

*A Synopsis of the
Apocryphal Nativity
and Infancy Narratives*

J.K. ELLIOTT

NEW TESTAMENT TOOLS AND STUDIES 34

BRILL

A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity
and Infancy Narratives

New Testament Tools and Studies

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VOLUME 34

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Narratives

by
J. K. Elliott



BRILL
LEIDEN • BOSTON
2006

Cover: P⁵², a fragment of the Gospel of John discovered in a trash heap in the sands of Egypt. This credit-card sized scrap is the earliest surviving manuscript of the New Testament, dating from around 125–150 c.e.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A synopsis of the apocryphal nativity and infancy narratives / by J.K. Elliott.
p. cm.—(New Testament tools and studies, ISSN 0077-8842 ; v. 34)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-90-04-15067-6

ISBN-10: 90-04-15067-6 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. Apocryphal infancy Gospels. 2. Infancy narratives (Gospels) I. Elliott, J. K. (James Keith) II. Series.

BS2850.A3S96 2006

229'.8—dc22

2006044003

ISSN 0077-8842

ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15067 6

ISBN-10: 90 04 15067 6

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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PREFACE

The original plan to produce a synopsis of the nativity and infancy stories came from Patrick Hartin and Kobus Petzer, then working in Witwatersrand and Potchefstroom Universities respectively. When they left South Africa their plan was shelved. Recently Koninklijke Brill invited me to revive their proposal. And with the blessing of Professor Hartin, now in the USA, I readily agreed.

Thanks are due to T&T Clark/Continuum for permission to reproduce translations of the *Liber Flavus*, and to the Irish Texts Society for permission to reproduce the English translation of the Irish versified version of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas as edited by James Carney in *The Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan*.

My thanks are conveyed to Loes Schouten of Brill for her professional help and to Jenny Holland, a graduate from the Theology Department at Leeds University, who assisted in the collecting and preparing of the textual extracts included here as well as chasing up much of the background literature. My wife, Carolyn, performed invaluable tasks, copy-editing the typescript and checking the proofs; my thanks go to her—as always.

J. K. Elliott
June, 2005

INTRODUCTION

In the New Testament the stories about Jesus' birth occur in the opening two chapters of the Gospel according to Luke and the Gospel according to Matthew. Both evangelists seem to have composed these chapters independently of the other. The two accounts differ considerably. Matthew's includes the Magi and the massacre of the innocents; Luke's relates the story of Jesus' birth in parallel to the story of the birth of John the Baptist, and includes an account of the visit of Mary to her kinswoman, Elizabeth. Luke tells of the census; and among his *dramatis personae* are the shepherds, as well as Simeon and also Anna the prophetess. Luke's narrative ends with the visit of Jesus to the Temple at the age of twelve. It is Luke's account that contains several hymns, many of which may have existed independently prior to the writing of this Gospel.

But whatever the sources used by these two evangelists, both of them obviously felt the need to preface their accounts of Jesus' ministry with some details about his coming into the world.

This was a need that continued; many later Christian writings elaborate upon the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. The non-canonical writings usually classified as Christian apocrypha, display great literary and theological imagination in their expansions of the Christmas story. In these later narratives more is written about Mary and her parents in an attempt to explain the unique status of the mother of Jesus. Joseph's role is also enhanced. Gaps in the stories in Matthew and Luke are filled, it being a common characteristic of the so-called apocryphal writings to amplify the stories told in what became the canonical accounts. Thus much is written about the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt to escape Herod's massacres. Distinctive stories about Jesus as a child also emerge. But the additions are not only literary or due to creative storytelling; many reflect a developing theological interest in Mary's virginity, for example. And, of course, it was these stories that not only reproduced the folk traditions about Mary and developing Mariology but in themselves also fuelled that theology.

This synopsis includes the canonical stories and a representative selection of the most important and interesting later narratives. The stories run from the circumstances surrounding the Virgin Mary's birth, her upbringing and life as a ward of the Temple through to her betrothal to Joseph. Then come the annunciation, the birth of Jesus, the flight to Egypt and Jesus' childhood deeds. The stories in this synopsis end with Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve. These parameters are set by the texts included in Geerard's chapter 'Apocrypha de Nativitate et de Infantia'.¹ These include the Protevangelium Iacobi, the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the Libellus de nativitate sanctae Mariae, the Latin Infancy Gospels published by M. R. James (the manuscripts known as British Library Arundel 404 and Hereford Cathedral Library O.3.9), the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (or the Childhood Deeds of the Lord), the Arabic Infancy Gospel, and the History of Joseph the Carpenter. Those are among the texts reproduced in the present synopsis. In addition I have included the testimony of one fragmentary papyrus text (Pap. Cairensis 10735), and three Irish texts recently published in a critical edition: a poetic version of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, and the nativity stories in the Leabhar Breac and the Liber Flavus Fergusiorum. Although the latter two are close to the Latin tradition behind the texts published by M. R. James (and hence dubbed by the editors of the Irish edition 'the "J" Compilation' in honour of James), it has been decided to include the Irish stories in preference to the underlying Latin tradition not only because the Irish texts are relatively unfamiliar and deserve wider recognition but also because of their inherent importance within the corpus of Christian apocrypha.

Whereas most synopses of the canonical gospels are printed in parallel vertical columns, the present synopsis sets out relatively short extracts from the texts under separated subheadings one beneath the other because in many cases there are too many texts to have made parallel vertical columns practicable. It is to be hoped that the layout will allow differences and similarities between the parallel accounts to be easily observable, for one of the main rationales for a synoptic presentation of parallel texts is obviously that the parallels be visually clear.

¹ M. Geerard, *Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti* (Turnhout, 1992), 25–42 (= *Corpus Christianorum*).

A few substantial passages occur where these are peculiar to only one of the texts found in the present publication. These are most striking and significant in chapter 10 “Jesus as a Child” where some stories are found in only one text (Pseudo-Matthew, or the Infancy Gospel of Thomas or the Arabic Infancy Gospel) and in the stories of the miracles in Egypt in chapter 9 from the Arabic Infancy Gospel.

Many of the texts selected for this book have a complicated and varied textual history. As well as the usual text-critical questions that arise when editing literature dependent on scribal copying, several of these texts were subjected to expansions or contractions as well as to substantial rewriting. None of these texts attained the status of canonical writings, a situation that could have curbed wild rewriting or imaginative reconstructions. Many of these texts were subjected to censorship from ecclesiastical authorities, which resulted in clandestine copies being circulated (with the likelihood of an increased level of error in transmission such activity doubtless created). In other cases expurgated versions were made, again with catastrophic consequences for a smooth textual history. Thus the editing of those texts that are preserved in a variety of manuscripts and in different early versions is a major enterprise. Because of a comparatively recent upsurge in scholarly attention to this literature, some of our texts are now available in good, modern critical editions. Those are noted in the bibliographies below. For other texts we are still sometimes dependent on older and less-than-ideal editions. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the present synopsis I think we are relatively well served. When available, modern critical editions have been used for my translations; details appear in the introductions to each text that follow.

For those who wish to investigate the minutiae of the differences within the textual tradition of a given story or to compare the detailed linguistic parallels between different but related texts, only a modern critical edition will suffice. And for those readers obviously only an edition that sets out the texts in their original language and prints an *apparatus criticus* will serve their purpose.

The aim in giving an English language synopsis is to enable the broader differences and developments to emerge from a comparative study of the parallels.

The letters and numbers that precede and follow the extracts enable a reader to place each goblet into its context (e.g. /5D_i at the end of a passage tells us that the words following are to be seen in chapter 5 of the synopsis in its subsection D_i; 1M/ at the beginning

of an extract shows that if one wished to see the immediately preceding words in this book one would need to look in chapter 1 of the synopsis in its section M). Chapter numbers are not given if the preceding or following extract appears in the current chapter (e.g. /Di would mean that one would turn to section Di in the present chapter of the synopsis to find the passage that follows the extract).

THE TEXTS

The two canonical texts, the Gospel according to Saint Matthew (Matthew hereafter) and the Gospel according to Saint Luke (Luke hereafter) are the only New Testament works used. The other texts to appear in this synopsis are early Christian apocryphal writings:

1. *The Protevangelium of James* (Geerard, *Clavis* 50)

Together with the Infancy Gospel of Thomas the Protevangelium of James is our most important source, and forms the basis for the further developments of the tradition. Because it tells of events prior to Jesus' Birth, especially concerning Mary's parents, her birth and upbringing, it became known as the Proto-Gospel. In ch. 25 the author claims to be James of Jerusalem. Its stories reflect the developing tradition that was ultimately expressed in Christian dogma on the perpetual virginity of Mary. In addition it gave support and impetus to feasts such as the Immaculate Conception of Mary and the Presentation in the Temple. Chapters 22–24, the so-called Apocryphum Zachariae, may have been added later or come from a different source, and tell of the death of John the Baptist's father. In this it gives prominence to a character who in the New Testament has only a small role and in a sense completes his story. The completing of biographies of Biblical characters satisfies curiosity and is often a prime motive behind many an apocryphal elaboration.

The text, which was probably originally composed in the second century, was particularly popular in the East. Over 150 manuscripts of it in Greek have survived. These are dated from several centuries, thus indicating its long-standing popularity. It was translated into several early versions (Coptic, Syriac, Georgian, Armenian, Ethiopian and Slavonic) showing that it was also popular in a wide geographical

area. Latin versions also exist, albeit not in great numbers. (The most complete MS. in Latin is Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève 2787).² In the West the later Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, see below, was the main vehicle in Latin for propagating stories that had originated in the Protevangelium.

As will be seen in the following Bibliography, the Greek text has been edited in various collections (for example by Fabricio (Fabricius), Thilo and Tischendorf). The oldest manuscript, found in Bodmer V, edited by Testuz in 1958, forms the basis for Émile de Strycker's French translation and commentary in his *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques* (see Bibliography below), and this has been consulted for my translation; for text omitted by Bodmer V, Tischendorf's edition and the earlier translation in my *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993, rev. 2005) have been used.

Throughout this book the text is regularly referred to as 'Protev.'

2. *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (Geerard, *Clavis* 57)

This text was probably originally written in Greek and comes from the second century. Translations were made early into Syriac, in which language the earliest form of this work seems to have survived, and into Latin (in two versions), as well as into Ethiopic, Slavonic and Georgian. Chapters 1, 10, 17–18 were added to the Greek in the Middle Ages: the form published by Tischendorf as 'Greek A' includes those additions. The full textual history of this apocryphon is complicated and we await a critical edition based on the fruits of Sever Voicu's researches. In the meantime I have, in general, repeated the translation found in my *Apocryphal New Testament*, which is based on Tischendorf's editions.

The commonly used title is a misnomer. Most of the manuscripts do not claim that it was written by Thomas, nor does this 'Gospel' tell of Jesus' *infancy*. A preferred title is 'The Childhood Deeds of Jesus'. Together with the Protevangelium, this was the most popular of the infancy narratives within the early church. It formed the basis and inspiration for many subsequent documents. As a compendium of stories that were doubtless told in the oral traditions of the church it is not surprising that the precise contents varied, as

² Recently edited by Rita Beyers in M. McNamara *et al.* (eds.), *Apocrypha Hiberniae I Evangelia Infantiae* (Turnhout, 2001) 921–57 (= *Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum* 14).

stories were added to or subtracted from written collections. Repeated versions of the same basic story were also included, the story of Jesus and his teacher and the symbolism of the letters of the alphabet being an example of the way some collections preserved alternative versions of the same story. The creative imagination of early Christians who wished to tell stories from the period in Jesus' life after the return from Egypt and before the canonical story of Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve resulted in a belief that Jesus held power over life and death and was possessed of complete knowledge from the beginning of his life. Filling a gap in a canonical record and expanding, albeit often in a crudely uncritical way, its theological thinking and teaching are common in the apocrypha.

This text is referred to throughout as *Infancy Thomas*, or *InfTh*, and, when necessary, with the Greek form (A, the 'long form' or B, a shorter form) or the Latin version indicated. The 'Pars Altera' attached to some manuscripts of the Gospel of Pseudo Matthew i.e. Ps-Matthew 25–42 needs to be considered alongside variant accounts of *Infancy Thomas*. (See below.)

3. *The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew or Liber de ortu beatae Mariae et infantia Salvatoris* (Geerard, *Clavis* 51)

This Latin text, originating in the sixth-seventh century is close to a Latin version of the *Protevangelium* (in chh. 1–17) and to the Arabic *Infancy Gospel* (in chh. 18–24). Our oldest extant manuscript is eleventh century. The chapters which Tischendorf included in his edition (25–42) and called *Pars Altera* are attached to *Pseudo-Matthew* in some medieval manuscripts but do in fact belong to the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, with which they need to be considered both from a literary and textual point of view.

This text popularized legends about Mary's early life in Latin-speaking Christendom in the Middle Ages. What encouraged its wide circulation and acceptance were prefatory letters from bishops Cromasius and Heliodorus to Jerome and his reply to them. Those spurious letters, which are found in other apocryphal texts too, were added here to provide this Gospel with appropriate credentials. [The letters are not reproduced in this synopsis, but may be read in my *Apocryphal New Testament*.]

The motive for the compiling of this Gospel seems to have been to further the veneration of Mary, not least by the inclusion of stories about the Holy Family's sojourn in Egypt.

I have based my translation on the text recently edited by Jan Gijssels, which follows the text of one family of manuscripts ('A'). Gijssels' edition sets out the complicated textual history of this text;³ nearly 200 extant Latin manuscripts contain all or part of this apocryphon. This Gospel is usually referred to in the synopsis as Ps-Matthew.

4. *Arundel 404*

(Part of Geerard, *Clavis* 53 'Liber de infantia Salvatoris')

This is but one manuscript that belongs to what is now being referred to as the 'J' (= M. R. James) Compilation. Another manuscript, not included here, is the Hereford MS. Both were originally published in part by M. R. James; a full version of both now appears in *CCSA* 14 (see Bibliography below). The Arundel manuscript (British Library Arundel 404) is fourteenth century; the Hereford Cathedral manuscript O.3.9 is thirteenth century.

Like the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the Arundel manuscript and its allies provide another means whereby the stories of the Protevangelium were popularized in Latin in the West. Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Martin McNamara's recent researches show how the Irish traditions about the nativity and the original form of the 'J' compilation seem to have had an existence prior to their 'contamination' by Ps-Matthew. If so, the text in the Arundel, Hereford and allied manuscripts has a good and early pedigree.

I repeat the translation of chh. 72–74 found in my *Apocryphal New Testament*, supplemented with a translation of chh. 68–69. Cross references to other chapters in the 'J' compilation appear alongside my references to the Irish traditions in the introductions to the relevant chapters of the synopsis.

³ An abbreviated form of that history may be seen in Gijssels' introduction to this apocryphon in François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain (eds.), *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* I (Paris, 1997) 107–114.

5. *The Gospel of the Birth of Mary or the Libellus de natiuitate sanctae Mariae* (Geerard, *Clavis* 52)

Over 130 manuscripts of this apocryphon have been catalogued. The text appears in two main forms, one the more original, the other a grammatically or stylistically revised form. The Gospel probably arose in the ninth century; in chh. 1–8 it is a free adaptation of Ps-Matthew, chh. 9–10 follow the canonical gospels of Matthew and Luke. The motive for its composition was to enhance devotion to Mary but without some apocryphal accretions found in Ps-Matthew that were doubtless deemed inappropriate or offensive. Much attention is paid to angelic apparitions. The problematic tradition about Joseph's former marriage is eliminated.

Jacob of Voragine popularized this apocryphon by including it in the Golden Legend.

I have translated the critical edition recently edited by Rita Beyers. The text is referred to in the synopsis as 'Mary'.

6. *The History of Joseph the Carpenter* (Geerard, *Clavis* 60)

In many ways this apocryphon may be seen as a counterpart to stories and legends about Mary. The whole narrative emanates from a speech by Jesus.

The text probably arose in Egypt in the fourth–fifth centuries and was originally composed in Greek. Coptic and Arabic versions also survive.

The translation below is adapted from A. Walker, *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations* (Edinburgh, 1870) 62–77 (= *Ante-Nicene Christian Library* 16). This text is referred to below as 'Joseph'. Much of the narrative concerns the death of Joseph, the Patron Saint of good death, and, as such, is outside this synopsis. Only those chapters relevant to the topics covered in this synopsis are included here.

7. *Papyrus Cairensis 10735*

Among fragmentary papyri that may contain parts of otherwise lost apocrypha is a sixth-seventh century Greek papyrus, now in Cairo. I use the translation of this papyrus found in my *Apocryphal New Testament*.

8. *The Arabic Infancy Narrative* (Geerard, *Clavis* 58)

Many of the stories from this source included in the synopsis are peculiar to this Gospel, although several of the many miracles found here show links to the underlying Syriac text, known in the edition by E. A. Wallis Budge, *The History of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the History of the Likeness of Christ* (London, 1899). Mary is the principal character throughout the Arabic Gospel and the core of the book consists of miracles wrought in Egypt during the Holy Family's sojourn there. The date of these stories is probably sixth century.

The translations below are adapted from A. Walker, *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations* (Edinburgh, 1870) 100–24 (= *Ante-Nicene Christian Library* 16) with close attention to M. Erbetta, *Gli apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento* (Turin, 1983) I/2, 104–116 based on Vatican Syr. 159, a text close to Sike's edition, and to Tischendorf's edition of the Latin (as revised by Fleischer). This differs somewhat from the text translated into French by Charles Genequand in François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain (eds.), *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens I* (Paris 1997), 211–38, which is based on the Laurentin ms. or. 32.

This text is referred to in the synopsis as 'Arabic'.

9. *The Irish Versified Narrative of Infancy Thomas*

This interesting and charming version of some of the 'Childhood Deeds' found in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas is the earliest form in which these stories were known in Ireland, dating perhaps as early as the 700 A.D., although the extant ms. containing them is seventeenth century (Dublin: National Library G50). It seems that this poetic version is based on the Latin of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (and not on its later retelling in Ps-Matthew).

The translation follows that edited by James Carney found in his *The Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan together with the Irish Gospel of Thomas and a Poem on the Virgin Mary* (Dublin, 1964).

An attempt to render the poem into English verse may be found elsewhere in Máire Herbert, 'Text and Translation of the Irish Versified Narrative of the Childhood Deeds of the Lord Jesus' in M. McNamara *et al.* (eds.), *Apocrypha Hiberniae I Evangelia Infantiae* (Turnhout, 2001) 441–83 (= *Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum* 13).

This text is referred to in the synopsis as 'Irish Verse'.

10. *Leabhar Breac*

The manuscript known as *Leabhar Breac* (= ‘the speckled book’) is fifteenth century but contains an Infancy Gospel (known in other manuscripts) of much earlier date. It has strong links with the Latin traditions behind the ‘J’ Compilation (see above) and all point to a ninth century origin.

The infancy story is the sequence of events from the census to the murder of Zacharias, and includes a section on the Magi, and stories concerning the flight to and sojourn in Egypt, but, unlike the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum* (see below), the *Leabhar Breac* avoids the testimony of the midwife after the birth of Jesus (chh. 67–75). The chapter numbers in the *Leabhar Breac* have been made to conform with the numbering given to the *Liber Flavus*, and these numbers parallel closely the chapter divisions in the ‘J’ Compilation too.

The translation is adapted from M. R. James’ edition.

11. *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*

Like the *Leabhar Breac* (above) the stories found in this Irish manuscript of the fifteenth century go back to the ninth century. This text concerns the birth of Mary and in chapters 2–58 is thus an Irish version of *Protevangelium* 1–16 with some parallels to *Ps-Matthew* as in the ‘J’ Compilation. Cross references to the text are given in chapters 1–4 of this synopsis. These stories are not in the *Leabhar Breac*. *Liber Flavus* overlaps the *Leabhar Breac* in chh. 59–75 (the census and the birth of Jesus), with interesting parallels to the ‘J’ Compilation. McNamara in *CCSA* 13 refers to the chapters as having come from a ‘Special Source’. That source contains details about the Roman census and the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. There they seek a lodging and a midwife. This text and the ‘J’ Compilation contain the midwife’s account of the miraculous birth. (The *Leabhar Breac* here merely has a summary of miracles associated with Christ’s birth.)

The translation is adapted from M. Herbert and M. McNamara (eds.), *The Irish Biblical Apocrypha* (Edinburgh, 1989), which is a better, more fluent translation than that found in the more recent edition in *CCSA* 13. The text is referred to in the synopsis as *Liber Flavus*.

Patristic sources have not been utilised. Although many church fathers refer to incidents in Mary’s or Jesus’ early careers, sometimes

elaborating on the Biblical accounts, our concern here has been to include only narratives.

Even in that area I have been selective. A bulkier synopsis could have been produced had I included the Armenian Infancy Gospel (Geerard, *Clavis* 59). That narrative, like others, is ultimately dependent on the Protevangelium and on the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, the Armenian being a particularly prolix rendering. There are intermittent similarities to the Arabic Infancy Gospel, and, like it, is probably derived from a Syriac original. I also exclude Geerard, *Clavis* 54, 55, and 56, *De sacerdotio Christi* (or *Conversio Theodosii Iudaei*), *Narratio Aphroditiani*, and *Visio Theophili* (or *Sermo de ecclesia s. Familiae in Monte Qusqam*) respectively. I also exclude apocrypha about the Virgin Mary such as the Syriac and Coptic fragments of the life of Mary (Geerard, *Clavis* 94–96) and others such as those found in Forbes Robinson, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels* I, IIa, IIb, IV. Other possible parallels may be seen in *The Life of John* according to Serapion,⁴ the *Discourse on Mary Theotokos* by Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem (British Library Or. 6794) and the *Discourse of Demetrius*, Archbishop of Antioch on the Birth of our Lord and on the Virgin Mary (BL Or 7027).⁵ These links deserve further research.

Another area that merits attention is art. Several representations of the life of Mary and the birth and childhood of Jesus in sculpture, frescoes and other iconic forms reveal significant parallels to the so-called Christian apocryphal writings.⁶ For example, pictorial depictions of the Annunciation to Mary are revealing. Some have the scene set indoors in a room, with Mary piously reading a book or weaving; others have her out of doors, carrying a water-pitcher at a well. Parallels in art to the Protevangelium 11:1 and 11:2–3 as well as to Ps-Matthew and to the traditions behind *Liber Flavus* 42–44 show the development of the two angelic apparitions; such links are instructive. Elsewhere, many other links between iconic and written parallels may be found but are outside the scope of this synopsis which gives only written sources.

⁴ An extract is found in W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* ET by R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge and Louisville, ²1991) I 146–8.

⁵ See E. A. Wallis Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London, 1915) 626–51 esp. 631–51 and 652–98.

⁶ This is an area I have explored in David R. Cartlidge and J. Keith Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha* (London and New York, 2001).

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The Protevangelium of James, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, Arundel MS. 404, the Gospel of the Birth of Mary, the History of Joseph the Carpenter, Papyrus Cairensis 10735, the Arabic Infancy Gospel, the Irish Versified Narrative of the Childhood Deeds of Jesus, Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavus Fergusiorum.

Abbreviations

Fabricius = J. A. Fabricius, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, 4 vols. (Hamburg, ¹1719).

Jones = J. Jones, *A New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (London, 1726–7; ²Oxford, 1798; ³1827).

Birch = A. Birch, *Auctarium Codicis Apocryphi Novi Testamenti Fabriciani*, i (Copenhagen, 1804).

Thilo = J. C. Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, i (Leipzig, 1832).

Giles = J. A. Giles, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti: The Uncanonical Gospels and Other Writings* (London, 1852).

Tischendorf, *EA* = id., *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig, ¹1876; repr. Hildesheim, 1966 and 1987).

Klostermann, *Apocrypha* = E. Klostermann, *Apocrypha* ii (Bonn, 1904; ²1910; ³Berlin, 1929) (= *Kleine Texte* 8, ed. H. Lietzmann).

Graf = G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, i (Vatican City, 1944) (= *Studi e Testi* 118).

de Santos Otero, *Alt Slav. Apok.* = A. de Santos Otero, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der altslavischen Apokryphen* 2 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1978, 1981) (= *Patristische Texte und Studien*, 20 and 23).

CCSA = *Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum*.

Proteuangelium of James

EDITIONS

Greek

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CHAPTER ONE

MARY'S BIRTH AND UPBRINGING

Contained in:

Luke 1

Protevangelium 1–10

Ps-Matthew 1–8

Mary 1–8

Joseph 2–4

Liber Flavus Fergusiorum 2–42

Summary of Narrative:

A. Joachim's Offering Rejected

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Liber Flavus

B. Anna Laments

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Liber Flavus

C. News of Anna's Pregnancy

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Liber Flavus

D. Joachim's Offerings Accepted

Protevangelium, Liber Flavus

E. Mary's Birth

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Liber Flavus

F. Mary at Six Months

Protevangelium, Liber Flavus

G. Mary's First Birthday

Protevangelium, Liber Flavus

H. The Presentation of Mary in the Temple

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Liber Flavus

I. (i) Mary in the Temple

Protevangelium, Mary, Liber Flavus

(ii) Details about Mary's Life in the Temple

Ps-Matthew, Liber Flavus

J. Mary at the Age of Twelve

Protevangeliium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Liber Flavus

K. The Early History of Joseph

Joseph

L. Joseph takes Mary as his Ward

Protevangeliium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Liber Flavus

M. Mary and the Veil of the Temple

Protevangeliium, Ps-Matthew, Liber Flavus

N. Appendix: The Birth of John the Baptist

Luke, Liber Flavus

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Luke N

Protevangeliium A B C D E F G H I (i) J L M

Ps-Matthew A B C E H I (ii) J L M

Mary A C E H I (i) J L

Joseph J K L

Liber Flavus Fergusiorum A B C D E F G H I (i, ii) J L M N

[References only]

A. JOACHIM'S OFFERING REJECTED

Protev. 1

In the 'Histories of the Twelve Tribes of Israel' Joachim was a very rich man, and he brought all his gifts to the Lord twofold, saying, 'What I bring in excess shall be for the whole people, and what I bring as a sin-offering shall be for the Lord, as a propitiation for me.'

Now the great day of the Lord drew near, and the children of Israel were bringing their gifts. And Reuben stood up and said, 'It is not lawful for you to offer your gifts first, because you have begotten no offspring in Israel.' Then Joachim became very sad, and went to the record-book of the twelve tribes of the people and said, 'I will look in the register to see whether I am the only one who has not begotten offspring in Israel', and he found that all the righteous had raised up offspring in Israel. And he remembered the patriarch Abraham to whom in his last days God gave a son, Isaac. And Joachim was very sad, and did not show himself to his wife, but went into the wilderness; there he pitched his tent and fasted forty days and forty nights, saying to himself, 'I shall not go down either for food or for drink until the Lord my God visits me; my prayer shall be food and drink.' **B**

Ps-Matthew 1-2

In those days there was a man in Israel, Joachim by name, of the tribe of Judah. He was the shepherd of his own sheep, fearing the Lord in integrity and singleness of heart. He had no other care than that of his herds, from the produce of which he supplied with food all who feared God, offering double gifts in the fear of God to all who laboured in doctrine, and a single gift to those who ministered to him. Therefore his lambs, and his sheep, and his wool, and all the things he possessed, he used to divide into three portions: one he gave to the orphans, the widows, the pilgrims, and the poor; the second to those who worshipped God; and the third he kept for himself and his entire house. And as he did so, the Lord multiplied to him his herds, so that there was no man like him in the people of Israel. This now he began to do when he was fifteen years old. And at the age of twenty he took to wife Anna, the

daughter of Achar, of his own tribe, that is, of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David. And though they had lived together for twenty years, he had by her neither sons nor daughters.

And it happened that, in the time of the feast, among those who were offering incense to the Lord, Joachim stood getting ready his gifts in the sight of the Lord. And the scribe, Ruben by name, coming to him, said; 'It is not lawful for you to stand among those who are doing sacrifice to God, because God has not blessed you so as to give you seed in Israel.' Therefore, being put to shame in the sight of the people, he retired from the Temple of the Lord weeping, and did not return to his house, but went to his flocks, taking with him his shepherds into the mountains to a far country, so that for five months his wife Anna could hear no tidings of him. **B**

Mary 1-2

The blessed and very glorious Mary, ever-virgin, was born of royal lineage and of the family of David. She was born in the town of Nazareth and brought up in Jerusalem in the Temple of God. Her father was called Joachim and her mother Anna. The paternal home was originally in Galilee in the town of Nazareth; her mother's home town was Bethlehem. Their life was simple and honest before God, irreproachable and charitable among men. They divided all their goods into three, dedicating one third to the Temple and its servants, another part to pilgrims and the poor with the other third reserved for themselves and their own domestic needs. Righteous before God and charitable to men, they lived a chaste married life for about twenty years without producing children. Nevertheless they made a vow that if God gave them a child they would dedicate it to the service of the Lord. For that reason they were in the habit of visiting the Temple of the Lord at every festival in the year.

When the Feast of Dedication approached Joachim went up to Jerusalem with some of his kinsfolk. At that time Issachar was High Priest there. And when he saw that Joachim was there among his compatriots with his offering he rebuked him and refused his gifts, asking him why he dared to take his place among the fruitful when he was infertile. He told him that his offering may be unworthy in God's sight, as God had not deemed him worthy of producing a descendent. Scripture said that everyone who did not produce a male child was cursed in Israel. That meant that he could release himself

from this curse if he produced a child; only then could he appear before God with his offerings. Filled with great shame by the reproach of this opprobrium, Joachim retreated among the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks in the pastures. Thus he did not wish to return home in case he was reproached by his kinsmen who had been present and who had heard the words of the priest. C

[*Liber Flavus* 2–5 (cf. *J' Compilation* 1–4)] B

B. ANNA'S LAMENTS

Protev. 2–3

A Anna his wife sang two dirges and gave voice to a twofold lament:

‘I will mourn my widowhood,
and grieve for my childlessness.’

Now the great day of the Lord drew near, and Judith¹ her maid said, ‘How long do you intend to humble your soul, because the great day of the Lord is near and it is not lawful for you to mourn? But take this headband, which the mistress of work gave me; it is not right for me to wear it because I am a servant and it bears a royal cipher.’²

But Anna said, ‘Get away from me! I shall never do it. The Lord has greatly humbled me. Who knows whether a deceiver did not give it to you, and you have come to make me share in your sin!’ Judith answered, ‘Why should I curse you?’³ The Lord God has shut up your womb to give you no fruit in Israel.’

And Anna was very sad, but she took off her mourning garments, washed her head, put on her bridal garments, and about the ninth hour went into her garden to walk there. And she saw a laurel tree and sat down beneath it and implored the Lord saying, ‘O God of our fathers, bless me and heed my prayer, just as you blessed the womb of Sarah and gave her a son, Isaac.’

¹ Variant: Euthine

² Or ‘you have a royal appearance’.

³ Variant adds ‘because you have not listened to me’.

And Anna sighed towards heaven and saw a nest of sparrows in the laurel tree and she sang a dirge to herself:

‘Woe is me, who gave me life
 What womb brought me forth?
 For I was born a curse before them all and before the children of
 Israel,
 And I was reproached, and they mocked me and thrust me out of the
 Temple of the Lord.
 Woe is me, to what am I likened?
 I am not likened to the birds of the heaven;
 for even the birds of the heaven are fruitful before you, O Lord.⁴
 Woe is me, to what am I likened?
 I am not likened to these waters;
 for even these waters are fruitful before you, O Lord.
 Woe is me, to what am I likened?
 I am not likened to this earth?
 for even this earth brings forth its fruit in its season and praises you,
 O Lord.’ C

Ps-Matthew 2

A And she prayed with tears, saying, ‘O Lord, most mighty God of Israel, why have you, seeing that you have already not given me children, taken from me my husband also? Behold, it is now five months since I have seen my husband; and I do not know where he is. If I knew him to be dead, I could bury him.’ And while she wept excessively, she entered into the court of his house; and she fell on her face in prayer, and poured out her supplications before the Lord. After this, rising from her prayer, and lifting her eyes to God, she saw a sparrow’s nest in a laurel tree, and uttered her voice to the Lord with groaning, and said, ‘Lord God Almighty, who has given offspring to every creature, to beasts wild and tame, to serpents, and birds, and fishes, and they all rejoice over their young ones, you have shut out me alone from the gift of your benignity. For you, O God, know my heart, that from the beginning of my married life I have vowed that, if you, O God, should give me son or daughter,

⁴ Some MSS. add ‘Woe is me, to what am I likened? I am not likened to the dumb animals; for even the dumb animals are fruitful before you, O Lord’.

I would offer them to you in your holy Temple.' And while she was thus speaking, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared before her, saying, 'Be not afraid, Anna, for there is seed for you in the decree of God; and all generations even to the end shall wonder at that which shall be born of you.' And when he had thus spoken, he vanished out of her sight. But she, in fear and dread because she had seen such a sight, and heard such words, then went into her bed-chamber, and threw herself on the bed as if dead. And for a whole day and night she remained in great trembling and in prayer. And after these things she called her servant, and said to her, 'Do you see me deceived in my widowhood and in great perplexity, and have you been unwilling to come in to me?' Then she, murmuring, answered and said, 'If God has shut up your womb, and has taken away your husband from you, what can I do for you?' And when Anna heard this, she lifted up her voice, and wept aloud. **C**

A [*Liber Flavus* 6–12 (cf. *J' Compilation* 5–7)] **C**

C. NEWS OF ANNA'S PREGNANCY

Protev. 4

B And behold an angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, 'Anna, Anna, the Lord has heard your prayer. You shall conceive and bear, and your offspring shall be spoken of in the whole world.' And Anna said, 'As the Lord my God lives, if I bear a child, whether male or female, I will bring it as a gift to the Lord my God, and it shall serve him all the days of its life.'

And behold there came two angels, who said to her, 'Behold, Joachim your husband is coming with his flocks for an angel of the Lord had come down to him and said to him, "Joachim, Joachim, the Lord God has heard your prayer. Go down from here; behold, your wife Anna shall conceive."' And Joachim went down and called his herdsmen and said, 'Bring me here ten female lambs without blemish and without spot; they shall be for the Lord my God. And bring me twelve tender calves and they shall be for the priests and council of elders, and a hundred young he-goats for the whole people.'

And, behold, Joachim came with his flocks, and Anna stood at the gate and saw Joachim coming and ran immediately and threw her arms around his neck saying, 'Now I know that the Lord God has greatly blessed me; for behold the widow is no longer a widow, and I, who was childless, shall conceive.'

And Joachim rested the first day in his house. **D**

Ps-Matthew 3

B At the same time there appeared a young man on the mountains to Joachim while he was feeding his flocks, and said to him, 'Why do you not return to your wife? And Joachim said, 'I have had her for twenty years, and it has not been the will of God to give me children by her. I have been driven with shame and reproach from the Temple of the Lord: why should I go back to her, when I have been once cast off and utterly despised? Here then will I remain with my sheep; and so long as God is willing to grant me life, I shall willingly, by the hands of my servants, bestow their portions upon the poor, and the orphans, and those who fear God.' And when he had thus spoken, the young man said to him, 'I am an angel of the Lord, and I have to-day appeared to your wife when she was weeping and praying, and have consoled her; and know that she has conceived a daughter from your seed, and you in your ignorance of this have left her. She will be in the Temple of God, and the Holy Spirit shall abide in her; and her blessedness shall be greater than that of all the holy women, so that no one can say that any before her has been like her, or that any after her in this world will be so. Therefore go down from the mountains, and return to your wife, whom you will find with child. For God hath raised up seed in her, and for this you will give God thanks; and her seed shall be blessed, and she herself shall be blessed, and shall be made the mother of eternal blessing.' Then Joachim adored the angel, and said to him, 'If I have found favour in thy sight, sit for a little in my tent, and bless your servant. And the angel said to him, 'Do not say servant, but fellow-servant; for we are the servants of one Master. But my food is invisible, and my drink cannot be seen by a mortal. Therefore you ought not to ask me to enter your tent; but if you were about to give me anything, offer it as a burnt-offering to the Lord.' Then Joachim took a lamb without spot, and said to the

angel, 'I should not have dared to offer a burnt-offering to the Lord, unless your command had given me the priest's right of offering.' And the angel said to him, 'I should not have invited you to offer unless I had known the will of the Lord.' And when Joachim was offering the sacrifice to God, the angel and the odour of the sacrifice went together straight up to heaven with the smoke.

Then Joachim, throwing himself on his face, lay in prayer from the sixth hour of the day even until evening. And his lads and hired servants who were with him saw him, and not knowing why he was lying down, thought that he was dead; and they came to him, and with difficulty raised him from the ground. And when he recounted to them the vision of the angel, they were struck with great fear and wonder, and advised him to accomplish the vision of the angel without delay, and to go back with all haste to his wife. And when Joachim was turning over in his mind whether he should go back or not, it happened that he was overpowered by a deep sleep; and, behold, the angel who had already appeared to him when awake, appeared to him in his sleep, saying, 'I am the angel appointed by God as your guardian: go down with confidence, and return to Anna, because the deeds of mercy which you and your wife Anna have done have been told in the presence of the Most High; and to you will God give such fruit as no prophet or saint has ever had from the beginning, or ever will have.' And when Joachim awoke out of his sleep, he called all his herdsman to him, and told them his dream. And they worshipped the Lord, and said to him, 'See that you do not despise the words of the angel. But rise and let us go hence, and return at a quiet pace, feeding our flocks.'

And when, after thirty days occupied in going back, they were now near at hand, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Anna, who was standing and praying, and said, 'Go to the gate which is called Golden, and meet your husband on the way, for to-day he will come to you. She therefore went towards him in haste with her maidens, and, praying to the Lord, she stood a long time in the gate waiting for him. And when she was wearied with long waiting, she lifted up her eyes and saw Joachim afar off coming with his flocks; and she ran to him and hung on his neck, giving thanks to God, and saying, 'I was a widow, and behold now I am not so: I was barren, and behold I have now conceived.' And when this was heard of, there was great joy among all their neighbours and acquaintances, so that the whole land of Israel congratulated them. **E**

Mary 3-5

A But after he had stayed there for a while an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a great light one day when he was on his own. He was disturbed by the sight but the angel who had appeared to him, calmed his fear and said to him, 'Have no fear, Joachim, do not be afraid of the sight of me. I am an angel, whom the Lord has sent to you to announce that your prayers have been answered and your alms have reached him. He has noticed and seen your modesty and he has heard the reproach of sterility which has been made against you unjustly. For God is the one who punishes sin not natural events. For he who closes a womb opens it miraculously later so that one may know that what is born is the fruit not of concupiscence but of a divine gift. Was not the first mother of your nation, Sarah, barren until she was eighty? And then in her advanced old age she bore Isaac to whom the blessings of all nations were promised. And Rachel, likewise pleasing to the Lord and the beloved wife of Jacob, was also sterile for a long time and yet gave birth to Joseph who was not only the lord of Egypt but also the liberator of many nations threatened with famine. Who among the leaders was stronger than Samson or holier than Samuel? And yet those two came from barren women. And if reason alone does not convince you to believe my words, at least believe those examples which show you that these long-deferred conceptions and sterile births are usually more miraculous.

So also your wife Anna will bear a daughter for you and you shall call her Mary. She shall be dedicated to the Lord from childhood as you have promised and she shall be filled with the Holy Spirit from her mother's womb. She will not eat or drink any impure thing and she will not live outside among ordinary people but in the Temple of the Lord lest any one should ever suspect or accuse her of impropriety. As she grows up, in the same way that she is a miraculous product of a sterile woman so she as a virgin shall give birth uniquely to the Son of the Most High and he shall be called Jesus. His name means that he shall be the Saviour of all nations. And this sign I shall give you: When you arrive at the Golden Gate you shall meet your wife who, although full of anxiety because of your delayed return, shall rejoice when she sees you.' With those words the angel left him.

Then he likewise appeared to Anna saying, 'Have no fear, Anna. Do not think that you have seen a ghost. I am the angel who has presented your prayers and offerings before the Lord. And now I

am sent to you to tell you that you shall give birth to a girl by the name of Mary who shall be blessed among all women. Full of the grace of the Lord from her birth she shall spend three years at home being suckled. Then, dedicated to the service of the Lord, she will not leave the Temple until her years of maturity. Serving God there day and night in fasting and prayer, she shall abstain from everything impure. She will not know a man but, alone, without precedent, without stain, without corruption, without sexual union, she, a virgin, shall bear a Son; a handmaid, she shall give birth to the Lord; made eminent by name and work she shall give birth to the Saviour of the world. Rise therefore and go up to Jerusalem. When you reach the Golden Gate, so called because it is ornamented with gold, the sign shall be that you meet your husband whose safety you are anxious about. When everything will have happened in this way, know that what I announce to you will definitely take place.'

So, in accordance with the angel's instruction both of them left the places where they were and went up to Jerusalem. And when they arrived at the place proclaimed by the angel they met one another. Happy to see each other again and fortified by the certainty of the promised birth, they duly gave thanks to the Lord who uplifts the humble. Then, having worshipped the Lord, they went home and awaited the divine promise with confidence and joy. **E**

B [*Liber Flavus* 13–17 (cf. *J' Compilation* 8–14)] **D**

D. JOACHIM'S OFFERINGS ACCEPTED

Protev. 5:1

C The next day he offered his gifts, saying to himself, 'If the Lord God is gracious to me the frontlet of the priest will make it clear to me.'

And Joachim offered his gifts and observed the priest's frontlet when he went up to the altar of the Lord; and he saw no sin in himself. And Joachim said, 'Now I know that the Lord God is gracious to me and has forgiven all my sins.' And he came down the Temple of the Lord justified, and went to his house. **E**

C [*Liber Flavus* 18 (cf. *J' Compilation* 15)] **E**

E. MARY'S BIRTH

Protev. 5:2

D And her months were fulfilled; in the ninth month Anna gave birth. And she said to the midwife, 'What have I brought forth?' And she said, 'A female.' And Anna said, 'My soul is magnified this day.' And she lay down. And when the days were completed, Anna purified herself and gave suck to the child, and called her Mary. **F**

Ps-Matthew 4

C After these things, her nine months being fulfilled, Anna brought forth a daughter, and called her Mary. **H**

Mary 5

C So Anna conceived and gave birth to a daughter and, as commanded by the angel, the parents named her Mary. **H**

D [*Liber Flavus* 19–21 (cf. *J' Compilation* 16)] **F**

F. MARY AT SIX MONTHS

Protev. 6:1

E Day by day the child grew strong; when she was six months old her mother stood her on the ground to see if she could stand. And she walked seven steps and came to her bosom. And she took her up saying, 'As the Lord my God lives, you shall walk no more upon this earth until I bring you into the Temple of the Lord.' And she made a sanctuary in her bedroom and did not permit anything common or unclean to pass through it. And she summoned the undefiled daughters of the Hebrews, and they served her. **G**

E [*Liber Flavus* 22–23 (cf. *J' Compilation* 16)] **G**

G. MARY'S FIRST BIRTHDAY

Protev. 6:2

F On the child's first birthday Joachim made a great feast, and invited the chief priests and the priests and the scribes and the elders and all the people of Israel. And Joachim brought the child to the priests, and they blessed her saying, 'O God of our fathers, bless this child and give her a name eternally renowned among all generations.' And all the people said, 'So be it, so be it, Amen.' And they brought her to the chief priests, and they blessed her saying, 'O God of the heavenly heights, look upon this child and bless her with a supreme blessing which cannot be superseded.' And her mother carried her into the sanctuary of her bedroom and gave her suck. And Anna sang this song to the Lord God:

I will sing a hymn to the Lord my God,
for he has visited me and removed from me the reproach of my
enemies.

And the Lord gave me the fruit of his righteousness, unique yet manifold before him.

Who will proclaim to the son of Reuben that Anna gives suck?

And she laid her down to rest in the bedroom of her sanctuary, and went out and served them. When the feast was ended they went down rejoicing and glorifying the God of Israel.⁵ **H**

F [*Liber Flavus* 24–25 (cf. *J' Compilation* 16)] **H**

H. THE PRESENTATION OF MARY IN THE TEMPLE

Protev. 7

G The months passed, and the child grew. When she was two years old Joachim said, 'Let us take her up to the Temple of the Lord, so that we may fulfil the promise which we made, lest the

⁵ Some MSS add 'And they gave her the name Mary because her name shall never fade'.

Lord send some evil to us and our gift be unacceptable.’ And Anna replied, ‘Let us wait until the third year, that the child may then no more long for her father and mother.’ And Joachim said, ‘Let us wait.’ And when the child was three years old Joachim said, ‘Call the undefiled daughters of the Hebrews, and let each one take a torch, and let these be burning, in order that the child may not turn back and her heart be tempted away from the Temple of the Lord.’ And they did so until they had gone up to the Temple of the Lord. And the priest took her and kissed her and blessed her, saying, ‘The Lord has magnified your name among all generations; because of you the Lord at the end of the days will reveal his redemption to the sons of Israel.’ And he placed her on the third step of the altar, and the Lord God put grace upon her and she danced with her feet, and the whole house of Israel loved her. **I(i)**

Ps-Matthew 4–5

E And having weaned her in her third year, Joachim, and Anna his wife, went together to the Temple of the Lord to offer sacrifices to God, and placed the infant, Mary by name, in the community of virgins, in which the virgins remained day and night praising God. And when she was put down before the doors of the Temple, she went up the fifteen steps so swiftly, that she did not look back at all; nor did she, as children are wont to do, seek for her parents. Whereupon her parents, and the priests of the Temple were astonished.

Then Anna, filled with the Holy Spirit, said before them all, ‘The Lord Almighty, the God of Hosts, being mindful of his word, has visited his people with a good and holy visitation, to bring down the hearts of the Gentiles who were rising against us, and turn them to himself. He has opened his ears to our prayers: he has kept away from us the exulting of all our enemies. The barren has become a mother, and has brought forth exultation and gladness to Israel. Behold the gifts which I have brought to offer to my Lord, and my enemies have not been able to hinder me. For God has turned their hearts to me, and himself has given me everlasting joy.’ **I(ii)**

Mary 6

E After three years had passed and the time of her being suckled came to an end they led the Virgin with offerings to the Temple of the Lord. There were around the Temple fifteen steps to climb corresponding to the fifteen gradual Psalms. Because the Temple was built on a mountain the altar of burnt offerings on its exterior could be reached only by the steps. They placed the Virgin on the first of these steps. In accordance with the custom, they divested themselves of their travel clothes. While they were putting on fresh, clean clothes, the virgin climbed up step by step without the assistance of anyone's hand in such a way that in this regard one would have believed that she was already fully mature. In the infancy of the Virgin the Lord already performed a great act and showed the greatness she would achieve by the sign of this miracle. When they had celebrated the sacrifice in accordance with the custom of the Law and had made their vow, they left the Virgin in the interior of the Temple with the other virgins who were being brought up in the same place. **I(i)**

G [*Liber Flavus* 26–28 (cf. *℣* *Compilation* 17–21)] **I(i)**

I(i) MARY IN THE TEMPLE

Protev. 8:1

H And her parents returned marvelling, praising the Lord God because the child did not turn back. And Mary was in the Temple of the Lord nurtured like a dove and received food from the hand of an angel. **J**

Mary 6–7

H They themselves returned home. As she grew up the Virgin of the Lord progressed in virtue day by day. And that was because, in the words of the Psalmist, “when her parents leave her God receives her”. Every day she was attended by angels, each day she enjoyed the divine vision, which preserved her from every evil and gave her goodness in abundance. **J**

H [*Liber Flavus* 29 (cf. *℣* *Compilation* 24)] **I(ii)**

I(ii) DETAILS ABOUT MARY'S LIFE IN THE TEMPLE

Ps-Matthew 6-7

H And Mary was held in admiration by all the people of Israel; and when she was three years old, she walked with a step so mature, she spoke so perfectly, and spent her time so assiduously in the praises of God, that all were astonished at her, and wondered; and she was not reckoned a young infant, but as it were a grown-up person. She was so constant in prayer, and her appearance was so beautiful and glorious, that scarcely any one could look into her face. And she occupied herself constantly with her wool-work, so that she in her tender years could do all that old women were not able to do. And this was the order that she had set for herself. From the morning to the third hour she remained in prayer; from the third to the ninth she was occupied with her weaving; and from the ninth she again applied herself to prayer. She did not retire from praying until there appeared to her the angel of the Lord, from whose hand she used to receive food; and thus she became more and more perfect in the work of God. Then, when the older virgins rested from the praises of God, she did not rest at all; so that in the praises and vigils of God none were found before her, no one more learned in the wisdom of the law of God, more lowly in humility, more elegant in singing, more perfect in all virtue. She was indeed steadfast, immoveable, unchangeable, and daily advancing to perfection. No one saw her angry, nor heard her speaking evil. All her speech was so full of grace, that her God was acknowledged to be in her tongue. She was always engaged in prayer and in searching the law, and she was anxious lest by any word of hers she should sin with regard to her companions. Then she was afraid lest in her laughter, or the sound of her beautiful voice, she should commit any fault, or lest, being elated, she should display any wrong-doing or haughtiness to one of her equals. She blessed God without intermission; and in case, even in her salutation, she might cease from praising God, if any one greeted her, she used to answer by way of salutation, 'Thanks be to God.' And from her the custom first began of men saying, 'Thanks be to God,' when they greeted each other. She refreshed herself only with the food which she daily received from the hand of the angel; but the food which she obtained from the priests she divided among the poor. The angels of God were often

seen speaking with her, and they most diligently obeyed her. If any one who was unwell touched her, the same hour he went home cured.

Then Abiathar the priest offered gifts without end to the high priests, in order that he might obtain her as wife to his son. But Mary forbade them, saying, 'It cannot be that I should know a man, or that a man should know me. For all the priests and all her relations kept saying to her, 'God is worshipped in children and adored in posterity, as has always happened among the sons of Israel.' But Mary answered and said unto them, 'God is first of all worshipped in chastity. For before Abel there was none righteous among men, and he by his offerings pleased God, and was without mercy slain by him who displeased him. Two crowns, therefore, he received—of oblation and of virginity, because in his flesh there was no pollution. Elijah also, when he was in the flesh, was taken up in the flesh, because he kept his flesh unspotted. Now I, from my infancy in the temple of God, have learned that virginity can be sufficiently dear to God. And so, because I can offer what is dear to God, I have resolved in my heart that I should not know a man at all.' J

I(i) [*Liber Flavus* 30–34 (cf. *J' Compilation* 24–25)] **J**

J. MARY AT THE AGE OF TWELVE

Protev. 8:2–3

I(i) When she was twelve years old, there took place a council of the priests saying, 'Behold, Mary has become twelve years old in the Temple of the Lord. What then shall we do with her lest she defile the Temple of the Lord?' And they said to the high priest, 'You stand at the altar of the Lord; enter the sanctuary and pray concerning her, and that which the Lord shall reveal to you we will indeed do.' And the high priest took the vestment with the twelve bells and went into the Holy of Holies and prayed concerning her. And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared and said to him, 'Zacharias, Zacharias, go out and assemble the widowers of the people, and to whomsoever the Lord shall give a sign she shall be a wife.' And the heralds went forth through all the country round about Judea; the trumpet of the Lord sounded, and all came running. **L**

Ps-Matthew 8

I(ii) When she was twelve⁶ years old the Pharisees said that it was a custom that no woman of that age should abide in the Temple of God. They fell upon the plan of sending a herald through all the tribes of Israel, that on the third day all should come together into the Temple of the Lord. And when all the people had come together, Abiathar⁷ the high priest rose, and mounted on a higher step, that he might be seen and heard by all the people; and when great silence had been obtained, he said, 'Hear me, O sons of Israel, and receive my words into your ears. Ever since this Temple was built by Solomon, there have been in it virgins, the daughters of kings and the daughters of prophets, and of high priests and priests; and they were great, and worthy of admiration. But when they came to the proper age they were given in marriage, and followed the course of their mothers before them, and were pleasing to God. But a new order of life has been discovered by Mary alone, who promises that she will remain a virgin to God. Wherefore it seems to me, that through our inquiry and the answer of God we should try to ascertain to whose keeping she ought to be entrusted.' Then these words found favour with the entire synagogue. And the lot was cast by the priests upon the twelve tribes, and the lot fell upon the tribe of Judah. And the priest said, 'To-morrow let every one who has no wife come, and bring his rod in his hand.' **L**

Mary 7

I(i) She reached her fourteenth year in such a way that only wicked people were able to find anything to reproach her with; good people who knew her judged her life and conduct worthy of admiration. Then the High Priest commanded publicly all the virgins who were being taught in the Temple and who had ended their youth to return to their homes to prepare for marriage in accordance with the customs of the nation and their maturity.

Whereas the others calmly obeyed this command only Mary, the Virgin of the Lord, replied that she could not do so because her

⁶ or fourteen

⁷ Variant 'Isachar'.

parents had consecrated her to the service of the Lord and moreover that as she herself had promised her virginity to the Lord she could not violate that vow through union with a man. The High Priest was in distress because he knew that one could not violate a promise by opposing the scripture that said 'Make vows and keep them' and because he dared not introduce a foreign custom to the nation. So he stipulated that at the coming festival all the noteworthy citizens of Jerusalem and neighbouring places should be present so that he may learn from their advice what should be done in such a disputatious case. That is what happened and everyone agreed that the Lord should be consulted on the matter. While the people prostrated themselves in prayer the High Priest made enquiry according to custom. Without delay a voice coming from the oracle and the place of propitiation was heard by everyone saying that one should follow the prophet Isaiah to learn to whom the Virgin should be entrusted and promised in marriage. Isaiah had said 'And there shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse and a branch shall come from its root and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest on it, the spirit of wisdom and of knowledge, the spirit of counsel and of might, and the spirit of knowledge and of piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill it'. Thus, in accordance with this prophesy all the members of the house and family of David eligible to marry and the unmarried took their rod to the altar. And if a small rod flowered after the offering and if onto its end the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove should descend its owner would be the one to whom the Virgin should be entrusted and given in marriage. **L**

Joseph 3-4

K Now when righteous Joseph became a widower, my mother Mary, blessed, holy, and pure, was already twelve years old. For her parents offered her in the Temple when she was three years of age, and she remained in the Temple of the Lord nine years. Then when the priests saw that the virgin, holy and God-fearing, was growing up, they spoke to each other, saying, 'Let us search out a man, righteous and pious, to whom Mary may be entrusted until the time of her marriage lest, if she remain in the Temple, it happen to her as is wont to happen to women, and lest on that account we sin, and God be angry with us.'

Therefore they immediately sent out, and assembled twelve old men of the tribe of Judah. And they wrote down the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. **L**

I(ii) [*Liber Flavius* 35–36 (cf. *J' Compilation* 26–28)] **L**

K. THE EARLY HISTORY OF JOSEPH

Joseph 2

There was a man whose name was Joseph, descended from a family of Bethlehem, a town of Judah, and the city of King David. This same man, being well furnished with wisdom and learning, was made a priest in the Temple of the Lord. He was, besides, skilful in his trade, which was that of a carpenter; and after the manner of all men, he married a wife. Moreover, he begot for himself sons and daughters, four sons, namely, and two daughters. Now these are their names—Judas, Justus, James, and Simon. The names of the two daughters were Assia and Lydia. At length the wife of righteous Joseph, a woman intent on the divine glory in all her works, departed this life. But Joseph, that righteous man, my father after the flesh, and the spouse of my mother Mary, went away with his sons to his trade, practising the art of a carpenter. **J**

L. JOSEPH TAKES MARY AS HIS WARD

Protev. 9

J And Joseph threw down his adze and went out to their meeting. And when they were gathered together, they took the rods and went to the high priest. He took the rods from them all, entered the Temple, and prayed. When he had finished the prayer he took the rods, and went out and gave them to them; but there was no sign on them. Joseph received the last rod, and behold, a dove came out of the rod and flew on to Joseph's head. And the priest said to Joseph, 'You have been chosen by lot to receive the virgin of the

Lord as your ward.' But Joseph answered him, 'I have sons and am old; she is but a girl. I object lest I should become a laughing-stock to the sons of Israel.' And the priest said to Joseph, 'Fear the Lord your God, and remember what God did to Dathan, Abiram, and Korah, how the earth was split in two and they were all swallowed up because of their rebellion. And now beware, Joseph, lest these things happen in your house too.' And Joseph was afraid and received her as his ward. And Joseph said to Mary, 'I have received you from the Temple of the Lord, and now I leave you in my house and go away to build my buildings. I will return to you; the Lord will guard you.' **M**

Ps-Matthew 8

J Then Joseph although aged brought his rod along with the young men. And the rods having been handed over to the high priest, he offered a sacrifice to the Lord God, and inquired of the Lord. And the Lord said to him, 'Put all their rods into the Holy of Holies of God, and let them remain there, and order them to come to you on the morrow to get back their rods; and the man from the point of whose rod a dove shall come forth, and fly towards heaven, and in whose hand the rod, when given back, shall exhibit this sign, to him let Mary be delivered to be kept.'

On the following day, then, all having assembled early, and an incense-offering having been made, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies, and brought forth the rods. And when he had distributed the rods, and the dove came forth out of none of them, the high priest put on the twelve bells and the sacerdotal robe; and entering into the Holy of Holies, he there made a burnt-offering, and poured forth a prayer. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him, saying, 'There is here the shortest rod, of which you have made no account: you brought it in with the rest, but did not take it out with them. When you have taken it out, and have given it him whose it is, in it will appear the sign of which I spoke to you.' Now that was Joseph's rod; and because he was an old man, he had been cast off, as it were, that he might not receive her, but neither did he himself wish to ask for the return of his rod. And when he was humbly standing last of all, the high priest cried out to him with a loud voice, saying, 'Come, Joseph, and receive your rod; for we are waiting for you.' And Joseph came up trembling, because the high

priest had called him with a very loud voice. But as soon as he stretched forth his hand, and laid hold of his rod, immediately from the top of it came forth a dove whiter than snow, exceedingly beautiful, which, after flying for a long time about the roofs of the Temple, finally flew towards the heavens. Then all the people congratulated the old man, saying, 'You have been made blessed in your old age, O father Joseph, seeing that God has shown you to be fit to receive Mary.' And the priests said to him, 'Take her, because of all the tribe of Judah you alone have been chosen by God.' Joseph began bashfully to address them, saying, 'I am an old man, and have children; why do you hand over to me this infant, who is younger than my grandsons?' Then Abiathar the high priest said to him, 'Remember, Joseph, how Dathan and Abiron and Korah perished, because they despised the will of God. So will it happen to you, if you despise this which is commanded by God.' Joseph answered him, 'I indeed do not despise the will of God; but I shall be her guardian until I can ascertain concerning the will of God, as to which of my sons can have her as his wife. Let some of her virgin companions, with whom she may meanwhile spend her time, be given for a consolation to her.' Abiathar the high priest answered and said, 'Five virgins indeed shall be given her for consolation, until the appointed day come in which you may receive her; for to no other can she be joined in marriage.' **M**

Mary 8

J Among the people present was Joseph, a man from the house and lineage of David, whose wife was dead and who had grown-up children. Since it seemed inappropriate to him that he should marry such a young girl as he had sons older than her, he was the only one to keep hold of his rod while the others took theirs in accordance with the oracle. As a consequence he did not obey the divine voice and the High Priest though he must consult the Lord once again. The Lord replied that only the man who refused to bring forward his rod was the one to whom the Virgin should be entrusted in marriage. Thus identified, Joseph brought his rod and when it flowered and a dove coming from heaven alighted on its end it was obvious to everyone's eyes that he was the one to whom the Virgin must be given in marriage. Thus, after the usual marital rites, Joseph

remained in Bethlehem to organise his household and to obtain what was needed for the marriage. Meanwhile Mary, the Virgin of the Lord, returned to her parents' home in Galilee together with seven other virgins the same age as herself who had been educated with her and whom she received from the priest. **2B**

Joseph 4

J And the lot fell upon the pious old man, righteous Joseph. Then the priests answered, and said to my blessed mother, 'Go with Joseph, and be with him till the time of your marriage.' Righteous Joseph therefore received my mother, and led her away to his own house. And Mary found James the Less in his father's house broken-hearted and sad on account of the loss of his mother, and she brought him up. Hence Mary was called the mother of James. Thereafter Joseph left her at home, and went away to the shop where he worked at his trade of a carpenter. And after the holy virgin had spent two years in his house her age was exactly fourteen years. **5D(vii)**

J [*Liber Flavus* 37–39 (cf. *J' Compilation* 28–30)] **M**

M. MARY AND THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE

Protev. 10

L Now there was a council of the priests saying, 'Let us make a veil for the Temple of the Lord.' And the priest said, 'Call to me pure virgins of the tribe of David.' And the officers departed and searched and they found seven virgins. And the priest remembered the child Mary, that she was of the tribe of David and was pure before God. And the officers went and fetched her. Then they brought them into the Temple of the Lord and the priest said, 'Cast lots to see who shall weave the gold, the amiantus, the linen, the silk, the hyacinth-blue, the scarlet, and the pure purple'. The pure purple and scarlet fell by lot to Mary. And she took them and went home. And that time Zacharias became dumb, and Samuel took his place until Zacharias was able to speak again. Mary took the scarlet and spun it. **2C**

Ps-Matthew 8

L Then Joseph received Mary, with the other five virgins who were to be with her in Joseph's house. These virgins were Rebecca, Sephora, Susanna, Abigea, and Zahel; to these the high priest gave the silk, and the blue, and the fine linen, and the scarlet, and the purple, and the flax. For they cast lots among themselves what each virgin should do, and the purple for the veil of the Temple of the Lord fell to the lot of Mary. And when she had got it, those virgins said to her, 'Since you are the last, and humble, and younger than all, you have deserved to receive and obtain the purple.' And thus saying, as it were in words of annoyance, they began to call her queen of virgins. While, however, they were so doing, the angel of the Lord appeared in the midst of them, saying, 'These words shall not have been uttered without consequence but prophesied as a prophecy most true.' Frightened by the presence of the angel and his words, they prayed for pardon and that she should pray for them. **2A**

L [*Liber Flavius* 40 cf. *ſ* *Compilation* 30] N

N. APPENDIX. THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the Temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard,

and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

And you will have joy and gladness,
and many will rejoice at his birth;
for he will be great before the Lord,
and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink,
and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit,
even from his mother's womb.

And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God,
And he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah,
to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,
and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.'

And Zechariah said to the angel, 'How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.' And the angel answered him, 'I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.' And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered at his delay in the Temple. And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the Temple; and he made signs to them and remained dumb. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, 'Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.'

Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, 'Not so; he shall be called John.' And they said to her, 'None of your kindred is called by this name.' And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, 'His name is John.' And they all marvelled. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of

Judea; and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, ‘What then will this child be?’ For the hand of the Lord was with him.

And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
 for he has visited and redeemed his people,
 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
 in the house of his servant David,
 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
 that we should be saved from our enemies,
 and from the hand of all who hate us;
 to perform the mercy promised to our fathers,
 and to remember his holy covenant,
 the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
 might serve him without fear,
 in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.
 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
 for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
 to give knowledge of salvation to his people
 in the forgiveness of their sins,
 through the tender mercy of our God,
 when the day shall dawn upon us from on high
 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
 to guide our feet into the way of peace.

And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel. **2 B-H, 3 B-E, 5A**

M [*Liber Flavus* 41–42:1 (cf. *J’ Compilation* 31–33)] **2C**

CHAPTER TWO

THE ANNUNCIATION

Contained in:

Luke 1:26–38

Protevangeliūm 11:1–3

Ps-Matthew 9

Mary 9

PapCair 10735

Liber Flāvus Fergusiorūm 42–44 (cf. J' Compilation 33–34)

Summary of Narrative:

A. Introductory

Ps-Matthew

B. An Angel Sent to Mary

Luke, Ps-Matthew, Mary

C. The Greeting

Luke, Protevangeliūm, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Liber Flāvus

D. Mary's Reaction

Luke, Protevangeliūm, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Liber Flāvus

E. The Annunciation

Luke, Protevangeliūm, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Liber Flāvus

F. Mary's Reaction to the Annunciation

Luke, Protevangeliūm, Mary, Liber Flāvus

G. The Angel's Explanation

Luke, Protevangeliūm, Mary, PapCair, Liber Flāvus

H. Mary's Reaction to the Explanation

Luke, Protevangeliūm, Mary, Liber Flāvus

I. Conclusion

Mary

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Luke B C D E F G H

Protevangelium C D E F G H

Ps-Matthew A B C D E

Mary B C D E F G H I

PapCair G

Liber Flavus Fergusiorum C D E F G H [References only.]

A. INTRODUCTORY

Ps-Matthew 9:1

1M And on the second day, while Mary was at the fountain to fill her pitcher, the angel of the Lord appeared to her, saying, ‘Blessed are you, Mary; for in your womb you have prepared an habitation for the Lord. For, lo, the light from heaven shall come and dwell in you, and by means of you will shine over the whole world.’ **B**

B. AN ANGEL SENT TO MARY

Luke 1:26–27

1N In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. **C**

Ps-Matthew 9:2

A Again, on the third day, while she was working at the purple with her fingers, there entered a young man of ineffable beauty. When she saw him Mary was afraid and trembled. **C**

Mary 9:1

1L At that time, that is as soon as she arrived in Galilee, the angel Gabriel was sent to her by God to tell her of the conception of the Lord and to explain how it was to happen and its manner. On entering her home he filled the room where she was with an immense light . . . **C**

C. THE GREETING

Luke 1:28

B And he came to her and said, ‘Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!’ **D**

Protev 11:1

1M And she took the pitcher and went out to draw water, and behold, a voice said, ‘Hail, highly favoured one, the Lord is with you, you are blessed among women.’ **D**

Ps-Matthew 9:2

B And he said to her, ‘Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with you: blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.’¹ **D**

Mary 9:1

B . . . and greeted her with great joy saying to her, ‘I greet you, Mary, Virgin most agreeable to the Lord, virgin full of grace, the Lord is with you. You are blessed above all women and blessed above all mankind born until now.’ **D**

1N [*Liber Flavus 42:2*] **D**

D. MARY’S REACTION

Luke 1:29

C But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. **E**

¹ This text is not in all manuscripts.

Protev 11:1

C And she looked around to the right and to the left to see where this voice came from. And, trembling, she went to her house and put down the pitcher and took the purple and sat down on her seat and drew out the thread. **E**

Ps-Matthew 9:2

C When she heard these words she trembled and was afraid.² **E**

Mary 9:2

C The Virgin who already knew well the faces of angels and was well acquainted with celestial light was neither afraid at the vision of the angel nor overcome by the intensity of the light. But she was perturbed by his very word and she began to wonder what this unusual greeting should signify, what it contained and to what purpose it would lead. **E**

C [*Liber Flavus 42:2*] **E**

E. THE ANNUNCIATION

Luke 1:30–33

D And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ **F**

² This text is not in all manuscripts.

Protev. 11:2

D And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before her and said, ‘Do not fear, Mary; for you have found grace before the Lord of all things and shall conceive by his Word.’ **F**

Ps-Matthew 9:2

D Then the angel of the Lord added, ‘Fear not, Mary; for you have found favour with God: Behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and shall bring forth a King, who fills not only the earth, but the heaven, and who reigns from generation to generation.’ **4(i)B**

Mary 9:2–3

D The angel, inspired by God, replied to her thought by saying, ‘Fear not, Mary, that this greeting conceals something contrary to your chastity. You have in fact found favour with God. Because you have chosen chaste virginity you shall conceive without sinning and shall bear a son. He shall be great because he will rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth and he shall be called Son of the Most High because he who is born in humility on earth reigns with the Father in grandeur. And the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for centuries and his reign shall have no end. He is King of kings and Lord of lords, and his throne will last for ever.’ **F**

D [*Liber Flavus* 43] **F**

F. MARY’S REACTION TO THE ANNUNCIATION

Luke 1:34

E And Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I have no husband?’ **G**

Protev. 11:2

E When she heard this she considered it and said, ‘Shall I conceive by the Lord, the living God, and bear as every woman bears?’ **G**

Mary 9:4

E To those words of the angel the Virgin replied, not because she was unbelieving but because she wanted to know the manner of the birth, by saying ‘How can this come about? I myself have not known a man because of my vow. How can I conceive in the human way or bear a child without male seed?’ **G**

E [*Liber Flavus* 43] **G**

G. THE ANGEL’S EXPLANATION

Luke 1:35–37

F And the angel said to her,

‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;
therefore the child to be born will be called holy,
the Son of God.

And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.’ **H**

Protev. 11:3

F And the angel of the Lord said, ‘Not so, Mary; for the power of the Lord shall overshadow you; wherefore that holy one who is born of you shall be called the Son of the Most High. And you shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.’ **H**

Mary 9:4

F The angel replied, ‘Do not think that you will conceive in the human way. It is as a virgin without union with a man that you shall conceive; as a virgin you will bear child; as a virgin you will give suck. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will protect you against all flames of passion. That is why he to be born of you—uniquely holy because he was conceived and born without sin—will be called Son of God.’ **H**

PapCair. 10735

The archistrategus] said to the virgin, ‘Behold [Elizabeth your] relative has also conceived [and it is] the sixth month for her, who [was barren.].’ In the sixth, that is the month Thoth, [his mother] conceived John. [But] the archistrategus announced [John beforehand] as the servant, who precedes the Lord’s coming.

F [*Liber Flavus* 44] **H**

H. MARY’S REACTION TO THE EXPLANATION

Luke 1:38

G And Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her. **3B**

Protev. 11:3

G And Mary said, ‘Behold, (I am) the handmaid of the Lord before him: be it to me according to your word.’ **3A**

Mary 9:4

G Then Mary, her hands extended and her eyes raised to heaven, said, ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord. I am unworthy of the name of mother. I shall do according to your will.’ **I**

G [*Liber Flavus 44*] **3A**

I. CONCLUSION

Mary 9:5

H It would take too long to reveal in this short work all the events that we have read about which preceded and followed the birth of the Lord. Let us therefore omit that which is fully described in the Gospel and pass on to the story that is found less fully there. **4(i)B**

CHAPTER THREE

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

Contained in:

Luke 1:39–56

Protevangelium 12:1–3

Liber Flavus Fergusiorum 45–47 (cf. J' Compilation 35–36)

Summary of Narrative:

A. Mary is Blessed by a Priest

Protevangelium, Liber Flavus

B. Mary Travels to Elizabeth

Luke, Protevangelium, Liber Flavus

C. Elizabeth Greets and Blesses Mary

Luke, Protevangelium, Liber Flavus

D. Mary's Reaction

Luke, Protevangelium, Liber Flavus

E. Mary Stays with Elizabeth Three Months

Luke, Protevangelium, Liber Flavus

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Luke B C D E

Protevangelium A B C D E

Liber Flavus A B C D E [References only.]

A. MARY IS BLESSED BY A PRIEST

Protev. 12:1

2H And she made ready the purple and the scarlet and brought them to the priest. And the priest blessed her and said, ‘Mary, the Lord God has magnified your name, and you shall be blessed among all generations of the earth’. **B**

2H [*Liber Flavus* 45] **B**

B. MARY TRAVELS TO ELIZABETH

Luke 1:39–40

2H In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. **C**

Protev. 12:2

A And Mary rejoiced and went to Elizabeth her kinswoman and knocked on the door. **C**

A [*Liber Flavus* 46:1] **C**

C. ELIZABETH GREETES AND BLESSES MARY

Luke 1:41–45

B And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that

the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the lord.' **D**

Protev. 12:2

B When Elizabeth heard it, she put down the scarlet and ran to the door and opened it, and when she saw Mary she blessed her and said, 'How is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, that which is in me leaped and blessed you.' **D**

B [*Liber Flavus* 46:1–3] **D**

D. MARY'S REACTION

Luke 1:46–55

C And Mary said,
 'My soul magnifies the Lord,
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
 for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.
 For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;
 for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
 and holy is his name.
 And his mercy is on those who fear him
 from generation to generation.
 He has shown strength with his arm,
 he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,
 he has put down the mighty from their thrones,
 and exalted those of low degree;
 he has filled the hungry with good things,
 and the rich he has sent empty away.
 He has helped his servant Israel,
 in remembrance of his mercy,
 as he spoke to our fathers,
 to Abraham and to his posterity for ever.' **E**

Protev. 12:2

C But Mary forgot the mysteries which the archangel Gabriel had told her, and raised a sigh towards heaven and said, ‘Who am I, Lord, that all generations of the earth count me blessed?’ **E**

C [*Liber Flavus* 46:3] **E**

**E. MARY STAYS WITH ELIZABETH FOR
THREE MONTHS**

Luke 1:56

D And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home. **5A**

Protev 12:3

D And she remained three months with Elizabeth. **4(i)B**

D [*Liber Flavus* 47] **4(i)B**

CHAPTER FOUR

MARY'S PREGNANCY AND ITS EXPLANATION

(i) THE EXPLANATION TO JOSEPH

Contained in:

Matthew 1:18–24

Protevangelium 12:3–14:2

Ps-Matthew 10–11

Mary 10:1–3

Joseph 5–6

Liber Flavus Fergusiorum 47–51 (cf. 'J' Compilation 36–45)

Summary of Narrative:

A. Introduction

Matthew

B. Mary's Pregnancy Discovered

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Liber Flavus

C. Joseph's Reaction

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Liber Flavus

D. The Appearance of the Angel to Joseph

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Liber Flavus

E. The Explanation

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Liber Flavus

F. Comment by Evangelist

Matthew

G. Joseph's Reaction

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Liber Flavus

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Matthew A B C D E F G

Protevangelium B C D E G

Ps-Matthew B C D E G

Mary B C D E G

Joseph B C D E G

Liber Flavus B C D E G [References only.]

A. INTRODUCTION

Matthew 1:18

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. **B**

B. MARY'S PREGNANCY DISCOVERED

Matthew 1:18

A When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit. **C**

Protev. 12:3–13:1

3E Day by day her womb grew, and Mary was afraid and went into her house and hid herself from the children of Israel. And Mary was sixteen years old when all these mysterious things happened. Now when she was in her sixth month, behold, Joseph came from his buildings and entered his house and found her with child. **C**

Ps-Matthew 10:1

2E While these things were going on, Joseph was occupied with his work, house-building, by the seashore at Capernaum for he was a carpenter. And after nine months he came back to his house, and found Mary pregnant. **C**

Mary 10

2I Joseph returning from Judea to Galilee had the intention of taking the virgin, his fiancée, as his wife. Three months had now passed and the fourth had just begun since her engagement to him. In the meantime her womb had gradually increased in size; the child began to be seen, and could not be hidden from Joseph. Openly

entering the virgin's home, as engaged couples do, and speaking intimately with her, he noticed that she was pregnant. **C**

Joseph 5

5D(vii) And three months after her conception the righteous man Joseph returned from the place where he worked at his trade; and he found my virgin mother pregnant. **C**

3E [*Liber Flavus* 47–48] **C**

C. JOSEPH'S REACTION

Matthew 1:19

B And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. **D**

Protev. 13:1–14:1

B And he struck his face, threw himself down on the ground on sackcloth and wept bitterly saying, 'With what countenance shall I look towards the Lord my God? What prayer shall I offer for this maiden? For I received her as a virgin out of the Temple of the Lord my God and have not protected her. Who has deceived me? Who has done this evil in my house and defiled the virgin? Has the story of Adam been repeated in me? For as Adam was absent in the hour of his prayer and the serpent came and found Eve alone and deceived her, so also has it happened to me.' And Joseph arose from the sackcloth and called Mary and said to her, 'You who are cared for by God, why have you done this and forgotten the Lord your God? Why have you humiliated your soul, you who were brought up in the Holy of Holies and received food from the hand of an angel? But she wept bitterly, saying, 'I am pure, and know not a man.' And Joseph said to her, 'As the Lord my God lives, I do not know whence it has come to me.'

And Joseph feared greatly and parted from her, pondering what he should do with her. And Joseph said, 'If I conceal her sin, I shall

be found to be in opposition to the law of the Lord. If I expose her to the children of Israel, I fear lest that which is in her may be from the angels and I should be found delivering innocent blood to the judgement of death. What then shall I do with her? I will put her away secretly.’ And the night came upon him. **D**

Ps-Matthew 10

B Wherefore, being in the utmost distress, he trembled and cried out, saying, ‘O Lord God, receive my spirit; for it is better for me to die than to live any longer.’ And the virgins who were with Mary said to him, ‘Joseph, what are you saying? We know that no man has touched her; we can testify that she is still a virgin, and untouched. We have watched over her; always has she continued with us in prayer; daily an angel of God speaks with her; daily she receives food from the hand of an angel. We know it is impossible that there can be any sin in her. But if you wish us to tell you what we suspect, nobody but the angel of the Lord has made her pregnant.’ Then said Joseph, ‘Why do you mislead me, to believe that an angel of the Lord has made her pregnant? But it is possible that some one has pretended to be an angel of the Lord, and has beguiled her.’ And thus speaking, he wept, and said, ‘How shall I face the Temple of the Lord, or of the priests of God? What am I to do?’ And thus saying, he thought that he would flee, and send her away. **D**

Mary 10

B He began to be disturbed and troubled because he did not know what to do for the best. He did not wish to denounce her because he was honourable nor to defame her on suspicion of fornication because he was pious. He therefore decided to annul the marriage secretly and to renounce her quietly. **D**

Joseph 5

B He was greatly perplexed, and thought of sending her away secretly. But from fear, and sorrow, and the anguish of his heart, he could endure neither to eat nor drink that day. **D**

B [*Liber Flavus* 48–50] **D**

D. THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL TO JOSEPH

Matthew 1:20

C But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, E

Protev. 14:2

C And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, E

Ps-Matthew 11

C And when he was thinking of rising up and hiding himself, and dwelling in secret, behold, on that very night, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in sleep, saying, E

Mary 10:2

C But, having made these decisions, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said to him, E

Joseph 6

C But at mid-day there appeared to him in a dream the prince of the angels, the holy Gabriel, furnished with a command from my Father; and he said to him, E

C [*Liber Flavus 51*] E

E. THE EXPLANATION

Matthew 1:20–21

D [Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a

son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' **F**

Protev. 14:2

D 'Do not fear this child. For that which is in her is of the Holy Spirit. She shall bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.' **G**

Ps-Matthew 11

D 'Joseph, son of David, fear not; receive Mary as your wife: for that which is in her womb is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and his name shall be called Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' **G**

Mary 10:2

D 'Joseph, son of David, you must not fear nor suspect the virgin of fornication, nor think anything untoward about her nor to fear taking her as wife. The fruit within her, which torments your heart at this time, is not the work of a man but of the Holy Spirit. She alone among women will as a virgin give birth to a son and you shall call him Jesus, that is a saviour, for it is he who shall save his people from their sins.' **G**

Joseph 6

D 'Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary as your wife: for she has conceived of the Holy Spirit; and she will bring forth a son, whose name shall be called Jesus. He it is who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron.' Having thus spoken, the angel departed from him. **G**

D [*Liber Flavus* 51] **G**

F. COMMENT BY EVANGELIST

Matthew 1:22–23

E All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means, God with us).’ **G**

G. JOSEPH’S REACTION

Matthew 1:24–25

F When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. **5D(vii)**

Protev. 14:2

E And Joseph arose from sleep and glorified the God of Israel who had bestowed his grace upon him, and he guarded her. **4(ii)A**

Ps-Matthew 11

E And Joseph, rising from his sleep, gave thanks to God, and spoke to Mary and the virgins who were with her, and told them his vision. And he was comforted about Mary, saying, ‘I have sinned, in that I suspected you at all.’ **4(ii)A**

Mary 10:3

E Then Joseph took the virgin as wife as the angel commanded. But he did not know her; he watched over her and preserved her chastity. **5A**

Joseph 6

E And Joseph rose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord had said to him; and Mary lived with him. **5A**

E [*Liber Flavus* 51] **4(ii) A**

(ii) THE QUESTIONING OF JOSEPH AND MARY
BY THE PRIESTS

Contained in:

Protevangelium 15–16

Ps-Matthew 12

Liber Flavus Fergusiorum 52–58 (cf. J' Compilation 46–58)

Summary of Narrative:

A. Mary's Pregnancy Discovered

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Liber Flavus

B. Joseph and Mary Questioned

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Liber Flavus

C. The Proof of their Innocence

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Liber Flavus

D. The Reaction

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Liber Flavus

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Protevangelium A B C D

Ps-Matthew A B C D

Liber Flavus Fergusiorum A B C D [References only.]

A. MARY'S PREGNANCY DISCOVERED

Protev. 15:1–2

4(i)G And Annas the scribe came to him and said to him, 'Joseph, why have you not appeared in our assembly?' And Joseph said to him, 'Because I was weary from the journey and I rested the first day.' And Annas turned and saw that Mary was pregnant. And he went running to the priest and said to him, 'Joseph, for whom you are a witness, has grievously transgressed.' And the high priest said, 'In what way?' And he said, 'The virgin, whom he received from the Temple of the Lord, he has defiled, and has secretly consummated his marriage with her, and has not disclosed it to the children of Israel.' And the priest said to him, 'Has Joseph done this?' And Annas said to him, 'Send officers, and you will find the virgin pregnant.' **B**

Ps-Matthew 12:1

4(i)G After these things there arose a great rumour that Mary was pregnant. **B**

4(i)G [*Liber Flavus 52–53*] **B**

B. JOSEPH AND MARY QUESTIONED

Protev. 15:2–16:1

A And the officers went and found as he had said, and brought her and Joseph to the court. And the priest said, 'Mary, why have you done this? Why have you humiliated your soul and forgotten the Lord your God, you who were brought up in the Holy of Holies and received food from the hand of an angel, and heard hymns, and danced before him? Why have you done this?' But she wept bitterly saying, 'As the Lord my God lives, I am pure before him and I know not a man.' And the priest said to Joseph, 'Why have you done this?' And Joseph said, 'As the Lord my God lives, I am

pure concerning her.' And the priest said, 'Do not give false witness, but speak the truth. You have consummated your marriage in secret, and have not disclosed it to the children of Israel, and have not bowed your head under the mighty hand in order that your seed might be blessed.' And Joseph was silent.

And the priest said, 'Give back the virgin whom you have received from the Temple of the Lord.' And Joseph began to weep. **C**

Ps-Matthew 12:1

A And Joseph was seized by the officers of the Temple, and brought along with Mary to the high priest. And he with the priests began to reproach him, and to say, 'Why have you deceived so great and so glorious a virgin, who was fed like a dove in the Temple by the angels of God, who never wished either to see or to have a man, who had the most excellent knowledge of the law of God? If you had not done violence to her, she would still have remained in her virginity.' And Joseph vowed, and swore that he had never touched her at all. **C**

A [*Liber Flavus 53-56*] **C**

C. THE PROOF OF THEIR INNOCENCE

Protev. 16:1-2

B And the priest said, 'I will give you both to drink the water of the conviction of the Lord, and it will make your sins manifest in your eyes.' And the priest took it and gave it to Joseph to drink and sent him into the hill-country, and he returned whole. And he made Mary drink also, and sent her into the hill-country, and she returned whole. **D**

Ps-Matthew 12:1-4

B And Abiathar the high priest answered him, 'As the Lord lives, I will give you to drink of the water of the Lord, and immediately your sin will appear.'

Then was assembled a multitude of people which could not be numbered, and Mary was brought to the Temple. And the priests, and her relatives, and her parents wept, and said to Mary, ‘Confess to the priests your sin, you that were like a dove in the Temple of God, and received food from the hands of an angel.’ And again Joseph was summoned to the altar, and the water of the Lord was given him to drink. And when any one that had lied drank this water, and walked seven times round the altar, God used to show some sign in his face. When, therefore, Joseph had drunk in safety, and had walked round the altar seven times, no sign of sin appeared in him. Then all the priests, and the officers, and the people justified him, saying, ‘Blessed are you, seeing that no charge has been found good against you.’ And they summoned Mary, and said, ‘And what excuse have you? Can there be a greater sign than your pregnancy that betrays you? Since Joseph is innocent, we only require you to confess who has deceived you. For it is better that your confession should betray you, than that the wrath of God should set a mark on your face, and expose you in the midst of the people.’ Then Mary said, steadfastly and without trembling, ‘O Lord God, King over all, who knows all secrets, if there be any pollution in me, or any sin, or any evil desires, or unchastity, expose me in the sight of all the people, and make me an example of punishment to all.’ Thus saying, she went up to the altar of the Lord boldly, and drank the water, and walked round the altar seven times, and no spot was found in her.

And when all the people were in the utmost astonishment, seeing that she was pregnant, and that no sign had appeared in her face, they began to be disturbed making conflicting statements: some said that she was holy and unspotted, others that she was wicked and defiled. Then Mary, seeing that she was still suspected by the people, and that she did not seem to them to be wholly cleared, said in the hearing of all, with a loud voice, ‘As the Lord Adonai lives, the Lord of Hosts before whom I stand, I have not known man; but I am known by him to whom from my earliest years I have devoted myself. And this vow I made to my God from my infancy, that I should remain unspotted in him who created me, and I trust that I shall so live to him alone, and serve him alone; and in him, as long as I shall live, will I remain unstained.’ **D**

B [*Liber Flavius* 56–57] **D**

D. THE REACTION

Protev. 16:3

C And all the people marvelled, because sin did not appear in them. And the priest said, 'If the Lord God has not revealed your sins, neither do I judge you.' And he released them. And Joseph took Mary and departed to his house, rejoicing and glorifying the God of Israel. **5A**

Ps-Matthew 12:5

C Then they all began to kiss her feet and to embrace her knees, asking her to pardon them for their wicked suspicions. And she was led down to her house with exultation and joy by the people, and the priests, and all the virgins. And they cried out, and said, 'Blessed be your name of the Lord for ever, because he has manifested your holiness to all his people Israel.' **5A**

C [*Liber Flavus 58*] **5A**

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Contained in:

Matthew 1:24–25

Luke 2:1–7

Protevangelium 17–20

Ps-Matthew 13:1–5

Arundel Infancy Gospel 68–69, 71–74

Mary 10:3

Joseph 5, 7

Arabic 2–3

Leabhar Breac 59–85:2 (cf. ‘J’ Compilation 59–85)

Liber Flavius Fergusiorum 59–75

Summary of Narrative:

A. The Census

Luke, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Arabic, Liber Flavius

B. i) Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem

Luke, Ps-Matthew, Joseph, Arabic, Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavius

ii) Joseph’s Anxiety about Registering Mary

Protevangelium

C. Mary’s Vision of Two Peoples

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavius

D. Jesus’ Birth

i) Arrival in Bethlehem

Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavius

ii) Joseph Speaks of Exile and Poverty

Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavius

iii) Joseph Finds a Resting Place

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Arabic, Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavius

iv) Joseph and the Tax-collectors

Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavus

v) a. Mary in the House

Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavus

b. James of the Knees' Narrative

Leabhar Breac

vi) Joseph Finds a Midwife; his Soliloquy

Protevangelium, Arabic, Leabhar Breac, Liber Flavus

vii) The Birth

Matthew, Luke, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Mary, Joseph, Leabhar Breac

viii) The Midwife's Account

Arundel, Liber Flavus

ix) Salome and the Proof of Mary's Virginitv

Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Arundel

x) A Healing by the Child

Arabic

xi) Joseph and Simeon Greet Mary and her Son

Leabhar Breac

xii) The Wonders at Jesus' Birth

Leabhar Breac

E. Joseph's Praise

Leabhar Breac

F. Joseph and the Shepherds

Leabhar Breac

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Matthew Dvii

Luke A Bi Dvii

Protevangelium A Bii C Diii, vi, vii, ix

Ps-Matthew A Bi C Diii, vii, ix

Arundel Dviii, ix

Mary A Dvii

Joseph A Bi Dvii

Arabic A Bi Diii, vi, x

Leabhar Breac Bi C Di, ii, iii, iv, va, b, vi, vii, xi, xii, E F

Liber Flavus Fergusiorum A Bi C Di, ii, iii, iv, va, vi, viii

A. THE CENSUS

Luke 2:1-3

3E In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. **B(i)**

Protev. 17:1

4(ii)D Now there went out a decree from the king Augustus that all those in Bethlehem in Judea should be enrolled. **B(ii)**

Ps-Matthew 13:1

4(ii)D And it came to pass some little time after, that an enrolment was made according to the edict of Caesar Augustus for all the world to be enrolled, each man in his native place. This first enrolment was made by Cyrinus, the governor of Syria. **B(i)**

Mary 10:3

4(i)G When the ninth month from the conception arrived he took his wife and the necessary possessions and went to Bethlehem, where he himself originally came from. **D(vii)**

Joseph 7

4(i)G Some time after that, there came forth an order from Augustus Caesar the king, that all the world should be enrolled, each man in his own city. **B(i)**

Arabic 2

In the three hundred and ninth year of the era of Alexander, Augustus put forth an edict, that every man should be enrolled in his native place. **B(i)**

Liber Flavus 59

4(ii)D It was the time and season when stewards and functionaries of the Roman ruler, Octavius Caesar, came to levy the Caesarian tribute. This was the manner in which the tribute was collected: everyone in the world had to go to his own district to pay it, and it would not be accepted elsewhere. It was called poll tax because it was levied on every head of livestock and cattle, on family members and spouses, as well as on wealth, clothing and implements, and all movable and immovable property, both land and produce, held throughout the world. **B(i)**

B(i). JOSEPH AND MARY GO TO BETHLEHEM*Luke 2:4-5*

A And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. **D(vii)**

Ps-Matthew 13:1

A It was necessary, therefore, that Joseph should enrol with Mary in Bethlehem, being of the tribe of Judah and of the house and family of David. **C**

Joseph 7

A The old man therefore, righteous Joseph, rose up and took the virgin Mary and came to Bethlehem, because the time of her delivery was at hand. Joseph then inscribed his name in the list; for Joseph the son of David, whose spouse Mary was, was of the tribe of Judah. **D(vii)**

Arabic 2

A Joseph therefore arose, and taking Mary his spouse, went away to Jerusalem, and came to Bethlehem, to be enrolled along with his family in his native city.¹ **D(iii)**

Leabhar Breac 59–60

And so Joseph and Mary came from Nazareth of Galilee to Bethlehem of Judah, like the others, and their family, namely Abion and Simeon and James of the Knees, the three sons of Joseph were there, and it is James of the Knees that told the narrative from Mary's birth to Christ's birth, and from Christ's birth to his crucifixion. And it is for this that he is called Christ's brother, for his being bearded like Christ, for the beards of both were alike. The second reason why James of the Knees was called Christ's brother was for his being a son to Joseph, that is pater Christi. And it is that James of the Knees who took the abbacy of Jerusalem after Christ in the land of Israel, and he was Mary's sister's son; it is he whom the Jews slew afterwards.

Mary too came thither, being pregnant from the Holy Ghost at that time; and with her came along the five virgins that used to be in her train without ever being parted from her. These are the names of those virgins, Sefur, Supstanna, Rabecca, Ratiel, Agizabeth. Why then did Mary come with her virgins thither? It is not hard to tell—to pay the Caesarian tribute; for there was not in the whole world of man or woman, young or old, who did not pay that tribute. And Joseph said, when he heard the criers collecting the tribute, that it would be right to pay the tribute in respect of cattle and treasure and land, food and clothing, and all the things one possessed, out of which the tribute had to be paid. When Joseph heard of the tribute being levied, he set out with his family to pay the tribute. Moabitus was the first name of Joseph.

They went towards Bethlehem and to Ephratah (Cornian) the city of David. **D(i)**

¹ One manuscript of the Arabic includes here Mary's vision of the two peoples (C below).

Liber Flavius 60

A When Joseph (formerly called Moab iustus, because of his righteousness) heard this, he set out with his household, himself and the Virgin Mary, and Simeon, Ameen, and James of the Knees, his three sons, to go from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem of Judah, since that was the city of David, and Joseph had been born there. For Joseph and Mary were of the family of David, there being forty generations exactly between Joseph and David. For that reason, therefore, they went to pay Caesar's tribute to Bethlehem of Judah. **D(i)**

B(ii). JOSEPH'S ANXIETY ABOUT REGISTERING MARY*Protev. 17:1*

A And Joseph said, 'I shall enrol my sons, but what shall I do with this child? How shall I enrol her? As my wife? I am ashamed to do that. Or as my daughter? But all the children of Israel know that she is not my daughter. On this day of the Lord the Lord will do as he wills.' **C**

C. MARY'S VISION OF TWO PEOPLES*Protev 17:2*

B(ii) And he saddled his she-ass and sat her on it; his son led, and Joseph followed. And they drew near to the third milestone. And Joseph turned round and saw her sad and said within himself, 'Perhaps the child within her is paining her.' Another time Joseph turned round and saw her laughing and said to her, 'Mary, why is it that I see your face at one moment laughing and at another sad?' And Mary said to Joseph, 'I see with my eyes two peoples, one weeping and lamenting and one rejoicing and exulting.' **D(iii)**

Ps-Matthew 13:1

B(i) When, therefore, Joseph and Mary were going along the road which leads to Bethlehem, Mary said to Joseph, ‘I see two peoples before me, the one weeping, and the other rejoicing.’ And Joseph answered, ‘Sit still on your beast, and do not speak superfluous words.’ Then there appeared before them a beautiful boy, clothed in white raiment, who said to Joseph, ‘Why did you say that the words which Mary spoke about the two peoples were superfluous? For she saw the people of the Jews weeping because they have departed from their God; and the people of the Gentiles rejoicing, because they have now approached and are near to the Lord, in accordance with what he promised to our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for the time is at hand when in the seed of Abraham, a blessing should be bestowed on all nations.’ **D(iii)**

Leabhar Breac 66–67

D(va) And Mary having gone into the house, immediately began to pray and to make crossvigil, her face upwards to heaven. Then Simeon said to his father, ‘I see the Virgin speaking’ ‘and I do not see to whom she speaks.’ ‘To the angels of heaven’ said Joseph.

Then Joseph saw Mary weeping and in heavy dolour, and saw her forthwith rejoicing and in great joy. ‘What is that, Virgin’ said Joseph ‘that at one time you show jubilation and joy, at another time dolours and sorrow?’ She answered him ‘Two peoples I see’ said she ‘one of them weeping and sorrowing, and the other glad and overjoyed.’ ‘That has a special significance’ said Joseph ‘Those are the people of the Jews who are destined to crucify Christ and to scatter his disciples afterwards; it is they, then, that are grieving. The people of the Gentiles, is the other people: they are rejoicing and exulting, because they were destined to believe in Christ thereafter.’ Joseph then said, ‘Go to bed, Virgin and sleep; and let Simeon put oil under your feet, and rest so, till God brings you to birth.’ **D(vb)**

Liber Flavus 66

D(iv) ‘O father’, said Simeon, ‘The maiden is speaking, and I do not know whom she is addressing’. ‘I think that she is suffering from

tiredness and distress’, said Joseph. And when Joseph looked at Mary he saw that she was alternately sad and joyful. ‘How is it, girl’, he said, ‘that at one time you are grieving, while at another time you are happy?’ ‘I see two peoples’, said she, ‘one of which is in mourning, and the other in gladness and sacred scripture tells us to weep with the mournful and to rejoice with the joyful.’ Joseph told her to go to her bed and rest. ‘O Simeon’, said he, ‘anoint the virgin’s feet with oil’. Simeon did so. **D(vi)**

D. JESUS’ BIRTH

(i) ARRIVAL IN BETHLEHEM

Leabhar Breac 62:1

B(i) It is there that the Virgin Mary was weary, for she could not ride or go on foot for her time was near. Then Mary was left in that place, and James and Simeon along with her, and the five virgins.

Joseph and Abion then went on to Bethlehem of Judah to pay the tribute and to seek a lodging-house. **D(ii)**

Liber Flavus 62:1

B(i) When they came near the city Joseph and Ameen went ahead to get lodgings, and Mary stayed behind with James of the Knees and Simeon, for she was very weary after the journey, being close to her time of delivery. It was a four-day journey from Nazareth in Galilee to the city of Jerusalem, with two further days from Jerusalem to Bethlehem of Judah. It was no wonder, then, that the maiden was exhausted after the long journey. **D(ii)**

(ii) JOSEPH SPEAKS OF EXILE AND POVERTY

Leabhar Breac 62:2, 4

D(i) Now when Joseph reached the middle of the city, he sat down on a large stone there, and great weakness and melancholy came

upon Joseph through joy and reverence, and he was afterwards dispraising the state of exile, and this is what he said. 'For though the exile be wealthy he is called poor. If however he be poor, he is hated and without honour, and he will bear the name of contemptible. I regret to-day my exile from you, Bethlehem of Judah' said Joseph. 'It is through poverty and indigence I went from you. Ill is the land where I have been until to-day' said he (concerning the land of Galilee) 'ill its food and its folk and its humanity and bad are the neighbouring cities for dwelling in them, for one is dispirited among them when one returns to them.'

So then he began dispraising exile greatly, and praising his own original fatherland and said, 'Happy and righteous is every one who will not be in exile.' **D(iii)**

Liber Flavus 62:2-5

D(i) And when Joseph reached the centre of the city, great gladness came upon him, and he said, 'It is most fitting that everyone should love his native place, and nothing is more appropriate than that everyone should be at ease in his own fatherland . . . And my heart is joyous before you, O Bethlehem of Judah, and I am gladdened by the sight of you. You are the heritage which God granted to the noble and honourable patriarch, Abraham. I, however, have come to this city to render tribute to Caesar, and to suffer hardship on that account.'

Joseph was seated on a stone, writing his declaration according to Roman law. This is what he wrote: 'I, Joseph, of the city of Bethlehem of Judah, of the tribe of David, am accompanied by the virgin Mary, of the same tribe, who was entrusted to my care by the casting of lots. I am accompanied also by my three sons, Simeon, Ameen, and James of the Knees. I have no wealth save my craftsman's tools. Moreover, the maiden is weary after the journey, and I have come in advance to seek lodgings for her, for she needs a place to stop and rest, where the child in her womb will be born.' **D(iii)**

(iii) JOSEPH FINDS A RESTING PLACE

Protev. 17:3-18:1

C And having come half-way, Mary said to him, 'Joseph, take me down from the she-ass, for the child within me presses me to come

forth.’ And he took her down from the she-ass and said to her, ‘Where shall I take you and hide your shame? For the place is desert.’

And he found a cave there and brought her into it, and left her in the care of his sons. **D(vi)**

Ps-Matthew 13:2

C And when he had said this, the angel ordered the beast to stand, for the time when she should bring forth was at hand; and he commanded Mary to come down from the animal, and go into an underground cave, in which there never was light, but always darkness, because the light of day could not reach it. And when Mary had gone into it, it began to shine with as much brightness as if it were the sixth hour of the day. The light from God so shone in the cave that neither by day nor night was light wanting as long as Mary was there. **D(vii)**

Arabic 2

C And having come to a cave, Mary told Joseph that the time of the birth was at hand, and that she could not go into the city; ‘But,’ said she, ‘let us go into this cave.’ This took place at sunset. **D(vi)**

Leabhar Breac 63:1

D(ii) After that Joseph went in search of lodgings throughout Bethlehem, and there he saw a certain small single house on the outskirts out beyond the rest, being alone without house or dwelling in its neighbourhood, a little, tiny, narrow, low-roofed cabin.

He went to look at the house, and said, ‘It seems to me that this is a guests’ cabin, and it is fitting for us to be in, and it is easier for the Virgin to bring forth in it, since it is far from sounds of men and from the summoning of the people.’

The house looked like a little cave, a stall, in which were an ass and a young ox, belonging to the master of the house, and one little round stool on the floor of the house, on which the guests used to sit. ‘Let us stay here, son’ said Joseph ‘for the sake of the exalted

Virgin who is coming wearily towards us. You wait for her, and I shall go into the city to know if I might find in it one to whom some of my craft may be pleasing in exchange for this night's supper.' **D(iv)**

Liber Flavus 63:1

D(ii) Then Joseph raised his eyes and saw a certain secluded little house standing alone beside the city, and he said, 'We should remain at this house, since it seems to me that it is an abode for visiting strangers'. Then Joseph went in and looked around. 'It is a small abode', said he, 'yet though it be so, it is suitable for poor people. It is remote from the converse and clamour and display of the populace. Stay here, son, while I go to the city to show my wares and fine craftsmanship in the hope of finding someone who will give me something for them'. **D(iv)**

(iv) JOSEPH AND THE TAX COLLECTORS

Leabhar Breac 63:2-64:1

D(iii) While Joseph was setting out to go seek for food, he heard the voice of the crier and herald going through the city, who said, 'Hebrew men and children of Israel, come to pay the Caesarian tribute; for Cyrinus King of Syria and the underkings of the Roman kings are going after a short time to Rome: and this is what he says, that all the tribute is to be brought to Rome to Octavius Augustus; and come to pay the tribute in this way: namely, your grandsons, your children, and your bondmaids, and your sons and your slaves and your tribes and show your gold and your treasure and your cattle, your finery and your clothes and come in that way, and give them up to the judgment of the king and lord; and let each come according to his age, both young and old.'

And this is why they were all brought there, because there was not one of them who was not under a distinct tax according to his age. And the same herald said, 'Every one who hides away from the King whatsoever he may have, let everything he conceals be taken from him, and whatever else he shall have in the world.'

Thus Joseph at that time was standing in front of the house, and he heard the proclamation again, and said ‘What you announce is sufficient for everyone that has anything will give it up without resistance. Myself first among them; I have nothing but my implements of trade, and they shall go to you if you will: and come to see my lodging for it is not a house at all that I have, but a little cave with a she ass’s stall in it, and not more than two wretched poor people would be fit to be in it.’ And he was greatly dispraising his dwelling.

The tax gatherers then went to view the house and they saw one little stool, and even that was not theirs, but belonged to the lodging-house keeper, and Joseph’s implements of trade. ‘Take them with you’ said Joseph ‘if you wish them.’ ‘We do not want them at all,’ they said. ‘And no wonder that you do not wish that’ said Joseph ‘it is from them that I get a little food for myself and for the Virgin who was entrusted to me in this land of Israel, and that I get a little food for my family through them. Take the children in recompense.’

After that discussion the tax gatherers took that wood on behalf of Joseph with his children, and in respect of Mary with her virgins. And after the tribute was taken Joseph came to the door of the house, and was looking out on the roads; he feared that his family would be carried off by the tax gatherers. **D(va)**

Liber Flavius 63:2–4

D(iii) While Joseph and his son were thus conversing together, the voice of the herald was heard proclaiming to the eminent people of the city, ‘Come, men, and make your declaration without delay, since Cyrinus son of Cirin, chief ruler of the land of Judah, is about to go immediately to confer with the king of the Romans, Octavius Augustus. For that reason, you are to come yourselves with your men and women, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your young and old, free and unfree, nobles and commoners. Give a written account of your gold and silver, land and territory, livestock and cattle, clothing and implements, and all your goods besides. Write down your seniority, your debts and your credits, and render justly the tribute of Caesar’. James has said that every time this tribute was levied everyone in the whole world had to draw up a will, as if on the point of death, and no man could conceal a penny-worth of his worldly goods from that levy. If he did, everything would be confiscated.

... As Joseph and Ameen listened to the proclamation, Joseph said to those who were collecting the tribute, 'You have given sufficient notice. Everyone who has the wherewithal will pay his tax to Caesar. Come here and see this house', said he, 'for it is not really a house at all, but a small insignificant cave containing a manger for an ass and ox. I see only one bed for the stranger to rest, and one little wooden stool for a guest to sit. These are the property of the owner of the lodging, not mine at all. All I have are my smith's implements, and my craftsman's tools, and though they seem paltry to you in the estimation and reckoning of the tribute, yet they provide a means of livelihood for myself, and for my three sons, and for the maiden whom God sent into my keeping after the drawing of lots, and whom I brought from the great Temple of Jerusalem, and from the sons of Israel. These are the only possessions I have'. **D(va)**

(va) MARY IN THE HOUSE

Leabhar Breac 64-65

D(iv) It was then that Joseph saw his family come towards him, Mary with her virgins, and James of the Knees on her left side, and Simeon on her right, and the virgins behind her. When they had arrived, Joseph said to Simeon, 'You have been a long time good friends.' Simeon said, 'It is not we that delayed, but the virgin, for her time has come now, and she is weary, and every hour of her time that she came forward, it seemed to us that she would bring forth the illustrious offspring that is in her womb; and it is certain that she will bring forth to-night, and let all service be done by us for her.'

Thereupon Mary came into the house, and Joseph said to Simeon, 'Fetch water and wash the virgin's feet, and give her food: seek then and buy everything that will please her, for we are certain that she will bring forth to-night the new, very powerful offspring that is in her womb. His like has not been found before and shall not be found after him. And no one knows that it is this child that saves the human race.'

The eighth day before the Kalends of January precisely was that night according to the day of the solar month, and thirteenth of the moon, and Sunday according to the day of the week. **C**

Liber Flavius 64–65

D(iv) After he had thus paid tribute on behalf of himself, and the four with him, and after the tax-collectors had departed, Joseph remained looking out along the road. In a short while he saw Mary approach the entrance to the city, with Simeon on one side of her, and James of the Knees on the other. Joseph said to his sons, 'You were a long time coming, sons'. 'It is not that we were dilatory', said the sons, 'but the maiden who is with us is very weary, and every hour and moment of the journey exhausted her, and we feared that she would go into labour before she reached a resting-place'.

Then Joseph said to Mary, 'You have endured much hardship on my account. Come in and rest'. 'O Simeon', said Joseph, 'Bring water and wash the virgin's feet, and give her food and all that she needs, for I am sure that no nobler service has ever been rendered, since the virgin will bear a holy infant known only to the Heavenly Father, the saviour of all, and the creator of every living thing'. **C**

(vb) JAMES OF THE KNEES' NARRATIVE

Leabhar Breac 67–70

C They were thus for a long space of the night, at which time James of the Knees told her the charities and the mysteries and the secrets of Christ, and some of the miracles of the divine offspring; and none but angels or apostles, or God himself, would be fit to tell them on account of their nobility and holiness, the illustratious miracles that have been and shall be and are now. **D(vi)**

(vi) JOSEPH FINDS A MIDWIFE; HIS SOLILOQUY

a) *Protev. 18 (Bodmer ms.)*

D(iii) And he found one who was just coming down from the hill-country, and he took her with him, and said to the midwife, 'Mary is betrothed to me; but she conceived of the Holy Spirit after she had been brought up in the Temple of the Lord.' **D(vii)**

b) *Protev. 18:1–19:1 (other mss.)*

D(iii) He went out to seek for a Hebrew midwife in the region of Bethlehem. Now I, Joseph, was walking, and yet I did not walk, and I looked up to the air and saw the air in amazement. And I looked up at the vault of heaven, and saw it standing still and the birds of the heaven motionless. And I looked down at the earth, and saw a dish placed there and workmen reclining, and their hands were in the dish. But those who chewed did not chew, and those who lifted up did not lift, and those who put something to their mouth put nothing to their mouth, but everybody looked upwards. And behold, sheep were being driven and they did not come forward but stood still; and the shepherd raised his hand to strike them with his staff but his hand remained upright. And I looked at the flow of the river, and saw the mouths of the kids over it and they did not drink. And then suddenly everything went on its course.

And behold, a woman came down from the hill-country and said to me, 'Man, where are you going?' And I said, 'I seek a Hebrew midwife.' And she answered me, 'Are you from Israel?' And I said to her, 'Yes.' And she said, 'And who is she who brings forth in the cave?' And I said, 'My betrothed.' And she said to me, 'Is she not your wife?' And I said to her, 'She is Mary, who was brought up in the Temple of the Lord, and I received her by lot as my wife, and she is not my wife, but she has conceived by the Holy Spirit.' And the midwife said to him, 'Is this true?' And Joseph said to her, 'Come and see.' **D(vii)**

Arabic 2

D(iii) And Joseph went out in haste to go for a woman to help her. When, he saw an old Hebrew woman belonging to Jerusalem, he said, 'Come hither, my good woman, and go into this cave, in which there is a woman near her time.' **D(x)**

Leabhar Breac 72

D(vb) But when the virgin was bringing forth her son, all the elements were silent and motionless without stirring, without shaking, doing homage to their Creator, for there was not in all created things

anything that was not aware of the Creator, except the unbelieving Jews alone. **D(vii)**

Liber Flavus 67–70:1

C And after Joseph had gone out Simeon followed him and said, ‘The virgin wishes to speak to you urgently, and I think she is on the point of delivery.’ ‘I will not leave her’, said Joseph. ‘Since you are more agile than I am, you go around the city in search of a midwife for her, for a competent midwife greatly assists a woman in childbirth.’ ‘How am I to do that since I know neither the city nor its people? Yet I will go, for I am sure that God will provide a midwife for her, and everything else that she needs, for he has special concern for her.’

As they ceased their conversation, they saw a fair, gentle-eyed girl approach swiftly, carrying a chair. ‘Who are you, girl?’, asked Joseph, ‘and what is the chair, which you have?’ ‘It is a chair for women in childbirth’, said she. ‘My mistress sent me to bring it to you, and she will follow me herself without delay, for a beautiful handsome youth came to guide us speedily to the virgin who is with you, to assist her in giving birth to the noble king’. This amazed them. Joseph looked at the nearby mountain, and saw a tall venerable woman at the summit, vigorously traversing the hill with swift steps until she speedily reached the place in which was the great teacher of Israel, Joseph.

As Joseph saw her approach him he went forward to speak to her, and they greeted each other. The woman said to Joseph, ‘Where are you going?’ ‘I am going to seek a Hebrew woman who will attend to the virgin who is about to give birth to the true God and true man, the beneficent king who is the creator of the four elements’ said Joseph. ‘Here I am’, said the woman, ‘for I am the best midwife of the Jewish people. Tell me, good man, are you an Israelite yourself?’ ‘I am, indeed’, said Joseph. ‘Who is this young woman brought to a cave lodging?’, she asked. ‘She is married to me’, said Joseph. ‘She is not your wife at all’, said she. ‘She is called the Virgin Mary, she was reared in the Temple of the Lord, and it fell to you by lot to look after and protect her’, she said ‘That is true’, said Joseph, ‘and since the Lord has revealed these things to you, I shall not conceal them. Let us go in to see Mary’, said Joseph.

When they went to the door of the house they saw a shining bright cloud above the cave, and such was the illumination, both

inside the cave and over the outside, that human eyes could not gaze on it. 'Enter', said Joseph. 'I will', said she, 'and may the hand of God be with me. And do not show me any disrespect', she said, 'for there is no midwife who is my equal throughout the land of the Jews'. 'We should rather give thanks to God that through his grace you were found', said Joseph. 'He who does not esteem God's providence, and does not show gratitude, commits a sin against the Lord'. Then Simeon said to Joseph, 'You have been blessed, beloved father, and the saints of heaven and the everlasting joy of all joys are with you, and she who has come to serve the God of gods, the Lord of lords, and the Infinite one. Do not keep her waiting outside.'

The woman went in, and shortly afterwards Joseph followed her. When they came out again Simeon was waiting at the entrance of the cave, and he asked the midwife for news. **D(viii)**

(vii) THE BIRTH

Matthew 1:24-25

4iG He took his wife but knew her not until she had borne a son. **7A**

Luke 2:6-7

B And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. **6.1A**

Protev. 19:1-2

D(vi) And she went with him. And they stopped at the entrance to the cave, and behold, a bright cloud overshadowed the cave. And the midwife said, 'My soul is magnified today, for my eyes have seen wonderful things; for salvation is born to Israel.' And immediately the cloud disappeared from the cave and a great light appeared, so that our eyes could not bear it. A short time afterwards that light withdrew until the baby appeared, and it came and took the breast

of its mother Mary. And the midwife cried, ‘This day is great for me, because I have seen this new sight.’ **D(ix)**

Ps-Matthew 13:2

D(iii) And there she gave birth to a son, and the angels surrounded him when he was being born. And as soon as he was born, he stood upon his feet, and the angels adored him, saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good pleasure.’ **D(ix)**

Mary 10:3

A And it came to pass that as she was there the days were completed when she would give birth and, as the Evangelists have taught us, she gave birth to her first born, our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns for eternity.

Joseph 5

1L And I chose her of my own will, with the concurrence of my Father, and the counsel of the Holy Spirit. And I was made flesh of her, by a mystery which transcends the grasp of created reason. **4(i)B**

Joseph 7

B(i) And indeed Mary, my mother, gave birth to me in Bethlehem, in a cave near the tomb of Rachel the wife of the patriarch Jacob, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. **9Aa**

Leabhar Breac 73, 75:3–4

D(vi) Thereafter while Joseph was in front of the house, and Mary within the house, there came at once a shining light cloud down from heaven until it was over the cave and the city, as though it were the sun that was rising over the middle of the city and cave. It was then that Mary brought forth her son, and all the miracles were worked that we have already mentioned. It has not been possible for anyone to recount or relate them, and even if it were possible, such a tale would not be proper.

Then the cave was filled with a very great fragrance as is exhaled from a precious ointment, and from wine, and from the fragrance of the whole world. The cave was filled with it, so that all were satisfied by it for a long time; and a very great and conspicuous star was seen above the cave from morning till evening, and its like was not seen before or after, nor anything that was equal to it.

Mary set her son to rest with swaddling clothes of white linen about him in the stall of the ass and the young ox, for no other place was found for him in the guest-house. And the creatures then recognised their creator, for they were licking him and adoring him, both the ass and the young ox, he being in the middle between them. Then was fulfilled what the prophet said of old, namely, Isaias the son of Amos. (cf. 6.3)

And when the animals had offered their licking and worship, Mary took her son in her bosom then, and she was perfectly healthy in body and mind, for she had no pains or birthpangs, and there was not ache or soreness in body or in flesh, but as the sun's light would pass through glass, without sigh, without sickness, without harm. **D(xi)**

(viii) THE MIDWIFE'S ACCOUNT

Arundel 71-74²

D(ix) 'When I entered to the maiden, I found her face looking upward; she was inclined toward Heaven and speaking to herself. I truly believe that she prayed to and blessed the Most High. When I had come to her, I said to her, "Daughter, tell me, do you not feel some pain, or is not some part of your body gripped with pain?" She, however, as if she heard nothing, remained immobile like solid rock, intent on Heaven.

In that hour, a great silence descended with fear. For even the winds stopped, they made no breeze; there was no movement of the leaves on the trees, nor sound of water heard; the streams did not flow; there was no motion of the sea. All things born in the sea were silent; no human voice sounded and there was a great silence.

² The midwife relates her experience to Simeon, Joseph's son (cf. D(vi) (Joseph's monologue)).

For the pole itself ceased its rapid course from that hour. The measure of time almost stopped. Everyone was overwhelmed with great fear and kept silent; we were expecting the advent of the most high God, the end of the world.

As the time drew near, the power of God showed itself openly. The maiden stood looking into heaven; she became like a vine. For now the end of the events of salvation was at hand. When the light had come forth, Mary worshipped him whom she saw she had given birth to. The child himself, like the sun, shone brightly, beautiful and most delightful to see, because he alone appeared as peace, bringing peace everywhere. In that hour when he was born the voice of many invisible beings proclaimed in unison, 'Amen.' And that light which was born, was multiplied and it obscured the light of the sun itself by its shining rays. The cave was filled with the bright light and with a most sweet smell. The light was born just as the dew descends from heaven to the earth. For its perfume is fragrant beyond all the smell of ointments.

I, however, stood stupefied and amazed. Fear seized me. I was gazing at the intense bright light which had been born. The light, however, gradually shrank, imitated the shape of an infant, then immediately became outwardly an infant like a child born normally. I became bold and leaned over and touched him. I lifted him in my hands with great awe, and I was terrified because he had no weight like other babies who are born. I looked at him; there was no blemish in him, but his whole body was shining, just as the dew of the most high God. He was light to carry, radiant to see. For a while I was amazed at him because he did not cry as new-born infants are accustomed to cry. While I held him, looking into his face, he smiled at me with a most joyful smile, and, opening his eyes, he looked at me intently, and suddenly a great light came forth from his eyes like a brilliant flash of lightning.'

Liber Flavus 70:2-75

D (vi) 'Woman', said Simeon, 'how is the virgin, and is there hope that she will live?' 'I have news indeed', she said . . . I bless my God and Lord who revealed these things to me, his servant, unworthy though I am to witness them. And how am I to relate them', said she, 'since they are new and extraordinary things, like nothing

experienced ever before?’ ‘I beseech you for the love of God to disclose them to me’, said Simeon. ‘They will not be concealed from you’, said she, ‘for in time they will be commonly known throughout the whole world, but they have been secret up to now. Heed these words and affix them in your heart, son’, she said.

‘When I came to the place where the virgin was, I saw her praying and blessing the Lord. I asked her if she were in distress of body or mind. She did not answer, but remained immobile as a rock, with her eyes directed towards heaven, praying unceasingly. Then all of creation stood still, the wind ceased its storms, the ocean its roar. The sea was quiet, the wave soundless, the land untraversed, swift-flowing rivers became like pools, streams reposed as if in sleep, fish remained still. There was not a quiver in the woods, leaves were motionless, animals stood at rest, birds did not fly, people could not speak or work during the sacred time while the virgin was giving birth to the everlasting Lord. Assuredly the four elements recognized their creator . . . The inhabitants of hell were held fast, motionless and miserable, without the ability to do evil or harm against creature or devout person fashioned by God on that night of the divine birth . . .’

‘The virgin was looking upwards, praying constantly . . . And we saw a bright light from her shine throughout the cave, so that she was like a single glorious radiance . . . Many angelic voices were heard above the cave praising the great Lord, and giving strength to the virgin inside. And the brightness outshone the light of the sun and all the stars. Moreover, a fragrance reached us, which would delight everyone everlastingly, with the perfume of all the fruit, wax, saffron, and beautiful ointments in the world, all the herbs and plants and beautiful fruits that ever existed in holy Paradise. More wonderful than all of these, indeed, was the pleasure derived from that fragrance. And heavenly angels were unceasingly in attendance, since there is no human born who could worthily partake of that mystery, except for the Virgin Mary herself.’

‘Deep silence overcame me, and I was seized by fear and terror at the sight of these miraculous events, for the infant was like a sphere of light, such that human eyes could not look on. He was briefly in this form before assuming the shape and appearance of a child, and my mind grew animated as I looked on him, and I bent down and raised him up. He weighed nothing, unlike an ordinary child, and as I examined him attentively, I could find neither blemish nor mark nor trace of blood on him. It was as if he were washed

in the gentle beautiful dew of the noble Heavenly Father. No known body was so radiant, no infant so weightless to carry, no human being was ever seen whose beauty was more resplendent. I marvelled that his nature was not like that of any other child, for he did not cry or wail, except for a little as he was being put in the manger. He was without the weakness of infancy, and as I looked in his face, he smiled at me, and no worldly delight was ever as pleasing. The flash of light from his eyes overshadowed the sunlight which reached throughout the cave at dawn from the east.'

When Simeon had heard these words he said, 'You are blessed and ever-fortunate, O devout and astute woman, and though I am the lowliest, it is propitious for me to have heard of these wonders, though I did not see them. And I believe all that you relate.'

(ix) SALOME AND THE PROOF OF MARY'S VIRGINITY

*Protev. 19:3–20:4*³

D(vii) And the midwife came out of the cave, and Salome met her. And she said to her, 'Salome, Salome, I have a new sight to tell you about; a virgin has brought forth, a thing which her condition does not allow.' And Salome said, 'As the Lord my God lives, unless I insert my finger and test her condition, I will not believe that a virgin has given birth.'

And the midwife went in and said to Mary, 'Make yourself ready, for there is no small contention concerning you'. And Salome inserted her finger to test her condition. And she cried out, saying, 'Woe for my wickedness and my unbelief; for I have tempted the living God; and behold, my hand falls away from me, consumed by fire!' And she bowed her knees before the Lord saying, 'O God of my fathers, remember me; for I am the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not make me pilloried for the children of Israel, but restore me to the poor. For you know, Lord, that in your name I perform my duties and from you I have received my hire'. And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared and said to her, 'Salome, Salome, the Lord

³ Bodmer papyrus V has a shorter version of this passage.

God has heard your prayer. Bring your hand to the child and touch him and salvation and joy will be yours.' And Salome came near and touched him, saying, 'I will worship him, for a great king has been born to Israel.' And Salome was healed as she had requested, and she went out of the cave.⁴ And, behold, an angel of the Lord cried, 'Salome, Salome, do not report what marvels you have seen, until the child has come to Jerusalem.' **8A**

Ps-Matthew 13:3-5 (following P group of mss.)

D (vii) Now, when the birth of the Lord was at hand, Joseph had gone away to seek midwives. And when he had found them, he returned to the cave and found with Mary the infant which she had brought forth. And Joseph said to Mary, 'I have brought two midwives, Zelomi and Salome; and they are standing outside by the entrance to the cave, not daring to come in because of the intense brightness.' And when Mary heard this she smiled; and Joseph said to her, 'Do not smile, but be prudent and allow them to visit you, in case you should require them for medication.' Then she ordered them to come to her. And when Zelomi had come in, she said to Mary, 'Allow me to touch you.' And when she had permitted her to make an examination the midwife cried out with a loud voice and said, 'Lord, Lord Almighty, mercy on us! It has never been heard or thought of that any one should have her breasts full of milk and that the birth of a son should show his mother to be a virgin. But there has been no spilling of blood in his birth, no pain in bringing him forth. A virgin has conceived, a virgin has brought forth, and a virgin she remains.'

And hearing these words, the other midwife with the name Salome said, 'I will not believe what I have heard unless I also examine her'. And Salome entered and said to Mary, 'Allow me to handle you, and prove whether Zelomi has spoken the truth.' And Mary allowed her to handle her. And when she had withdrawn her hand from handling her it dried up, and through excess of pain she began to weep bitterly and to be in great distress, crying out and saying, 'O Lord God, you know that I have always feared you, and that without recompense I have cared for all the poor; I have taken

⁴ Variant adds the word 'justified' (cf. Luke 18:14).

nothing from the widow and the orphan, and the needy have I not sent empty away. And, behold, I am made wretched because of my unbelief, since without a cause I wished to test your virgin.'

And while she was speaking, there stood by her a young man in shining garments saying, 'Go to the child and worship him and touch him with your hand, and he will heal you, because he is the Saviour of the world and of all that hope in him.' And she went to the child with haste and worshipped him and touched the fringe of the clothes in which he was wrapped, and instantly her hand was cured. And going out she began to cry aloud and to tell the wonderful things which she had seen and which she had suffered and how she had been cured, so that many believed through her preaching. **6.1A**

Arundel 68-69

Behold a girl came with a chair which was customarily used to help women giving birth. She stopped. When they saw her they were amazed, and Joseph said to her, 'Child, where are you going with that chair?' The girl responded, 'My mistress sent me to this place because a youth came to her with great haste and said, "Come quickly to help with an unusual birth; a girl will give birth for the first time." When she heard this, my mistress sent me on before her; look, she herself is following.'

Joseph looked back and saw her coming; he went to meet her and they greeted each other. The midwife said to Joseph, 'Sir, where are you going?' He replied, 'I seek a Hebrew midwife.' The woman said to him, 'Are you from Israel?' Joseph said, 'I am from Israel.' The woman said to him, 'Who is the young woman who will give birth in this cave?' Joseph replied, 'Mary, who was promised to me, who was raised in the Lord's Temple.' The midwife said to him, 'She is not your wife?' And Joseph said, 'She was promised to me, but was made pregnant by the Holy Spirit.' The midwife said to him, 'What you say, is it true?' Joseph said to her, 'Come and see.'

They entered the cave. Joseph said to the midwife, 'Come, see Mary.' When she wished to enter to the interior of the cave, she was afraid, because a great light shone resplendent in the cave, the light did not wane in the day nor through the night as long as Mary stayed there.

Joseph said, 'Mary. Behold, I have brought to you a midwife, Zachel, who stands outside in front of the cave, who because of the brightness not only dares not enter the cave, but cannot.' When she heard this, Mary smiled. Joseph said to her, 'Do not smile, but take care; she comes to examine you in case you need medicine.' He ordered the midwife to enter and she stood before her.

For hours Mary permitted herself to be watched, then the midwife cried with a loud voice and said, 'Lord, great God, have mercy, because never has this been heard, nor seen, nor even dreamed of, until now, that the breasts should be full of milk and a male child, after birth, should make his mother known to be a virgin. There was no offering of blood in the birth, no pain occurred in the parturition. A virgin conceived, a virgin has given birth and after she gave birth, she remained a virgin.' **D(viii)**

(x) A HEALING BY THE CHILD

Arabic 3

D(vi) Wherefore, after sunset, the old woman, and Joseph with her, came to the cave, and they both went in. And, behold, it was filled with lights more beautiful than the gleaming of lamps and candles, and more splendid than the light of the sun. The child, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, was sucking the breast of the Lady Mary his mother, being placed in a stall. And when both were wondering at this light, the old woman asks the Lady Mary, 'Are you the mother of this child?' And when the Lady Mary gave her assent, she says, 'You are not at all like the daughters of Eve.' The Lady Mary said, 'As my son has no equal among children, so his mother has no equal among women.' The old woman replied, 'My mistress, I came to get payment; I have been for a long time affected with palsy.' Our mistress the Lady Mary said to her, 'Place your hands upon the child.' And the old woman did so, and was immediately cured. Then she went forth, saying, 'Henceforth I will be the attendant and servant of this child all the days of my life.' **6.1C**

(xi) JOSEPH AND SIMEON GREET MARY AND HER SON

Leabhar Breac 75:5

D (vii) Joseph went afterwards into the cave, and saw Mary, and her son on her bosom; she giving her breast to him, for she had indeed breasts flowing like the gushing of spring-water.

Joseph came then, and Simeon, glad and overjoyed, after him; and Joseph said, ‘Go, son and behold him for whom you were seeking, the Saviour, on the breast of Mary his own mother, and welcome him and be merry and cheerful to him.’ And they two then bade welcome to the son. **D(xii)**

(xii) THE WONDERS AT JESUS’ BIRTH⁵*Leabhar Breac 75:6*

D(xi) Afterwards came the morning of the next day, and then was fulfilled every miracle and every wonder, every prediction and every prophecy that was made in the Old Law and in the New Testament concerning the Divine Child, and it is a little of his miracles and wonders that is related here. **E**

E. JOSEPH’S PRAISE

Leabhar Breac 81:1–4

D(xii) Joseph was exultant and very joyous, praising and exalting the Divine Child.

Afterwards Joseph said ‘I had better go into the city to buy food for the virgin and for my family, for this festival is a noble and honourable festival in heaven and on earth, for to-day was born the

⁵ Cf. the legends “The Seventeen Wonders of the Night of Christ’s Birth” and “The Marvels of the Birth of the Saviour” in the Irish tradition e.g. in *Apocrypha Hiberniae I Evangelia Infantiae* ed. Martin McNamara *et al.* (Turnhout, 2001) (= *CCSA* 14) esp. 582–617.

Lord of men and angels, and gods, and all other creatures besides.

To-day came into the world the one through whom the world was judged.

To-day the power of the devil was weakened, and the power of the church, heavenly and earthly, was strengthened.

To-day was dispersed the light of wisdom and knowledge to the Israelite people who were in the darkness of ignorance and unwisdom.

To-day are glorified and honoured the holy prophets, their prophecy having been fulfilled.

To-day was placed the venerated food of the angels amid the mean food of men in the stall of a she ass and a young ox.

To-day the brute animals without intelligence have recognized their Creator: for every creature is aware of its Creator.

To-day the kingly star first appeared to the three druids who came with it on their way to adore Jesus.

To-day has been given the supremacy and kingship of the heavenly city to a man, that is to Christ, Son of the Living God.

To-day the angels of heaven have submitted to the men of earth; for a king from among men has obtained kingship over the angels.

To-day has been made an awesome contract between the two realms of the Lord, between heaven and earth.

To-day have been opened the doors of the Heavenly City, so that the doors of heaven are wide opened to the human race to enter and dwell therein.

To-day shall quarrels and evil sentiments be driven out of the world. For the Prophet of the Eternal Truth and the True Peace has come into it, Christ the Son of the Living God.

To-day the true love of mankind has been recognized by the Heavenly Father, when the Second Person of the Godhead assumed humanity to succour them, for in bondage under the devil they died for the fault and transgression of Adam and Eve till this day.' **F**

F. JOSEPH AND THE SHEPHERDS

Leabhar Breac 81:5–85:2

E Now Joseph was for a long time thus discoursing to his sons James of the Knees and Simeon and Abion, and praising Christ, and foretelling every good thing thereafter.

And Joseph said again, 'I had better go to buy a little food for the virgin.' He went and was on the streets and causeways of Bethlehem for part of the day. As he was there he saw a certain large band come towards him talking to one another. Joseph drew near to them then, till he was listening to them, and he was seeking to buy food from them. This is what they said, 'We have searched the whole city and we do not find in it him whom we seek. Let us go then forth out of the city and let us also search if he may be outside the city.' Then Joseph said to them, 'Have you any milk for sale?' 'We have none at all', they said. 'Have you eggs or cheese?', said Joseph.

'Good man', they said 'why do you come to us? It is not to trade that we have come, and it is not that that concerns us, but a marvellous strange piece of news we have' 'We are seeking him and we do not find him, for he is wonderful and strange', said they. 'If he is indeed wonderful, it is he that happens to be with me in my house', said Joseph. He said to them then, 'Who are you, and whence have you come?' 'We', they said, 'are the shepherds of the city of Bethlehem, and last night we were on the top of a tower in the east of the plain of Bethlehem. A thousand paces east from Bethlehem is a very great hill, and there the shepherds of Bethlehem all come together keeping their cattle away from dogs and thieves and other beasts, and in the nights it was usual for them to be there.' 'Well then we were there', they said 'guarding our cattle, and all of us in one place, some of us asleep, some watching, some story-telling to one another, some singing songs and ditties, others sporting, and shouting, and humming, another set whistling and telling tales. Thus we were happily occupied. After the rising of the moon towards us, as we were there at midnight, we saw a light from the east coming until it lighted all the plains of Bethlehem. Thus was that cloud, having a beautiful, shining, conspicuous, venerable form in its midst, and there were many different kinds of music in that cloud, and each kind of music thereof was as sweet as another'.

'That very great light having reached us, horror and fear seized us, and we placed our faces all against the ground. Whereupon an angelic voice said from the cloud, "Do not be in dread or fear, since for this I have come, to tell tidings to you and to the whole people, tidings to which its equal or like has not been found from the beginning of the world till to-night. For to-day was born the Saviour Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, in the city of David, in Bethlehem

of Judah, to succour mankind who died in Adam, God of Gods, and Heaven of men, and Power of powers, Man over men, King over kings, gentle Soldier without wrath, without pride, without pomp. Go to him” he said “and you will find him with little swaddling clothes of white linen about him, in the ass’s manger.” And when he had said that, the angelic host that was along with him uttered the melodious ever-sweet song, *‘Gloria in excelsis deo et in terra pax. Amen.’*

The shepherds were telling these tidings to Joseph, and they said, ‘We have searched the city and we have not found in it him whom we are seeking.’ Joseph said to them, ‘Let not that which God has manifested for you be hidden from you. Come now, behold the object of your search’. ‘Hail to you’, said the Shepherds ‘for to you first God has been manifested: that is the greatest good that has come and that will come.’ Then Joseph went before them to the door of the house. The shepherds went after him into the house with much rejoicing. Joseph tarried outside, behind them, and lifted his face up to heaven, saying, ‘O great God, great is this miracle! We thought that none other but ourselves had knowledge of the Divine birth, and yet the shepherds heard it, when they were a thousand paces from Bethlehem eastwards.’

Simeon said, ‘Wonder not at anything you shall hear about this child, but only believe truly what I tell you, that it will be a short time till the men of the world will recognise his miracles and his marvels.’ As Simeon and Joseph were for a long time in that conversation, the shepherds came out from the stall and said, ‘We have seen the Son of the Heavenly Father.’ ‘How did he look?’, said Joseph.

‘Fairer than the earth’, said they
 ‘More wonderful than heaven
 Brighter than sun
 Clearer than streams
 Sweeter than honey
 Greater than the universe
 Higher than heaven’s hosts
 More beautiful than angels
 Nobler than the world
 Wider than the universe is his speech
 Better than the world
 More precious than creatures
 Eye does not reach him
 And he finds no room in ears,
 The world has not found and shall not find his like.’

And they said, 'We have kissed his feet and we have licked his hands, and we have beheld his face, and he has done miracles and great wonders in our presence; and happy are you, Joseph for there has not been given to a man ever before you, nor shall there come to anyone after you, a dignity like the dignity which has been conferred on you: and give us a love for him for we are contented so far, since you have permitted us to behold the divine brightness.' 'What is it then that you wish?', said Joseph. 'It is not difficult to say: that you come with us to drink wine and to amuse and enjoy yourself, for to-day our chief has a great banquet for us, that is, the chief of the shepherds. It is indeed customary for him to prepare a great feast every year for the shepherds: on the eighth of the Kalends of January precisely that feast is held.' 'I will not go, however', said Joseph 'as it would not be right for me to leave Mary and her child without their having food and drink: but, indeed, my soul and heart are with you', said Joseph 'and take my blessing with you.' 'Since you are not coming with us', said the shepherds 'every best thing we have shall reach you, fresh cheese and milk and a crown of thorns, and wine, and good wheat and honey, and hen-eggs, and vegetables and herbs too; and even if you are with the little babe, so also shall you be with us.'

Now the reason why the Saviour was first seen by the shepherds is because they were without sleep, watching and waiting for the light of day. This is what that denotes: whosoever wishes to obtain everlasting life ought to be without sleep in the night time, watching for eternal light, that is, the countenance of Almighty God.

The shepherds then went away. And Joseph, and Mary, and Christ were in the guest-house, and all these foods were given to them by the shepherds as we have previously stated. **8G**

CHAPTER SIX

THE ADORATION OF JESUS AFTER HIS BIRTH

1. The Shepherds and the Angels

Contained in:

The Gospel of Luke 2:8–20

The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew 13:6–7; 14

The Arabic Infancy Gospel 4

Summary of Narrative:

A. The Angels Appear to the Shepherds

Luke, Pseudo-Matthew

B. Their Message

Luke

C. More Angels Join in the Praise of God

Luke, Pseudo-Matthew, Arabic

D. The Shepherds' Reaction

Luke, Arabic

E. The Reaction of the People and the Shepherds' Praise

Luke, Arabic

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Luke A B C D E

Pseudo-Matthew A C

Arabic C D E

2. The Appearance of the Star

Pseudo-Matthew

3. Jesus Adored by Animals

Pseudo-Matthew

1. THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS

A. THE ANGELS APPEAR TO THE SHEPHERDS¹*Luke 2:8-9*

5D(vii) And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. **B**

Ps.-Matthew 13:6

5D(ix) And some shepherds stated that they had seen angels at midnight . . . **C**

B. THEIR MESSAGE

Luke 2:10-12

A And the angel said to them, 'Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.' **C**

C. MORE ANGELS JOIN THEM IN PRAISE OF GOD

Luke 2:13-15

B And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹ cf. 5F.

‘Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!’
When the angels went away from them into heaven **D**

Ps-Matthew 13:6

A . . . singing hymns, praising and blessing God, and saying, ‘There has been born the Saviour of all, who is Christ the Lord, in whom salvation shall be brought back to Israel.’ **6.2**

Arabic 4

5D(x) Then came shepherds; and when they had lighted a fire, and were rejoicing greatly, there appeared to them the hosts of heaven praising and celebrating God Most High. **D**

D. THE SHEPHERDS’ REACTION

Luke 2:15–17

C The shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child. **E**

Arabic 4

C And while the shepherds were doing this, the cave was at that time made like a temple of the upper world, since both heavenly and earthly voices glorified and magnified God on account of the birth of the Lord Christ. **E**

E. THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE AND THE SHEPHERDS' PRAISE

Luke 2:18–20

D And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. **7A**

Arabic 4

D And when that old Hebrew woman saw the manifestation of those miracles, she thanked God, saying, 'I give thanks, O God, the God of Israel, because my eyes have seen the birth of the Saviour of the world. **7A**

2. THE APPEARANCE OF THE STAR

Ps-Matthew 13:7

6.1C Moreover, a great star [larger than any that had been seen since the beginning of the world]² shone over the cave from the evening till the morning. [And the prophets who were in Jerusalem]¹ said that this star pointed out the birth of Christ, who should according to the promise restore not only Israel, but all nations. **6.3**

3. JESUS ADORED BY ANIMALS

Ps-Matthew 14

6.2 And on the third day after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, Mary went out of the cave, and entering a stable, placed the child

² Longer text in the P group of mss.

in the stall, and the ox and the ass, genuflecting, adored him. Then was fulfilled that which was said by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.' The animals, therefore, having him in their midst, incessantly adored him. Then was fulfilled that which was said by Habakkuk the prophet, saying, 'Between two animals you are made manifest.' Joseph remained with Mary three days in the same place. **7A**

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

Contained in:

Matthew 1:25

Luke 2:21–38

Ps-Matthew 15

Arabic 5–6

Summary of Narrative:

A. The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

Matthew, Luke, Ps-Matthew, Arabic

B. The Presentation in the Temple

Luke, Arabic

C. Simeon

Luke, Ps-Matthew, Arabic

D. Anna

Luke, Ps-Matthew, Arabic

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Matthew A

Luke A B C D

Ps-Matthew A C D

Arabic A B C D

A. THE NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS

*Matthew 1:25***5D(vii)** And she called him Jesus **8A***Luke 2:21*

6.1E And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. **B**

Ps-Matthew 15:1

6.3 On the sixth day he entered Bethlehem where they spent seven days. On the eighth day he led the child to the Temple of the Lord. When the child had been circumcised they offered for him a pair of turtle doves and two young pigeons. **C**

Arabic 5

6.1E And the time of circumcision, that is, the eighth day, being at hand, the child was to be circumcised according to the law. Wherefore they circumcised him in the cave. And the old Hebrew woman took the piece of skin; but some say that she took the navel-string, and laid it in a jar of oil of nard. And she had a son, a dealer in unguents, and she gave it to him, saying, 'See that you do not sell this jar of unguent of nard, even if three hundred denarii should be offered you for it.' And this is that jar which Mary the sinner bought and poured upon the head and feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which she wiped with the hair of her head.¹ **B**

¹ Cf. Luke 7:37–38.

B. THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

Luke 2:22-24

A And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord’) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.’ **C**

Arabic 5

A Ten days after, they took him to Jerusalem; and on the fortieth day after his birth they carried him into the Temple, and set him before the Lord, and offered sacrifices for him, according to the commandment of the law of Moses, which is: Every male that opens the womb shall be called the Holy of God. **C**

C. SIMEON

Luke 2:25-35

B Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word;
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation
which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to thy people Israel.’

And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against. The thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed and a sword will pierce through your own soul also.' **D**

Ps-Matthew 15:2

B Now there was in the Temple a man of God, perfect and just, whose name was Symeon, a hundred and twelve years old. He had received the answer from the Lord, that he should not taste of death till he had seen Christ, the Son of God, living in the flesh. And having seen the child, he cried out with a loud voice, saying: 'God has visited his people, and the Lord has fulfilled his promise.' And he made haste, and adored him. And after this he took him up into his cloak and kissed his feet, and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.' **D**

Arabic 6

B Then old Simeon saw him shining like a pillar of light, when the Lady Mary, his virgin mother, rejoicing over him, was carrying him in her arms. And angels, praising him, stood round him in a circle, like body guards standing by a king. Simeon therefore went up in haste to the Lady Mary, and, with hands stretched out before her, said to the Lord Christ, 'Now, O my Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy compassion, which thou hast prepared for the salvation of all peoples, a light to all nations, and glory to thy people Israel.' **D**

D. ANNA

Luke 2:36-38

C And there was a prophetess Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the Temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. **10T**

Ps-Matthew 15:3

C There was also in the Temple of the Lord, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, who had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity; and she had now been a widow eighty-four years. And she never left the Temple of the Lord, but spent her time in fasting and prayer. She also likewise adored the child, saying: In him is the redemption of the world. **8A**

Arabic 6

C Anna also, a prophetess, was present, and came up, giving thanks to God, and calling the Lady Mary blessed. **8A**

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MAGI

Contained in:

Matthew 2:1–12

Protevangelium 21

Ps-Matthew 16

Arabic 7–8

Leabhar Breac 87–92:2, (92:3–96:2)

Summary of Narrative:

A. Magi Come to Jerusalem

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Arabic

B. Herod Hears about them and Consults the Priests

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew

C. His Message to the Magi

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew

D. The Magi Find Jesus and Adore him

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Arabic

E. The Magi Depart

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Arabic

F. Kings Come to the Magi to Learn about Jesus

Arabic

G. The Druids

Leabhar Breac

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Matthew A B C D E

Protevangeliium A B C D E

Ps-Matthew A B C D E

Arabic A D E F

Leabhar Breac G

A. MAGI COME TO JERUSALEM

Matthew 2:1-2

7A Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.’ **B**

Protev. 21:1

5D(ix) And behold, Joseph was ready to go to Judea. And there took place a great tumult in Bethlehem of Judea. For there came wise men saying, ‘Where is the new-born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him.’ **B**

Ps-Matthew 16:1

7D And when the second year was past, magi came from the east to Jerusalem, bringing great gifts. And they made persistent inquiry of the Jews, saying, ‘Where is the king who has been born to you? We have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him.’ **B**

Arabic 7

7D And it came to pass, when the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Judea, in the time of King Herod, behold, magi came from the east to Jerusalem, as Zeraduscht had predicted. **D**

B. HEROD HEARS ABOUT THEM AND CONSULTS
THE PRIESTS*Matthew 2:3-6*

A When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet:

"And thou, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
art by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from thee shall come a ruler
who will govern my people Israel." C

Protev 21:2¹

A When Herod heard this he was troubled and sent officers to the wise men, and sent for the high priests and questioned them, 'How is it written concerning the Messiah? Where is he born?' They said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judaea; for thus it is written.' And he let them go. **C**

Ps-Matthew 16:1

A And word of this came to King Herod, and so alarmed him that he called together the scribes and the Pharisees, and the teachers of the people, asking of them where the prophets had foretold that Christ should be born. And they said, 'In Bethlehem of Judah. For it is written: And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art by no means the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come forth a Leader who shall rule my people Israel.' **C**

C. HIS MESSAGE TO THE MAGI

Matthew 2:7-8

B Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying 'Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.' **D**

¹ Bodmer considerably abbreviates ch. 21.

Protev. 21:2

B And he questioned the wise men and said to them, ‘What sign did you see concerning the new-born king?’ And the wise men said, ‘We saw how an indescribably greater star shone among these stars and dimmed them, so that the stars no longer shone; and so we knew that a king was born for Israel. And we have come to worship him.’ And Herod said, ‘Go and seek, and when you have found him, tell me, that I also may come to worship him.’ **D**

Ps-Matthew 16:1

B Then King Herod summoned the magi to him, and carefully inquired of them when the star appeared to them. Then, sending them to Bethlehem, he said, ‘Go and make strict inquiry about the child; and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.’ **D**

D. THE MAGI FIND JESUS AND ADORE HIM

Matthew 2:9–11

C When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the east went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. **E**

Protev. 21:3

C And the wise men went out. And behold, the star which they had seen in the east, went before them until they came to the cave. And it stood over the head of the cave. And the wise men saw the young child with Mary his mother, and they took out of their pouch gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. **E**

Ps-Matthew 16:2

C And while the magi were going on their way, there appeared to them the star, which was a guide to them, going before them until they came to where the child was. And when the magi saw the star, they rejoiced with great joy; and going into the house, they saw the child Jesus sitting in his mother's lap. Then they opened their treasures, and presented great gifts to the blessed Mary and Joseph. And to the child himself they each offered a piece of gold. And in addition one gave gold, another frankincense, and the third myrrh. **E**

Arabic 7

A And there were with them gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And they adored him, and presented to him their gifts. Then the Lady Mary took one of the swaddling-bands, and, on account of the smallness of her means, gave it to them; and they received it from her with the greatest marks of honour. **E**

E. THE MAGI DEPART

Matthew 2:12

D And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. **9Ba**

Protev. 21:4

D And having been warned by the angel that they should not go into Judea, they went to their own country by another route. **9Aa**

Ps-Matthew 16:2

D When they were about to return to King Herod, they were warned in a dream what Herod was thinking. They then adored the infant a second time and, full of joy, returned to their own country by a different route. **9Aa**

Arabic 7

D And in the same hour there appeared to them an angel in the form of that star which had before guided them on their journey; and they went away, following the guidance of its light, until they arrived in their own country. **F**

F. **KINGS COME TO THE MAGI TO FIND OUT
ABOUT JESUS**

Arabic 8

E And their kings and chief men came together to them, asking what they had seen or done, how they had gone and come back, what they had brought with them. And they showed them that swaddling-band which the Lady Mary had given them. Wherefore they celebrated with a feast, and, according to their custom, lit a fire and worshipped it, and threw that swaddling-band into it; and the fire laid hold of it, and enveloped it. And after the fire had gone out, they took out the swaddling-band exactly as it had been before, just as if the fire had not touched it. Wherefore they began to kiss it, and to put it on their heads and their eyes, saying, 'This verily is the truth without doubt. Assuredly it is a great thing that the fire was not able to burn or destroy it.' Then they took it, and with the greatest honour laid it up among their treasury. **9Aa**

G. **THE DRUIDS**

Leabhar Breac 87–92.2 (cf. ℑ' Compilation 87–92)

5F On a certain day, as Joseph stood at the entrance to the house, he saw a large group approach him directly from the east. Thereupon Joseph said to Simeon, 'Son, who are these drawing near us? They seem to have come from afar'. Then Joseph went towards them, and said to Simeon, 'It appears to me, son, that they practice druidic augury and divination, for they do not take a single step without

looking upward, and they are arguing and conversing about something amongst themselves. I think that they are foreigners, come from distant lands, for their appearance, colour and attire is unlike that of our own people. They are wearing bright flowing robes, even-coloured crimson tunics, long red cloaks, and variegated gapped shoes. From their apparel they seem like kings or leaders’.

There were three men in front of the group. One of them was a handsome nobleman, grey-bearded, with high temples. He was called Melcisar, and it was he who gave the gold to Christ. There was another bearded man with very long brown hair. His name was Balcisar, and it was he who gave the frankincense to Christ. Yet another man had fair hair and was beardless. His name was Hiespar, and it was he who gave the myrrh to Christ. Other names for these kings were Malcus, Patifaxat, and Casper. Malcus was the alternate name for Melcisar, Patifaxat for Balcisar, Casper for Hiespar.

Joseph said, ‘Well do they travel, unwearied, though they come from afar’. Then they reached the place where Joseph was, along with his son, Simeon. They went past Joseph into the house. Joseph went with them and said, ‘Tell me, for God’s sake, who you are, and from whence have you come to the house without my permission?’ ‘Our leader and lord preceded us to this small dwelling, and we have followed him’, they replied. ‘From where have you yourselves come?’, asked Joseph. ‘From the east’, they said, ‘from eastern India, the lands of Arabia, the lands of the Chaldeans, and from other various lands in the eastern world’.

‘Why have you come?’, asked Joseph. ‘The answer is not difficult’, they said. ‘A king of the Jews, a king of the whole world, has been born in this country, and we have come to find him, to do him reverence, and to see him’. ‘From whence did you receive that knowledge?’, asked Joseph. ‘That is easy’, they said. ‘It has been in our ancient books and writings from the time of our first man down to the present day that, whenever we should see a star like this one over our land, we should go with it whatever way it travelled, because it was a sign of the king of the world. For, according to prophecy and foreknowledge, that king is destined to save us, and the human race, straight away, after his birth’.

‘Why did you not go to Jerusalem to seek him?’, asked Joseph. ‘For that is the chief city of the land, where the Temple of the Lord is to be found. Moreover, the king of the Jews, Herod, dwells there’. ‘We did travel there already’, they said. ‘When we reached the city

the majestic star went away from us, and we did not see it at all. We entered the house in which was the king, Herod, and we told him that a king of the Jews had been born in his land, and that a regal star had preceded us from the eastern world as far as this place, and had gone from us here [in Jerusalem]. Then we inquired of the king, and of the Jewish people, as to where he had been born. They said that they did not know’.

Then all his sorcerers, sages, and men of knowledge and wisdom were summoned to Herod, and he asked them where the birth of a king of the Jews had been predicted in their prophecies. They all said, ‘In Bethlehem of Judah, as the Holy Spirit declared through the mouth of the king, David son of Jesse: “*De diversario in spelonca nasci Christum in Bethlehem*” ’ . . . Then Herod was seized with great trembling and fear, and he said, ‘Where else would a son of a king of the Jews be born but in my house?’. Then the sooth-sayers said. ‘It is the son of the king of the whole world who was to be born there’. Then Herod’s mind was occupied with many and grievous deliberations and thoughts. The wise men of the Jewish people were called back to him, and he enquired again attentively as to where, in prophecy or augury, the birth of that king was located. They all replied, ‘In Bethlehem of Judah.’

Then Herod said to the magi who had come to adore Christ, ‘Go to Bethlehem of Judah, and if you find Christ there come back to me, so that I may go myself to adore him. Take my royal diadem to Christ’, said he. (This was a royal diadem made of Arabian gold, full of precious stones and ornamented gems. It was, moreover, the diadem which was on Herod’s own head every day). ‘Take with you also for him this royal ring set with conspicuous jewels, the equal or like of which has never been found in the world. It was given to me by the king of Persia. Give it to that king, and when you come back, I will go myself to adore him, and bring other gifts for him even better than these’.

‘We brought those gifts with us, then’, said the magi, ‘and we left the city. Immediately after, our own kingly star manifested itself to us, and we rejoiced greatly at that. It preceded thereafter until it was over this house, above the roof. Then, before our eyes, it entered the house, and you do not allow us to follow in its wake’ . . .

Then they asked leave of Joseph to enter the house. Joseph said to them, ‘I will not keep you from what God himself has revealed to you’. Joseph, indeed, would have been pleased if the news were

known generally and revealed to all. 'A blessing on you', they said. 'Let us go now to see the Saviour and God of the people.' Then they entered the house, greeted Mary, and said, '*Ave tu benedicta gratia plena*', 'God be with you, you who are blessed and full of grace'. After that they went to the manger, and beheld Christ there.

When the magi had entered the house, Joseph said to Simeon, 'Go after them, son, and observe them keenly, in order to see and find out what they do to the child, for it is not my place to watch or scrutinize them'. Then Simeon went to keep an eye on them. There were the magi, face downwards, prostrating themselves and bowing down to the Son of God. Simeon was filled with wonder at their behaviour, and related it to Joseph. 'Continue to keep watch on what they are doing', said Joseph. They rose up then and opened their gifts, and gave them to Christ. 'What have they given him', asked Joseph. 'An easy answer', said Simeon, 'gold, frankincense and myrrh, and the presents which Herod gave to them'.²

² These stories continue in like manner to chapter 96.

CHAPTER NINE

THE SLAYING OF THE INFANTS AND THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT

Contained in:

Matthew 2:13–23

Protevangelium 22–24:3

Infancy Gospel of Thomas (Latin) 1–3

Pseudo-Matthew 17–25

Joseph 8–9

Arabic Infancy Gospel 9–35

Leabhar Breac (97–109), 110, (111–120), 121–138, (139–161)

Summary of Narrative:

A. The Slaying of the Infants

a) Herod Kills the Infants

Matthew, Protevangelium, Ps-Matthew, Joseph, Arabic, Leabhar Breac

b) Mary Hides Jesus

Protevangelium, Leabhar Breac

c) John the Baptist

Protevangelium, Leabhar Breac

B. The Flight to Egypt

a) An Angel Tells Joseph to go to Egypt

Matthew, Ps-Matthew, Arabic

b) The Journey to Egypt

Matthew, Ps-Matthew, Joseph, Arabic

c) Miracles Performed by Jesus on the Way to Egypt and in Egypt

InfTh (Latin), Ps-Matthew, Arabic, Leabhar Breac

C. The Return

a) The Command to Return

Matthew, InfTh (Latin), Ps-Matthew

b) The Journey Back

Matthew, Joseph, Arabic

c) Miracles Performed by Jesus on the Way Back from Egypt
Arabic

D. The Death of Herod

Joseph, Arabic, Leabhar Breac

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Matthew Aa Ba Bb Ca Cb

Infancy Thomas (Latin) Bc Ca

Protevangelium Aa Ab Ac

Ps-Matthew Aa Ba Bb Bc Ca

Joseph Aa Bb Cb

Arabic Aa Ba Bb Bc Cb Cc D

Leabhar Breac Aa Ab Ac Bc D

A. THE SLAYING OF THE INFANTS

A) HEROD KILLS THE INFANTS

Matthew 2:16-18

Bb Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

‘A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled,
because they were no more.’ **Ca**

Protev. 22:1

8E But when Herod realized that he had been deceived by the wise men he was angry and sent his murderers and commanded them to kill all the babies who were two years old and under. **Ab**

Ps-Matthew 17:1

8E Herod was enraged when he saw that the magi had tricked him, and he ordered that all the roads should be searched because he wanted to capture and execute them. When he could not find them anywhere, he sent once more to Bethlehem and all its borders, and slew all the male children of two years old and under, according to the time that he had determined from the magi. **Ba**

Joseph 8

5D(vii) But Satan went and told this to Herod the Great, the father of Archelaus. It was this same Herod who ordered my friend and relative John to be beheaded. Accordingly he searched for me

diligently, thinking that my kingdom was to be of this world. But Joseph, that pious old man, was warned of this by a dream. **Bb**

Arabic 9

8F When Herod saw that the magi had left him, and not come back to him, he summoned the priests and the wise men, and said to them, ‘Show me where Christ is to be born.’ And when they answered, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea,’ he began to think of putting the Lord Jesus Christ to death. **Ba**

[*Leabhar Breac* 97–109 has a long digression on Herod’s family. 110 states that Herod remembered the druids (magi) telling him that the King of the Jews had been born. He then decided to kill all the infants of the same age as Christ for he thought it likely that Christ would be killed among them. From here to chapter 120 is a description of how the massacre progressed.]

B) MARY HIDES JESUS

Protev. 22:2

Aa When Mary heard that the babies were to be killed, she was afraid and took the child and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in an ox-manger. **Ac**

*Leabhar Breac 121–125*¹

Aa While Mary and Joseph were on their way they saw a large troop approaching them, seeking Christ to slay him. Mary was seized with a great fear and she said, ‘Son, what shall we do?’ ‘Woman’, said he, ‘say it is wheat which you carry.’ The troop then came and asked Mary, ‘What are you carrying?’ said they. ‘Wheat’, said she. ‘We will find that out’, they said and one of them looked and found

¹ Adapted from M. McNamara *et al.* (eds.), *Apocrypha Hiberniae I. Evangelia Infantiae* (Turnhout, 2001) 396–400.

wheaten grain on her back. 'This is not a person but wheat', said they. They passed by thereafter to kill all others.

For that reason they profess ever since that the body of Christ is made of wheat. Moreover, it is the custom with the Greeks to offer wheaten grain along with a host. Thus was the Son of God saved on that day.

On another occasion as they travelled they met another troop of Herod's people. Mary then asked, 'What will we do now, Son?' said she. Christ answered, 'Say that it is I whom you are carrying', said he. The troop came then. 'What are you carrying?' said they. 'The one you seek', said she. 'Be off', they said, 'if it were he, you would not admit it.'

Joseph and Mary were in Nazareth of Galilee when the angel told them to go to Egypt in flight from Herod. They set out then, twelve in number. These are their names: Christ i, Mary ii, Rebecca iii, Ratiel iv, Supsanna v, Sepura vi, Agizabath vii, Moabitus *id est* Joseph viii, James of the Knees ix, Simeon x, Abion xi, the three sons of Joseph, and one driving-servant with them xii, and an ass.

They set out afterwards from the land of Galilee to the tribe of Issacar, to the city of David, and south of Jericho to the land of Amon, to Moab and to Macloch and through the deserts of Mount Sinai. **Bc**

C) JOHN THE BAPTIST

Protev 22:3–24:3

Ab But Elizabeth, when she heard that John was sought for, took him and went up into the hill-country. And she looked around to see where she could hide him, and there was no hiding-place. And Elizabeth groaned aloud and said, 'O mountain of God, receive a mother with a child.' For Elizabeth could not ascend. And immediately the mountain was rent asunder and received her. And a light was shining for them; for an angel of the Lord was with them and protected them.

Herod was searching for John, and sent officers to Zacharias saying, 'Where have you hidden your son?' And he answered and said to them, 'I am a minister of God and serve in the Temple of the Lord.

I do not know where my son is.’ And the officers departed and told all this to Herod. Then Herod was angry and said, ‘His son is to be king over Israel!’ And he sent to him again saying, ‘Tell the truth. Where is your son? You know that you are at my mercy.’ And the officers departed and told him these things. And Zacharias said, ‘I am a witness of God. Pour out blood! But the Lord will receive my spirit, for you shed innocent blood at the threshold of the Temple of the Lord.’ And about daybreak Zacharias was slain. And the children of Israel did not know that he had been slain.

But at the hour of the salutation the priests were departing, and the customary blessing of Zacharias did not take place. And the priests stood waiting for Zacharias, to greet him with prayer and to glorify the Most High.

But when he failed to come they were all afraid. But one of them took courage and went in and he saw beside the altar congealed blood; and a voice said, ‘Zacharias has been slain, and his blood shall not be wiped away until his avenger comes.’ And when he heard these words, he was afraid and went out and told the priests what he had seen. And they took courage and entered and saw what happened. And the ceiling panels of the Temple wailed, and they split their clothes from the top to the bottom. And they did not find his body, but they found his blood turned into stone. And they were afraid, and went out and told all the people that Zacharias had been slain. And all the tribes of the people heard and they mourned him and lamented three days and three nights.

[*Leabhar Breac* 159–161 follows *Protev.* 22–24 concerning John the Baptist and the death of Zacharias.]

B. THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT

A) AN ANGEL TELLS JOSEPH TO GO TO EGYPT

Matthew 2:13

8E Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' **Bb**

Ps-Matthew 17:2

Aa Now the day before this was done Joseph was warned by an angel of the Lord, who said to him, 'Take Mary and the child, and go into Egypt by the way of the desert.' **Bb**

Arabic 9

Aa Then appeared an angel of the Lord to Joseph in his sleep, and said, 'Rise, take the boy and his mother, and go away into Egypt.' **Bb**

B) THE JOURNEY TO EGYPT

Matthew 2:14-15

Ba And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son.' **Aa**

Ps-Matthew 17:2

Ba And Joseph did what the angel had told him.² **Bc**

Joseph 8

Aa Therefore he set out, taking Mary, my mother, with me lying in her arms. Salome was their fellow traveller. He retired into Egypt, and remained there for one whole year, until the hatred of Herod had passed away. **Cb**

Arabic 9

Ba He rose towards cock-crow, and set out. **Bc**

C) MIRACLES PERFORMED BY JESUS ON THE WAY TO
EGYPT AND IN EGYPT

Infancy Thomas (Latin) 1-2

Now when they had come into Egypt, they found a lodging in the house of a certain widow, and they passed one year in the same place. And Jesus was three years old, and when he saw boys playing, he began to play with them. And he took a dry fish and put it in a basin, and ordered it to breathe, and it began to breathe. And he said again to the fish, 'Reject the salt which you have, and go into the water', and so it came to pass. But the neighbours, seeing what was done, told the widow in whose house Mary his mother was staying, and when she heard it, she cast them out of her house in great haste.

And as Jesus was walking with Mary his mother in the middle of the city, he looked up and saw a teacher teaching his pupils; and behold twelve sparrows which were quarrelling together fell from the wall into the lap of the teacher who was teaching the boys. But when Jesus saw it he laughed and stopped. When the teacher saw him laughing, in a great rage he said to his pupils, 'Go, fetch him

² Not in all manuscripts.

to me.' Now when they had taken him, the master took hold of his ear, and said, 'What have you seen that had made you merry?' But he said, 'Behold master, my hand is full of corn. I showed it to them and scattered the corn, which, at their peril, they carry away; for it was this that they were fighting for so that they might divide the corn.' And Jesus did not depart from there until it was accomplished; and for this reason, the teacher cast him out of the city together with his mother. **Ca**

Ps-Matthew 18-24

Bb Having come to a certain cave and wishing to rest in it, Mary dismounted from her beast, and sat with the child Jesus in her lap. And on the journey there were with Joseph three boys, and with Mary a girl, going on the journey along with them. Suddenly, many dragons came out of the cave, and, when they saw them, the children cried out in absolute terror. Then Mary put Jesus down and even though he was not yet two years old he stood on his feet before the dragons, which worshipped Jesus before departing. This fulfilled the prophecy of the Psalmist, which says, 'Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons; ye dragons, and all ye deeps'. Jesus walked before the dragons, commanding them to hurt no one. However, Mary and Joseph were very much afraid that the dragons should hurt the child. Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid, and do not consider me to be a little child; for I am and always have been perfect; and all the beasts of the forest are tame before me.'

Lions and panthers also worshipped him and accompanied them in the desert. Wherever Joseph and the blessed Mary went, the animals went before them to show them the way. They bowed their heads and showed their submission by wagging their tails and worshipped him with great reverence. At first, when Mary saw the lions and the panthers and various kinds of wild beasts coming around them, she was very afraid. However, the infant Jesus joyfully looked into her face and said, 'Do not be afraid, mother; for they come not to do you harm, but wish to serve both you and me.' With these words he drove all fear from her heart. The lions kept walking with them, beside the oxen, and the asses and the beasts of burden that carried their baggage, and they did not hurt a single one of them. They were tame among the sheep and the rams that they had brought with them from Judea. They walked among wolves and

feared nothing; and not one animal hurt another. This fulfilled the words of the prophet: 'Wolves shall feed with lambs; the lion and the ox shall eat straw together'. Two oxen were drawing a wagon together, with provision for the journey, and the lions led the way of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the third day of their journey, whilst they were walking, the blessed Mary was tired by the excessive heat of the sun in the desert. On seeing a palm tree, she said to Joseph, 'Let me rest here a little under the shade of this tree'. Joseph therefore quickly led her to the palm, and helped her dismount from her beast. As the blessed Mary was sitting there, she looked up to the foliage of the palm and saw that it was full of fruit, and she said to Joseph, 'I wish that it were possible to get some of the fruit of this palm.' Joseph said to her, 'Why do you say that when you can see how high the palm tree is. You are thinking about eating its fruit, but I am thinking more of our lack of water, because the skins are now empty, and we have none to refresh ourselves or our cattle'. Then the child Jesus, with a joyful countenance and resting on his mother's lap, said to the palm; 'O tree, bend you branches and refresh my mother with your fruit.' Immediately at these words the palm bent its top down to the feet of the blessed Mary; and they gathered from it fruit, which refreshed them all. After they had gathered all its fruit, it remained bent down, waiting for the order to rise from him who had commanded it to stoop. Then Jesus said to it, 'Raise yourself, O palm tree, and be strong and be the companion of my trees, which are in the paradise of my Father; and open from your roots a vein of water, which has been hidden in the earth, and let the waters flow, so that we may be satisfied by you.' It rose up immediately, and at its root, a spring of very clear, cool and sparkling water began to come forth. When they saw the spring of water, they rejoiced with great joy, and they and all their cattle and beasts were satisfied. Because of this, they gave thanks to God.

The next day they set out from there, and in the hour in which they began their journey, Jesus turned to the palm, and said, 'This privilege I give to you, O palm tree. One of your branches shall be carried away by angels, and planted in the paradise of my Father. This blessing I shall confer upon you: it will be said to all that conquer in any contest, "You have attained the palm of victory"'. Whilst he was speaking, an angel of the Lord appeared and stood upon the palm tree. The angel took one of the branches and flew to

heaven with the branch in his hand. When they saw this, they fell on their faces and became as if dead. Jesus said to them, 'Why are your hearts possessed with fear? Do you not know that this palm, which I have caused to be transferred to paradise, shall be prepared for all the saints in the place of delights, as it has been prepared for us in this place of the wilderness?' Thus they were all filled with joy, and being strengthened, they all rose up.

After this, as they were going on their journey, Joseph said to Jesus, 'Lord it is extremely hot; if it pleases you, let us go by the sea shore, so that we might rest in the cities on the coast.' Jesus said to him, 'Fear not Joseph; I shall shorten the way for you, so that you shall travel in one day what should have taken thirty.' Whilst they were so speaking, they looked forward and began to see the mountains and cities of Egypt.

Rejoicing and exulting, they came into the regions of Hermopolis, and entered into a city of Egypt that is called Sotinen. As they did not know anyone there from whom they could ask for hospitality, they went into the temple, which was called the Capitol of Egypt. In this temple there had been set up three hundred and fifty-five idols, to each of which, on its own day, divine honours and sacred rites were paid. The Egyptians of that city entered the Capitol, where the priests told them how many sacrifices were offered each day, according to the honour in which the god was held.

When the most blessed Mary went into the temple with the little child, all the idols prostrated themselves on the ground, so that all of them were lying on their faces, shattered and broken to pieces; thus plainly showing they were nothing. This fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'Behold, the Lord will come upon a swift cloud and will enter Egypt, and all the handiwork of the Egyptians shall be moved at his presence'.

When Affrodosius, the governor of the city, heard of this, he went to the temple with all his army. When they saw Affrodosius and all his army coming into the temple, the priests of the temple thought that he was making haste purely to see vengeance taken on those who had made the gods fall down. However, when Affrodosius came into the temple and saw all the gods lying prostrate on their faces, he went up to the blessed Mary, who was carrying the Lord, and worshipped him and said to all his army and all his friends, 'If this were not the God of our gods, our gods would not have fallen on their faces before him; nor would they be lying prostrate in his

presence, thus silently confessing that he is their Lord. If we do not follow our gods' example, we may risk his anger, and shall all be destroyed, just as it happened to Pharaoh, king of the Egyptians, who reigned in the days when God did great miracles in Egypt and caused his people to escape by the strength of his hand. **Ca**

Arabic 10–25

Bb He was wondering about how to set out on his journey and morning came before he had gone very far. He approached a great city where there was an idol to which all the other idols and gods of the Egyptians offered gifts and vows. A priest stood before this idol, ministering to it, and who, as often as Satan spoke from the idol, reported it to the inhabitants of Egypt and its territories. This priest had a son, three years old and beset by many demons. The child made many speeches and utterances; and, when seized by the demons, tore his clothes, and whilst naked, threw stones at the people. There was also a hospital in that city dedicated to the idol and, when Joseph and the Lady Mary came into the city, they went into it. The citizens were very afraid. All the chief men and the priests of the idols came together to the idol and said to it, 'What agitation is this that has arisen in our land?'

The idol answered them, 'A God has come here in secret, who is God indeed; there is no god beside him who is worthy of divine worship because he is truly the Son of God. When he arrived in this land and it became aware of his presence, it trembled and was moved and shaken, and we are exceedingly afraid of the greatness of his power.' In the same hour that idol fell down, and, at its fall, all the inhabitants of Egypt and other places ran together.

The son of the priest, his usual disease having come upon him, entered the hospital, and there came upon Joseph and the Lady Mary, from whom all others had fled. The Lady Mary had washed the clothes of the Lord Christ, and had spread them over some wood. The demoniac boy came and took one of the clothes and put it on his head. Then the demons, in the shape of ravens and serpents, began to fly out of his mouth. The boy, being immediately healed at the command of the Lord Christ, began to praise God, and then to give thanks to the Lord who had healed him. When his father saw him restored to health, he said, 'My son, what has

happened to you, and by what means have you been healed?' The son answered, 'When the demons had thrown me on the ground, I went into the hospital and there I found an august woman with a boy, whose newly washed clothes she had thrown upon some wood. I took up one of these and put it upon my head, and the demons left me and fled.' At this the father rejoiced greatly and said, 'My son, it is possible that this boy is the Son of the living God who created the heavens and the earth: for when he came over to us, the idol was broken and all the gods fell and perished by the power of his magnificence.'

Here was fulfilled the prophecy which says, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son'. When they heard that the idol had fallen down and perished, Joseph and Mary trembled and were afraid. Then they said, 'When we were in the land of Israel, Herod wanted to put Jesus to death, and therefore slew all the children of Bethlehem and its surroundings, and there is no doubt that the Egyptians will burn us with fire as soon as they hear that this idol has been broken.'

On leaving the city, they came to a place where there were robbers who had bound and plundered several men of their baggage and clothes. Then the robbers heard a great noise, like the army of a magnificent king leaving his city with his army and his chariots and drums. At this the robbers were terrified and left all that they had stolen. Their captives rose up, loosed each other's bonds, recovered their baggage and went away. When they saw Joseph and Mary coming, the men said to them, 'Where is that king? The robbers left us when they heard his magnificent approach and so we have escaped safely.' Joseph answered; 'He will come after us.'

Later, they came to another city, where there was a demoniac woman whom the accursed and rebellious Satan had beset one night when she had gone out for water. She could neither wear clothes nor live in a house. As often as they tied her up with chains and thongs, she broke them and fled naked into waste places. She stood at crossroads and cemeteries, throwing stones at people and brought great calamities upon her friends. When the Lady Mary saw her, she pitied her; and upon this, Satan immediately left her, and fled away in the form of a young man, saying, 'Woe to me from you, Mary, and from your son.' So that woman was cured of her torment, and being restored to her senses, blushed because of her nakedness, and, shunning the sight of men, went home to her friends. After she had put on her clothes, she gave an account of the matter to her

father and her friends; and, as they were the chief men of the city, they received the Lady Mary and Joseph with the greatest honour and hospitality.

The next day, having been provided with provision for their journey, they went away. On the evening of that day Joseph and Mary arrived at another town, where a marriage was being celebrated. However, by the arts of the accursed Satan and the work of enchanters, the bride had become dumb and could not speak a word. After the lady Mary had entered the town, carrying her son, the Lord Christ, the dumb bride saw her, and stretched out her hands towards the Lord Christ. She drew him to her and took him in her arms and held him close. She kissed him and leaned over him, moving his body back and forwards. Immediately her tongue was loosened, and her ears were opened. She gave thanks and praise to God, because he had restored her to health. That night the inhabitants were overjoyed and thought that God and his angels had come down to them.

They stayed there three days, being held in great honour and living splendidly. Then, having been supplied by them with provisions for the journey, they went away and came to another city, in which, because it was very populous, they thought of passing the night. In that city there was an excellent woman. Once, having gone down to the river to bathe, the accursed Satan, in the form of a serpent, had leapt upon her and twisted himself round her abdomen; and, every night, he tyrannically tormented her. This woman, seeing the Lady Mary holding the child, the Lord Christ, in her arms, was struck with a longing for him and said to the Lady Mary, 'O Mistress, give me this child that I may carry him and kiss him.' Mary gave him to the woman, and when he was given to her Satan let the woman go, and fled, leaving her, and the woman never saw him again after that day. All those who were present praised God Most High, and the woman freely bestowed gifts upon them.

The next day, the same woman took scented water to wash the Lord Jesus. After she had washed him, she took the water in which he had been washed, and poured part of it upon a girl who was living there, and washed her with it. The girl's body was white with leprosy, but, as soon as she had been washed, the girl was cured of her leprosy. The townspeople said, 'There is no doubt that Joseph and Mary and that boy are gods, not men.' When they were getting ready to leave, the girl who had been suffering from the leprosy came up to them, and asked them to let her go with them.

They gave her permission and she went with them. Afterwards they came to a city in which there was the castle of a most illustrious prince, who kept a house for the entertainment of strangers. They turned into this place; and the girl went away to the prince's wife. The girls found her weeping and sorrowful, and she asked her why she was weeping. 'Do not be surprised at my tears', said the princess, 'for I am overwhelmed by a great affliction, which as yet I have not been able to tell any one.' 'Perhaps', said the girl, 'if you reveal it and disclose it to me, I might have a remedy for it.' 'Hide this secret, then', replied the princess, 'and tell it to no-one. I was married to this prince, who is a king and ruler over many cities, and I lived for a long time with him, but had no son by him. When at length I produced him a son, he was leprous; and, as soon as my husband saw him, he turned away with loathing, and told me to either kill the child or give him to the nurse to be brought up in some place where we should never hear of him again. He said that he could have nothing more to do with me and that he would never see me again. Therefore I do not know what to do and I am overwhelmed with grief. Alas! my son. Alas! My husband.' 'Did I not say,' said the girl, 'that I have found a cure for your disease and I shall tell you about it, for I too was a leper; but was cleansed by God, who is Jesus, the son of the Lady Mary.' The princess asked where this God was, of whom the girl had spoken. The girl answered, 'Here, he is living in the same house.' 'But how is this possible?' replied the princess, 'Where is he?' The girl said, 'They are Joseph and Mary; and the child with them is called Jesus. It is he who cured me of my disease and my torment.' The prince's wife asked, 'But how were you cured of your leprosy. Will you not tell me that?' 'Why not?' said the girl. 'From his mother, I got the water in which he had been washed, and poured it over myself; and thus I was cleansed from my leprosy.' Then the princess rose up and invited them to avail themselves of her hospitality. She prepared a splendid banquet for Joseph in a great assembly of the men of the place. On the following day she took scented water in which to wash the Lord Jesus, and afterwards she poured the same water over her son, whom she had taken with her. Immediately her son was cured of his leprosy. Therefore, singing thanks and praises to God, she said, 'Blessed is the mother who bore you O Jesus; do you so cleanse those who share the same nature with you with the water in which your body has been washed?'

She also bestowed great gifts upon the mistress, the Lady Mary, and sent her away with great honour.

Afterwards, they came to another city, and, wishing to spend a night there, they went to the house of a man, who, although newly married, was under the influence of witchcraft and therefore unable to enjoy his wife. However, when they had spent the night with him, his bond was loosened. At daybreak, when they were preparing themselves for the journey, the bridegroom would not let them go and prepared a great banquet for them.

Therefore they set out on the following day. As they came near to another city, they saw three women weeping as they came out of a cemetery. When the Lady Mary saw them, she said to the girl who accompanied her, 'Ask them what the matter is, or what calamity has befallen them.' They did not reply to the girl's questions, but asked instead, 'Where have you come from and where are you going, for the day is already gone and night is fast approaching?' 'We are travellers,' said the girl, 'and are looking for a hospitable house where we might pass the night.' The women said, 'Come with us and spend the night with us.' They followed them and were brought into a new house with splendid decorations and furniture. Now it was winter, and the girl, going into the chamber of the women, found them again weeping and lamenting. There stood beside them a mule, covered with cloths of gold, and sesame was put before him, and the women were kissing him and giving him food. The girl said, 'What is all the ado, my ladies, about this mule?' They answered her with tears and said, 'This mule, which you see, was our brother, born of the same mother as ourselves. When our father died, leaving us great wealth, and this, our only brother, we did our best to get him married and were preparing his nuptials for him, as is the custom. However, some women, moved by mutual jealousy, unbeknown to us, bewitched him. One night, a little before daybreak, when the door of our house was shut, we saw that our brother had been turned into a mule, as you can now see. We are sorrowful, as you can see, and we have no father to comfort us. There is no wise man, or magician, or enchanter in the world that we have omitted to send for; but nothing has done us any good. As often as our hearts are overwhelmed with grief, we go away with our mother here, and weep at our father's grave and then come back again.'

When the girl heard these things, she said, 'Be of good courage and weep not, for the cure of your distress is near. Yes, it is beside

you and in the middle of your own house. For I also was a leper, but when I saw that woman, and along with her that young child, whose name is Jesus, I sprinkled my body with the water in which his mother had washed him and I was cured. I know that he can also cure your affliction. Rise, go to Mary my mistress; bring her into your house, and tell her your secret; and entreat and supplicate her to have pity upon you.' After the women had heard the girl's words, they went quickly to the Lady Mary and brought her into their chamber, and sat down before her, weeping and saying, 'O, our mistress, Lady Mary, have pity on your handmaidens; for no-one older than ourselves, and no head of the family, neither father or brother, is left to live with us. This mule, which you see, was our brother, but women have made him such as you see by witchcraft. We beseech you to have pity upon us.' Then, grieving at their lot, the Lady Mary took up the Lord Jesus, and put him on the mule's back; and she wept as well as the women and said to Jesus Christ, 'Alas, my son, heal this mule by your mighty power and make him a man endowed with reason as he was before.' When the Lady Mary uttered these words, the mule's form was changed, and it became a young man, free from every defect. Then he and his mother and sisters adored the Lady Mary and lifted the boy above their heads, and began to kiss him, 'Blessed is she that bore you, O Jesus, O Saviour of the world; blessed are the eyes that have the joy of seeing you.'

Moreover, both the sisters said to their mother, 'Our brother has indeed been raised to human form, by the aid of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the salutary intervention of this girl, who pointed out to us Mary and her son.

Now indeed, as our brother is unmarried, it would do very well for us to give him as his wife this girl, their servant.' Therefore, having asked the Lady Mary and obtaining her consent, they prepared a magnificent wedding for the girl. Their sorrow having been changed into joy and the beating of their breasts into dancing, they began to be glad, to rejoice, to exult and to sing, adorned, on account of their great joy, in the most splendid and gorgeous attire. Then they began to recite songs and praises, and to say, 'O Jesus, son of David, who turns sorrow into gladness and lamentations into joy!' Joseph and Mary remained there ten days. They then set out, treated with great honours by these people, who, and after bidding them farewell, returned home weeping, especially the girl.

During their travels, they came to a desert; but, on hearing that robbers infested it, Joseph and Mary decided to cross it by night. However, as they were travelling along, they saw two robbers lying in the way and, along with them, a number of other robbers, who were still sleeping. Now, these two robbers, into whose hands they had fallen, were Titus and Dumachus. Titus said to Dumachus, ‘I implore you to let these persons go freely, so that our comrades may not see them.’ Dumachus refused, so Titus said to him again, ‘Take these forty drachmas from me and hold them as a pledge.’ At the same time he held out to him the belt that he had had around his waist, to keep him from opening his mouth or speaking. The Lady Mary, seeing that the robber had done them a kindness, said to him, ‘The Lord God will sustain you by his right hand and will grant you remission of your sins.’ The Lord Jesus answered and said to his mother, ‘My mother, in thirty years time the Jews will crucify me at Jerusalem, and these two robbers will be raised upon the cross along with me, Titus at my right hand and Dumachus on my left; and after that day Titus shall go before me into Paradise.’ She said, ‘God keep this from you, my son.’ Then they went towards a city of idols, which, as they drew near to it, was changed into sand-hills.

Therefore they turned aside to that sycamore that is now called Matarea, and here the Lord Jesus brought forth a fountain, in which the Lady Mary washed his shirt, and balsam was produced in that region from the sweat of the Lord Jesus that Mary sprinkled there.

Then they came down to Memphis and saw Pharaoh, and they remained in Egypt for three years. The Lord Jesus did very many miracles in Egypt, which are recorded neither in the Gospel of the Infancy nor in the perfect Gospel. **Cb**

Leabhar Breac 126–138

126, 128 tells of the palm tree:³

Ab There, great heat and thirst and a sort of hunger seized the holy Mary. Then they saw a very tall palm, which had a lot of fruit on it, standing alone on the top of a mound with a cave beside it.

³ Adapted from M. McNamara *et al.* (eds.), *Apocrypha Hiberniae I Evangelia Infantiae* (Turnhout, 2001) 400–402.

Mary said, 'We would like to eat some of the fruit of the palm', she said, 'but it cannot be climbed because of its height.' Joseph said, 'A drink of pure pleasant-tasting water would be better, because the water of the vessel has given out. And let us sit under the palm to cool ourselves', said he.

Thereafter, as Christ sat on the lap of Mary, his mother, he said to the palm, 'Bow down a little, palm tree so that my family and my mother might eat your fruit.' Thereupon the palm tree lowered its top till it was before Mary, and they ate their fill of its fruit. The palm tree then remained bent in that fashion waiting until he who had told it to bend should tell it to rise.

Then Christ said, 'Rise, palm, so that you may be among the trees of my Father's paradise and give forth water from your roots.' Angels forthwith took the tree up with them to paradise and streams of clear sweet water then came forth from the roots of the tree, And they drank their fill of it and filled their vessels and satisfied their pack animals, for Mary rode an ass, and there were two young oxen carrying provisions for them.

[*Leabhar Breac* recounts other miracles including Christ's taming of wild creatures, and the destruction of idols in Sotien.]

Chapter 138 then has: Mary and Joseph were in Egypt then for the seven years in which Herod remained alive in the kingship of the sons of Israel. How one could relate the plagues and the vengeance which Herod wreaked on the people of Israel during that time till the great fatal disease seized him we will tell hereafter concerning the deaths of Herod and of the Jews killed by him, that is, after his daughter and son-in-law, as well as friends, had perished. **D**

C. THE RETURN

A) THE COMMAND TO RETURN (CF. D)

Matthew 2:19–20

Aa But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.’ **Cb**

Infancy Thomas (Latin) 3

Bc And behold an angel of the Lord met Mary and said to her, ‘Take the child and return to the land of the Jews, for they are dead who sought his life.’ And Mary arose with Jesus, and they went to the city of Nazareth, which is in the possession of her⁴ father. Now when Joseph went out of Egypt after the death of Herod, he led him into the desert until there should be peace in Jerusalem from those who sought the child’s life; and he thanked God that he gave him understanding, and that he found favour before the Lord God.

Ps-Matthew 25⁵

Bc After a short time the angel said to Joseph, ‘Return to the land of Judah, for they are dead who sought the child’s life.’ **10A**

B) THE JOURNEY BACK

Matthew 2:21–23

Ca And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over

⁴ Variant: ‘his’.

⁵ Not in all manuscripts.

Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'

Joseph 9

Bb And that impious tyrant Herod being dead, they returned into the land of Israel, and lived in a city of Galilee which is called Nazareth.

Arabic 26

Bc And at the end of the three years he came back out of Egypt, and returned.⁶ **D**

C) MIRACLES PERFORMED BY JESUS ON THE WAY BACK
FROM EGYPT

Arabic 26-35

D Wonderful indeed that the Lord of the world should be thus borne and carried about through the world!

Afterwards, going into the city of Bethlehem, they saw many serious diseases infesting the eyes of the children, who were dying in consequence. A woman was there with a sick son, whom, as he was now very near to death, she brought to the Lady Mary, who saw him as she was washing Jesus Christ. The woman said to her, 'O my Lady Mary, look upon this son of mine, who is suffering from a grievous disease.' The Lady Mary listened to her, and said, 'Take a little of that water in which I have washed my son, and sprinkle him with it.' She therefore took a little of the water, as the Lady Mary had told her, and sprinkled it over her son. When this was done, his illness abated; and after sleeping a little, he rose up from sleep safe and sound. His mother, rejoicing at this, took him to the

⁶ Not in all manuscripts.

Lady Mary, who said to her, 'Give thanks to God, because he has healed this your son.'

There was another woman in the same place, a neighbour of the woman whose son had lately been restored to health. She wept night and day because her son was suffering from the same disease and he was now almost blind. The mother of the child that had been cured said to her, 'Why not take your son to the Lady Mary, as I did with mine when he was nearly dead? He was healed with water in which the body of her son, Jesus Christ, had been washed.' When the woman heard this from her, she too went and got some of the same water and washed her son with it, and his body and his eyes were instantly made well. When the woman took her son to the mother of Jesus and told her all that had happened, the Lady Mary ordered her to give thanks to God for her son's restoration to health, and to tell nobody of this matter.

In the same city there were two women, wives of one man, and each had a son ill with fever. One was called Mary, and her son's name was Cleopas. She rose and took her son to the Lady Mary, the mother of Jesus, and offering her a beautiful shawl, said, 'O my Lady Mary, accept this shawl, and for it give me one small bandage.' Mary did so, and the mother of Cleopas went away and made a shirt of it and put it on her son. Thus he was cured of his disease, but the son of her rival died. Therefore, hatred sprung up between them. They did the housework for one week each, and as it was the turn of Mary the mother of Cleopas, she heated the oven to bake bread; and going away to fetch the dough that she had kneaded, she left her son, Cleopas, beside the oven. Her rival, seeing him alone, and the oven very hot from the fire blazing under it, seized him and threw him into the oven, then took herself off. Mary, coming back and seeing her son Cleopas lying in the oven laughing and the oven quite cold, as if no fire had even been near it, knew that her rival had thrown him into the fire. She therefore drew him out and took him to the Lady Mary, and told her what had happened to him. The Lady Mary said, 'Keep silence, and tell no one of the affair; for I am afraid for you if you divulge it.' After this, her rival went to the well to draw water, and, seeing, Cleopas playing beside the well, and nobody near, she seized him and threw him into the well and then went home herself. Some men who had gone to the well for water saw the boy sitting on the surface of the water; and so they went down and drew him out. They were seized with a

great admiration of the boy and praised God. Then the boy's mother came, and, weeping, took him up and went to the Lady Mary, and said, 'O my lady, see what my rival has done to my son, and how she has thrown him into the well. She will be sure to destroy him some day or other.' The Lady Mary replied, 'God will avenge you upon her.' Later, when her rival went to the well to draw water, her feet got tangled in the rope, and she fell into the well. Some men came to draw her out, but they found that her skull was fractured and her bones broken. Thus she died a miserable death and in her came to pass that saying: 'They have dug a well deep, but have fallen into the pit which they have prepared'.

Another woman had twin sons who had fallen ill. One of them had already died and the other was very near death. His mother, weeping, lifted him up, and took him to the Lady Mary, and said, 'O my lady, help me and succour me, for I had two sons, and I have just buried one and the other is at the point of death. See how I am going to entreat and pray to God.' She began to pray, 'O Lord, you gave me two sons, of whom you have taken away the one, at least leave this one to me.' Therefore, the Lady Mary, seeing the fervour of her weeping, had compassion on her, and said, 'Put your son on my son's bed, and cover him with his clothes.' The woman put her son in the bed in which the Christ was lying. The child had already closed his eyes in death, but as the smell of the clothes of the Lord Jesus Christ reached the boy, he opened his eyes, and, calling for his mother with a loud voice, he asked for bread, and took it and sucked it. Then his mother said, 'O Lady Mary, now I know that the power of God dwells in you, so that your son heals those that share the same nature with himself, as soon as they have touched his clothes.' This boy that was healed is he who in the Gospel is called Batholomew.⁷

Moreover there was a leprous woman, and she went to the Lady Mary, the mother of Jesus, and said, 'My lady, help me.' The Lady Mary answered, 'What help do you need? Is it gold or silver, or is it that your body be cured from the leprosy?' The woman asked, 'Who can grant me this?' The Lady Mary replied, 'Wait a little, until I have washed my son Jesus and put him to bed.' The woman waited as Mary had told her. When Mary had put Jesus to bed,

⁷ Variant 'Thomas'.

she held out to the woman the water in which she had washed his body, and said, 'Take a little of this water and pour it over your body.' As soon as she had done this, the woman was cured and gave praise and thanks to God.

After staying with Mary three days, the woman went away. She came to a city, where one of the chief men had married the daughter of another of the chief men. However, when the man saw his wife, he noticed that between her eyes was the mark of leprosy, in the shape of a star, and so the marriage was dissolved and became null and void. When the woman who had been cured by Mary saw them weeping and overwhelmed with sorrow, she asked them the cause of their grief. However, they replied, 'Do not inquire into our condition for we cannot tell anyone of our grief or speak of it to anyone but ourselves.' Nevertheless, she urged and entreated them to entrust it to her, saying that perhaps she would be able to tell them of a remedy. When they showed her the girl and, as soon as the woman had seen the sign of the leprosy that had appeared between the eyes of the girl, the woman said, 'I also, whom you see here, suffered from the same disease, when, upon some business which happened on my way, I went into Bethlehem. Going into a cave there, I saw a woman named Mary, whose son was named Jesus. When she saw that I was a leper, Mary took pity upon me, and gave me the water in which she had washed her son's body. I sprinkled my body with it and was cured.' Then the girl said, 'Will you not, O lady, rise and go with us and show us the Lady Mary?' The woman agreed, and they all rose and went to the Lady Mary, carrying with them magnificent gifts. When they had presented to Mary the gifts, they showed her the leprous girl, whom they had brought with them. The Lady Mary said, 'May the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ descend upon you', and handed them a little of the water in which she had washed the body of Jesus Christ, ordering the miserable woman to be bathed in it. When this had been done, the girl was immediately cured and all those standing nearby, praised God. They therefore joyfully returned to their own city, praising the Lord for what he had done. When the chief heard that his wife had been cured, he took her home and made a second marriage, and gave thanks to God for the recovery of his wife's health.

There was also a young woman afflicted by Satan, for that accursed wretch repeatedly appeared to her in the form of huge dragon that prepared to swallow her. He also sucked out all her blood so that

she was left like a corpse. As often as he came near her, she, with her hands clasped over her head, cried out, and said, 'Woe, woe is me, for nobody is near to free me from that accursed dragon!' Her father and mother and all those who were about her or saw her, bewailed her lot. Men stood round her in a crowd and all wept and lamented, especially when she wept and said, 'Oh my brethren and friends, is there no one to free me from that murderer?' The daughter of the chief who had been healed of her leprosy, on hearing the girl's voice, went up to the roof of her castle, and saw the girl with her hands clasped over her head weeping, and all the crowds standing round her weeping as well. She therefore asked the demoniac's husband whether his wife's mother was alive. When he answered that both her parents were living, she said, 'Send for her mother to come to me.' The girl's husband sent for his mother-in-law. When she arrived, the chief's daughter asked, 'Is that distracted girl your daughter?' 'Yes, O lady' answered the sorrowful and weeping mother, 'she is my daughter.' The chief's daughter answered, 'Keep my secret, for I confess to you that I was formerly a leper; but now the lady Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, has healed me. If you wish your daughter to be healed, take her to Bethlehem, and look for Mary the mother of Jesus and believe that your daughter will be healed. I believe, indeed, that you will come back with joy, with your daughter healed.' As soon as the woman heard the words of the chief's daughter she quickly led away her own daughter; and going to the place indicated, she went to the Lady Mary and showed her the state of her daughter. The Lady Mary, hearing her words, gave her a little of the water in which she had washed the body of her son Jesus, and ordered her to pour it on the body of her daughter. She also gave her a swaddling cloth, which had come from the clothes of Jesus, and said, 'Take this cloth, and show it to your enemy as often as you see him.' Then she saluted them and sent them away.

They left and returned to their own district. The time was at hand when Satan would often attack her, and at that very time, that accursed one appeared to her in the shape of a huge dragon, and the girl was afraid at the sight of him. Her mother said to her, 'Fear not, my daughter, allow him to come near you and then show him the cloth that the Lady Mary has given us, and let us see what will happen.' Satan came near in the likeness of a terrible dragon and the body of the girl shuddered for fear of him, but as soon as she

took out the cloth, and placed it on her head, and covered her eyes with it, flames and live coals began to dart forth from it and were cast upon the dragon. O the great miracle that was done as soon as the dragon saw the cloth of the Lord Jesus, from which fire darted and was cast upon his head and eyes! He cried out in a loud voice, 'What have I do with you, O Jesus, son of Mary? Whither shall I fly from you?' and, with great fear, he turned his back and departed from the girl, and never appeared to her again. The girl now had rest from him and gave praise and thanks to God, as did all those who were present at that miracle.

Another woman, living in the same place, had a son who was tormented by Satan. He, Judas by name, when seized by Satan, used to bite all who came near him; and if he found no one near him, he used to bite his own hands and other limbs. The mother of this wretched creature, on hearing the fame of the Lady Mary and her son, Jesus, rose up and took her son to the Lady Mary. In the meantime, James and Joses had taken the Lord Jesus with them to play with the other children. They had gone out of the house and sat down, and the Lord Jesus was with them. The demoniac Judas came up and sat down at Jesus' right hand, and then, being attacked by Satan in the same manner as usual, wanted to bite the Lord Jesus, but was unable to. Nevertheless he struck Jesus on the right side, whereupon Jesus began to weep. Immediately Satan went forth out of that boy, fleeing like a mad dog. The boy who struck Jesus and out of whom Satan fled in the shape of a dog was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus to the Jews. The Jews transfixed Jesus with a spear on the same side that Judas had struck. **10A**

D. THE DEATH OF HEROD (CF. ALSO CA CB)

Joseph 9

Bb Now Herod died by the worst form of death, atoning for the shedding of the blood of the children who he had wickedly murdered even though they were without sin. **Cb**

Arabic 26

Cb When they arrived at Judea, Joseph was afraid to enter it. On hearing that Herod was dead and that Archelaus his son had succeeded him, he was very afraid indeed, but he went into Judea. An angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said, 'Joseph, go into the city of Nazareth and live there.' **Cc**

[*Leabhar Breac* 139–151 relates the maladies preceding Herod's death. Chapter 152 then has:

When Herod had died in that manner the angel came to Joseph while they were in Egypt and said to him, 'Go and take with you the boy, Jesus, and his mother, Mary, and depart to the land of Israel, for all those who sought you, Herod and his followers, are dead.' However, when they heard that it was Archelaus, son of Herod, who was king of Israel they went to Nazareth of Galilee and they remained there henceforth till Christ was baptized in the River Jordan.

[*Leabhar Breac* 153–158 relates the history of the Romans in Palestine up to the time of Pilate.]

CHAPTER TEN

JESUS AS A CHILD

Contained in:

Infancy Gospel of Thomas 2—end (Greek A and B)

Ps-Matthew 26–42¹

Arabic Infancy Gospel 36–53

Irish Versified Narrative

Summary of Narrative:

A. Jesus and the Birds

InfTh A, B, Ps-Matthew, Arabic (*bis*), Irish Verse

B. Jesus Curses a Boy

InfTh A, B, Ps-Matthew, Arabic, Irish Verse

C. Jesus and the Alphabet

i) With Zacchaeus

InfTh A, B, Ps-Matthew, Arabic, Irish Verse

ii) With Another Teacher

InfTh A, Ps-Matthew, Arabic

iii) With a Third Teacher

InfTh A, Ps-Matthew

D. Jesus and Zeno

InfTh A, B, Ps-Matthew, Arabic, Irish Verse

E. Jesus Heals a Man's Foot

InfTh A, B

F. Jesus Fetches Water

InfTh A, B, Ps-Matthew, Arabic, Irish Verse

¹ These chapters are what Tischendorf called the *Pars Altera*. They are found in later forms of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. See Introduction.

- G. Jesus Sows a Field
InfTh A, Ps-Matthew, Irish Verse
- H. Jesus stretches a Beam
InfTh A, B, Ps-Matthew, Arabic, Irish Verse
- I. Jesus Heals James' Viper Bite
InfTh A, Ps-Matthew, Arabic
- J. Jesus Heals a Sick Child
InfTh A
- K. Jesus Heals a Workman
InfTh A
- L. Jesus and the Lions
Ps-Matthew
- M. Joseph Heals in the Name of Jesus
Ps-Matthew
- N. The Poisoned Boy
Arabic
- O. Jesus Shares a Meal with his Family
Ps-Matthew
- P. Jesus and the Dyer
Arabic
- Q. Jesus and the Throne
Arabic
- R. Jesus and the Kids
Arabic
- S. Jesus the King
Arabic
- T. Jesus in the Temple at the Age of Twelve
Luke, InfTh A, Arabic

Summary of the Contents of the Texts:

Luke T

Infancy Thomas (A) A B Ci, ii, iii D E F G H I J K T

Infancy Thomas (B) A B Ci D E F H

Ps-Matthew A B Ci, ii iii D F G H I L M O

Arabic A B Ci, ii D F H I N P Q R S T

Irish Verse A B Ci D F G H

A. JESUS AND THE BIRDS

Infancy Thomas A 2-3

When this boy Jesus was five years old he was playing at the crossing of a stream, and he gathered together into pools the running water, and instantly made it clean, and gave his command with a single word. Having made soft clay he moulded from it twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when he did these things. And there were also many other children playing with him. When a certain Jew saw what Jesus was doing while playing on the Sabbath, he at once went and told his father Joseph, 'See, your child is at the stream, and he took clay and moulded twelve birds and has profaned the Sabbath.' And when Joseph came to the place and looked, he cried out to him, saying, 'Why do you do on the Sabbath things which it is not lawful to do?' But Jesus clapped his hands and cried out to the sparrows and said to them, 'Be gone!' And the sparrows took flight and went away chirping. The Jews were amazed when they saw this, and went away and told their leaders what they had seen Jesus do.

Now the son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Joseph; and he took a branch of a willow and with it dispersed the water which Jesus had collected. When Jesus saw what he had done he was angry and said to him, 'You insolent, godless ignoramus, what harm did the pools and the water do to you? Behold, now you also shall wither like a tree and shall bear neither leaves nor root nor fruit.' And immediately that child withered up completely; and Jesus departed and went into Joseph's house. But the parents of the boy who was withered carried him away, bemoaning his lost youth, and brought him to Joseph and reproached him. 'What kind of child do you have, who does such things?' **B**

Infancy Thomas B 2-3

One day, when there was a shower, he went out of the house where his mother was and was playing on the ground where water was flowing down. And when he had made pools, the waters came down and the pools were filled with water. Then he said, 'I will that you waters become clear and good.' And straightway they became

so. But a certain child of Annas the scribe passed by, carrying a stick of willow, and he broke up the pools with the stick and the waters gushed out. And Jesus turned and said to him, 'Wicked and lawless one, what harm did the pools do you that you emptied them? You shall not go on your way and you shall dry up like the stick which you are holding.' And as he was going, after a little while, he fell down and gave up the ghost. And when the young children who were playing with him saw it, they marvelled and went and told the father of the dead child. And he ran and found the child dead and went and complained to Joseph.

And Jesus made of that clay twelve sparrows; and it was Sabbath. And one young child ran and told Joseph saying, 'Behold your child is playing in the brook and has made sparrows of the clay, which is not lawful.' And having heard, he went and said to the child, 'Why do you do these things, profaning the Sabbath?' And Jesus did not answer, but looked at the sparrows and said, 'Go, fly away, and remember me while you live.' And at the word they took flight and went off into the air. And Joseph marvelled when he saw it. **B**

Ps-Matthew 26-28

9Ca And it came to pass, after Jesus had returned from Egypt, to live in Galilee, he was playing on a Sabbath-day with some children at the bed of the Jordan. He was entering the fourth year of his age. And as he sat there, Jesus made for himself seven pools of clay, and to each of them he made passages, through which at his command he brought water from the torrent into the pool, and took it back again. Then one of those children, a son of the devil, moved with envy, shut the passages which supplied the pools with water, and overthrew what Jesus had built up. Then Jesus said to him, 'Woe you son of death, you son of Satan! Do you destroy the works which I have wrought?' And immediately he who had done this died. Then with great uproar the parents of the dead boy cried out against Mary and Joseph, saying to them, 'Your son has cursed our son, and he is dead.' And when Joseph and Mary heard this, they came forthwith to Jesus, on account of the outcry of the parents of the boy, and the gathering together of the Jews. But Joseph said privately to Mary, 'I dare not speak to him; but you admonish him, and say, "Why have you raised against us the hatred of the people;

and why must the troublesome hatred of men be borne by us?" And his mother having come to him, asked him, saying, 'My Lord, what was it that he did to bring about his death?' And he said, 'He deserved death, because he scattered the works that I had made.' Then his mother asked him, saying, 'Do not so, my Lord, because all men rise up against us.' But he, not wishing to grieve his mother, with his right foot kicked the hinder parts of the dead boy, and said to him, 'Rise, you son of iniquity; for you are not worthy to enter into the rest of my Father, because you destroyed the works which I had made.' Then he who had been dead rose up, and went away. And Jesus, by the word of his power, brought water into the pools by the aqueduct.

And it came to pass, after these things, that in the sight of all Jesus took clay from the pools, which he had made, and of it made twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when Jesus did this, and there were very many children with him. When, therefore, one of the Jews had seen him doing this, he said to Joseph, 'Joseph do you not see the child Jesus working on the Sabbath at what it is not lawful for him to do? He has made twelve sparrows of clay.' And when Joseph heard this, he reprov'd him, saying, 'Why do you do on the Sabbath such things as are not lawful for us to do?' And when Jesus heard Joseph, he struck his hands together, and said to his sparrows, 'Fly!' And at the voice of his command they began to fly. And in the sight and hearing of all who stood by, he said to the birds, 'Go and fly through the earth, and through all the world, and live.' And when those who were there saw such miracles, they were filled with great astonishment. And some praised and admired him, but others reviled him. And certain of them went away to the chief priests and the heads of the Pharisees, and reported to them that Jesus the son of Joseph had done great signs and miracles in the sight of all the people of Israel. And this was reported in the twelve tribes of Israel.

And again the son of Annas, a priest of the Temple, who had come with Joseph, holding his rod in his hand in the sight of all, with great fury broke down the dams which Jesus had made with his own hands, and let out the water which he had collected in them from the torrent. Moreover, he shut the aqueduct by which the water came in, and then broke it down. And when Jesus saw this, he said to that boy who had destroyed his dams, 'O most wicked seed of iniquity! O son of death! O workshop of Satan! verily the fruit of

your seed shall be without strength, and your roots without moisture, and your branches withered, bearing no fruit.' And immediately, in the sight of all, the boy withered away, and died. **B**

Arabic 36

9Cc Now, when the Lord Jesus had completed seven years from his birth, on a certain day he was occupied with boys of his own age. They were playing with clay, from which they were making images of asses, oxen, birds, and other animals; and each one boasting of his skill, was praising his own work. Then the Lord Jesus said to the boys, 'The images that I have made I will order to walk.' The boys asked him whether he were the son of the Creator; and the Lord Jesus bade them walk. And they immediately began to leap; and then, when he had given them leave, they again stood still. And he had made figures of birds and sparrows, which flew when he told them to fly, and stood still when he told them to stand, and ate and drank when he handed them food and drink. After the boys had gone away and told this to their parents, their fathers said to them, 'My sons, take care not to keep company with him again, for he is a wizard: flee from him, therefore, and avoid him, and do not play with him again after this.' **P**

Arabic 46

F Again, on another day, the Lord Jesus was with the boys at a stream of water, and they had again made little fish-ponds. And the Lord Jesus had made twelve sparrows, and had arranged them round his fish-pond, three on each side. And it was the Sabbath-day. Wherefore a Jew, the son of Hanan, coming up, and seeing them thus engaged, said in anger and great indignation, 'Do you make figures of clay on the Sabbath-day?' And he ran quickly, and destroyed their fish-ponds. But when the Lord Jesus clapped his hands over the sparrows which he had made, they flew away chirping.

Then the son of Hanan came up to the fish-pond of Jesus also, and kicked it with his shoes, and the water vanished away. And the Lord Jesus said to him, 'As that water has vanished away, so your life shall likewise vanish away.' And immediately that boy dried up. **B**

Irish Verse 1-10

When Jesus, son of the living God, was a small boy, five years of age, he blessed twelve small pools; he had fenced them in with clay.

He fashioned twelve small birds—*passeres* they are called; on the Sabbath day he made them smoothly out of clay.

A certain Jew upbraided Jesus, son of the great God; he escorted him by the hand to his foster-father, Joseph.

‘Reprove your son, Joseph, what he does is not good; on the Sabbath day he has made clay-images of birds.’

Jesus clapped his two hands, his little voice was heard; before their eyes—kingly the grace!—he scared the birds away.

A dear beautiful little voice was heard on the lips of pure Jesus: ‘So that you may know who has made you, go to your home.’

A certain man announced it to the people; wonderful was the news: the cries of the birds in flight were heard.

The son of Annas, the scribe, came towards his play-thing; he let each stream run out at its side; he destroyed the masonry.

‘What have you done’, said Jesus, ‘has not been of advantage to us; may you be as a little branch that falls before its fruit.’

The boy collapsed like a withered twig; it would have been better for him if he had not destroyed the play-thing of the King’s son. **B**

NOTE:

The Koran knows of the tradition that Jesus performed miracles including the following: “I create for you from clay something resembling the form of birds and I blow into it and it becomes birds by God’s leave” (Sura 3:49 and cf. Sura 5:110). Muslim commentators from the classical period refer to this. The *Tafsīr* of Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī (*ob.* AD 922)—the oldest major commentary on the Koran extant—quotes an earlier tradition traced back to Ibn Ishāq (*ob.* AD 768):

Jesus, the blessings of God be upon him, was sitting one day with the boys from the elementary school. He took clay and then said, ‘Shall I make a bird for you from this clay?’ They said, ‘Can you do that?’ He replied, ‘Yes, by leave of my Lord.’ Then he prepared it and when he had made it in the form of a bird he blew into it. Then he said, ‘Become a bird by leave of my Lord.’ So it flew out between the palms of his hands.

The boys went off and mentioned that business of his to their teacher and divulged it to the people.

Jesus grew and the Children of Israel had in mind to do away with him. So when his mother feared for him she bore him on a little donkey of hers and went off as a fugitive with him.

(See Neal Robinson, "Creating Birds from Clay: A Miracle in the Qur'an and in Classical Muslim Exegesis" *Muslim World* 79 (1989) pp. 1-13.)

B. JESUS CURSES A BOY

Infancy Thomas A 4-5

A After this he again went through the village, and a child ran and knocked against his shoulder. Jesus was angered and said to him, 'You shall not go further on your way', and immediately he fell down and died. But some, who saw what took place, said, 'From where was this child born, since his every word is an accomplished deed?' And the parents of the dead child came to Joseph and blamed him and said, 'Since you have such a child, you cannot dwell with us in the village; teach him to bless and not to curse. He is killing our children.'

And Joseph called the child to him privately and admonished him saying, 'Why do you do such things? These people suffer and hate us and persecute us.' But Jesus replied, 'I know that these words are not yours; nevertheless for your sake I will be silent. But these people shall bear their punishment.' And immediately those who had accused him became blind. And those who saw it were greatly afraid and perplexed, and said concerning him, 'Every word he speaks, whether good or evil, was a deed and became a miracle.' And when they saw that Jesus had done this, Joseph arose and took him by the ear and pulled it violently. And the child was angry and said to him, 'It is fitting for you to seek and not to find, and you have acted most unwisely. Do you not know that I am yours? Do not vex me.' **C(i)**

Infancy Thomas B 4-5

A And after some days, as Jesus was going through the middle of the city, a certain child threw a stone at him and hit him on the shoulder. And Jesus said to him, 'You shall not go on your way.' And straightway he too fell down and died. And those who happened to be there were astonished saying, 'Where does this young child come from that every word that he says has immediate effect?' They too went and complained to Joseph, saying, 'You will not be able to dwell with us in this city. But if you please, teach your child to bless and not to curse; for he slays our children and every word that he says has immediate effect.'

And when Joseph was seated upon his chair, the child stood before him. And taking hold of him by the ear, he pinched it hard. And Jesus looked intently at him and said, 'It is enough for you.' **C(i)**

Ps-Matthew 29

A Then Joseph trembled, and took hold of Jesus, and went with him to his own house, and his mother with him. And, behold, suddenly from the opposite direction a boy, also a worker of iniquity, ran up and touched the shoulder of Jesus, wishing to make sport of him, or to hurt him, if he could. And Jesus said to him, 'You shall not go back safe and sound from the way that you came. And immediately he fell down, and died. And the parents of the dead boy, who had seen what happened, cried out, saying, 'Where does this child come from? It is manifest that every word that he says is true; and it is often accomplished before he speaks.' And the parents of the dead boy came to Joseph, and said to him, 'Take away that Jesus from this place, for he cannot live with us in this town; or at least teach him to bless, and not to curse.' And Joseph came up to Jesus, and admonished him, saying, 'Why do you do such things? For already many are in grief and against you, and hate us on your account, and we endure the reproaches of men because of you.' And Jesus answered and said unto Joseph, 'No one is a wise son but he whom his father has taught, according to the knowledge of this time; and a father's curse can hurt none but evil-doers.' Then they came together against Jesus, and accused him to Joseph. When Joseph saw this, he was in great terror, fearing the violence and uproar of the

people of Israel. And the same hour Jesus seized the dead boy by the ear, and lifted him up from the earth in the sight of all: and they saw Jesus speaking to him like a father to his son. And his spirit came back to him, and he revived. And all of them wondered. **C(i)**

Arabic 47

A At another time, when the Lord Jesus was returning home with Joseph in the evening, he met a boy, who ran up against him with so much force that he fell. And the Lord Jesus said to him, 'As you have thrown me down, so you shall fall, and not rise again.' And the same hour the boy fell down, and expired. **C(i)**

Irish Verse 11-21

A Another time when Jesus was at home with Joseph another boy who came to him annoyed him.

'May it not be a going and coming', said Jesus, 'the journey you have made.' The boy collapsed; he died on the instant.

He annoyed the ignoble kin of the boy upon whom he had pronounced the doom. They said, 'With your son, Joseph, go from us, avoid the land and the village.'

'Unless you restrain your son you must go elsewhere; whatever path you might take out of here it would not be too soon.'

'Why, son', said Joseph, 'have you annoyed the people? Anyone upon whom you pronounce your doom is taken away dead from you.'

'Anyone who is innocent', said Jesus, 'does not die from judgements. It is only the wicked that the curse pursues.'

'It is enough that I gave my ear to them and that they be hostile to me without that, in addition, they should shear the two ears from my head.'

'A great terror,' said the people, 'is your son who does this thing; until now we never heard of any such little boy.'

'Quicker than a glance around, everything he says is done immediately; we never heard of the equal of that boy in the world.'

Said Joseph, 'He is not like the sons of others: unless it were a cross or death, whichever it be, he would not attain at all.'

‘Everyone who solemnly reviled him, he punished: deafness seized their ears, blindness their eyes.’ **C(i)**

C. JESUS AND THE ALPHABET²

i) WITH ZACCHAEUS (ZACHARIAS)

Infancy Thomas A 6–8

B Now a certain teacher, Zacchaeus by name, who was standing in a certain place, heard Jesus saying these things to his father, and marvelled greatly that, being a child, he voiced such things. And after a few days he came near to Joseph and said to him, ‘You have a clever child, and he has understanding. Come, hand him over to me that he may learn letters, and I will teach him with the letters all knowledge, and how to address all the older people and to honour them as forefathers and fathers, and to love those of his own age.’ And he told him all the letters from Alpha to Omega distinctly, and with much questioning. But he looked at Zacchaeus the teacher and said to him. ‘How do you, who do not know the Alpha according to its nature, teach others the Beta? Hypocrite, first if you know it, teach the Alpha, and then we shall believe you concerning the Beta.’³ Then he began to question the teacher about the first letter, and he was unable to answer him. And in the hearing of many the

² Cf. *Epistula Apostolorum* 4 in J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993), 559.

³ Irenaeus, *Av. Haer.* 1.13. 1 says that the Marcosian sect support their doctrines by a vast number of apocryphal writings. ‘They adduce, too, this false invention, that when the Lord as a child was learning the alphabet, and his teacher said, as the custom is, “Say Alpha”, he answered, “Alpha.” But when the teacher bade him say Beta, the Lord answered, “First tell me what Alpha is, and then will I tell thee what Beta is.” And this they interpret as meaning that he alone knew the unknown mystery, which he manifested in the form of Alpha.’

⁴ The text appears to be corrupt. Literally it seems to be: ‘how it has lines and a middle stroke which you see, common to both, going apart, coming together, raised up on high, dancing (?), of three signs, like in kind (?) balanced, equal in measure.’

child said to Zacchaeus, ‘Hear, teacher, the arrangement of the first letter, and pay heed to this, how it has lines and a middle stroke which goes through the pair of lines which you see, (how these lines) converge, rise, turn in the dance, three signs of the same kind, subject to and supporting one another, of equal proportions; here you have the lines of the Alpha’.⁴

Now when Zacchaeus the teacher heard so many such allegorical descriptions of the first letter being expounded by the child, he was perplexed at such a reply and at his teaching and said to those who were present, ‘Woe is me, I am in difficulties wretch that I am; I have brought shame to myself in drawing to myself this child. Take him away, therefore, I beseech you, brother Joseph. I cannot endure the severity of his gaze; I cannot make out his speech at all. This child is not earth-born; he can even subdue fire. Perhaps he was begotten even before the creation of the world. What belly bore him, what womb nurtured him I do not know. Woe is me, my friend, he confuses me; I cannot attain to his understanding. I have deceived myself, thrice wretched man that I am. I desired to get a pupil, and have found I have a teacher. My friends, I am filled with shame, that I, an old man, have been defeated by a child. I suffer despair and death because of this child, for I cannot in this hour look him in the face. And when all say that I have been conquered by a small child, what have I to say? And what can I tell concerning the lines of the first letter of which he spoke to me? I do not know, my friends, for I know neither beginning nor end of it. Therefore I beg you, brother Joseph, take him away to your house. Whatever great thing he is, a god or an angel I do not know what I should say’.

And while the Jews were trying to console Zacchaeus, the child laughed aloud and said, ‘Now let those who are yours bear fruit, and let the blind in heart see. I have come from above to curse them and to call them to the things above, as he who sent me ordained for your sakes.’ And when the child had ceased speaking, immediately all those who had fallen under his curse were saved. And no one after that dared to provoke him, lest he should curse him, and he should be maimed. **D**

Infancy Thomas B 6–7

B And on the next day he took him by the hand and led him to a certain teacher named Zacchaeus and said to him, ‘Take this child,

teacher, and teach him letters.’ And he said, ‘Hand him over to me, brother, and I will teach him the Scripture and persuade him to bless everything and not to curse.’ And when Jesus heard he laughed, and said to them, ‘You say what things you know, but I understand more things than you; for before the ages I am. And I know when your fathers’ fathers were born, and I understand how many are the years of your life.’ And everyone who heard was astonished. And again Jesus said to them, ‘Are you astonished because I said to you that I know how many are the years of your life? Truly I know when the world was created. Behold, you do not believe me now. When you see my cross then you will believe that I speak the truth.’ And they were astonished when they heard these things.

And Zacchaeus wrote the alphabet in Hebrew and said to him, ‘Alpha.’ And the child said, ‘Alpha.’ And the teacher said again ‘Alpha’ and the child likewise. Then again the teacher said a third time, ‘Alpha.’ Then Jesus looking at the teacher said, ‘You do not know the Alpha, how will you teach another the Beta?’ And the child, beginning from the Alpha, said of his own accord the twenty-two letters. Then, again, he said, ‘Hear, teacher, the arrangements of the first letter, and know how many strokes and rules it has, and marks that are common, diametral, and convergent.’ And when Zacchaeus heard such attributes of the one letter, he was astonished, and could not answer him. And he turned to Joseph and said, ‘Brother, truly this child is not earth-born; therefore take him away from me.’ **D**

Ps-Matthew 30–31

B Now a certain Jewish schoolmaster named Zachyas heard Jesus speaking; and seeing that he could not be overcome, knowing the power that was in him, he became angry, and began rudely and foolishly, and without fear, to speak against Joseph. And he said, ‘Do you not wish to entrust me with your son, that he may be instructed in human learning and in reverence? But I see that Mary and yourself have more regard for your son than for what the elders of the people of Israel say against him. You should have given more honour to us, the elders of the whole church of Israel, both that he might be on terms of mutual affection with the children, and that among us he might be instructed in Jewish learning.’ Joseph, for his part, said to him, ‘And is there any one who can keep this child,

and teach him? But if you can keep and teach him, we by no means hinder him from being taught by you those things which are learned by all.' And Jesus, having heard what Zachyas had said, answered and said to him, 'The precepts of the law which you have just spoken of, and all the things that you have named, must be kept by those who are instructed in human learning; but I am stranger to your law-courts, because I have no father after the flesh. You who read the law, and are learned in it, abide in the law; but I was before the law. But you think that no one is equal to you in learning, and that no other can teach anything but that which you have named I shall teach you. But he alone who is worthy can teach. For when I shall be exalted on earth, I will cause to cease all mention of your genealogy. For you know not when you were born: I alone know, when you were born, and how long your life on earth will be.' Then all who heard these words were struck with astonishment, and cried out, 'Oh! oh! oh! This marvellously great and wonderful mystery. Never have we heard the like! Never has it been heard from any one else, nor has it been said or at any time heard by the prophets, or the Pharisees, or the scribes. We know whence he is sprung, and he is scarcely five years old; and whence does he speak these words? The Pharisees answered, 'We have never heard such words spoken by any other child so young.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'At this you wonder, that such things are said by a child? Why, then, do you not believe me in those things which I have said to you? And you all wonder because I said to you that I know when you were born. I will tell you greater things, that you may wonder more. I have seen Abraham, whom you call your father, and have spoken with him; and he has seen me.' And when they heard this they held their tongues, nor did any of them dare to speak. And Jesus said to them, 'I have been among you with children, and you have not known me; I have spoken to you as to wise men, and you have not understood my words because you are younger than I am, and of little faith.'

A second time the master Zachyas, doctor of the law, said to Joseph and Mary, 'Give me the boy, and I shall hand him over to Master Levi, who shall teach him his letters and instruct him.' Then Joseph and Mary, soothing Jesus, took him to school, that he might be taught his letters by old Levi. And as soon as he went in he held his tongue. And the master Levi said one letter to Jesus, and, beginning from the first letter Aleph, said to him, 'Answer.' But Jesus was

silent, and answered nothing. Wherefore the preceptor Levi was angry, and seized his storax-tree rod, and struck him on the head. And Jesus said to the teacher Levi, 'Why do you strike me? You shall know in truth, that he who is struck can teach him who strikes him more than he can be taught by him. For I can teach you those very things that you are saying. But all these are blind who speak and hear, like sounding brass or tinkling cymbal, in which there is no perception of those things which are meant by their sound.' And Jesus in addition said to Zachyas, 'Every letter from Aleph even to Thet is known by its arrangement. Say first, therefore, what Thet is, and I will tell you what Aleph is.' And again Jesus said to them, 'Those who do not know Aleph, how can they say Thet, the hypocrites? Tell me what the first one, Aleph is; and I shall then believe you when you have said Beth.' And Jesus began to ask the names of the letters one by one, and said, 'Let the master of the law tell us what the first letter is, or why it has many triangles, graduate, subacute, mediate, obduced, produced, erect, prostrate, curvistrate.' And when Levi heard this, he was thunderstruck at such an arrangement of the names of the letters. Then he began in the hearing of all to cry out, and say, 'Ought such a one to live on the earth? He ought to be hung on a great cross. For he can put out fire, and make sport of other modes of punishment. I think that he lived before the flood, and was born before the deluge. For what womb bore him? Or what mother brought him forth? Or what breasts gave him suck? I flee before him; I am not able to withstand the words from his mouth, but my heart is astounded to hear such words. I do not think that any man can understand what he says, unless God were with him. Now I, unfortunate wretch, have given myself up to be a laughing-stock to him. For when I thought I had a scholar, I, not knowing him, have found my master. What shall I say? I cannot withstand the words of this child: I shall now flee from this town, because I cannot understand them. An old man like me has been beaten by a boy, because I can find neither beginning nor end of what he says. For it is no easy matter to find a beginning of him.' I tell you of a certainty, I am not lying, that to my eyes the proceedings of this boy, the commencement of his conversation, and the upshot of his intention, seem to have nothing in common with mortal man. I do not know whether he be a wizard or a god or whether an angel of God speaks in him. Whence he is, or where he comes from, or who he will turn out to be, I know not.' Then

Jesus, smiling at him with a joyful countenance, said in a commanding voice to all the sons of Israel standing by and hearing, 'Let the unfruitful bring forth fruit, and the blind see, and the lame walk right, and the poor enjoy the good things of this life, and the dead live, that each may return to his original state, and abide in him who is the root of life and perpetual sweetness.' And when the child Jesus had said this, forthwith all who had fallen under malignant diseases were restored. And they did not dare to say anything more to him, or to hear anything from him. **C(ii)**

Arabic 48

B There was, moreover, at Jerusalem a certain man named Zachaeus, who taught boys. He said to Joseph, 'Why, O Joseph, do you not bring Jesus to me to learn his letters?' Joseph agreed to do so, and reported the matter to the Lady Mary. They therefore took him to the master; and he, as soon as he saw him, wrote out the alphabet for him, and told him to say Aleph. And when he had said Aleph, the master ordered him to pronounce Beth. And the Lord Jesus said to him, 'Tell me first the meaning of the letter Aleph, and then I shall pronounce Beth.' And when the master threatened to flog him, the Lord Jesus explained to him the meanings of the letters Aleph and Beth; also which figures of the letters were straight, which crooked, which drawn round into a spiral, which marked with points, which without them, why one letter went before another; and many other things he began to recount and to elucidate which the master himself had never either heard or read in any book. The Lord Jesus, moreover, said to the master, 'Listen, and I shall say them to you. And he began clearly and distinctly to repeat Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, on to Tau. And the master was astonished, and said, 'I think that this boy was born before Noah.' And turning to Joseph, said, 'You have brought to me to be taught a boy more learned than all the masters.' To the Lady Mary also he said, 'This son of yours has no need of instruction.' **C(ii)**

Irish Verse 22-39

B Said the sage Zacharias, ‘This is a wonderful boy; were he to be taught he would be more wonderful still.’

Zacharias takes him with him to his school in order that he might study with him like everybody else.

When he had written an alphabet for him he said, ‘Say A.’ Though the son of the King did not answer he knew more.

The master became angry; he hit him on the head, using either fist or stick.

‘This is how it is wont to be,’ said Jesus. ‘Any anvil that is struck teaches him who strikes it; it is not it that is taught.’

‘For, what you have taught to all, what you have written for me, the letters you record, I know their names.’

Jesus recounted his letters for them before their eyes, each of them with its element and with its secret.

Said the sage Zacharias, ‘Take the boy away from me. I am not capable of answering you. Boy, do not vex me.’

‘I thought it was a pupil I brought with me to my school; I saw it was a master I had taken in charge.’

‘I do not know how it is, whether he is an angel or God; it seems to me that until today I was not befogged.’

‘Who is the mother who conceived this being in womb? Who is the foster-mother who was able to nurse the suckling?’

‘The earth is not the proper place for him: rather is this the being destined for the cross and who has been before the Flood.’

The little boy Jesus answered, ‘Sage of the law of God, you think Joseph is my father. It is not he.’

‘I was before your begetting; it is I who am the sage; I know every thought that has been in your heart.’

‘You are certain in every science, you have read all; I have a lesson for you that no man knows.’

‘I have a wonderful matter to tell you without a trace of lie; I have seen Abraham in the time when he existed.’

‘Thus did I see even you long ago through the mystery of the Holy Spirit; sage of the law, from all time before your begetting I was.’

‘That cross you speak of, he will suffer it who has come to it for the sake of all to redeem every living creature.’ **D**

ii) WITH ANOTHER TEACHER

Infancy Thomas A 14

H And when Joseph saw the understanding of the child and his age, that he was growing to maturity, he resolved again that he should not remain ignorant of letters; and he took him and handed him over to another teacher. And the teacher said to Joseph, 'First I will teach him Greek, and then Hebrew.' For the teacher knew the child's knowledge and was afraid of him. Nevertheless he wrote the alphabet and practised it with him for many an hour; but he did not answer him. And Jesus said to him, 'If you are indeed a teacher, and if you know the letters well, tell me the power of the Alpha, and I will tell you that of the Beta.' And the teacher was annoyed and struck him on the head. And the child was hurt and cursed him, and he immediately fainted and fell on his face to the ground. And the child returned to Joseph's house. But Joseph was grieved and commanded his mother, 'Do not let him go outside the door, for all those who provoke him die.' **C(iii)**

Ps-Matthew 38

H And it came to pass a second time, that Joseph and Mary were asked by the people that Jesus should be taught his letters in school. They did not refuse to do so; and according to the commandment of the elders, they took him to a master to be instructed in human learning. Then the master began to teach him in an imperious tone, saying, 'Say Alpha.' And Jesus said to him, 'Tell me first what Beta is, and I will tell you what Alpha is.' And upon this the master got angry and struck Jesus; and no sooner had he struck him, than he fell down dead.

And Jesus went home again to his mother. And Joseph, being afraid, called Mary to him, and said to her, 'Know of a surety that my soul is sorrowful even unto death on account of this child. For it is very likely that at some time or other some one will strike him in malice, and he will die.' But Mary answered and said, 'O man of God! Do not believe that this is possible. You may believe to a certainty that he who has sent him to be born among men will himself guard him from all mischief, and will in his own name preserve him from evil.' **C(iii)**

Arabic 49

C(ii) Thereafter they took him to another and a more learned master, who, when he saw him, said, 'Say Aleph.' And when he had said Aleph, the master ordered him to pronounce Beth. And the Lord Jesus answered him, and said, 'First tell me the meaning of the letter Aleph, and then I shall pronounce Beth.' And when the master hereupon raised his hand and flogged him, immediately his hand dried up, and he died. Then Joseph said to the Lady Mary, 'From this time we shall not let him go out of the house, since every one who opposes him is struck dead.' **T**

iii) WITH A THIRD TEACHER

Infancy Thomas A 15

C(ii) And after some time yet another teacher, a good friend of Joseph, said to him, 'Bring the child to me to the school. Perhaps I by persuasion can teach him the letters.' And Joseph said to him, 'If you have the courage, brother, take him with you.' And he took him with fear and anxiety, but the child went gladly. And he went boldly into the school and found a book lying on the lectern and picked it up, but did not read the letters in it; instead he opened his mouth and spoke by the Holy Spirit and taught the law to those that stood around. And a large crowd assembled and stood there listening to him, wondering at the beauty of his teaching and the fluency of his words, because, although an infant, he made such pronouncements. But when Joseph heard it, he was afraid and ran to the school, wondering whether this teacher also was inexperienced. But the teacher said to Joseph, 'Know, brother, that I took the child as a disciple; but he is full of much grace and wisdom; and now I beg you, brother, take him to your house.' And when, the child heard these things, he at once smiled at him and said, 'Since you have spoken well and have testified rightly, for your sake shall he who was stricken be healed.' And immediately the other teacher was healed. And Joseph took the child and went away to his house. **I**

Ps-Matthew 39

C(ii) Again the Jews asked Mary and Joseph a third time to coax him to go to another master to learn. And Joseph and Mary, fearing the people, and the overbearing of the princes, and the threats of the priests, led him again to school, knowing that he could learn nothing from man, because he had perfect knowledge from God only. And when Jesus had entered the school, led by the Holy Spirit, he took the book out of the hand of the master who was teaching the law, and in the sight and hearing of all the people began to read, not indeed what was written in their book; but he spoke in the Spirit of the living God, as if a stream of water were gushing forth from a living fountain, and the fountain remained always full. And with such power he taught the people the great things of the living God, that the master himself fell to the ground and adored him. And the heart of the people who sat and heard him saying such things was turned into astonishment. And when Joseph heard of this, he came running to Jesus, fearing that the master himself was dead. And when the master saw him, he said to him, ‘You have given me not a scholar, but a master; and who can withstand his words?’ Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the Psalmist: The river of God is full of water. In this way you prepare the earth and provide corn for its people. **M**

D. JESUS AND ZENO

Infancy Thomas A 9

C(i) Now after some days Jesus was playing in the upper story of a house, and one of the children who were playing with him fell down from the house and died. And when the other children saw it they fled, and Jesus remained alone. And the parents of the one who was dead came and accused him and they threatened him. Then Jesus leaped down from the roof and stood by the corpse of the child, and cried with a loud voice, ‘Zeno’—for that is what he was called—‘arise and tell me, did I throw you down?’ And he arose at once and said, ‘No, Lord, you did not throw me down, but raised

me up.' And when they saw it they were amazed. And the parents of the child glorified God for the sign that had happened and worshipped Jesus. **E**

Infancy Thomas B 8

C(i) And after these things, one day Jesus was playing with other children on a house-top. And one young child was pushed down by another headlong on to the ground and he died. And when the children playing with him saw it they fled; and Jesus was left alone standing upon the house-top from which the boy had been thrown down. And when the parents of the dead child learned it they ran weeping, and when they found the child lying dead on the ground and Jesus standing up above, supposed that the boy had been thrown down by him; they looked at him and reproached him. And Jesus, when he saw that, straightway leaped down from the house-top and stood at the head of the dead boy and said to him, 'Zeno, did I cast you down? Arise and speak'—for the boy was so called. And at the word the boy arose and he worshipped Jesus and said, 'Lord, you did not cast me down, but when I was dead you brought me to life.' **E**

Ps-Matthew 32

C(i) After these things, Joseph and Mary departed thence with Jesus into the city of Nazareth; and he remained there with his parents. And one day, when Jesus was playing with the children on the roof of a certain house, it happened that one of the children pushed another down from the roof to the ground, and he was killed. And the parents of the dead boy, who had not seen this, cried out against Joseph and Mary, saying, 'Your son has thrown our son down to the ground, and he is dead.' But Jesus was silent, and answered them nothing. And Joseph and Mary came in haste to Jesus; and his mother asked him, saying, 'My lord, tell me if you threw him down.' And immediately Jesus went down from the roof to the ground, and called the boy by his name, Zeno. And he answered him, 'My lord.' And Jesus said to him, 'Was it I who threw you down from the roof to the ground?' And he said, 'No, my lord.' And the parents of the boy who had been dead wondered, and

honoured Jesus for the miracle that had been wrought. And Joseph and Mary departed with Jesus to Jericho. **E**

Arabic 44

I One day, when the Lord Jesus was playing again with the boys on the roof of a house, one of the boys fell down from above, and immediately expired. And the rest of the boys fled in all directions, and the Lord Jesus was left alone on the roof. And the family of the boy came up and said to the Lord Jesus, 'It was you who threw our son headlong from the roof. And when he denied it, they cried out, saying, 'Our son is dead, and here is he who has killed him.' And the Lord Jesus said to them, 'Do not bring an evil report against me; but if you do not believe me, come and let us ask the boy himself, that he may bring the truth to light.' Then the Lord Jesus went down, and standing over the dead body, said, with a loud voice, 'Zeno, Zeno, who threw you down from the roof?' Then the dead boy answered and said, 'My lord, it was not you who threw me down, but another cast me down from it'. And when the Lord commanded those who were standing by to attend to his words, all who were present praised God for this miracle. **F**

Irish Verse 40-44

C(i) He played a game with boys, the pure son of Mary; his age I know: he was seven years.

One of the boys fell over a cliff; he thereupon died; they all fled except Jesus; he waited for the crowd.

He was charged with an attempt: that it was he who had thrown him down. 'Wait for me a while', said Jesus, 'until I reach him.'

'I am charged, Zeno, with throwing you down. Is it true?' 'It is not true, Lord, it is not true. Release him, it is not he who is guilty.'

He was dead before, he was dead after as soon as he had said this; when the crowd saw it they released him. **F**

E. JESUS HEALS A MAN'S FOOT

Infancy Thomas A 10⁵

D After a few days a certain man was cleaving wood in a corner, and the axe fell and split the sole of his foot, and he was losing so much blood that he was about to die. And there was a clamour, a crowd gathered, and the child Jesus also ran there, forced his way through the crowd, and took the injured foot, and it was healed immediately. And he said to the young man, 'Arise now, cleave the wood and remember me.' And when the crowd saw what happened, they worshipped the child, saying, 'Truly the spirit of God dwells in this child.' **F**

Infancy Thomas B 9

D And after a few days, one of the neighbours while cleaving wood cut off the sole of his foot with his axe and from loss of blood was at the point of death. And many people ran up to him. Jesus also came with them there. And he touched the wounded foot of the young man, and immediately healed him, and said to him, 'Arise, cleave your wood.' And he arose and worshipped him, giving thanks and cleaving the wood. Likewise, also, all who were there marvelled and gave thanks to him. **F**

F. JESUS FETCHES WATER

Infancy Thomas A 11

E When he was six years old, his mother gave him a pitcher and sent him to draw water and bring it into the house. But in the crowd he stumbled, and the pitcher was broken. But Jesus spread out the garment he was wearing, filled it with water and brought it to his

⁵ This story is not in all manuscripts.

mother. And when his mother saw the miracle, she kissed him, and kept to herself the mysteries which she had seen him do. **G**

Infancy Thomas B 10

E And when he was six years old, Mary, his mother, sent him to fetch water from the well. And as he went his pitcher broke. And going on to the well, he spread out his garment and drew water from the well and filled it, and took the water and brought it to his mother. And when she saw it she was astonished and embraced him and kissed him. **H**

Ps-Matthew 33

D Now Jesus was six years old, and his mother sent him with a pitcher to the fountain to draw water with the children. And it came to pass, after he had drawn the water, that one of the children came against him, and struck the pitcher, and broke it. But Jesus stretched out the cloak which he had on, and took up in his cloak as much water as there had been in the pitcher, and carried it to his mother. And when she saw it she wondered, and reflected within herself, and laid up all these things in her heart. **G**

Arabic 45

D Once upon a time the Lady Mary had ordered the Lord Jesus to go and bring her water from the well. And when he had gone to get the water, the pitcher already full was knocked against something, and was broken. And the Lord Jesus stretched out his handkerchief, and collected the water, and carried it to his mother; and she was astonished at it. And she hid and preserved in her heart all that she saw. **A**

Irish Verse 45

D His mother sent him for water—wonderful renowned son! He filled his lap with the water and it did not go through his cloak. **G**

G. JESUS SOWS A FIELD

Infancy Thomas A 12⁶

F Again, in the time of sowing the child went out with his father to sow corn in their field. And as his father sowed, the child Jesus also sowed one grain of corn. And when he had reaped it and threshed it, he brought in a hundred measures, and he called all the poor of the village to the threshing-floor and gave them the corn, and Joseph took the residue. He was eight years old when he performed this sign. **H**

Ps-Matthew 34

F Again, on a certain day, he went forth into the field, and took a little wheat from his mother's barn, and sowed it himself. And it sprang up, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. And at last it came to pass that he himself reaped it, and gathered as the produce of it three kors, and gave it to his numerous acquaintances. **L**

Irish Verse 46

F He sowed a little field with leeks—its size was not great: when it was cut afterwards there were a hundred basketfuls of produce. **H**

H. JESUS STRETCHES A BEAM

Infancy Thomas A 13

G His father was a carpenter and made at that time ploughs and yokes. And he received an order from a rich man to make a bed for him. But when one beam was shorter than its corresponding one and they did not know what to do, the child Jesus said to his father

⁶ This story is not in all manuscripts.

Joseph, 'Lay down the two pieces of wood and make them even from the middle to one end.' And Joseph did as the child told him. And Jesus stood at the other end and took hold of the shorter piece of wood, and stretching it made it equal to the other. And his father Joseph saw it and was amazed, and he embraced the child and kissed him, saying, 'Happy am I that God has given me this child.' **C(ii)**

Infancy Thomas B 11

F And when Jesus had reached his eighth year, Joseph was ordered by a certain rich man to construct a bed for him, for he was a carpenter. And he went out in the field to collect wood, and Jesus also went with him. And having cut two pieces of wood, he fashioned one and he laid it beside the other; and when he had measured it he found it too short. And when he saw it, he was grieved and sought to find another. And when Jesus saw it, he said to him, 'Lay these two together so as to make both ends equal.' And Joseph, being in doubt what the child meant by this, did what was ordered. And he said to him again, 'Take hold firmly of the short piece of wood.' And Joseph wondered but took hold of it. Then Jesus taking hold of the other end pulled it and made that piece of wood equal to the other. And he said to Joseph, 'Grieve no more but do your work without impediment.' And he, when he saw, was exceedingly amazed and said within himself, 'Blessed am I that God gave me such a child.' And when they had gone away into the city, Joseph told Mary. And when she heard and saw the wonderful miracles of her Son, she rejoiced, glorifying him with the Father and the Holy Ghost, now and ever and unto the ages of the ages. Amen.

Ps-Matthew 37

L Now Joseph was a carpenter, and used to make nothing else of wood but ox-yokes, and ploughs, and implements of husbandry, and wooden beds. And it came to pass that a certain young man ordered him to make for him a couch six cubits long. And Joseph commanded his servant to cut the wood with an iron saw, according to the measure that he had sent. But he did not keep to the prescribed measure, and made one piece of wood shorter than the other. And

Joseph was in perplexity, and began to consider what he was to do about this. And when Jesus saw him in this state of agitation, because it was a matter of embarrassment to him, he addressed him with words of comfort, saying, ‘Come, let us take hold of the ends of the pieces of wood, and let us put them together, end to end, and let us fit them exactly to each other, and draw them to us, for we shall be able to make them equal.’ Then Joseph did what he was bid, for he knew that he could do whatever he wished. And Joseph took hold of the ends of the pieces of wood, and brought them together against the wall next to himself, and Jesus took hold of the other ends of the pieces of wood, and drew the shorter piece to him, and made it of the same length as the longer one. And he said to Joseph, ‘Go and work, and do what you have promised to do.’ And Joseph did what he had promised. **C(ii)**

Arabic 38

P And Joseph used to go about through the whole city, and take the Lord Jesus with him, when people sent for him in the way of his trade to make for them doors, and milk-pails, and beds, and chests; and the Lord Jesus was with him wherever he went. As often, therefore, as Joseph had to make anything a cubit or a span longer or shorter, wider or narrower, the Lord Jesus stretched his hand towards it; and as soon as he did so, it became such as Joseph wished. Nor was it necessary for him to make anything with his own hand, for Joseph was not very skilful in carpentry. **Q**

Irish Verse 47–48

G A piece of craftwork was brought to Joseph’s house to be adjusted, for its corner was lopsided—one side exceeds the other.

Said Jesus, ‘Take your part; I shall take mine.’ He stretched the shorter half until it was long as the other.

I. JESUS HEALS JAMES' VIPER BITE

Infancy Thomas A 16

C(iii) Joseph sent his son James to gather wood and take it into his house, and the child Jesus followed him. And while James was gathering the sticks, a viper bit the hand of James. And as he lay stretched out and about to die, Jesus came near and breathed upon the bite, and immediately the pain ceased, and the creature burst, and at once James was healed. **J**

Ps-Matthew 41

M And they went away from Capernaum into the city which is called Bethlehem; and Joseph lived with Mary in his own house, and Jesus with them. And on a certain day Joseph called to him his first-born son James, and sent him into the vegetable garden to gather vegetables for the purpose of making broth. And Jesus followed his brother James into the garden; but Joseph and Mary did not know this. And while James was collecting the vegetables, a viper suddenly came out of a hole and struck his hand, and he began to cry out from excessive pain. And, becoming exhausted, he said, with a bitter cry, Alas! Alas! An accursed viper has struck my hand. And Jesus, who was standing opposite to him, at the bitter cry ran up to James, and took hold of his hand; and all that he did was to blow on the hand of James, and cool it: and immediately James was healed, and the serpent died. And Joseph and Mary did not know what had been done; but at the cry of James, and the command of Jesus, they ran to the garden, and found the serpent already dead, and James quite cured. **O**

Arabic 43

N On another day, Joseph sent his son James to gather wood, and the Lord Jesus went with him as his companion. And when they had come to the place where the wood was, and James had begun to gather it, behold, a venomous viper bit his hand, so that he began to cry out and weep. The Lord Jesus then, seeing him in this

condition, went up to him, and blew upon the place where the viper had bitten him; and this being done, he was healed immediately. **D**

J. JESUS HEALS A SICK CHILD

Infancy Thomas A 17⁷

I And after these things in the neighbourhood of Joseph a little sick child died, and his mother wept bitterly. And Jesus heard that great mourning and tumult, and he ran quickly, and finding the child dead, he touched his breast and said, 'I say to you, do not die but live and be with your mother.' And immediately it looked up and laughed. And he said to the woman, 'Take him and give him milk and remember me.' And when the people standing round saw it, they marvelled and said, 'Truly, this child was either a god or an angel of God, for every word of his is an accomplished deed.' And Jesus departed from there and played with other children. **K**

K. JESUS HEALS A WORKMAN

Infancy Thomas A 18⁸

J After some time a house was being built and a great disturbance occurred, and Jesus arose and went there. And seeing a man lying dead he took his hand and said, 'I say to you, man, arise, do your work.' And immediately he arose and worshipped him. And when the people saw it, they were amazed and said, 'This child is from heaven, for he has saved many souls from death, and is able to save them all his life long.' **T**

⁷ This story is not in all manuscripts.

⁸ This story is not in all manuscripts.

L. JESUS AND THE LIONS

Ps-Matthew 35-36

G There is a road going out of Jericho and leading to the river Jordan, to the place where the children of Israel crossed; and there the Ark of the Covenant is said to have rested. And Jesus was eight years old, and he went out of Jericho and went towards the Jordan. And there was beside the road, near the bank of the Jordan, a cave where a lioness was nursing her whelps; and no one was safe to walk that way. Jesus, coming from Jericho, and knowing that in that cave the lioness had brought forth her young, went into it in the sight of all. And when the lions saw Jesus, they ran to meet him and worshipped him. And Jesus was sitting in the cavern and the lion's whelps ran round his feet, fawning and playing with him. And the older lions, with their heads bowed, stood at a distance and worshipped him and fawned upon him with their tails. Then the people who were standing afar off and who did not see Jesus, said, 'Unless he or his parents had committed grievous sins, he would not of his own accord have exposed himself to the lions.' And when the people were reflecting within themselves and were overcome with great sorrow, behold, suddenly in the sight of the people Jesus came out of the cave and the lions went before him, and the lion's whelps played with each other before his feet. And the parents of Jesus stood afar off with their heads bowed and they watched; likewise also the people stood at a distance on account of the lions, for they did not dare to come close to them. Then Jesus began to say to the people, 'How much better are the beasts than you, seeing that they recognize their Lord and glorify him; while you men, who have been made in the image and likeness of God, do not know him! Beasts know me and are tame; men see me and do not acknowledge me.'

After these things Jesus crossed the Jordan in the sight of them all with the lions; and the water of the Jordan was divided on the right hand and on the left. Then he said to the lions so that all could hear, 'Go in peace and hurt no one; neither let man injure you, until you return to the place where you have come from.' And they, bidding him farewell, not only with their voices but with their gestures, went to their own place. But Jesus returned to his mother. **H**

M. JOSEPH HEALS IN THE NAME OF JESUS

Ps-Matthew 40

C(iii) After these things Joseph departed with Mary and Jesus to go into Capernaum by the sea-shore, on account of the malice of his adversaries. And when Jesus was living in Capernaum, there was in the city a man named Joseph, exceedingly rich. But he had wasted away under his infirmity and died, and was lying dead in his couch. And when Jesus heard people in the city mourning and weeping and lamenting over the dead man, he said to Joseph, 'Why do you not grant the benefit of your favour to this man, seeing that he is called by your name?' And Joseph answered him, 'How have I any power or ability to grant him a benefit?' And Jesus said to him, 'Take the kerchief which is upon your head, go and put it on the face of the dead man and say to him, "Christ save you", and immediately the dead man will be healed and will rise from his couch.' And when Joseph heard this, he went away at the command of Jesus and ran and entered the house of the dead man, and put the kerchief, which he was wearing on his head, upon the face of him, who was lying in the couch and said, 'Jesus save you.' And forthwith the dead man rose from his bed and asked who Jesus was. **I**

N. THE POISONED BOY

Arabic 42

S In the meantime, while these things were going on, some men came up carrying a boy. For this boy had gone into the mountain with those of his own age to seek wood, and there he found a partridge's nest; and when he stretched out his hand to take the eggs from it, a venomous serpent bit him from the middle of the nest, so that he called out for help. His comrades accordingly went to him with haste, and found him lying on the ground like one dead. Then his relations came and took him up to carry him back to the

city. And after they had come to that place where the Lord Jesus was sitting like a king, and the rest of the boys standing round him like his servants, the boys went hastily forward to meet him who had been bitten by the serpent, and said to his relations, 'Come and salute the king.' But when they were unwilling to go, on account of the sorrow in which they were, the boys dragged them by force against their will. And when they had come up to the Lord Jesus, he asked them why they were carrying the boy. And when they answered that a serpent had bitten him, the Lord Jesus said to the boys, 'Let us go and kill that serpent.' And the parents of the boy asked leave to go away, because their son was in the agony of death; but the boys answered them, saying, 'Did you not hear the king saying "Let us go and kill the serpent?" and will you not obey him? And so, against their will, the couch was carried back. And when they came to the nest, the Lord Jesus said to the boys, 'Is this the serpent's place?' They said that it was; and the serpent, at the call of the Lord, came forth without delay, and submitted itself to him. And he said to it, 'Go away, and suck out all the poison which you have put into this boy.' And so the serpent crawled to the boy, and sucked out all its poison. Then the Lord Jesus cursed it, and immediately on this being done it burst asunder; and the Lord Jesus stroked the boy with his hand, and he was healed. And he began to weep; but Jesus said, 'Do not weep, for by and by you shall be my disciple'. And this is Simon the Cananaean, of whom mention is made in the Gospel. I

O. JESUS SHARES A MEAL WITH HIS FAMILY

Ps-Matthew 42

I Joseph came to a feast with his sons, James, Joseph, and Judah, and Simeon, and his two daughters. Jesus met them, with Mary his mother, along with her sister Mary, the daughter of Cleophas, whom the Lord God had given to her father Cleophas and her mother Anna, because they had offered Mary the mother of Jesus to the Lord. And she was called by the same name, Mary, for the consolation of her parents. And when they had assembled, Jesus sanctified

and blessed them, and he was the first to begin to eat and drink; for none of them dared to eat or drink or to sit at table or to break bread until he had first sanctified them. And if he happened to be absent, they used to wait for him. And when he did not wish to come for refreshment, neither Joseph nor Mary, nor the sons of Joseph, his brothers, came. And, indeed, these brothers, keeping his life as a lamp before their eyes, observed him, and feared him. And when Jesus slept, whether by day or by night, the brightness of God shone upon him. To whom be all praise and glory for ever and ever. Amen, amen.

P. JESUS AND THE DYER⁹

Arabic 37

A One day, when Jesus was running about and playing with some children, he passed by the workshop of a dyer called Salem. They had in the workshop many cloths which he had to dye. The Lord Jesus went into the dyer's workshop, took all the pieces of cloth and put them into a tub full of indigo. When Salem came and saw that the cloths were spoiled, he began to cry aloud and asked the Lord Jesus, saying, 'What have you done to me, son of Mary? You have ruined my reputation in the eyes of all the people of the city; for everyone orders a colour to suit himself, but you have come and spoiled everything.' And the Lord Jesus replied, 'I will change for you the colour of any cloth which you wish to be changed', and he immediately began to take the cloths out of the tub, each of them dyed in the colour the dyer wished, until he had taken them all out. When the Jews saw this miracle and wonder, they praised God. **H**

⁹ Cf. Gospel of Philip 63: The Lord went into the dye works of Levi. He took seventy-two different colours and threw them into the vat. He took them all out white. And he said, 'Even so has the Son of Man become a dyer.' Cf. also the Armenian Infancy Gospel 21.

Q. JESUS AND THE THRONE

Arabic 39

H Now, on a certain day, the king of Jerusalem sent for him, and said, 'I wish you, Joseph, to make for me a throne to fit that place in which I usually sit.' Joseph obeyed, and began the work immediately, and remained in the palace two years, until he finished the work of that throne. And when he had it carried to its place, he perceived that each side wanted two spans of the prescribed measure. And the king, seeing this, was angry with Joseph; and Joseph, being in great fear of the king, spent the night without supper, nor did he taste anything at all. Then, being asked by the Lord Jesus why he was afraid, Joseph said, 'Because I have spoiled all the work that I have been two years at.' And the Lord Jesus said to him, 'Fear not, and do not lose heart; but take hold of one side of the throne, I shall take the other, and we shall put that to rights.' And Joseph, having done as the Lord Jesus had said, and each having stretched his own side, the throne was put to rights, and brought to the exact measure of the place. And those that stood by and saw this miracle were struck with astonishment, and praised God. And the woods used in that throne were of those which are celebrated in the time of Solomon the son of David; that is, woods of many and various kinds. **R**

R. JESUS AND THE KIDS

Arabic 40

Q On another day the Lord Jesus went out into the road, and seeing some boys who had met to play, he followed them; but the boys hid themselves from him. The Lord Jesus, therefore, having come to the door of a certain house, and seen some women standing there, asked them where the boys had gone; and when they answered that there was no one there, he said again, 'Who are these

whom you see in the furnance?’¹⁰ They replied that they were young goats of three years old. And the Lord Jesus cried out and said, ‘Come out, O goats, to your Shepherd.’ Then the boys, in the form of goats, came out, and began to skip round him; and the women, seeing this, were very much astonished, and were seized with trembling, and speedily supplicated the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘O our Lord Jesus, son of Mary, you are truly that good Shepherd of Israel; have mercy on your handmaidens who stand before you, and who have never doubted: for you have come, O our Lord, to heal, and not to destroy.’ And when the Lord Jesus answered that the sons of Israel were like the Ethiopians among the nations, the women said, ‘You, O Lord, know all things, nor is anything hid from you; now, indeed we beseech you, and ask you of your mercy to restore these boys, your servants, to their former condition.’ The Lord Jesus therefore said, ‘Come, boys, let us go and play.’ And immediately, while these women were standing by, the kids were changed into boys. **S**

S. JESUS THE KING

Arabic 41

R Now in the month Adar, Jesus, after the manner of a king, assembled the boys together. They spread their clothes on the ground, and he sat down upon them. Then they put on his head a crown made of flowers, and, like chamber-servants, stood in his presence, on the right and on the left, as if he were a king. And whoever passed by that way was forcibly dragged by the boys, saying, ‘Come hither, and adore the king; then go on your way.’ **N**

¹⁰ Or ‘archway’.

T. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE AT THE AGE OF TWELVE

Luke 2:41-51

7C Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.' And he said to them, 'How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man.

Infancy Thomas A 19

K And when he was twelve years old his parents went according to the custom to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover with their companions and after the feast of the Passover they returned to their house. And while they were returning, the child Jesus went back to Jerusalem. But his parents supposed that he was in the company. And when they had gone a day's journey, they sought him among their kinsfolk, and when they did not find him, they were troubled, and returned again to the city seeking him. And after the third day they found him in the Temple sitting among the teachers, listening and asking them questions. And all paid attention to him and marvelled how he, a child, put to silence the elders and teachers of the people, elucidating the chapters of the law and the parables of the

prophets. And his mother Mary came near and said to him, 'Why have you done this to us, child? Behold, we have sought you sorrowing.' Jesus said to them, 'Why do you seek me? Do you not know that I must be about my father's affairs?' But the scribes and Pharisees said, 'Are you the mother of this child?' And she said, 'I am.' And they said to her, 'Blessed are you among women, because God has blessed the fruit of your womb. For such glory and such excellence and wisdom we have never seen nor heard.' And Jesus arose and followed his mother and was subject to his parents; but his mother stored up all that had taken place. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and grace. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Arabic 50-53

C(ii) And when he was twelve years old, they took him to Jerusalem to the feast. And when the feast was finished, they returned; but the Lord Jesus remained in the temple among the teachers and elders and learned men of the sons of Israel, to whom he put various questions upon the sciences, and gave answers in his turn. For he said to them, 'Whose son is the Messiah?' They answered him, 'The son of David.' 'Wherefore then', then said he, 'does he in the Spirit call him his lord, when he says, The Lord said to my lord, Sit at my right hand, that I may put thine enemies under thy footsteps?' Again the chief of the teachers said to him, 'Have you read the books?' 'Both the books', said the Lord Jesus, 'and the things contained in the books.' And he explained the books, and the law, and the precepts, and the statutes, and the mysteries, which are contained in the books of the prophets—things which the understanding of no creature attains to. That teacher therefore said, 'I hitherto have neither attained to nor heard of such knowledge: Who, pray, do you think that boy will be?'

And a philosopher who was there present, a skilful astronomer, asked the Lord Jesus whether he had studied astronomy. And the Lord Jesus answered him, and explained the number of the spheres, and of the heavenly bodies, their natures and operations; their opposition; their aspect, triangular, square, and sextile; their course, direct and retrograde; the twenty-fourths, and sixtieths of twenty-fourths; and other things beyond the reach of reason.

There was also among those philosophers one very skilled in treating of natural science, and he asked the Lord Jesus whether he had studied medicine. And he, in reply, explained to him physics and metaphysics, hyperphysics and hypophysics, the powers likewise and humours of the body, and the effects of the same; also the number of members and bones, of veins, arteries, and nerves; also the effects of heat and dryness, of cold and moisture, and what these give rise to; what was the operation of the soul upon the body, and its perceptions and powers; what was the operation of the faculty of speech, of anger, of desire; lastly, their conjunction and disjunction, and other things beyond the reach of any created intellect. Then that philosopher rose up, and adored the Lord Jesus, and said, 'O Lord, from this time I will be your disciple and slave.'

While they were speaking to each other of these and other things, the Lady Mary came, after having gone about seeking him for three days along with Joseph. She therefore, seeing him sitting among the teachers asking them questions, and answering in his turn, said to him, 'My son, why have you treated us thus? Behold, your father and I have sought you with great trouble.' But he said, 'Why do you seek me? Do you know that I ought to occupy myself in my Father's house?' But they did not understand the words that he spoke to them. Then those teachers asked Mary whether he were her son; and when she signified that he was, they said, 'Blessed are you, O Mary, who have brought forth such a son. And returning with them to Nazareth, he obeyed them in all things. And his mother kept all these words of his in her heart.'