your food" / אכלו ארוחתכם). Then *SY* echoes *DEH*'s triple-*ecce* with the Hebrew equivalent triple-הנה (Behold! Behold! Behold!).¹⁶⁸ In this both *DEH* and *SY* arguably accentuate the visuality and immediacy of the scene, and in each case the object of the gaze is the same: the dead infant's hand, foot, and other 'portions' ("half the remains" [*dimidium reliqui*] in *DEH* becomes "pieces for you" [נתחיו לפניכם] in *SY*, again highlighting Maria's plunderers as guilty parties to this deed).¹⁶⁹ As is usual for *SY*, the minute differences between the Hebrew and its Latin source are informed by biblical phraseology: the statement in *DEH* where Maria rebuffs the idea that the child is "not mine," or, literally, "alien" or "another's" (*alienum*), becomes in *SY* the statement that the child is not "the son of another woman" (ילד אשה אחרת), a unit of Hebrew syntax to be found in Judges 11:2 (בן-אשה אחרת).¹⁷⁰ Aesthetic considerations may also help explain certain idiosyncrasies of *SY*'s version: *DEH*'s following fourfold statement of Maria's that "I did it ... I divided ... I ate ... I reserved" (*feci, diuisi, manducarem, reseruarem*)¹⁷¹ becomes a threefold sequence in *SY*—"I bore, I ate, I preserved" (ילדתי, אכלתי, שנרתי)¹⁷²—matching the trifecta established in the three הנה exclamations mentioned above.

The biblicizing nature of *SY* emerges again in its cutting in and out of direct discourse, which the parallel section of *DEH* never does. Moreover, in momentarily stepping away from speech to describe Maria adopting a new tenor, *SY* again aligns Maria with Hagar from Genesis, something we have already noticed occurring above. When *SY*, speaking of Maria, says that "the woman lifted up her voice in bitter lament and weeping" (ותשא האשה את קולה במר נהי ובכי), this cues the reader familiar with the

¹⁶⁷ Indeed, the imperative in *DEH* does not come until the following section (see below).

¹⁶⁸ See Flusser, *The Josippon*, 2.160–161; also Zewi, "The Particles הנה and והנה."

¹⁶⁹ The reference to 'pieces of him' (נתחיו) has an unmistakably cultic ring to it, as it recalls how, e.g., the sacrificial ram prescribed in Exodus is to be 'cut into its pieces,' an identical Hebrew phrase. Note Exod 29:17: "Cut up the ram into its pieces (לנתחיו), wash its entrails and legs, and put them with its pieces (על-נתחיו) and its head." Cf. Lev 1:6,8,12; 8:20; 9:13; Ezek 24:4,6. Maria gives her plunderers not just a meal, but an offering, as it were. Perhaps a more apt biblical parallel is the gruesome tale in which the Levite cuts up (ינתחה) his raped-and-murdered concubine "into twelve pieces" (לשנים עשר נתחים) to send to the tribes of Israel as a testament to its depravity (Judg 19:29).

¹⁷⁰ *SY*'s adoption of the noun child (ילד) instead of son (בן) here may be explained stylistically: the end of the sentence has Maria state that the child is "my son" (בני), and thus the use of ילד earlier avoids avoidable repetition (or, put positively, gives the sentence aesthetic vocabularic variety). Cf. 1 Kgs 3:20–23 and 2 Kgs 6:29, two episodes in which the motherhood of a deceased child is contested, the latter in the context of eating said child (!). Such passages must have been in the mind of *SY*'s author.

¹⁷¹ Notice the Latin style of a balanced movement from perfect indicative (x2) to imperfect subjunctive (x2).

¹⁷² Note that the Hebrew, unlike the Latin, never moves cases: all three verbs remain Qal perfects.

Hebrew Bible to recall again the scene in which Hagar, bereft of support and abandoned into the wilderness with her infant son, “lifted up her voice and wept” (ותשא את-קלה) (ותבך; Gen 21:16b).¹⁷³ Indeed, the respective plights of Maria and Hagar are not all that different, both involving (at first) starvation and the impending death of a child in a situation of complete helplessness. Surely the author of *SY* had this scene in mind, however consciously, when writing this sentence. Similarly, it cannot be an accident that *SY* begins Maria’s lament with the duplicated בני בני (“my son, my son”), which immediately recalls one of the more famous instances of child bereavement in the Jewish Scriptures: that of David following the death of Absalom. Twice in 2 Sam 18:33 (and only there in the Hebrew Bible) do we read בני בני, the cry of a grieving parent over a deceased son.¹⁷⁴ In a similar vein, the Maccabean mother-martyr of *SY* 15 (טו; cf. 2 Macc 7; 4 Macc 8–17) gives a speech to her sons pending their execution by King Antiochus, a speech which begins with the woeful address: “my sons, my sons” (בני בני).¹⁷⁵

The biblical and apocryphal figures with whom Maria is obliquely aligned are not villains: the Maccabean mother is a national hero *par excellence*;¹⁷⁶ King David is a protagonist whose biblical legacy is unremittingly positive (despite his many foibles). Hagar, fittingly, is the Bible’s epitome of a figure at the mercy of the actions of others: she is object, not subject, and is subjected to her fate at the hands of a man, much as Maria is pushed over the edge by a group of men. Is *SY* signaling a perennial critique of the plight of women within patriarchal society, where they were often oppressed, helpless, and used?

The bipartite understanding of the human person as body + soul/spirit surfaces in both *DEH* and *SY*. Both have Maria say to her son, ‘you have upheld/given life to *my spirit*’ (*anima mea*/נפש). Speaking thus of the self is as endemic a feature of Jewish and/or Hebrew expression and worldview as it is of the Christian and/or Latin. And it is not just *SY* Maria’s נפש which has been preserved by her son, but also her “old age” (שיבה). The collocation of these two ideas was probably inspired by Ruth 4:15a: there, after Boaz takes Ruth, the women say to Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law, of Boaz: “May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age” (והיה לך למשיב נפש ולכלכל) (את-שיבתך). Yet again we find Maria being connected to a celebrated character from the Jewish Scriptures.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Cf. the same language in Gen 27:38; 29:11; Judg 2:4; 21:2; 1 Sam 11:4; 24:16; 30:4; 2 Sam 3:32; 13:36 Ruth 1:9,14; Job 2:12. The idea of lamenting “in bitterness” (במר) finds a grammatical parallel in Job 7:11 and 10:1.

¹⁷⁴ Note the collocation of “eat” (אכל) in the imperative, the vocative address “my son” (בני), and the reference to “something sweet” (מתוק) in Prov 24:13: “My son, eat honey, for it is good, yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste.” The closest the Hebrew Bible comes to referring to a human being as sweet, as opposed to honey or an actual food item, is in Song 2:3; this is perhaps telling, inasmuch as *SY* is playing upon the idea of something which is definitely *not* food being rendered as such.

¹⁷⁵ Thanks again to Saskia Dönitz for pointing me to this important parallel.

¹⁷⁶ This was true for both Jews and Christians; see Van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 103, 113–114, 232–233.

¹⁷⁷ Another correlation between Maria and Naomi might be that Maria, bereft of her son, is said to have wept “in bitterness” (במר), and Naomi is famous for having said, after having been bereft of her two sons (and husband), “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara (מרא), for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly (המר) with me” (Ruth 1:20). See Linafelt, “Narrative and Poetic Art.”

The final lines of this portion of Maria’s speech in *SY* continue the passage’s tendency to highlight the bandits as actors alongside Maria herself. The statement that these bandits came upon Maria “in fierce wrath” (בַּחֲרֵי אָף) attributes to them a characteristic imputed to the LORD in Lamentations 2:3.¹⁷⁸ This parallel is intriguing given that the Book of Lamentations laments the destruction of Israel and thus tells much the same story as does the latter part of *SY*. This language gives a somewhat different ring to the sentiment carried over from *DEH*—that those who came ready to kill (*necatari*) have become guests (*conuiuiae*). By using ‘fierce wrath’ instead of identifying murderous intent and by speaking of those who have become ‘neighbors’ sitting at her table, Maria in *SY* transforms PH’s Latin into the idiom of the Hebrew Bible,¹⁷⁹ changing the tone of the story even as its content remains largely unchanged.

BJ 6.2II

<p>φάγετε, καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ βέβρωκα. μὴ γένησθε μῆτε μαλακώτεροι γυναικὸς μῆτε συμπαθέστεροι μητρός. εἰ δ’ ὑμεῖς εὐσεβεῖς καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀποστρέφεσθε θυσίαν, ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμῶν βέβρωκα, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν δὲ ἐμοὶ μεινάτω.”</p>	<p>Eat, for I also have eaten. Be not softer than a woman, nor more sympathetic than a mother. But if you are pious and refuse my sacrifice, then what I have eaten was your portion—let the rest remain for me.”</p>
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LBJ 6.2II

<p><i>Comedite, nam et ego comedi. Nolo sitis aut femina molliores, aut matre misericordiores. Quod si uos pietatem colitis, et mea sacrificia repudiatis, ego quidem comedi, reliquum autem eius mihi manebit.</i></p>	<p>Eat, for I also have eaten. Be not softer than a woman, nor more sympathetic than a mother. But if you preserve piety and refuse my sacrifice—I have already eaten, but the rest of him will remain for me.”</p>
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LHE 3.6.26b

<p><i>edite, nam et ego prior comedi quae genui. Nolite effici aut matre religiosiores aut femina molliores. quod si vos pietas vincit et execramini cibos meos, ego, quae iam talibus pasta sum, ego his iterum pascar.</i></p>	<p>Eat, for I myself have been the first to eat what I bore. Do not be more pious than a mother or milder than a woman. For if religious scruples overcome you and you abhor my food, I who had already feasted upon such as this will feast upon it again.”</p>
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¹⁷⁸ Lam 2:3; “In fierce anger (בַּחֲרֵי אָף) he has cut off all the strength of Israel; he has drawn back his right hand from before the enemy. And he has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire consuming round about.” Was this passage perhaps in the mind of the author of *SY* while writing this passage?

¹⁷⁹ עֲמִיתִים are most frequently mentioned in the law-codes of Leviticus (6:2; 18:20; 24:19; 25:14–15; though see Zech 13:7), perhaps alluding to the norms of appropriate social behavior which make up such a large part of the Torah and which have been so clearly violated in the Maria Story.

Gustate et uidete quia suavis filius meus. Nolite fieri molliores matre, infirmiores muliere. Aut si uos in medio uulnere misericordes et non suscipitis hostiam meam atque auersamini holocaustum meum, ego consummabo sacrificium meum, manducabo quod reliquum est. uidete ne uobis opprobrio sit quod fortior uobis mulier reperta sit, quae absumeret epulas uirorum. Ego quidem tales paravi epulas, sed uos sic epulari matrem fecistis. Et me tenebat passio sed uicit necessitas.'

Taste and see that my son is sweet. Do not be gentler than a mother, weaker than a woman. But if you are compassionate in the midst of misfortune and receive not my offering and shrink from my burnt offering, I will consume my sacrifice, I will eat what is left. Watch out, lest it be shame to you when it is reported that a woman is stronger than you, [a woman] who can eat the meals of men. Indeed, I have prepared such meals, but you have forced a mother to dine thus. And affection was constraining me, but necessity overcame."

SY 86k (פן)

And the woman said to them: "Eat now; why do you abhor this my food? Eat and fill up, for I have filled up on my son. Taste, please, and see how sweet my son is! Do not be affected by your compassion more than me, and do not be fainter in your hearts than I, because it is a disgrace for men of war to have a heart fainter than the heart of a woman. But if you refuse to eat of my offering, then I will eat! And it will be to your shame that this day my heart was stronger than your hearts. For this table is fitting [for me] to lay out for brave men like you. For this meal I have set out for you is ready. For you have caused me to lay out such a table. For it was more fitting for me to keep my compassion for my son than for you. Because you plundered my house, forcing me to prepare this spread."

ותאמר להם האשה: אכלו נא למה זה תיעבתם את מאכלי? אכלו ושבועו כי אנכי השביעני בני! טעמו נא וראו מה מתוק בני! ואל יכמרו רחמיכם יותר ממני ואל ירך לבבכם יותר ממני כי חרפה היא לאנשי המלחמה להיות לבם רך מלב האשה. ואם תמאנו לאכול מזבחי אני אוכלנו! ותהי לכם לחרפה כיום הזה כי גבר לבבי מלבבכם. כי כזה השולחן נאה לערוך לפני אנשים גיבורים ככם. כי את הארוחה הזאת אני ערכתיה ולמענכם הוכנה. כי אתם גרמתם לי לערוך כשולחן הזה. כי לי היה נאה לכמור רחמי על בני יותר מכם. ועל כי שללתם ביתי חוייבתי להריח את הארוחה הזאת.

This section continues Maria's previous address to her persecutors. Continuity between all five traditions is marked by the beginning of each with the imperative "Eat!"—*φάγετε/comedite/editel/gustate/אכלו*—spoken by Maria to the bandits. (It is a testament to the diversity between the three Latin traditions that none here uses the same verb.) To this mandate *LHE* has Maria add the phrase *quae genui*, "what I bore," as if to remind

the reader of the unforgettable meal to which Maria hereby alludes. Other than this, the first sentence of the three more strictly ‘Josephan’ traditions—*BJ*, *LBJ*, *LHE*—are virtually identical, despite their variance in verbiage. In the second sentence, as in the first, we find these three traditions again diverging in their lexical details. And this is where things get interesting.

These first three traditions listed above each have Maria follow her initial command with an exhortation to her plunderers not to fall short of her example both as a woman (*γυναικίως/femina*) and as a mother (*μητρὸς/mater*);¹⁸⁰ if she could eat her killed-and-cooked infant, then so could they. Here we find a kind of gendering of the ability to perform the unimaginable, effected via distinct comparative adjectives within each tradition. The eight words of *LBJ*’s second sentence are a direct Latin equivalent of *BJ*’s Greek, *μαλακός* and *mollis* referring to softness or delicacy, *συμπαθής* and *misericos* to sympathy or compassion. The former terms are regularly associated with women and often mean “effeminate.”¹⁸¹ The latter terms are not as routinely gendered, but it is interesting to note that Soranus of Ephesus, a first-second century CE physician, claimed in his *Gynecology* that breastfeeding made mothers “more sympathetic” (*συμπαθέστεραι*) toward their offspring, the precise comparative form of the adjective employed by Maria above (albeit there in the masculine).¹⁸² This denotes that *συμπαθής/misericos* was seen as a motherly trait in the ancient world. Thus when Maria tells her persecutors not to be *more* so than a mother, she is marshaling the conventional medical-psychological wisdom of her day in doing so. In (*L*)*BJ* Maria isolates *the* culturally understood traits taken to be specifically definitive of women and mothers respectively and bids her plunderers not to exhibit these womanly and maternal traits more than she. The irony in this, of course, is that such a charge plays upon norms that ought not to be upset, as such a reversal would turn the world upside down, as it were.¹⁸³ Yet the charge appears in a context where—clearly—this has already happened. The logic seems to be that since the mother in this situation has abandoned all softness and sympathy, so Maria’s plunderers ought also to do. But this attempt to enforce social and emotional norms takes place in a context when all such norms have been radically jettisoned. Such directives make little sense in such a topsy-turvy scenario.

¹⁸⁰ *LHE* uniquely reverses the order in which these are listed, with *mater* preceding *femina*.

¹⁸¹ Often in poetry, e.g. in Sappho (Greek) and Horace (Latin): see Andrisano, “Multiple Models and Horace,” 287; Klein, “*Mollis* – *ἀπαλός*.” The term *ἀπαλός* is a frequently used equivalent to *μαλακός*. See further Vorster, “Androgyny and Early Christianity.” The term was also commonly applied to mothers in, e.g., Vergil *Aen.* 7.357; 8.666; 10.818.

¹⁸² Soranus *Gyn.* 2.18.15, cited and discussed in Porter, “Empathy and Compassion,” here at 93, discussing how *συμπαθής* is also a generally important trait for doctors and midwives. The same ideals are held for *Misericordia* by the Latin physician-authors (e.g. Celsus in his *De Medicina*, Scribonius Largus in his *Compositiones Medicamentorum*).

¹⁸³ When *mollis* was applied to males, this often implied youth and/or a subordinate/sexually submissive position (Ovid *Met.* 9.28) or was used as an insulting and delegitimizing charge of effeminacy (Cicero *de Orat.* 2.276–77); see Langlands, *Sexuality Morality*, 244 and 286. However, see Lada-Richards, “Cum Femina Primum ...”

Rufinus, for his part, likewise associates softness (*mollis*) with womanliness in his version of the speech. What is unusual about *LHE*'s version, however, is the adjective he associates with motherhood, *religiosa*, which Rufinus further highlights by placing it first in the two-part imperative. Unlike *miser cordia*, the idea of *religio* connotes piety, devotion, reverence, even what we might call religious awe, and the term appears most often in contexts of familial obligation, human-divine interaction, and cultic/ritual contexts like those of sacrifice or burial and treatment of the dead. In Maria's mouth, the comparative adjective highlights different aspects of the scene than one finds in *(L)BJ*: that Maria's crime was committed against a family member, a person to whom she especially owed care and loyalty, and that her actions are unholy or sinful, now comes more prominently into view. In the late antique Christian context in which Rufinus translated Josephus (via Eusebius), such vocabulary implies an ecclesially-moded assessment of Maria's actions which should probably be read as a cypher for the Jews as a whole; Christians of the time habitually construed and constructed 'the Jews' via the gauge of *religio* (including *DEH*).¹⁸⁴ According to Rufinus, Maria bid her persecutors not be more *pious* than a mother, rather than referring to sympathy. The charge is equally ironic, but it accentuates the religious, rather than the emotional, scruples which Maria has violated, possibly instilling the passage with a charge stemming from Christian apologetic.

In phrasing Maria's command as he does, Rufinus may be drawing upon the next sentence in the passage, where *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* all introduce the notion of piety (*εὐσεβεία/pietas*) into her discourse. Yet here also Rufinus makes notable alterations to the script. All three traditions have Maria expressing the same ultimatum to her plunderers: 'if you refuse to eat what I have cooked on grounds of piety, then I will eat the rest of it as well.' Sometimes, discrete differences in wording appear to be basically stylistic: while *BJ* begins the prodasis with "if you *are* pious" (*εἰ ὑμεῖς εὐσεβεῖς*), *LBJ* begins with "if you *preserve* [or, literally, *cultivate*] piety" (*si uos pietatem colitis*); and both of these traditions complete the prodasis of the conditional clause with Maria saying that it is her *sacrifice* (*θυσία/sacrificia*) which the bandits will be rejecting. This word choice casts the situation in terms of cultic propriety, as if Maria were a worshipper negotiating with others over the acceptability of a given offering. Such analogy would seem to make better sense of *LHE*'s choice of *religiosiores* in the previous sentence, but, remarkably, *LHE* does not use the language of sacrifice for Maria's final sentence but only that of food (*cibus*), following the metaphorical rendering of the conditional: "if piety has conquered you" (*si vos pietas vincit*).¹⁸⁵ It seems then that the comparative *religiosiores* served Rufinus as a way to convey the religious-cultic import of the scene without (for whatever reason)

¹⁸⁴ Lactantius marks an important turning point in such apologetically-motivated uses of *religio* against Jews and pagan philosophers; see Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion*, 104–106. See further Berzon, *Classifying Christians*, 62–64.

¹⁸⁵ The personification of *pietas* was a current way of writing in Rufinus' time, as testified by his contemporary, the Latin poet Claudian (*Panegyric* 166–169), alongside the figures of *Clementia* and *Perfidia*; Garrison, *Pietas from Vergil to Dryden*, 73. Cf. Prudentius' *Psychomachia* 239 and 559 (Pelttari, *The Psychomachia*, 51 and 62); Statius *Thebaid* 11.492–495.

using the language of sacrifice in the following sentence (perhaps the image of a mother named Mary/Maria calling her son a sacrifice in such an unholy context grated against this Christian author’s theological sensibilities, which would be understandable). Finally, in line with the lexical and syntactic diversity between *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE*, all have Maria state in different terms her intention to eat the remaining portion of her cooked son as well, should the bandits refuse to partake.

In this portion of *DEH* and *SY* we find the several interrelated valences present in the other three traditions transformed in a number of striking ways. First, and most obviously, PH’s first line of this portion of Maria’s speech evinces a twisted play on Psalm 34:8a (MT Ps 34:9a): “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good” becomes “taste and see that my son is sweet.” A closer look at the textual tradition shows that PH’s language mirrors the language of Jerome’s Roman and Gallican Psalters,¹⁸⁶ both of which reflect a Greek (non-MT) version of this line:

Psalm 33:9a (LXX)
 γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος

Psalm 33:9a (Roman & Gallican Psalters)
gustate et uidete quoniam suavis est Dominus

The Greek term *χρηστὸς* generally meant something like “useful, beneficial,” but it was sometimes used to convey the meanings of “wholesome” and “pleasant to taste,” hence the Latin *suavis*, usually “sweet.” Thus, PH is actually playing upon a psalmic line which he knew, probably in Greek, that read: “taste and see that the Lord is sweet.” To put this biblical line into Maria’s mouth in such a context is, for a Christian author, shocking, all the more so given that this psalm would come to be a staple communion psalm within the liturgy of certain churches¹⁸⁷—perhaps already at the time of PH’s writing. But then, the shocking and grotesque is not out of character within *DEH*’s Maria Story. Additionally, perhaps the reader is to recall the second part of Psalm 34:8—“How blessed is the man who takes refuge in him”—a recollection which would generate significant irony within the Maria Story: Maria quotes a psalm about the blessing of divine protection even as she is embodying the effects of a divine curse prophesied within the same scriptural corpus (Deut 28:57; Lam 2:20; 4:10).

The most interesting textual upshot of this transformation of Psalm 34:8a comes in the Hebrew of *SY*, which follows *DEH*’s Latin. After several initial mandates by Maria to “eat” (אכלו, twice) and “fill up” (שבועו, once), which *SY* uniquely adds to this particular point in the speech, we read *SY*’s translation of *DEH*’s psalm paraphrase: טעמו נא וראו מה מתוק בני (“taste and see how sweet my son is”). *SY*’s iteration of this sentence is so interesting because, while it overtly employs the language of MT Psalm 34:9a—טעמו וראו—it is in fact partly based on the Greek version of that psalm as filtered through PH, whose phrasing is parallel to the Latin of Jerome’s two Greek-based psalters (*gustate et uidete quoniam bonus Dominus*). In a roundabout way, Psalm 34:9a has moved from

¹⁸⁶ On Jerome’s three versions of the Psalms—the Roman, Gallican, and Hebrew—the first two of which were based on the Vetus Latina and Greek Jewish Scriptures respectively, see Goins, “Jerome’s Psalters.”

¹⁸⁷ See Schattauer, “The Koinonicon,” 123.

Jewish tradition (MT, LXX) to Christian (Vulgate, *DEH*) and back again (*SY*), finding itself once again in Hebrew yet now with radically different content and context.

It is impossible to imagine that the respective readerships of *DEH* and *SY*—Latin-reading Christians of late antiquity on one hand, Hebrew-reading Jews of the early Middle Ages on the other—would not have recognized the psalmic allusion in this portion of Maria’s speech. The effect, I suggest, would have been to foreground the inappropriateness and vulgarity of the scene, and perhaps also to signal subtly that this scenario is one in which divine protection is *not* enjoyed; Maria is *not* “blessed” (*beatus*/אשרי), and thus the second part of Psalm 34:8 (MT 34:9) cannot be applied to her. The Maria Story takes on a perverse poetics and theology simultaneously. The readers of *DEH* and *SY* come to recognize in a new scriptural relief that the Maria Story represents the absence of divine protection and blessing. The Maria Story is the antithesis of the scriptural ideal.

Compared to the other Greek and Latin traditions, *DEH* demarcates and extends the tropes of sacrifice and gendered traits already touched on above. PH has Maria phrase her statements here quite differently: instead of her telling her persecutors not to be more sympathetic than a mother, she begins her conditional with “if you are compassionate (*miseriordes*) in the midst of suffering (*in medio uulnere*),” leaving the gender stereotypes for later. The result of the conditional is the same as in the other traditions: Maria says she will eat what remains if the bandits will not. However, PH exaggerates the cultic analogy to Maria’s slaughtered and cooked son, referring to him as “my offering” (*hostia mea*), “my burnt offering” (*holocaustum meum*), and “my sacrifice” (*sacrificium meum*). The twin parallel statements by which Maria says “I will eat” (*consummabo, manducabo*) what remains constitute a redundancy which once again witnesses the gratuity of PH’s Latin style.¹⁸⁸ Only at this point does PH introduce the gender stereotypes.

The way Maria uses female stereotypes here in *DEH* is more explicit in content and more direct in delivery than what we find in (*L*)*BJ* and *LHE*. She begins with an overt warning to her plunderers that their reputations are at stake: you should “beware” (*uidete*) of the “shame” (*opprobrium*) you are risking, Maria tells them, if word should get out “that a woman is stronger than you” (*quod fortior uobis mulier*). The threat of this particular brand of shame may ostensibly be read as something which was supposed to have been able to strike fear into the hearts of men. The theoretical ground upon which Maria predicts such a rumor might spread is that it will be said that this woman was ‘stronger’ than they “because she was able to eat the meals of men” (*quae absumeret epulas uirorum*). This ambiguous statement may be an allusion to Seneca’s *Thyestes*, a tragedy whose *epulae* are prepared by and eaten by men (*Thy.* 62; 760; cf. 1034). Certainly Maria seems to be referring to the “meals” which she would potentially eat as those which belong to her plunderers (since she has saved them for them). If it be reported that Maria

¹⁸⁸ On the rhetorical practice of *repetitio* (distinguished from *iteratio* and *reduplicatio*) and *commutatio pronuntiationem*, see Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 276–277 (end of §616–618) and 373–374 (§835) respectively. See 206 (§434) on *recapitulatio*.

could stomach such plates and they could not, or perhaps that she took away their plates from them (*absumo* can mean “consume” or “take away”),¹⁸⁹ this will be to their shame.

Finally, PH’s Maria enters into a brief valuation of events that have transpired. She admits to having cooked this unholy meal (*Ego ... tales paraui epulas*), but maintains that the bandits are also culpable: ‘you made me do it,’ she asserts (*uos sic epulari matrem fecistis*). Maria articulates her eventual capitulation to such pressure in terms of internal struggle, *passio* and *necessitas* being the warring factions.¹⁹⁰ The former is said to have been holding Maria back from the deed (*tenebat*)—reading this as an iterative imperfect—but necessity eventually won the day (*uicit*). This poetic personification of inner turmoil provides the reader with a retroactive window into Maria’s torn soul. In a way, this can be read as an almost redemptive explanation of her actions: it is not that she lacked *passio*, but that *necessitas* proved more powerful. The laconic final line in which Maria explains this provides a finality to the very end of Maria’s speech, moving the focus back from the bandits to Maria herself and at the same time stamping an authoritative interpretation onto the entire affair: the Maria Story is the story of *necessitas* winning the day, overpowering even the *passio* of mother for her child.

The end of Maria’s speech in *SY* is a little different. Her initial comparative challenge to the bandits is the same, however: she bids them not be more “affected by compassion” (כמר + רחמים) or “fainter of heart” (לבב + רך) than she. “Compassion” is in the Hebrew Bible a term often associated with the LORD, but we should note that in Lam 4:10 it is also the hands of “compassionate women” (נשים רחמניות) who are said to have boiled their children. The Jewish Bible therefore identifies compassion as a trait which mothers in particular have for their children, but one which in times of the direst distress does not prevent the unspeakable. The Hebrew phrase לבב + רך is a biblical idiom denoting fear in the face of danger (Lev 26:36). Maria’s charge not to be faint of heart sounds very much like what the priest was supposed to say to the sons of Israel before they went into battle against their enemies according to Deuteronomy 20:3.¹⁹¹ Perhaps this explains why Maria says specifically that it is a disgrace (חרפה) for men of war (אנשי המלחמה) to have fainter hearts than a woman. *SY*’s use of martial language to refer to the bandits here sets it apart here from all earlier traditions, and it casts Maria’s figure as a woman not only harder or stronger than men, but than warriors. This comports with her saying that, should the bandits refuse her sacrifice, it will accrue to their shame that Maria’s

¹⁸⁹ Maria’s being *fortior* fits logically with either meaning: either she had a ‘stronger’ stomach, or she was stronger and thus able to take away the food of the weaker.

¹⁹⁰ Inasmuch as *DEH*’s Latin can take on distinctly Roman or distinctly Christian valences, *passio* here could convey a political idea related to cardinal virtues (Roman) or some connotation of martyrological suffering (Christian); see Estève, “L’Oeuvre historique,” XVIII and cf. *DEH* 3.2.1 (*passio* describing Peter and Paul) and 5.2.1 (*passio* describing the Maccabean heroes).

¹⁹¹ Deut 20:3 “He shall say to them, “Hear, O Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be fainthearted (אל-ירך לבבכם). Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them.” Indeed, it is the man who is fearful and fainthearted (רך הלבב), in addition to others (those engaged to be married, those who recently built a house, e.g.), who is instructed to turn back and not to proceed to war (20:8).

heart was stronger than (גבר ... מ-) theirs, the nominalization of גבור (גבור) being the Hebrew Bible's quintessential term for a "mighty" man.¹⁹²

The term by which Maria refers to her cooked child as an "offering" is זבה. With two exceptions (Deut 12:15,21), as Jacob Milgrom showed, the term always bears a sacral connotation: it is "exclusively a cultic term, referring to ritual slaughter and sacrifice."¹⁹³ Thus, like the Latin traditions do in various ways, so also SY has Maria couch her deed in ritualistic language. But in SY the focus remains more on the men who had been plundering Maria and on their 'warrior' status. This SY satirizes again when Maria claims that it is fitting (נאה)¹⁹⁴ for her to have layed out a table "for brave men like you" (לפני אנשים גיבורים ככם). The tone must be read as at least partially sarcastic: after all, the scene is one of a group of armed men robbing and threatening one helpless woman. In fact, for Maria to speak of this group in terms of אנשי המלחמה and אנשים גיבורים is downright ridiculous.¹⁹⁵

But this part of Maria's address is also manifestly part of a sequenced logic. The five כי ("because") statements that Maria makes here seem to support each other in a kind of explanatory stack. All of them contribute to the overall point of why it will be a shame to her plunderers should they refuse to partake of her "offering." In other words, these are arguments as to why these bandits should accept this meal Maria has made for them. The first three layered explanations go something like this: first (כי-clause #1), the men should partake because it is appropriate (נאה) for Maria to have prepared such a table for them; second (כי-clause #2), the men should partake because the meal is "prepared" (הוכנה), that is, it is ready to go right now; third (כי-clause #3), the men should partake because they were the ones who ultimately forced the preparation of such a meal.¹⁹⁶ In SY Maria spells this reasoning out more overtly than in the other traditions, including DEH. In this way, in SY Maria's deed is more understandable, inasmuch as her persecutors are framed as more explicitly culpable.

SY shares uniquely with DEH in this section the detail that Maria lays her deed at the feet of her plunderers. But in SY Maria is more specific about this accusation and spends more time describing it, confirming previous suspicions that SY does more to disperse responsibility for Maria's *teknophagia* than does DEH. In DEH, Maria had told her persecutors that "you have forced a mother to dine thus." In SY, Maria follows the three כי-clauses mentioned above with a fourth and fifth, closing clauses which seal the guilt of the bandits. First she states that it was more appropriate for her (as mother) than for these men (as non-relatives) to retain compassion for her son; but since she did not,

¹⁹² E.g. Nimrod the "mighty hunter" (גיבור ציד; Gen 10:9), or Jephthah the "mighty man of valor" (גיבור חיל) (Judg 11:1), or simply the generic "mighty man" (איש גבור; 1 Sam 14:52).

¹⁹³ Milgrom, "Profane Slaughter," 2.

¹⁹⁴ נאה, "it is fitting, becoming, beautiful, comely," is a rare word in the Hebrew Bible, appearing only at Ps 93:5, Song 1:10, and Isa 52:7 and, interestingly given its use here in SY, never in the Qal in the Bible (Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, ad loc.).

¹⁹⁵ Such terminology is sometimes collocated to emphasize the martial valor of warriors: 1 Chr 12:8, Ezek 39:20.

¹⁹⁶ Note that this third point also explains points 1 and 2: the meal 1) was "fitting" and 2) is ready right now because of the violent actions of these men which forced the issue.

they need not. If a mother, of all people, can feast upon her child, then certainly the unrelated people who forced this mother to do such a thing should be able to as well. Maria ends her speech with a blunt finale.¹⁹⁷ Here—and only in *SY*—she recounts directly what has happened: “you plundered” (םתלש) my house, “you forced me” (יחיבת) to prepare this meal. While one might not agree with Maria’s reasoning, it is notable that *SY* allows such a perspective to be articulated. The reader of *SY* is confronted with a problematizing aspect of the episode’s overall meaning: Maria has done an unthinkable thing, but she is allowed to say, and not without reason, that what she did was the fault of those who stole everything else she had. One might say that in *SY*, the ‘Maria Story’ becomes the ‘Story of Maria and Her Plunderers.’ In the conclusion, I will suggest that this is a defining feature of this story as told in *SY*.

BJ 6.212

μετὰ ταῦθ' οἱ μὲν τρέμοντες ἐξήεσαν, πρὸς ἐν τοῦτο δειλοὶ καὶ μόλις ταύτης τῆς τροφῆς τῇ μητρὶ παραχωρήσαντες, ἀνεπλήσθη δ' εὐθέως ὅλη τοῦ μύσου ἡ πόλις, καὶ πρὸ ὀμμάτων ἕκαστος τὸ πάθος λαμβάνων ὥσπερ αὐτῷ τολμηθὲν ἔφριττε.

After this, they went away trembling. In this one thing were they cowards, and they barely conceded even this food to the mother; so immediately the city was filled with [news of] the abomination, and each person held the tragedy before his eyes, trembling as if he had dared to do it.

LBJ 6.212

Post haec illi quidem trementes exierunt, ad hoc solum timidi, uixque hoc cibo matri cesserunt. Mox autem repleta est eo scelere tota ciuitas, et unusquisque ante oculos sibi cladem illam proponens, tanquam ipse hoc admisisset horrebat.

After this they went away trembling, fearful of this alone, and they barely left this food for the mother. But soon the whole city was filled with [news of] this crime, and as one and all placed this tragedy before their eyes, each bristled as if he had done it himself.

LHE 3.6.27

post haec illi territi trementesque discedunt, qui hunc solum ex omnibus facultatibus miserae matri reliquerant cibum. repleta est autem confestim uniuersa ciuitas nefarii sceleris nuntio, et unusquisque ante oculos facinus, quod perpetratum fuerat, adducens, tamquam si ipse id

After this, terrified and trembling, they departed, they who, from all that she had, had left the wretched mother only this food. The whole city was immediately filled with the news of this outrage, each person holding the wicked deed that had been

¹⁹⁷ The finale also begins with a *כי ועל* rather than simply *כי*, which can be read as a way of denoting emphasis.

perpetrasset, horrebat.

committed before his eyes and shrinking from it as though he himself had done it.

DEH 5.41.1a

repleuit continuo totam urbem tanti sceleris nefas et unusquisque tamquam ante oculos positum parricidalis conuiuii ministerium perhorrescebat. Coeperunt et ipsi incentores seditionis examinare post haec quos raperent cibos, ne similes escas inuenirent et uelut imprudentes sumerent.

Immediately the enormity of such a crime filled the whole city and one and all, with such a thing placed before their eyes, were trembling with horror at the serving of this parricidal meal. And the inciters of rebellion themselves began to examine after this those food items they had seized, lest they find there similar snacks and take hold of something comparable unknowingly.

SY 86L (פו)

And the affair was heard in all the city, and the Judeans mourned heavily. And moreover the chief bandits were subdued by this affair because the affair was serious in their eyes.

וישמע הדבר בכל העיר ויתאבלו היהודים מאד. וגם שרי הפריצים נכנעו לדבר הזה כי גדל הדבר בעיניהם.

This penultimate section of the Maria Story proper records the aftermath of Maria's deed, something to which *DEH* and *SY* characteristically add a few details. The (*L*)*BJ* tradition records the scene's basic form: Maria's former persecutors walk away shuddering, news of the terrible event gets out, and a kind of sense of collective responsibility breaks out among all in the city. *LBJ* evinces its characteristic slavish following of *BJ*'s Greek, even to the point of matching word order and particles (see, e.g., the first six words in each above), but not through the entire passage. In fact, where it matters most, *LBJ* reads quite differently than *BJ*. In *BJ* Maria's deed is an "abomination" or "defilment" (*μύσος*), which *LBJ* translates as *scelus* ("crime, heinous act, wicked deed"), and the situation overall a "tragedy" (*πάθος*), which *LBJ* renders *clades* ("disaster, calamity"). The Greek version conveys (Jewish) ritual impurity on a tragic level while the Latin version depicts a crime of disastrous proportions. Perhaps these differences betray the differing perspectives of the first-century Jewish general-turned-historian who wrote the story in the first place and the late antique Christian scribe who translated it for posterity.

As per usual among the Latin traditions, in this section Rufinus straddles the fence between the (relatively) straightforward translation of *LBJ* and the freewheeling reworking of *DEH*. For one thing, *LHE* reworks the Greek's syntax in the first sentence, such that, rather than 1a) walking away trembling, 2a) being afraid in only this one regard (i.e. not being willing to eat Maria's 'meal'), and 3a) hardly leaving even this 'food' for Maria, the bandits 1b) walk away trembling *and terrified* and 2b) leave only this final meal

to Maria. Rufinus transposes where the ‘only’ (*solum*) falls in the logic of the sentence and adds the detail that the plunderers left to Maria her son alone “of all that she had” (*ex omnibus facultatibus*). These idiosyncrasies of *LHE* change the character of Maria’s persecutors in the story: they are not afraid of *eating Maria’s cooked son*, which they are said to be in (*L*)*BJ*, but are trembling and terrified at the scene in general, and they are again identified as those who had taken everything from Maria. Maria is also distinctive in *LHE* here in that she is again identified as *misera*. It seems as if *LHE* vilifies Maria’s persecutors and highlights Maria’s being oppressed more than is strictly warranted by the Greek text (Eusebius’ *HE*) on which it is based. We might also surmise that *LHE* intensifies the denouement of events transpired by referring not just to the “abomination” or “crime” filling the city but rather the “announcement” or “declaration” (*nuntius*) of an “impious/abominable crime” (*nefarii sceleris*). With the addition of the adjective *nefarius* Rufinus paints a scene which captures the connotations of Josephus’ *μύσος* and *LBJ*’s *scelus*.¹⁹⁸ Finally, in reporting how everyone in the city bristled at the deed as if affirming some corporate responsibility, Rufinus refers to it not as a tragedy (*BJ*) or as a disaster (*LBJ*) but as a *facinus*, a term which here means “outrage, crime, villainy” but which can also carry the more generic meaning of simply “deed.” Unlike *BJ* and *LBJ*, I suggest, *LHE* hereby keeps the focus on the specific thing that had been done by Maria rather than alluding to the situation as a whole (as *πάθος* and *clades* seem to). One overall impression of *LHE*’s version of this section is of a narrative more interested in the people involved: Rufinus arguably does less to ‘zoom out’ and capture the larger significance of the scene, at least in this portion of the narrative.

Interestingly, in this penultimate scene PH reverses the order in which the affected parties respond to the “disaster.” Before anything is said of the bandits we read that, not just the “crime” or “abomination,” but “the enormity/wickedness of such a crime” (*tanti sceleris nefas*) filled the city, and it did so “immediately” (*continuo*) as in *BJ* (*εὐθέως*) and *LHE* (*confestim*), in some contradistinction to *LBJ* (“soon,” *mox*). As in the other traditions, the citizens in *DEH* all hold the deed “before their eyes”; but in *DEH*, each person does not do so ‘as if he himself had committed [the deed],’ something *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* all have in common. Instead, what the people tremble at in *DEH* is the serving (*ministerium*) of a “parricidal meal” (*parricidalis conuiuuii*). This way of referring to Maria’s deed reminds the reader again of its grotesqueness and backwardness and fits with *DEH*’s general tendency to be graphic in description and gratuitous in tragic elements. More graphic still is the next sentence. Instead of recording the bandits’ dispositions, PH records their actions: he relates how the bandits, whom he here calls “the inciters of [the] rebellion” (*incentores seditionis*), began after this to examine (*examinare*) the foodstuffs (*cibos*) which they had seized (*raperent*), lest they find that they had unintentionally (*inprudentes*) acquired “similar meals” (*similes escas*). Here it is tempting to see another connection between PH’s Maria Story and Seneca’s *Thyestes*, inasmuch as the latter

¹⁹⁸ Rufinus also makes explicit that it was the *report* of the crime which filled the city, which clarifies the literary metaphor shared by *BJ* and *LBJ* where an abomination or crime is (personified) said to have “filled” Jerusalem.

revolves around a scene in which Thyestes eats children (his own) unknowingly.¹⁹⁹ Thyestes' ignorance is the crux of the tale,²⁰⁰ and PH may have this mind when penning this end of his version of the Maria Story. In any case, *DEH* paints a very different picture of the bandits/inciters in this passage: they are not trembling and fearful; they are efficient, searching their own stores for such 'contamination.' Unlike *BJ*, *LBJ*, or *LHE*, in *DEH* one cannot claim any kind of redeeming humanity for the bandits, who do not respond to the revelation of Maria's crime, but merely react.

SY's record of the response to Maria's deed is arguably more banal than that of any of the four earlier traditions. *SY* does not follow *DEH* in relating how one and all 'held the deed before their eyes.' Instead, *SY* simply relates that news of the event traveled into all the city and the Jews "mourned greatly" (יתאבלו ... מאד) at hearing it. By stringing together a few phrases of basic biblical Hebrew *SY* presents a much more straightforward report.²⁰¹ The effect on the bandits as described by *SY* differs from the other traditions as well. They do not tremble and fear (*[L]BJ*, *LHE*) or re-search their own seized food-store (*DEH*), but rather are simply "subdued" (ונכנעו). The Niphal of the verb כנע is interesting here, for this form can mean both "to be humbled/subdued" or "to humble oneself."²⁰² Moreover, *SY* seems to employ both usages in his work.²⁰³ So the interpretive question is: does the verb here in the Maria Story mean that the "chief bandits" humbled *themselves* or were subdued?²⁰⁴ Lack of an agent signaled by the prefix מ- might seem to mitigate against the latter, but the former seems difficult to square with the overall character of these men as sketched out over the course of the chapter. The prepositional ל-phrase which follows the verb is rather unhelpful, for nowhere else does *SY* use this construction; neither is the final explanation—"because the affair was serious in their eyes" (כי גדל הדבר בעיניהם)—unequivocal. Whether this was the intention of the author or an accident of Hebrew grammar, the reader of *SY* is left with an interpretive conundrum in assessing the meaning, morals, and characters of this passage. Either the bandits partially responsible for this terrible event repented of their evil, or they were simply coerced into a change of behavior by the horror of the ordeal. However, it could

¹⁹⁹ See, e.g., Seneca *Thy.* 783 where, amidst a scene depicting graphically the cooking and then Thyestes' eating of the flesh of his sons, the Messenger addresses him thus: "It is good, Thyestes, that you are ignorant of your troubles" (*bonum est, Thyesta, quod mala ignoras tua*). Or again at 1066–1067: "He rent his children with impious mouth, though he unknowing, and they unknowing" (*scidit ore natos impio, sed nesciens, sed nescientes*).

²⁰⁰ Cf. Seneca *Thy.* 434.

²⁰¹ Cf., e.g., 1 Sam 17:31a, 1 Sam 5:11b, and Exod 14:39b.

²⁰² Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, ad loc.

²⁰³ In *SY* 18 (ח), recording the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, one reads first that God struck Antiochus with boils (שחין) but that Antiochus "was not subdued/humbled by the disease" (לא נכנע מן החולי). A few lines later, after further divinely-sent physiological discomfort, one reads that "he degraded himself and humbled himself" (ונשפל ונכנע). The diverse meanings are supported by the German of Börner-Klein and Zuber, *Josippon*, 194.

²⁰⁴ The former meaning ("humbled themselves") is a theme in 2 Chronicles (12:6–7,12; 30:11; 33:12,23; 36:12; cf. 1 Kgs 21:29) whereby various parties alternately evade or invite destruction at the hands of the LORD. In 2 Chron 12:6 it is also "chiefs/princes" (שרי) who do the self-humbling, which perhaps provided the model for *SY*.

be that for a particular brand of reader with a strong sense of providence within history, the difference is merely cosmetic.

BJ 6.213

σπουδῇ δὲ τῶν λιμωπτόντων ἐπὶ τὸν θάνατον ἦν, καὶ μακαρισμὸς τῶν φθασάντων πρὶν ἀκοῦσαι καὶ θεάσασθαι κακὰ τηλικαῦτα.

But there was a hastening toward death among those who were starving and a pronouncement of blessing for those who arrived there first before hearing and seeing such evils.

LBJ 6.213

Ab omnibus autem quos famis urgebat properabatur ad mortem, et beati appellabantur qui priusquam id audirent siue conspicerent interissent.

But among all those who were being oppressed by famine there was a hastening toward death, and they were called 'blessed' who perished before they could hear or see this.

LHE 3.6.28a

omnes autem, quos famis necessitas perurgebat, festinabant magis ad mortem, beatos dicentes eos, quibus contigit interisse, priusquam talium malorum polluerentur auditu.

And all of those being pressed hard by the famine hastened all the more quickly to death, calling blessed those who had perished before being defiled by hearing of such wickedness.

DEH 5.41.1b

Coeperunt uniuersi timere, ne diu uiuerent, et more uelle. Peruenit etiam ad Romanos huius facti immanitas. Nam plerique hoc horrore perterriti ad hostem fugerunt.

All began to fear, lest they live long, and to desire death. Now too the immensity of what was done there reached the Romans. For a great many, thoroughly terrified by his horror, fled to the enemy.

SY 86m (פו)

And all the people were wishing, each man with all his soul, to die, because they were horrified in the presence of this famine. Then many of the people went

וישאלו כל העם איש את נפשו למות כי נבהלו מפני הרעב הזאת. ויסעו רבים מן העם עם כל אשר להם מירושלם אל מחנה רומנים.

with all that they had out from the city of Jerusalem over to the Roman camp.

This short final section returns the reader from the Maria Story itself to the larger narrative context: a besieged and starving Jerusalem suffering its death throes. Maria's travesty is here seen to deepen the despondence of the general populace: all five traditions state that the people of Jerusalem, who had all now heard the story, wanted to die. *BJ*, *LBJ*, and *LHE* all record the Josephan detail that anyone who had died theretofore was considered "blessed" (*μακαρισμός/beatius*) because (s)he had not heard about or seen such horrors. *LHE*'s language uniquely conjures the idea of ritual pollution in saying this, stating that those who heard such a story "were contaminated" (*polluerentur*) thereby. More than once have we seen connotations of ritual impurity and uncleanness in this story; and indeed, this was already a well-worn trope within Josephus' *BJ*, the earliest recounting of this episode.

DEH aestheticizes the populace's reaction: the people not only desire death, but are afraid (*timere*) "lest they live a long time" (*ne diu uiuerent*). In this way PH makes more explicit the general sentiment following Maria's ordeal: namely, that at this point death has become preferable to life. *SY* omits this stylization and thereby accidentally (it seems) comes to conform again to the earlier tradition represented by (*L*)*BJ* and *LHE* in saying simply that all the people desired to die upon hearing the news. Naturally, however, *SY* articulates this in the unmistakable idiom of the Hebrew Bible by saying that each man 'asked to die with all his soul' (ישאלו כל העם איש את נפשו למות), a phrasing reminiscent of Jonah 4:8.²⁰⁵

Only *DEH* and *SY* add that the news reached the Romans outside of Jerusalem by Jews who were fleeing the city. As we will see in our conclusion, the aftermath of the scene once the Romans (i.e. Titus) have heard of it provides critical interpretive context for the scene within the various traditions.

3 Summary Analysis & Conclusion

In all five traditions discussed above, the Maria Story is a horrific ordeal. Yet we have seen how each account has its own telling idiosyncrasies, creating a conglomerate overall tradition resembling a mosaic much more than a monolith. For example, Maria's agency and insanity appear to be highlighted in *DEH*, while *SY* accentuates the part played by Maria's plunderers in the story. More on this further below. The first question to be asked in seeking further insight into how each of these texts understands the Maria Story is a narratological one: namely, what happens after the passage related above?

Dramatically different answers to this question presents themselves across *BJ*, *LBJ*, *LHE*, *DEH*, and *SY*. In *BJ* and *LBJ* the very next thing we read is that Maria's deed soon

²⁰⁵ Jon 4:8: "When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die (ישאל את-נפשו למות), saying, 'Death is better to me than life.'"

spread to the Romans ([L]BJ 6.214). The effects of the news are several. First, for most of the Romans it is said to have intensified their hatred of the Jewish nation (ἔθνος/gens; 6.215). Second, Titus declares himself innocent in what has transpired, recalling how he had sued for peace and attempted to avoid such disaster (6.215–16). Then he changes his tune, stating that those who would burn down the Temple with their own hands “were worthy of such food” (τοιαύτης τροφῆς ἀξίους/huiusmodi alimentis . . . dignissimos; 6.216). He next promises to cleanse “the abomination of infant-cannibalism” (τὸ τῆς τεκνοφαγίας μύσος/scelus huius nefandi uictus); he will not leave to the light of day a city “in which mothers are thus fed” (6.217). Finally, he states that such was more appropriate for fathers than mothers, for the former still remained in arms despite such a tragic turn of events (6.218). Titus understands those Jews still fighting as being beyond any capacity for reasoning. This helps him commit to his course: he will destroy Jerusalem, for those defending it are clearly bent on dying in its defense. BJ and LBJ thus provide a narrative frame which situates the Maria Story at the far end of a series of self-depredations performed by the Jews within Jerusalem; Titus is portrayed as fairly reasonable in deciding to decimate the city, and the blame falls more or less solely on the shoulders of the men within Jerusalem, the same kind of men who forced Maria’s hand and the very same men who continue to resist Rome. The Maria Story is the height of Jerusalem’s auto-pollution, and it helps explain (even justify) the destruction which was soon to follow.

The narrative fallout of the Maria Story is, as one might suspect, quite different within the apologetic confines of Eusebius’ HE/Rufinus’ LHE. Eusebius-Rufinus interprets the scene in line with what was by that time an established Christian interpretation of the fall of Jerusalem generally, drawing upon Jesus’ words from Matthew 24:

Such was the punishment for the Jews’ impiety and crime against God’s Christ, but it is right to add to these the truthful prediction of our Savior, in which he indicates these very things, saying precisely: “Pray that your escape may not be during winter or on the Sabbath. For at that time there will be great affliction such as there has never been from the beginning of the world to the present, nor shall there be.”²⁰⁶

Τοιαῦτα τῆς Ἰουδαίων εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ παρανομίας τε καὶ δυσεβείας τὰπίχειρα, παραθεῖναι δ’ αὐτοῖς ἄξιον καὶ τὴν ἀψευδῆ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν πρόρρησιν, δι’ ἧς αὐτὰ ταῦτα δηλοῖ ὧδέ πως προφητεύων > οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις· προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται ὑμῶν ἡ φυγὴ χειμῶνος μηδὲ σαββάτω. ἔσται γὰρ τότε θλίψις μεγάλη, οἷα οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς κόσμου ἕως τοῦ νῦν, οὐδὲ μὴ γένηται < .

Hactenus Ioseppus. Igitur Iudaeos pro his, quae in Christum dei commisere, piaculis talis consecuta est poena. dignum autem est huic historiae adhibere dominicas voces, quibus ipse salvator talia secutura esse praedicit: > vae autem <, ait, > praegnantibus et nutrientibus

²⁰⁶ Translation from Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea: The History of the Church*, 131. Cf. Matt 24:19–21. Schott also notes an apt parallel from Greek tragedy: Sophocles’ *Tereus*, where the mother Procne feeds her son to her husband as revenge for raping her sister Philomela.

*vel lactantibus in illis diebus. orate autem, ut non fiat fuga vestra hieme vel sabbato. erit enim tunc tribulation magna, qualis non fuit ab initio saeculi usque nun neque erit <*²⁰⁷

The only way of understanding the scene in the account of Eusebius/Rufinus is as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, now not (only) ‘Old Testament’ prophecy (like Deut 28; Lam 2 & 4) but the ‘New Testament’ prophecy of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew. The Maria Story is simply an *exemplum* standing in for the destruction of the Jews as a whole. The hopelessness and tragedy of the scenario epitomizes how these late antique Christians understood the plight of the Jews circa 70 CE. The (L)HE version of the Maria Story is, despite its similarity in details, a very different story from what we find in (L)BJ, because it exists within a very different narrative framework. Its interpretation is explicitly given: the Maria Story is really the story of the Jews.

The aftermath of the Maria Story in *DEH*, and later in *SY*, is noticeably different from what we find in (L)BJ and/or (L)HE. There Titus makes a speech in *oratio recta* and puts a new spin on the interpretation of the Maria Story. I first reproduce Titus’ speech as found in *DEH* in full, both because it has not appeared in English elsewhere and because it provides critical information for interpreting the Maria Story in that work, while at the same time providing clues as to the literary nature of *DEH*:

Upon hearing this, Caesar cursed the contagion of the unhappy country and, lifting his hands to heaven, declared as follows: “Certainly we have come for war, but we have not fought with men. Against the utter madness of monsters and wild animals, what sensible thing could I say? We have railed in judgment against all the sheer apathy of rocks. Wild animals care for their young, and likewise feed them when they are hungry, and while they feed on the bodies of other kinds of animals, they keep away from the corpses of animals like themselves. This is beyond the harshest thing imaginable, that a mother should devour the limbs to which she gave birth. I, blameless, absolve myself from this your contagion, whatever power you are who exists in heaven. You know, surely you know that I have constantly offered peace from heartfelt compassion, and that I have asked that which does not shame a conqueror to say, that I have wanted to spare even the authors of such omens themselves, to spare the people, to preserve the city. But what am I to do against those who resist, what am I to do against those who rage against themselves? While a great many of their weapons have been laid down, because they would not cease from slaughtering their own people, I have returned to the war so that I might set free those who remain, not so that I might destroy them. They themselves have often urged from the walls to fight, lest they be destroyed harshly at the hands of their own people. What kind of people are these, what is the remedy for such enemies? Indeed, I had heard that the savageness of this people was intolerable, who excite themselves to such strange insolence because of their extraordinary beliefs: namely that their birth draws them out of heaven, where they first take on bodily form; that they previously were residents of heaven,

²⁰⁷ Eusebius (Rufinus) *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.7.1. Schwartz and Mommsen, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, 210–211.

who came down for the purpose of cultivating the earth, and who then return from earth to heaven; that they passed through the dried up sea on foot, that the waves of the sea fled before them, and that the reversed flow of the Jordan turned back toward its source; that the sun stood still so that they might at that time conquer their enemies, lest the night impede them; that they are taken off into heaven in fiery chariots; that the powers of heaven have fought on their behalf, that the entire force of their enemy was dispersed in their absence, and that victory was achieved while they were sleeping. These things I discovered, but I used to think that they were considerate of the divine blessings surrounding them, not that they would compound their audacity in every direction, so that they thought it impossible that they should be defeated by the Romans. Accordingly, I understand that there is a battle between us and these, who believe themselves insuperable, who consider themselves survivors of the deluge, heirs of the flood, sojourners of the earth, travellers of the sea, ascenders of the sky, for whom the wave is a wall, the air a road, heaven a home, whom neither flames can burn nor chains restrain. The rock was loosened and poured itself as a drink to those who thirsted; heaven was opened to those who were hungry and food was sent; the camp was filled with the meat of birds, and man ate the bread of angels. Waters were held back, the bitter was made sweet, the sun stood still, darkness was illuminated. Finally, who could possibly be greater, or how could audacity possibly be absent from these who, as they say, having died, live, and having been buried, are resuscitated? It is also a common opinion that these men conspired against the divine, and their punishment is the proof. And the land burns today because of the impiety of its inhabitants, and even now many of these a cleft in the earth has swallowed. Therefore, how long shall we linger in these places, where there indeed exists the ruin of the earth. We have truly seen a dead sea, we have even seen dead the things born of the land, the dry earth, the empty shadows of green fruit, beauty outside and ashes within. Who can doubt that we abide in the underworld, in which even the elements themselves have died? Indeed, who is able to live after death in these places where the goodness of nature has died and you, religio, stand upon the deceased? Furthermore, who would not esteem parents who are already dead? Who would not show love for sons now lost and hold a place for their children? Affection remains, even if a child should perish, a name perseveres—natural love does not cut it asunder. Yet among these, truly, a mother does not acknowledge her living son, nor does she hear him beseeching (her), nor does she have pity on his screaming, but for one hour's worth of wretched food she plunges her parricidal hands into her own kin. But what new thing am I arguing, when the beginnings of her own race are reckoned from a familial parricide, with Abraham himself, whom they call their father and the author of their way of life and the originator of their worship, in whom they proclaim to have been the greatest faith, because he did not think to have mercy on his son and brought him forward to the altar as a sacrifice and did not hesitate to offer him as a burnt offering? I do not condemn his devotion, but I question his piety. And they say that another of them, having been victorious in battle, vowed

that whatever should first come out of his house upon his return he would sacrifice to god, and that, when he returned, his daughter came out and he laid hands on his daughter; and there are many other examples of this kind. What kind of race is this, which allows for murdering people in the name of *religio* and considers parricide to be sacrifice? What god would be able to demand this, or what kind of priest is there that would be able to carry it out? Finally, they say that this man of old, as if he were too prudent, did not do this thing, but rather was willing to do it; and the other adhered [to his vow] strictly, as if he were too stupid [not to]. They have their sacred rites; yet for all this they are unfeeling men, with whom it is standard practice to kill children, an unhappy people, among whom exists such an industry, such a ministry. May their own ruins cover it and hide it, lest the sun look upon the disease of the earth itself, lest the sphere of stars behold it; lest the breeze of the wind be defiled, and that cleansing fire arise. We used to consider the Thyestan meal to be a fable; [but] we have seen a disgraceful thing, we have witnessed a truth more horrible than the tragedies. For there it was someone of the stronger sex and distinct from those [body] parts [which were cooked/eaten], here a woman, to whom a part of herself became food. There it was [effectd by] the fraud of another, here voluntarily of one's own free-will. He suffered, she scoffed. Fitting food for such men, who, by their obstinate fighting, brought their own women to such a meal. In any case, I see that those who are insensitive to these things are plagued with such bitter evils and have had their consciences made useless. For this reason let us prepare quickly for war. Because they are incapable of being helped, let us fall upon them quickly, so that we may flee the dying waters of these regions, and the sinking earth."

Quo conperto Caesar exsecratus infelicis terrae contagium, manus ad caelum eleuans, talia protestabatur: 'Ad bellum quidem uenimus sed non cum hominibus dimicamus. Aduersus omnem rabiem beluarum ac ferarum, quid sensibilia loquar? Aduersus omnem rupium immanitatem decernimus. Diligunt ferae fetus suos, quos etiam in fame sua nutriunt, et quae alienis corporibus pascuntur, a consimilium ferarum abstinent cadaueribus. Hoc ultra omnem acerbitatem est, ut membra quae genuit mater uorarit. Mundus ego ab hoc contagio tibi me absoluo, quaecumque in caelo potestas es. Scis, scis profecto quia intimo affectu pacem frequenter obtuli et quod non pudet dicere uictor rogauit, quia parcere etiam ipsis tantorum prodigiorum auctoribus uolui, parcere populo, urbem seruare. Sed quid facerem repugnantibus, quid facerem aduersus suos furentibus? Positis plerumque armis, quia illi a suorum caedibus non desinebant, in bellum reuerti ut liberarem obsessos, non perderem. Ipsi nos de muris hortati saepe sunt dimicare ne grauius a suis perirent. Quales sunt ciues, quibus hostis remedio est? Audieram equidem intolerabilem huius esse populi ferocitatem, qui incredibilibus se opinionibus in omnem excitet insolentiam, de caelo se genus ducere, ibi primum induisse corporis formam, caeli se fuisse incolas, descendisse ad cultus terrarum, de terris ad caelum redire, transisse per maria sicco pede, fugisse ante se fluctus maris, conuersa Iordanis fluenta in suum fontem recurrisset, stetisse solem ut hi hostes suos uincerent ne nox impediret, raptos in caelum igneis curribus suos, caeli proeliatas pro se potestates, et absentibus his uniuersas hostium fusas copias, dormientibus

partam uictoriam. Haec conpereram, sed putabam quod diuina circa se iactarent beneficia, non usquequaque audaciam extenderent, ut se nec a Romanis uinci posse arbitrarentur. Agnosco itaque cum his nobis esse proelium, qui se insuperabiles credant, qui se iacent diluuii superstites, heredes fluminum, terrarum hospites, uiatores aequoreos, ascensores aethereos, quibus unda murus est, aer uia, caelum habitatio, flammae cedunt nec uincula tenent. Sittentibus petra soluitur ac sese fundit in potus, esurientibus caelum aperitur, cibus mittitur, carne uolatilium castra implentur et panem angelorum manducat homo. Stringuntur liquentia, amara dulcescunt, sol statuitur, tenebrae inluminantur. Postremo quid amplius potest esse, quando his deesse audacia potest, qui, ut aiunt, mortui uiuunt et sepulti resuscitantur? Aduersus diuina quoque conspirasse hos homines opinio frequens, et poena indicio est. Ardent hodie quoque terrae propter incolarum impietatem, plerosque etiam ex istis hiatus soli absorbuit. Quamdiu igitur in his locis moramur, ubi et terrarum ruina est? Vidimus et mare mortuum, uidimus etiam mortua terrarum nascentia, humum aridam, uirentium fructuum umbras inanes, foris gratiam intus fauillam. Quis dubitare potest quod apud inferos uersemur, apud quos etiam elementa moriuntur ipsa? Quin etiam, quae post mortem uiuere solet, apud hos naturae pietas mortua et superstes defunctis religio. Quis enim parentes non etiam mortuos diligit? Quis etiam amissos filios non amet et loco pignorum teneat? Manet affectus, etsi pignus obierit, perseuerat nomen, naturae gratia non intercidit. Apud hos uero nec uiuentem mater recognoscit filium, nec appellantem audit, nec uagientis miseretur et propter unius horae execrabilem cibum parricidales inicit pignori manus. Sed quid quasi nouum arguo, cum a parricidio fraterno generis sui numerent exordia, cum ipsius Abrahae, quem appellant patrem et disciplinae auctorem ac sui principem cultus, in eo maxime fidem praedicent, quod nec filio parcendum putauerit eumque sicut hostiam aris admouerit atque holocaustum offerre non dubitauerit? Non condemno deuotionem sed quaero pietatem. Alium quoque e suis uouisse aiunt uictorem, ut quidquid sibi primum occurrisset domum reuertenti, immolaret deo suo, et, cum rediret, occurrisset filiam atque illum iniicisse filiae manus, multaue alia huiusmodi exempla. Qualis ista gens, quae religioni tribuat hominis necem et sacrificium putet esse parricidium? Quis deus hoc possit exigere aut qualis sacerdos, qui hoc possit deferre? Denique ueterem illum quasi prudentiorem non fecisse aiunt sed uoluisse, istum quasi inconsultiorem perseuerasse. Habeant suos ritus: duri tamen homines, apud quos disciplina est filios occidere, infelix ciuitas, in qua talis officina, tale ministerium est. Operiant eam ruinae suae atque abscondant, mundi ipsius contagionem ne sol uideat, ne stellarum globus spectet; ne maculentur aurarum spiramina, purgatorius quoque ille exurgat ignis. Thyestean dapes fabulam putabamus, flagitium uidemus, ueritatem cernimus atrociorum tragoediis. Ibi enim firmior sexus et partis alienus, hic mulier, cui partus proprius fuerit cibus. Ibi aliena fraus, hic propria uoluntas. Ille doluit, haec insultauit. Digna talibus uiris esca, qui pertinaciter bellando mulieres suas ad tale perduxerunt conuiuium. Equidem eos tantis malorum afflictos acerbitatibus iam furere arbitror mentisque impotes factos qui haec non sentiant. Quare maturius bellum conficiamus. Quia emendari non queunt, ingruamus instantius, ut fugiamus regionum istarum morientes aquas, terras ruentes.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ [Ps-Hegesippus] *De Excidio Hierosolymitano* 5.41.2. Ussani, CSEL 66.1: 387; translation mine.

PH transposes ideas found already in Josephus' version of this scene into a lengthy, direct speech put into the mouth of Titus.²⁰⁹ This allows PH as author to muse over various implications of the Maria Story through the mind and mouth of a Roman general, PH 'throwing his voice' via speech-writing, as it were. The rhetorical moves PH makes hereby are several. For one thing, this speech identifies Jerusalem and even the larger region of which it is a part (i.e. Judea) as the direct object of divine cursing and abandonment, ostensibly evidenced in the 'deadness' of the land overall. This frames the Maria Story as cognate to the moral depravity of the men of Sodom in Genesis 19:²¹⁰ after an exhibition of their wickedness, the LORD rained down fire and brimstone, devastating Sodom and Gomorrah for all time. In the same way, after the spectacle of Maria's deed, Titus pronounces Jerusalem and Judea 'dead' and its inhabitants meriting a merciful annihilation.

Another prominent feature of this speech is its rootedness in the past and its deployment of heroes from the Hebrew Bible as biblical *exempla*. Perhaps a bit unrealistic in Titus' mouth (though not historically impossible, but this is hardly the point), we find here both Abraham and, implicitly, Jephthah being used as stand-ins to gauge 'what kind of race' the Jews are. Titus thus combines exemplarity, ethnography, and exegesis in a speech PH uses to help explain how a Roman at least might have thought about Maria's deed and what it might mean for discerning some essential Jewish identity: Abraham and Jephthah, ancestors of the Jews, were apparently willing to kill their children, so is Maria's action so surprising?²¹¹ This logic need not be taken to represent PH's own thinking—indeed, such a negative assessment of Abraham, a figure of signal importance for Christian historical self-understanding, would be shocking for a Christian—but it does show that PH was capable of articulating historical explanations for the actions of the Jews circa 70 CE, explanations that drew upon assumptions of national character and ethnic continuity undergirded by the discursive logic of Roman exemplarity. Thus, the reader of *DEH* is presented with the idea—if not as a viable one from the author's perspective, at least as a historically feasible one from a Roman general's perspective—that Maria's deed might be seen to betray the Jewish national character.

A third notable feature of Titus' speech in *DEH* is the explicit identification of Maria's actions with Thyestan myth. Titus is made to marvel that such things could happen in real life: they were not only myths. Moreover, Titus undertakes a qualitative comparison between what Thyestes was reported to have done and what Maria did, a comparison in which Maria comes out looking far worse than Thyestes. Such a comparison might not be unrealistic to put into the mind of the first-century Roman general. In any case, Titus' meaning is clear: with Maria, we see that the truth is more horrible than fiction, which leads Titus to reaffirm his intention to burn Jerusalem to ground, and then to 'get out of

²⁰⁹ The speeches of *DEH* are keys to the whole in many ways: it was in speeches that PH most set himself apart from his major source, Josephus' *BJ*, and instilled his own meanings and literary artistry into his work; see Bell, "Historiographical Analysis," 78–79 for the Maria Story.

²¹⁰ This parallel had already been made, in fact, in *(L)BJ* 5.566 and recorded also in *(L)HE* 3.6.16, just before the beginning of the Maria Story in these latter traditions.

²¹¹ See discussion in Bay, "Exemplarity, Exegesis, & Ethnography."

Dodge' post-haste. Drawing upon the theme of Jewish national decline which looms so large across *DEH*²¹² and upon the portents which were famously taken to predict the fall of Jerusalem, Titus' speech makes the Maria Story a microcosm of the Jewish story: for a people who used to receive divine blessing and consistent success, things became irreparably bad, and the only solution was absolute destruction. Indeed, the theme of *DEH* as a work is the "ultimate destruction" (*supremum excidium*) of Jerusalem,²¹³ and the Maria Story presages, justifies, and in some ways explains this historic catastrophe. For PH, in other words, the Maria Story comes to serve a far-reaching narrative rhetoric of anti-Jewish historiography, one which sees through Christian theology the divine damnation and abandonment of the Jews and their land emblazoned upon historical record by the events of 70 CE. The added details and tragedy of the story as told in *DEH* all contribute to this subtle transvaluation of the episode.

Nor are these tragic elements restricted to the Maria Story proper: Titus' oratorical imagining of how Maria's son screamed as she cut him up, and his remarking that she did all this for a measly hour of life, is some of the most disturbing material we have seen yet. The point, however, is that all of this heightened horror becomes not an emic remembrance of Jewish suffering, as it was for Josephus, but an etic monument of Jewish sin and judgment; PH concretizes for Christian late antiquity the Christian supersessionist understanding of Jerusalem's downfall and the death of the Jews, and all of this is distilled into the Maria Story.

The aftermath of the Maria Story as recorded in *SY* is based upon the account in *DEH*. However, *SY* is, of course, a Jewish text, whereas *DEH*, as we have seen, uses the Maria Story to form an iteration of its anti-Jewish historical perspective. Thus we are not surprised to find subtle variations in *SY*'s version of the scene:

And so it was that when Titus heard of this thing he feared greatly. So he stood and spread out his hands toward heaven and said: "God of Heaven, hidden things are plain to you and you know the mysteries of my heart, that I have not come to this city to make war but rather to summon it to peace. And [you know] how many times I have asked for peace, and they have not been willing. And I have continued to implore them, but they have not inclined their ears. And I have sought to have mercy upon them, so that perhaps they might live. And when they were fighting, a man against his brother, I called out to save them. But we came and we found them perpetrating these evils and cruelties toward their brothers. And on top of all the evil that they did this is the greatest evil: that a woman ate her son. But I have also heard of the bravery of this people, and the love with which you have loved them. And you caused your name to tabernacle among them. And you selected from among them Hasidim and you concealed yourself in the heavens. And you separated the sea for them and the waters of the Red Sea fled before them and the waters of the Jordan were turned back for their sake. And the sun stood still for them when they were at battle with their enemies until you delivered them.

²¹² See Bay, "Jewish National Decline and Biblical Figures."

²¹³ See briefly Bell, "Josephus and Pseudo-Hegesippus."

And you lifted up their prophets to heaven in chariots of fire. And you smote the multitude of the Assyrians as they lay upon their beds. All of this I know, oh LORD God. And now, this people against whom I am fighting—I said that it was upon you they relied, but they do not have faith in you. And now, behold! See that they do not trust in your deliverance; rather, they trust in their swords and in their fighting. They boasted in your signs and wonders which you performed for their noble forefathers. For they boasted and spoke thus: 'No ruler is able to subjugate us, for the sea itself was rent for us, the bitter waters were made sweet for us, our bread descended from heaven, our water came up from the earth, and the Jordan was turned back before us. Heaven stood still for us, and it and its hosts fought in our aid.' These things you did for their fathers while they were righteous, but to these men on account of their wickedness you have struck while they were fighting with us. For this reason you gave their land over to become a wilderness and their cities to the sword. And now, let us hurry and depart from the midst of their land lest we be destroyed by their evil. For our eyes behold Sodom, which was overturned within their borders, and their waters made bitter with an irremediable blow. And they have hardened their heart like iron, for they say: 'We resemble our forefathers, who had hard hearts,' for Abraham, their forefather, had one son, and he did not remember his compassion for him but rather went up to slaughter him. I will not convict him, it is just that I wonder how he could forget his compassion for his son. And one king among their kings sacrificed his only daughter and pronounced many imprecations and curses." When he had finished speaking they brought the battering ram up to the wall. At that time many of the leaders of the rebels came over to him and accepted terms of peace with him.

ויהי כשמוע טיטוס את הדבר הזה ויירא מאד. ויעמוד ויפרוש כפיו אל השמים ויאמר: אלהי השמים הנסתרות גליוות לך ואתה יודע תעלומות לבי כי לא באתי אל העיר הזאת למלחמה כי אם לקרוא אליה לשלום. וכמה פעמים ביקשתי השלום ולא אבו. והרביתי להתחנן אליהם ולא הטו את אזנם. ובקשתי לחמול עליהם אולי יחיון. וכאשר נלחמו איש באחיו קראוני להצילם. ונבוא ונמצא חיות רעות ואכזרים לאחיהם. ועל כל הרעה אשר עשו גדלה הרעה הזאת כי האשה אכלה את בנה. וגם אני שמעתי את גבורת העם הזה ואהבתך אשר אהבתם. ותשכן שמך בתוכם. ותבחר מהם חסידים ותעלם אליך השמים. ותקרע להם את הים וינסו מי ים סוף מפניהם ומי הירדן נסובו לאחור למענם. וידום השמש להם בהלחמם על אויביהם עד אשר הושעתם. וברכבי אש העליתה את נביאיהם לשמים. ותך המון אשור והם שוכבים על משכבותם. את כל זה ידעתי יי אלהים. ועתה העם הזה אשר אלחם עמם אמרתי כי עליך בוטחים והם אינם בוטחים בך. ועתה הנך רואה כי לא בטחו בישועתך כי אם בחרבם ובמלחמותם יבטחו. ויתגאו על אותותיך ומופתיך אשר עשית לאבותם הטובים. כי אלה יתגאו ויאמרו כי: לא יוכל לנו מושל להכניעינו כי הים נקרע לנו והמים המרים המתקו לנו ולחמנו הוריד מן השמים ומימינו עלו מן הארץ והירדן נסב אחור לפנינו. ושמים דמם בעבורינו והם וצבאם נלחמו לעזרתנו. ואלה עשית לאבותם בצדקתם ולא להם על רעתם הכית במלחמותינו. למען תת ארצם שממה ועריהם חרבה. ועתה נמהר לצאת מקרב ארצם פן נספה ברעתם. כי עינינו רואות את סדום אשר בגבולם נהפכת ומימיהם מרים במכות נמרצות. והקשו לבם כברזל כי יאמרו: נדמה לאבותינו אכזרי לבב כי אברהם אביהם היה לו בן אחד ולא נכמרו רחמיו עליו וילך לשוחטו. ואני לא ארשיענו אך אפלא איך לא נכמרו רחמיו על בנו. ומלך אחד

ממלכיהם שחט את בתו יחידתו ורבים חירופים וגידופים אמר. ויהי ככלותו לדבר ויביאו את האיל
אל החומה. אז יצאו אליו הרבה משרי הפריצים וישלימו עמו.²¹⁴

SY's version of Titus' reaction to hearing of Maria's deed is quite different from what we find in *DEH*. Most conspicuously absent are the derogatory remarks comparing the Jews to animals and rocks and the insistence upon the damnedness of the land of Judea. SY does have Titus identify Jerusalem explicitly as Sodom, but the description of the cursedness of the land is restricted to a note in passing. Also, Titus puts his mention of Abraham into the mouths of his Jewish enemies, and instead of PH's stylized assessment of the patriarch in terms of *devotio*, *pietas*, and *religio*, SY has Titus say, much more simply, that he cannot understand how Abraham could kill his son. Also interesting is SY's treatment of Jephthah, whom Titus calls a "king" (מלך); he is said only to have killed his only daughter while uttering 'imprecations and curses'—apparently a misunderstood reference to the "vow" (נדר) Jephthah makes in Judges 11:30 to the effect that, should the LORD give him victory in battle, he would sacrifice the first thing to exit his house upon his return.²¹⁵ In any case, Abraham and Jephthah are not used to effect any explicit stereotyped ethnography in SY, as they are in *DEH*; rather, they appear in Titus' mouth as the forefathers whom the Jews themselves putatively claim as role models.

SY, like *DEH*, includes in Titus' speech reference to the ancient successes of Israel. But these do not implicate national decline in the same way: they are significantly shortened in SY, and Titus' tone is also different. In *DEH*, Titus appears to know Jewish tradition extremely well and he appears incredulous that the Jews believe what they believe, do what they do, and still resist him and the Roman army. In SY, Titus appears pious and confused: he had heard that the Jews trusted in their God, but they do not. He speaks in the second person, with the use of the *sacrum nomen* (י), to "the LORD God," and 'discusses' all of these things, recalling the 'signs and wonders' that God did for the Jews' forefathers. The latter he several times differentiates from their descendants, the former being "good" (טובים) and living "in their righteousness" (בצדקתם), the latter being those who "do not have faith" (אינם בוטחים) in God and who are culpable on account of their evil (רעתם). In SY, therefore, the 'modern day' Jews against whom Titus has been fighting appear as an aberration within the historical record, an apple fallen far from its noble, ancestral tree; in *DEH*, quite to the contrary, Titus had painted the Jews as tainted in their culture from the beginning, and thus 'naturally' turned to the evils he was now seeing. On a number of discrete and subtle levels, Titus' speech/reaction in SY paints a less bleak, less negative picture of the Jews than *DEH*. They are still culpable for their own destruction, and their city will still be destroyed, but one can read between the lines of SY a sympathy for the Jewish predicament which is not present in *DEH*, SY's Christian source.

²¹⁴ *Sefer Yosippon* 86 (פ). Text from Börner-Klein and Zuber, *Josippon*, 827, 829; my thanks again to Dagmar Börner-Klein for a more accessible version of this text.

²¹⁵ Or, perhaps, SY is imagining the 'curses and imprecations' that a father must have uttered upon realizing the gravity of his mistake. On the נדר see Schumann, *Gelübde*, 79, III, 159, 379.

Regardless of the further conclusions one may draw, one of the primary takeaways from the Maria Story and its aftermath in *DEH* must be that PH exaggerates the tragic dimension of the episode. This appears to be, at least in part, a reflection of theological commitments which insist on a stark anti-Jewish bent regarding events surrounding the Temple's destruction, which therefore drives the author to highlight Maria's culpability and thereby Jewish depravity, and ultimately Jewish suffering. PH already found an incipient model for creating a tragic scene which highlighted Jewish wrongdoing-and-suffering in Josephus; his graphic intensification of such a scene might also be a reflection of early Imperial literature with which PH interacts, such as Seneca's *Thyestes*, which exhibited "a kind of literary necrophilia" and indulged manifestly in stories of gore, violence, and death.²¹⁶ Maria's extended soliloquies, the addition of superfluous and often shocking details, the substantial extension (and thus effective slowing) of the scene—all of these heighten the emotional intensity, highlight the tragedy, and play up the spectacle of the terrible story. In this way PH betrays himself as an author of his age: he shares with other late antique Christian authors the habit of fixating upon the spectacle and tragedy of the Maria Story as a means of driving a logic of Christian triumphalism and/or a brand of anti-Jewish rhetoric. Basil of Caesarea, in his *Sermon in Time of Famine and Drought (Homilia Dicta tempore famis et siccitatis = Homily 8)*, uses the Maria Story as part of an extended cogitation upon the theological, historical, physiological aspects of bodily hunger:

The agony of hunger has constrained many even to violate the limits of nature, in one case a man feeding on the bodies of his very race, in another a mother on her child, who came forth from her stomach only to be dreadfully conceived again by the stomach. This drama is recorded in the Jewish history, the tragedy diligently chronicled in Josephus, when such an event seized the Jerusalemites who paid the righteous penalty for impiety toward the Lord.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Poe, "Analysis of Seneca's *Thyestes*," 359: "*Thyestes* has something to say about the enormous satisfaction which Atreus derives from his slaughter, and indirectly about the satisfaction derived by the poet from describing the slaughter or by the reader from reading the description: the plays declares that it is the satisfaction of a natural human impulse to violence and ultimately to self-destruction."

²¹⁷ Basil of Caesarea *Homily 8.7*. PG 31: 321D, 324A (= §69D–70A): Τὸ τοῦ λιμοῦ πάθος κατηνάγκασε πολλοὺς πολλάκις καὶ τοὺς ὄρους κινήσαι τῆς φύσεως· ἄψασθαι μὲν ἄνθρωπον τῶν ὁμοφύλων σομάτων, ματέρα δὲ παῖδα, ὃν ἐκ τῆς γαστρὸς προήγαγε, πάλιν τῇ γαστρὶ κακῶς ὑποδέξασθαι. Καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ὄραμα Ἰουδαϊκὴ ἐτραγώδησεν ἱστορία, ἣν Ἰώσηπος ἡμῖν ὁ σπουδαῖος συνεγράψατο, ὅτε τὰ δεινὰ πάθη τοὺς Ἱεροσολυμίτας κατέλαβε, τῆς εἰς τὸν Κύριον δυσσεβείας ἐνδίκους τιμωρίας τιννύντας. Translation from Holman, *The Hungry are Dying*, 190–191, who mistakenly cites the account in Josephus as occurring at *BJ* 7.8 (206n13). Holman's appendix contains the first English translation of three Cappadocian sermons; Basil's, cited here, was written around 368–369 CE and thus is very likely coeval with *DEH*. In fact, this portion of Basil's sermon was already translated earlier in Schreckenberg, "Josephus in Early Christian Texts," 73: "This drama is also shown by the 'Jewish history', which the excellent Josephus composed for us, to be a tragic event, when the horrible suffering befell those living in Jerusalem, who were justly punished for their sacrilegious crime against the Lord" (see n154 for a discussion of how "Josephus has been pocketed by Basil and other Church fathers"). The sermon also shares with the Maria Story (and the surrounding narrative) a fascination with the physicality of hunger and starvation, a keen interest in the role of mothers during times of famine, and a notion of naturalness and that which is 'unnatural' when gauging right and wrong behavior during such ordeals.

Very much like *DEH*, Basil leverages the Maria Story's tragedy as evidence that the destruction of Jerusalem/death of the Jews in 70 CE was divine punishment for the rejection/crucifixion of Jesus. This lends credence to the idea that PH's aesthetics of hyperbole regarding the Maria Story is not purely ornamental, but is rather serves a larger anti-Jewish narrative agenda. Very much the same understanding attends John Chrysostom's treatment of the Maria Story in his *Homilies on Matthew*. Discussing Matthew 24:21, Chrysostom says:

“Pray,” he says, “For there will be at that time a tribulation such as has not been, nor will be again.” Nor should one suppose that this was said hyperbolically; rather, having come upon the writings of Josephus, let him learn the truthfulness of these things which were said. For no one could say that he, being a believing man, exaggerated the tragedy so as to prove the things which had been said. For he also was a Jew, and very much a Jew, and a devoted follower, and one of those who lived after the advent of Christ. What, then, does this man say? That these terrors outstripped every [previous] tragedy, and that no war at any other time has so befallen that race. For the famine was such that the eating of children was fought for by the mothers themselves and that there were fights on account of this; and he says that many who had been killed had their stomachs ripped open in the middle. Happily, then, I would ask the Jews: whence such God-sent and unendurable wrath came upon them, one more grievous than all those which had come before, not only in Judea but also across the entire inhabited world? Isn't it obvious that it was for the affront of the cross and the rejection which this represented? Everyone would say so, and along with everyone and in defense of everyone, the very truth of the facts themselves.”²¹⁸

Chrysostom is generalizing, and does not identify Maria *per se*.²¹⁹ However, we can safely say that at the end of the fourth century CE Christian authors used the Maria Story

²¹⁸ John Chrysostom *Homilies on Matthew* LXXVI. PG 58: 695 (= §732–33): Προσεύχεσθε, φησίν, “Ἐσται γὰρ τότε θλίψις, ὅσα οὐκ ἐγένετο, οὐδὲ μὴ γένηται. Καὶ μὴ τις νομίση τοῦτο ὑπερβολικῶς εἰρῆσθαι· ἀλλ’ ἐντυχῶν τοῖς Ἰωσήπου γράμμασι, μανθανέτω τῶν εἰρημένων τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκεῖνο ἂν ἔχοι τις εἰπεῖν, ὅτι πιστὸς ὢν ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸ συστήσαι τὰ εἰρημένα ἐξώγκωσε τὴν τραγωδίαν. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ Ἰουδαῖος ἦν, καὶ σφόδρα Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ ζηλωτῆς, καὶ τῶν μετὰ τὴν Χριστοῦ παρουσίαν. Τί οὖν οὗτός φησιν; “Ὅτι πᾶσαν ἐνίκησε τραγωδίαν ἐκεῖνα τὰ δεινὰ, καὶ πόλεμος οὐδεὶς οὐδέποτε τοιοῦτος τὸ ἔθνος κατέλαβε. Τοσοῦτος γὰρ ἦν ὁ λιμὸς, ὡς αὐταῖς ταῖς μητέρας περιμάχοντο εἶναι τὴν παιδοφαγίαν, καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου πολέμους γίνεσθαι· πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ νεκροὺς γενομένους κατὰ μέσας ἀναρρήγνυσθαι τὰς γαστέρας ἔφη. Ἦδέως ἂν οὖν ἐροίμην Ἰουδαίους, πόθεν οὕτω θεήλατος ὄργη καὶ ἀφόρητος ἦλθεν ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς, καὶ πασῶν ἔμπροσθεν γενομένων, οὐκ ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης χαλεπωτέρα; Οὐκ εὐδηλον, ὅτι διὰ τὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ τόμημα καὶ τὴν ἀπόφασιν ταύτην; Ἀπαντες εἶποιεν ἂν, καὶ μετὰ πάντων καὶ πρὸ πάντων αὐτῆ ἢ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθεια. (Translation mine.)

²¹⁹ Schreckenberg, “Josephus in Early Christian Texts,” 75–76, does not mention the Maria Story connection. However, related to Chrysostom's mention of not a mother but mothers eating their children is Cyril of Alexandria's mention of *teknophagiai* (*In Johannis Ev.* 8:28; PG 78: 828), of which Schreckenberg says: “The exaggerated plural *teknophagiai* for the singular episode (similarly, Eusebius in *Theoph.* 4.20–22) betrays a secret complacency with the suffering of the Jews” (80–81).

(and other stories like it) to illustrate God's rejection and punishment of the Jews,²²⁰ and at the same time to make a spectacle of such a historic fall from grace. PH's variegated intensification of the Maria Story, which we examined above, situates him firmly within such a cultural mood.

Indeed, so important was the Maria Story to many late antique Christian authors that at least one, Fabius Planciades Fulgentius (d. 532/533 CE), was only interested in this one scene out of the entire corpus of Josephus (assuming he knew more), and he does not even cite Josephus by name in recalling the episode.²²¹ In recounting the ups and downs of the Roman Empire, this probable author of *On the Ages of the World and of Man* writes:

For Vespasian, chosen by Christ to avenge the injustice done Him, did avenge the evil of the Jews, brought to an end the Israelite iniquity, and yet did not condemn to permanent exile the remnant who sought to return from the bondage of captivity. Ending the obstinate and evil resistance of the Hebrews against God with an execrable famine, he prolonged their wretchedness, so that one would devour the babe hanging from the milk-giving breasts of its starving mother, and (what an unfeeling brute animal would never do to its own young) a mother, reduced to utter savagery, consume her own offspring. These are the violent evils, my God, permitted by your wrath, that hunger should overcome natural kinship and a starving mother eat of her own offspring. Yet this punishment of the insurgents by God was just, for Judaea maintained in its sons this obduracy which held out in its defense to the very sentence to crucifixion: and they who had scorned to receive the flesh of the Son of God, prepared for food the flesh of their own children. Notice, therefore, that they had once ridiculed the five thousand satisfied by five loaves, and now—such their life had become—in their hunger they tasted the flesh of their own children. First, a ruler of the Jews slaughtered the infants as he sought to take Christ, then a second such as he, seeking to avenge Christ, gave up infants to be chewed by their parents.²²²

²²⁰ Kampianaki, "Perceptions of Flavius Josephus," has recently used Basil, Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria's treatment of the Maria Story and related 'tragic' episodes to show "that in medieval times Josephus' works were appreciated and read by Greek intellectuals not only for their content but also for their aesthetic approach to the recording of history" (311). Kampianaki's point is sound, though using such early authors to generalize about "medieval times" seems tenuous; even if scholarship often begins the Medieval era quite early, usually it marks it from ca. 500 CE, after all of these authors had long since died; Rubin, *The Middle Ages*, I marks the Medieval from 500 to 1500 CE.

²²¹ Schreckenberg, "Josephus in Early Christian Texts," 82.

²²² Fulgentius *De aetatibus mundi et hominis* 14. Translation from Whitbread, *Fulgentius the Mythographer*, 220–221. The Latin text may be found in Helm, *Fabii Planciadis Fulgentii, 177–178: Nam Uespasianus Iudaicae uindex nequitiae, quem suae Christus iniuriae elegerat uindicem, ipse Israeliticam cladem finem usque perduxit et nequaquam iam ultra de captiuitatis ergastulum redituram perenni exulatu damnauit. Hic itaque Hebream aduersus Deum calcitrantem nequitiam execrandae famis exitu terminans illam usque miserabilitatem perduxit, ut lacteis dependentem uberibus natum ieiunae matris faceret prandium et quae insensibilis suis catulis nequaquam ingerit fera, illud mater in suis uisceribus faceret efferata. Quae sunt ista, Deus meus, te irascente permissa bellica crimina, ut fames naturae federa uinceret et mater de suis uisceribus ieiuna pranderet. Sed iusta haec diuinitatis in rebellibus*

This passage is remarkable for a number of reasons, not least of which is the inverse relationship it posits between the Christian sacrament of communion and the Jews' purported fall into *teknophagia*. Indeed, not just John 6:51–56 but also the Gospel story of the feeding of the five thousand (Matt 14:21 // Mark 6:44 // Luke 9:14 // John 6:10)²²³ and King Herod's infamous massacre of the innocents recorded in Matthew 2:16–18 become intertexts for a Christian understanding of the Maria Story and the historical moment to which it belonged. Fulgentius has gone much further than PH in couching the Maria episode, which is not identified as such, within an overtly Christian (one might say 'gospel') discourse of historical theology. This shows that the Maria Story continued to be a generative tradition within Christian circles after *DEH*,²²⁴ and that after PH wrote the anti-Jewish ideology attached to the story became more explicit and pronounced, something which *DEH* may well have instigated.

The above parallels support the idea that PH's extending the length and heightening the intensity of the Maria Story should be read as contributing to a larger 'anti-Jewish' rhetoric (anti-Jewish in the sense that it marks Christ's death/crucifixion as the reason for Jerusalem's destruction and reads that destruction as God's rejecting/cursing of his former people).²²⁵ Such a historiographical rhetoric is indeed the defining feature of *DEH*'s narrative ideology. In addition, PH's fixation upon the narrative details of the scene, his up-playing of its graphic and shocking visuality, his use of ornamental and balanced Latin vocabulary and syntax, may all also signal *DEH*'s engagement with a cultural poetics akin to what Michael Roberts identified as late antiquity's "jeweled style."²²⁶ It may be that the aesthetic and the rhetorical elements of PH's Maria Story coalesce to meet the expectations of the text's implied Christian reader.

Regardless of the vagaries of intent latent within *DEH*'s version of the Maria Story, the effect of that version can be summarized by several interrelated points:

- a) Maria is out of her mind, but is able to articulate and defend her actions and decisions in a way that makes them all the more disturbing;
- b) The Maria Story is an important scene within the logic of *DEH*'s narrative rhetoric, as signaled by its extension, Latin stylization, and tragic/spectacular presentation;
- c) The Maria Story's function in *BJ* as a tragic scene epitomizing Jewish suffering and targeting the actions of Jews (i.e. the rebels) as responsible for Jerusalem's downfall

fuerat pena. Quam enim Iudea patientiam habet in filiis, quae suam salutem usque ad patibulum perduxerat crucis; et quae carnem filii Dei accipere spreuit, sui carnes filii suis epulis praeparauit. Cerne enim quia quinque panibus saturata quinque milia ante deriserat et nunc — tantum uitae reliquum — filii carnes esuriens praelambeat. Primum etiam Iudaicus princeps dum Christum quaerit infantes interimit, ast hic secundus dum Christum ulciscitur parentum mandibulis infantes addixit.

²²³ See further Matt 16:9 // Mark 8:19.

²²⁴ Kampianaki, "Perceptions of Flavius Josephus," 313n80 includes George the Monk (*Chronicon* 1.385.24–386.14) and John Zonaras (*Annales* 538.21–539.10) as Byzantine authors who include reminiscences of the Maria Story, and makes the important point that Maria "was presented as an extremely negative mother figure and implicitly juxtaposed with the Virgin Mary" (313, emphasis mine).

²²⁵ See Bay, "Writing the Jews out of History."

²²⁶ Roberts, *The Jeweled Style*.

becomes emphasized in *DEH* and turned to more explicitly anti-Jewish historiography.

All in all, the Maria of *DEH* is a figure more self-conscious, active, and thus culpable than in the earlier traditions. She is an insignia not only of the horror of divine judgment upon the Jews but I would argue that she is also, very unlike in Josephus, an embodiment of their depravity. The badness of what happened to the Jews in 70 CE and the badness of the Jews in general according to PH find expression in the Maria Story, where Maria, the Jewish *Medea* and *Atreus + Thyestes*, acts out in tragic relief the Jewish plight on a world stage. While the event itself was localized, its significance for the Jews was not, and *DEH* confirms this understanding in the speech put into the mouth of Titus following the Maria Story.

Maria in *SY* is very different from the figure in *DEH*, despite—or rather, probably because of—the fact that *DEH* was *SY*'s main, perhaps only, source. While in *DEH* Maria resembles the seminal figures of Senecan tragedy, in *SY* we have seen over and over again how Maria is correlated with protagonists of the Jewish Scriptures, 'heroes of the Hebrew Bible.' In *DEH* Maria is a largely negative figure; in *SY*, the picture is more complicated.

SY's version of the Maria Story, as we have shown, is based upon that of *DEH*, and may or may not be cognizant of the other Greek and Latin traditions.²²⁷ For that reason, many of its idiosyncrasies may be explained with reference to its Latin source. But a number of them may not. In *SY*, overall, Maria is a less crazed and more pitiable character. She is the object of grammatical action more often than in the other traditions, and her persecutors share a greater part of the culpability with her, being largely responsible for her hopelessness and thus partially to blame for her ungodly reaction thereto. *SY* underscores its sympathetic portrayal of Maria by aligning her with figures from the Hebrew Bible who are not villains, but are either put upon (Hagar), unlucky (Jephthah), or simply mourning (David). It is even possible to read Abraham as a moral forerunner to Maria's action. All in all, *SY* writes its Maria Story with a rather different overall message. Removing the anti-Jewish material from *DEH*, a characteristic feature of *SY*'s use of its main source, *SY* in a way returns to Josephus' presentation of the story: it is a tale of personal tragedy and national travesty; its details are grotesque, its implications bleak; it gives a face to the denir of Jewish fortunes, soon to be realized in Jerusalem's destruction. But it does not define the Jewish national character, nor mark a permanent plight for the Jews, nor expose some essential Jewishness always nascent beneath the surface. The Maria Story, in sum, is a microcosm of *SY*'s literary, rhetorical, historiographical habits: it evinces an interest in style and the dramatic, regularly employs biblical language, freely reworks its historical sources (even contradicting the Christian anti-Judaism implicitly

²²⁷ Evidence that *SY* might have drawn on *LBJ* and/or *LHE* may be adduced from the above texts, albeit not definitively: *SY*'s introduction of Maria by name, its presentation of how she was seeking food (implicitly from the land rather than from the social sphere), —all of these may (but need not necessarily) be read to suggest that *SY* drew upon one of these early Latin traditions in addition to *DEH*.

or explicitly contained therein), and develops a Hebrew poetics that is classical, readable, and novel all at the same time.

This article has sought to shed light on the diversity of the Maria Story in its Greek, Latin, and Hebrew iterations across the first millennium of the Common Era. It has also pointed out important idiosyncrasies of the various accounts and the interesting interrelations between them. Furthermore, it has highlighted characteristic features of *DEH* and *SY* as texts, a valuable contribution inasmuch as these works remain little-known and seldom-studied. All of this I have attempted to situate within a larger framework of Jewish and Christian cultural history which, in various times and places, (in)formed the authors who penned these works. Thus, while *SY* as an early Medieval work appears largely beholden to its source-texts, at times it can, like *BJ*, *LBJ*, *LHE*, and *DEH*, be rendered more intelligible within its cultural moment. Of course, these works too, like *SY*, were heavily influenced by biblical language and tradition and various exegetically construed ideologies. So perhaps this is where to end such an article: the Maria Story—told by Josephus, received and transmitted within Latinate Christianity, and eventually transformed into Hebrew and retooled again for Jewish use—actually represents the traditionary *Nachleben* of an older complex of stories: one version was told by the biblical authors of Deuteronomy and Lamentations, another played with by the Greek tragedians Sophocles and Euripides. It is an ancient story, more imaginable for the ancient mind than for ours. It is the story of siege, starvation, and the end of hope; of what happens to women, mothers, and children during the darkest hours of war, a time which may also be read to represent divine abandonment, or cursing, or enmity. Through Josephus, this became the story of Maria, a “myth for the world,” not just for Jews (but certainly about them). And so, beginning with Josephus, the story began to be retold, now with a face for the tale: “There was a certain woman among those dwelling across the Jordan ... and her name was Maria ...”

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