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The Syriac Tradition of the Infancy
Gospel of Thomas

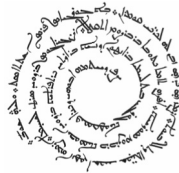
A Critical Edition and English Translation

Tony Burke



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The Syriac Tradition of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas



Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies

48

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A Critical Edition and English Translation

Tony Burke

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FOREWORD

The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (IGT) is believed to be one of the earliest texts of the Christian apocrypha. Irenaeus and the author of the *Epistula Apostolorum* seem to have known it in the late second century and, unlike many apocryphal texts, which routinely expand and interact with the texts of the canon, it contains few parallels or allusions to the canonical Gospels. Yet IGT is rarely taken seriously as a witness to early Christian understandings of Jesus. Its depiction of Jesus' childhood would seem to have little connection to the historical Jesus, its Christology is difficult to associate with early heretical groups, and its portrayal of the young wonderworker cursing his playmates and teachers is offensive to modern sensibilities. Nevertheless IGT is extremely important for Christian piety—its stories spread throughout both the churches of the West, principally via the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, and the churches of the East, due largely to the Syriac Life of Mary compendia, and from these texts the stories were transformed into art, iconography, plays, hymns, and other forms of devotion.

IGT was known in Syriac speaking lands by at least the fifth or sixth century—the time of the earliest known manuscript, published over a century and a half ago by William Wright. Scholars interested in reconstructing the original text of the gospel did not immediately see the value of the Syriac tradition; so it took some time before the tradition was given the attention it deserved. A few other witnesses were published sporadically in the decades since Wright's *textus receptus*, but no one, until now, has endeavored to assemble all of the known published and unpublished manuscripts into a formal critical edition.

It is clear from the number of manuscripts that IGT was a very popular text in the Syriac churches. Though it is found as a separate text in only a few manuscripts, it had a much richer life as part of collections of apocryphal texts featuring episodes from the

life of the Virgin Mary. One branch of this tradition, the West Syriac *Life of Mary*, is examined here from 19 Syriac manuscripts and another 13 in Garšūnī. Another effort to collect Mary-related apocrypha is found in the East Syriac *History of the Virgin*, known in 21 manuscripts, though only four of them incorporate IGT. Many of the manuscripts containing the two Life of Mary compendia seem to have been created specifically for use in Marian piety, as they often contain additional Mary-related texts, including hymns and miracle stories. And these books of Mary were copied well into the nineteenth century. For many Syriac Christians then, these texts contained acceptable depictions of Jesus' childhood years; they were neither frivolous nor blasphemous.

In some ways the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas in the Syriac Tradition* functions as a supplement to my earlier edition of the Greek tradition of IGT published in the Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum in 2010. Along with critical editions and translations of the four Greek recensions, that volume contains a comprehensive overview of previous scholarship and a discussion of how the text reflects idealistic views of children in antiquity. The present volume follows a similar model, with a shortened summary of scholarship focusing only on the Syriac tradition followed by a detailed description of the manuscripts, editions and translations of the Syriac manuscripts divided into three recensions, and a synopsis of these recensions for ease of comparison. Rounding out the book is a glossary and an edition and translation of a little-known Arabic translation of the Syriac tradition based on one complete and one fragmentary manuscript.

Additional manuscripts of the three recensions are likely to be made available after the publication of this volume; indeed, the editions have been revised several times over the years as new sources became known. Readers interested in keeping track of new developments can consult the online resource e-Clavis: Christian Apocrypha, which features manuscript listings and other resources for a wide range of apocryphal texts. Look for links to the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, the *Life of Mary (West Syriac)*, and the *History of the Virgin (East Syriac)*.

This project has been almost a decade in the making. I have many people to thank for their help along the way. First, to George Kiraz and Melonie Schmierer-Lee of Gorgias Press for accepting the book for publication, for waiting patiently through years of

delays, and for guiding it through the publication process; to the Small Grants Program at York University for sponsoring a manuscript-gathering trip to Union Theological College, Princeton, and Harvard and to my daughters, Meghan and Sophie, for coming along for the ride; to all of the libraries and librarians for their assistance, including Michelle Chesner (Norman E. Alexander Librarian for Jewish Studies at Columbia University), and Columba Stewart and Adam McCollum at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library; and to Alain Desreumaux and Charles Naffah for supplying me with copies of manuscripts.

I am grateful to several colleagues who, in sharing their expertise on Syriac texts and traditions, greatly increased the depth of the volume and helped prevent a legion of embarrassing errors. Thank you Charles Naffah, Fr. Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand, and Stephen Shoemaker, my fellow investigators of the Syriac Life of Mary literature; and Stephen J. Davis, Stephen Gero, and Robert Cousland, each of whom have made their own significant contributions to studying IGT; and also F. Stanley Jones, Sebastian Brock, James Coakley, James Walters, Kristian Heal, Adam McCollum, and Thomas A. Carlson for guiding me through the vagaries of Syriac Christianity. Most of all I thank Slavomír Céplö for contributing the edition and translation of the Arabic IGT, for his assistance with the Garšūnī manuscripts, and for his indefatigable patience in answering requests for help too numerous to mention. Slavomír and I began collaborating in 2008, first on an edition of the *Legend of the Thirty Pieces of Silver*, and subsequently more informally assisting each other on our individual projects. At this point, I have benefitted far more from our relationship than he has and this volume would not have been possible without him. Ďakujem ti, môj priateľ.

Finally, I dedicate this volume to my wife, Laura Cudworth. Our relationship began at the start of my work on this project and she has supported me every step of the way to its completion, including the time she came to my defense when a misbehaving scholar sought to hinder my access to the source materials. Thanks for having my back.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANCIENT

<i>Acts Pil.</i>	<i>Acts of Pilate</i>
<i>Apamea</i>	<i>Miracle of the Theotokos in the City of Apamea</i>
<i>Apoc. Paul</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Paul</i>
<i>Apocr. Gos. John</i>	<i>Apocryphal Gospel of John</i>
<i>Arab. Gos. Inf.</i>	<i>Arabic Infancy Gospel</i>
<i>Arm. Gos. Inf.</i>	<i>Armenian Infancy Gospel</i>
<i>Bk. Bee</i>	Solomon of Basra, <i>Book of the Bee</i>
<i>Death</i>	Jacob of Serug, <i>On the Death and Burial of the Virgin</i>
<i>Departure</i>	Timothy, bishop of Gargar, <i>On the Departure of Mary</i>
<i>Dorm. Vir.</i>	<i>Dormition of the Virgin</i>
<i>Ep. Chr. Heav.</i>	<i>Epistle of Christ from Heaven</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus haereses</i>
<i>Hist. Phil.</i>	<i>History of Philip in the City of Carthage</i>
<i>Hist. Vir.</i>	East Syriac <i>History of the Virgin</i>
IGT	<i>Infancy Gospel of Thomas</i>
Ga	Greek A recension
Gb	Greek B recension
Gd	Greek D recension
Gs	Greek S recension
Eth	Ethiopic version
Geo	Georgian version
Ir	Irish version
LM	The first Latin version preserved in the <i>pars altera</i> of the <i>Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew</i>
LV	The first Latin version preserved in Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, lat. 563 (5th cent.)
LT	The second Latin version
Syr	Syriac version

<i>Life Mary</i>	West Syriac <i>Life of Mary</i>
<i>Malice</i>	Pseudo-Ephrem, <i>On the Malice of the Jews against Mary and Joseph</i>
<i>Prot. Jas.</i>	<i>Proteuangelium of James</i>
<i>Ps.-Mt.</i>	<i>Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew</i>
<i>Quest. Bart.</i>	<i>Questions of Bartholomew</i>
<i>6 Bks. Dorm.</i>	Syriac <i>Six-Books Dormition of the Virgin</i>
<i>Trans. Vir.</i>	<i>Transitus Virginis</i>
<i>Vis. Theo.</i>	<i>Vision of Theophilus</i>

MODERN

BHO	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis</i> . Edited by Paul Peeters, <i>Subsidia Hagiographica</i> 10 (Brussels: Société des Bollandists, 1910).
CANT	<i>Clavis apocryphorum Novi Testamenti</i> . Edited by Maurice Geerard, <i>Corpus Christianorum</i> (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992).
CPG	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> . Edited by Maurice Geerard, 5 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–1987).

1 HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

The history of scholarship on the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* has been told previously, and in much detail.¹ The goal of this introduction is to narrow the focus specifically to work on the Syriac tradition of the text (hereafter, Syr), though with attention paid to how Syr relates to the various other versions. To those who know IGT well, the importance of Syr is unmistakable, but it has not always been so, and there are many readers of IGT even today who are unaware of the relationships between the sources and, by extension, Syr's critical role in determining the text's original form and meaning. Of course, finding this elusive original form is not the only goal of research. IGT has enjoyed a popularity in Syriac Christianity spanning at least 1500 years, but this is scarcely reflected in scholarship where it would appear that the Syriac text was only "rediscovered" in the nineteenth century. Readers should be cautioned, therefore, that scholars' interests are far different from those who read and cherished IGT in manuscript form. Their story, for now, remains largely untold.

1. EARLY DISCOVERIES: GREEK, LATIN, ARABIC

The usual telling of the history of IGT scholarship begins with the first published Greek MS: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ancien fonds gr. 239 (15th cent.). Excerpts from the MS appear in the notes to Richard Simon's *Nouvelles observations sur le texte et les versions du Nouveau Testament* from 1693;² three years later the text was printed in full by Jean Baptiste Cotelier.³ The Paris MS is not

¹ Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 45–126. On Syr in particular see Burke, "Unpublished Syriac Manuscript," 229–38; and Horn and Phenix, "Apocryphal Gospels in Syriac," 537–44.

² Simon, *Nouvelles observations*, 5–9.

³ Cotelier, *SS. Patrum qui temporibus apostolicis floruerunt*, vol. 1, 345–46.

complete: it features only IGT 1–5 followed by the beginning of the story of Jesus and the Dyer, an episode otherwise unattested in the Greek tradition, but found also in *Arab. Gos. Inf.* (ed. Genequand) 35, *Arm. Gos. Inf.* 21, and several other sources.⁴ This *Arab. Gos. Inf.* made its scholarly debut around the same time as the Greek IGT in Heinrich Sike's 1697 edition and Latin translation of the text from an undated and initially unidentified MS,⁵ subsequently revealed to be Oxford, Bodleian Library, Or. 350.⁶ The text repurposes portions of *Prot. Jas.* and expands the story with additional traditions about Jesus' birth and stories about the Holy Family's sojourn in Egypt. *Arab. Gos. Inf.* is believed to be a translation from Syriac (specifically, the East Syriac *Hist. Vir.* or one of its sources); Sike's version is particularly significant as it incorporates a large portion of IGT, again, probably translated from the Syriac. Additional sources for *Arab. Gos. Inf.* have appeared since Sike's day but they have not been translated into English. For many scholars, then, *Arab. Gos. Inf.* is known in the form published by Sike.⁷

For several centuries, most of the attention paid to IGT—indeed, to all available early apocrypha—focused on the Greek and Latin traditions. Recovery of the Greek text was significantly advanced by Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli's 1764 publication of Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, 2702 (15th cent.),⁸ the first known witness to the 19-chapter form of the text, which soon became dominant in scholarship. A similar MS, Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, A 187 (16th cent.),⁹ was used along with the Paris and Bologna MSS by Johann Karl Thilo for the first proper

⁴ The story is included in certain Ukrainian IGT MSS (see Rosén, *Slavonic Translation*, 44), some MSS of the Latin *Ps.-Mt.*, and was known to Muslim writers (on the latter two sources see James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 66–67).

⁵ Sike, *Evangelium Infantiae*. English translation in Walker, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 100–24; and Cowper, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 170–216. Both translations were made from the revised Latin translation of Sike's edition in Tishendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, 181–209.

⁶ Genequand, “Vie de Jésus en Arabe,” 209.

⁷ For more discussion of *Arab. Gos. Inf.* see below pp. 111–18.

⁸ Mingarelli, “Apocrypho Thomae Evangelio.”

⁹ Thilo, *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, vol. 1, lxxiii–xci (introduction), 277–315 (text with Latin translation and notes).

critical edition of the text in 1832. Thilo drew also on portions of a fourth source—Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Phil. gr. 162 (144) (15th cent.)—noted in a 1675 catalog by Peter Lambeck.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the IGT portion of the Vienna MS has since been lost; all that survives now are Lambeck’s extracts from chs. 1 and 2. The same four Greek MSS were then used by Constantin Tischendorf in his influential *Evangelia Apocrypha* collection from 1853. Tischendorf christened Thilo’s 19-chapter version Greek A (Ga)¹¹ in order to distinguish it from a shorter form of the text, Greek B (Gb), which he published from a single MS found on his famous visit to St. Catherine’s monastery (Sinai gr. 453, 14th/15th cent.).¹² Tischendorf’s collection also includes three Latin versions of the text: an early translation from a fifth-century fragmentary palimpsest (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, lat. 563; =LV),¹³ a more recent translation that features a short prologue narrating the Holy Family’s activities in Egypt (based on Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat. lat. 4578, 14th cent.; =LT),¹⁴ and two MSS of an expanded version of *Ps.-Mt.* (=LM) that incorporates the Latin translation of IGT witnessed also in the early palimpsest.¹⁵

The Ga text opens with an attribution to “Thomas the Israelite philosopher,” presumably intended to mean the apostle Thomas, though why Thomas, a figure often associated with unorthodox (some might say gnostic) forms of Christianity, was chosen as the author is somewhat mysterious. Based on this attribution, early scholars of the text identified IGT as the “Gospel of Thomas” often mentioned and sometimes quoted by early Christian authors.¹⁶ The problem with this identification is that the

¹⁰ Lambeck, *Commentariorum*, 270–73.

¹¹ Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, 140–57.

¹² *Ibid.*, 158–63. Gb first saw publication in Tischendorf’s account of his Mt. Sinai expedition, “Rechenschaft über meine handschriftlichen Studien,” 51–53.

¹³ Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, xlv–xlvi (published previously in *De evangeliorum apocryphorum*, 214–15).

¹⁴ Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, 164–80.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93–112.

¹⁶ For a comprehensive discussion of the early citations to the “Childhood of the Lord” and to the “Gospel of Thomas” see Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 3–44.

passages quoted from the “Gospel of Thomas” do not appear in IGT. This realization led to the creation of an expurgation theory that explained the absences as a result of “orthodox revision” similar to the changes made over time to the apocryphal acts. Early scholarship focused also on IGT’s troubling portrayal of Jesus. Commentators objected to the stories of Jesus maiming and murdering his Galilean neighbours, but they derived some comfort from the apparent progression in the young messiah’s demeanour—the villagers demand that Joseph teach his son to bless and not to curse and, for the most part, their desires are met. After the teacher Zacchaeus’s lament in ch. 7, Jesus restores those he cursed to health, and then performs a number of praiseworthy miracles (chs. 9–18), broken only by the cursing of the second teacher in ch. 14. The stories of chs. 10, 17, and 18 are of particular note because they are structured very much like Synoptic miracle stories; in these tales, the young Jesus seems to be turning into the man familiar to readers of the canonical Gospels.

Tischendorf’s Ga text has been very popular in scholarship; its regular appearance in apocrypha collections, sometimes with Gb and LT, has cemented its status as the *textus receptus* of IGT, a position that has proved difficult to unseat despite subsequent advances in establishing the text’s original form based on other versions.

2. SYRIAC MANUSCRIPTS AND SYRIAN ORIGINS

The first of these advances arrived in 1865 with William Wright’s publication of a Syriac MS from the British Library. The sixth-century MS—London, British Library, Add. 14484 (=W)¹⁷—predates the previously published Greek MSS by almost a millennium and contains striking differences from Tischendorf’s Ga text. The introduction with its attribution to Thomas is lacking; thus the title of the text is simply “The Childhood of the Lord Jesus.” The Synoptic-like miracles of chs. 10, 17 and 18 also are absent and in general, the remaining individual chapters are shorter, except for ch. 6, which is considerably expanded with material that at this point in scholarship had been seen also in LT and LM but was largely neglected due to the favoritism showed to Ga.

¹⁷ Wright, *Contributions*, ٤٠٢ (Syriac text), 6–11 (English translation).

Wright's MS quickly made an impact on IGT scholarship. Tischendorf, for his part, incorporated its readings into the apparatus of the second edition of *Evangelia Apocrypha*. B. H. Cowper went a step further in his 1867 collection of apocrypha in English translation. Alongside Tischendorf's Ga text, Cowper placed Gb, LT, and his own translation of W,¹⁸ added because of its antiquity and its agreements with the Latin palimpsest LV.¹⁹ Cowper stated also that he believed IGT may have been composed in Syriac.²⁰ The same opinion was held by Michel Nicolas, though Nicolas, it seems, was unaware of the existence of Wright's MS. In *Études sur les évangiles apocryphes*, published in 1866, Nicolas outlines his belief that all the infancy gospels were written by Syrian Jewish-Christians.²¹ IGT's Jewish-Christian features are said to include the text's esteem of James, certain geographical hints (e.g., playing on rooftops as in IGT 9), and affinities between IGT's letter speculation section (ch. 6:4) and similar practices in Kabbalah.²² Nicolas was the first scholar to present an explicit argument for Syriac composition. He cited the text's attribution to Thomas—an apostle associated with Syriac Christianity via the *Acts of Thomas*²³—and the low quality of its Greek which, he claimed, owes itself to slavish translation from Syriac.²⁴ Many of Nicolas's ideas about IGT were revisited by Jean Variot in his comprehensive 1878 study *Les évangiles apocryphes*.²⁵ A Syrian origin was again postulated, though Variot was able to support his claim with Wright's Syriac text, a text which he felt demonstrated signs of an earlier tradition—it has fewer errors than the Greek and shows a concern for the law (see ch. 6:2b).²⁶

¹⁸ Cowper, *Apocryphal Gospels*, lxxviii–lxxv (introduction), 128–69 (Ga, Gb, LT), 448–56 (Syr).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, lxxv.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 128; cf. lxxii.

²¹ Nicolas, *Études sur les évangiles apocryphes*.

²² *Ibid.*, 290–94.

²³ *Ibid.*, 199.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 331.

²⁵ Variot, *Les évangiles apocryphes*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 46–47.

A second Syriac source for IGT was published in 1899 by E. A. W. Budge.²⁷ During his travels in Syria, Budge commissioned a copy of a thirteenth/fourteenth-century manuscript from Alqoš featuring the East Syriac *Hist. Vir.*, a compilation of various noncanonical texts that prominently feature stories of Jesus' mother, beginning with *Prof. Jas.* and ending with *Dorm. Vir.* Much of the material in-between, featuring tales of the Holy Family in Egypt, is found also in *Arab. Gos. Inf.*, indicating that Budge's text is an important witness to an earlier stage in the infancy gospel's development. Budge published his *Hist. Vir.* based on two manuscripts: the version from Alqoš that includes IGT as well as other expansions (=A), and a shorter version from a MS at the Royal Asiatic Library (Syr. 1; =B). Budge's Alqoš MS is widely believed to be missing but that is not the case; it now resides in the library of the University of Leeds (cataloged as Syr. 1). Perhaps this belief has contributed to the severe neglect of *Hist. Vir.* by subsequent scholars.²⁸

Syr next appeared in scholarship in Arnold Meyer's contributions to Edgar Hennecke's *Neutestamentlichen Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*.²⁹ In the 1904 edition, Meyer notes the correspondences between the Latin and Syriac traditions, professes their superiority over the Greek manuscripts, and concludes that the original text, "ohne Zweifel," stood nearer to these translations.³⁰ Meyer's support of the versions is apparent in his translation, which generally follows Ga but adds the Syriac and Latin translations in parallel columns where Meyer considered Ga

²⁷ Budge, *History of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, vol. 1, 67–76 (IGT material in Syriac), vol. 2, 71–82 (in English). Budge also reprinted the Syriac text of W for comparison (vol. 1, 217–22).

²⁸ Aside from works by Paul Peeters, Elena Merscherskaja, and Anton Pritula (surveyed below), the most comprehensive study of the text would be Erica C. D. Frank's unpublished 1974 Master's thesis ("History of the Blessed Virgin Mary"), which examines *Hist. Vir.*'s use of other Syriac apocrypha and its possible influence on the Qur'an. A new edition of *Hist. Vir.* is being prepared by Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand for future publication in the Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum

²⁹ See Meyer, "Erzählung des Thomas" and the more in-depth study in the accompanying *Handbuch* ("Kindheitserzählung des Thomas" [1904]).

³⁰ Meyer, "Kindheitserzählung des Thomas" (1904), 133.

to be deficient (chs. 5–8). For the second edition in 1924, Meyer supplemented his readings from W with another early MS from Göttingen (Universitätsbibliothek, Syr. 10; 6th cent.; =G). Meyer became aware of the manuscript via Hugo Duensing who mentions it in a brief announcement made in 1911.³¹ It was then noted by Anton Baumstark in his 1922 survey of Syriac literature. Baumstark mentioned also several other unpublished MSS, all of which have turned out to be witnesses to Budge's *Hist. Vir.*³² The full extent of the Göttingen MS was not revealed at the time, but readers would have seen from Meyer's 1924 translation that it includes material from Ga 6–8 missing in W. The new MS reaffirmed Meyer's belief that Syr represents an older text form than the Greek recensions.³³ Unfortunately, it was many years before a full collation of G saw publication.

In the years between Meyer's contributions to the Hennecke collections, Paul Peeters brought new interest to the Syriac traditions in his own Christian apocrypha collection, *Évangiles apocryphes*, co-edited with Charles Michel. The second volume, published in 1914, features an introductory essay by Peeters detailing a comprehensive Syro-Arabian theory of origin for the various infancy gospel traditions.³⁴ To make his argument, Peeters drew upon a new seventeenth-century MS (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Syr. 159; dated 1622/1623; =P) featuring *Arab. Gos. Inf.* in Garšūnī (Arabic in Syriac script) with IGT appended in Syriac. According to Peeters's theory, all of the childhood stories found in the infancy gospels derive from a larger collection of legends assembled in Syriac in the fifth century. The IGT material, he claimed, was soon detached from this collection and then translated into Greek and Latin. An intermediate Greek text between the Latin and Syriac texts was considered a possibility by Peeters but not a necessity. Peeters admitted the unlikelihood of such a transmission process, but the greatest weakness in his argument is his failure to offer any proof for his assertion of Syriac composition. He declared only that an inverse relationship from

³¹ In Meyer's telling ("Kindheitserzählung des Thomas" [1924], 93–94), the MS came from Sinai and was donated to Göttingen by Duensing who announced the discovery in "Mitteilungen 58."

³² Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 69 n. 12.

³³ Meyer, "Kindheitserzählung des Thomas" (1924), 94.

³⁴ Peeters, *Évangiles apocryphes*, i–lix.

Greek to Syriac would not work.³⁵ As for his new IGT MS, Peeters produced only an excerpt of chs. 5–8, translated into French with notes on variant readings from W, the Greek and Latin MSS, and an edition of four Slavonic MSS still largely unknown in the West at this time.

Peeters's lasting contribution to the study of IGT is his strong assertion about Syriac composition. The contention is a hallmark of French scholarship on the text, beginning from Variot and Nicolas and continuing up to the 1970s.³⁶ Non-Francophone scholars also often argue for Eastern (even Syrian) origins for the text, though largely based on the text's attribution to Thomas.³⁷ As it turns out, both lines of argument have proved to be baseless.

3. MORE EARLY VERSIONS

Scholars had to wait decades before another Syriac witness to IGT saw publication. In the meantime a number of other early versions of the text appeared, eventually leading several scholars to conclude that the early versions, Syr among them, preserved the gospel better than the extant Greek traditions.

One of these versions, the Georgian, became known to Western readers through Peeters's essay on the infancy gospels. A fragmentary MS (Tbilisi, Cod. A 95; 10th cent.; =Geo)³⁸ containing chs. 1–7 came to Peeters's attention via an 1897 summary by Alexander Khakhanov.³⁹ The text was later published in two independent editions: one in Georgian by Kornelius Kekelidze in 1918 and the other in Russian by Leon Melikset-Bek in a journal article dated 1917–1920.⁴⁰ A third, definitive edition was prepared by Akaki Sanidze in 1941,⁴¹ and this formed the basis of a Latin

³⁵ Ibid, xvii–xx. For an early critique of Peeters's theory see James, review of Peeters, *Évangiles apocryphes*, vol. 2.

³⁶ See the works cited in Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 72 n. 3.

³⁷ Ibid., 72 n. 4.

³⁸ Peeters, *Évangiles apocryphes*, xix–xx.

³⁹ Khakhanov, *Overki po istorii gruzjinskoj slovenosti*, vol. 2, 319–21.

⁴⁰ Kekelidze, *Monumenta Hagiographica Georgica*, vol. 1, 115–17; Melikset-Bek, "Fragment grusinskoi."

⁴¹ Sanidze, "A Fragment of the Georgian Version of the Apocryphal 'Gospel of Thomas.'"

translation by Gérard Garitte in 1956.⁴² Except for a subsequent translation into Italian by Luigi Moraldi, the text has not been revisited since.⁴³ Peeters also brought *Arm. Gos. Inf.* to Western readers' attention in a French translation based on the 1898 edition of Esayi Tayec'i,⁴⁴ as well as two additional MSS and several fragments.⁴⁵ Another translation, the first in English, was made by Abraham Terian in 2008.⁴⁶ *Arm. Gos. Inf.* is significant for the study of Syr as it features several episodes from IGT (chs. 6, 9, 13 and the story of Jesus and the Dyer). These same stories are preserved alone, without the other IGT material, in the recension of *Arab. Gos. Inf.* published by Provera in 1973 (from Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, codex orientalis 387 [32]; dated to 1299).⁴⁷ This recension is believed to preserve the text in a form earlier than the MS published by Sike. The shared material in *Arm. Gos. Inf.* and *Arab. Gos. Inf.* suggests some relationship between the traditions, perhaps originating in a Syriac milieu.⁴⁸

An Ethiopic version of IGT (=Eth) appeared in 1919 as part of Sylvain Grébaud's efforts to publish the lengthy *Ta'amra 'Iyasus* (*Miracles of Jesus*).⁴⁹ Miracle Eight of the collection corresponds to IGT 2–9, 11–16 and 19; ch. 12, however, is inserted, following a story of Jesus on a sunbeam, after ch. 19. This peculiar form of the text captured the attention of Adolf Grohmann, who suggested that ch. 12 may be a late addition to Eth, and that the missing chapters (10, 17, 18) were perhaps not available to the compiler.⁵⁰ Of the origin of Eth, Grébaud and Grohman assumed the *Ta'amra 'Iyasus* was translated from Arabic.⁵¹ This source was later identified

⁴² Garitte, "Le fragment géorgien," 516–20.

⁴³ Moraldi, *Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. 1, 276–79.

⁴⁴ Tayec'i, *Ankanon girke' nor ktakaranac'*, vol. 2, 1–236.

⁴⁵ Peeters, *Évangiles apocryphes*, 69–286.

⁴⁶ Terian, *Armenian Gospel of the Infancy*.

⁴⁷ Provera, *Vangelo arabo dell'infanzia*.

⁴⁸ Budge's *Hist. Vir.* is proof that at least a portion of *Arab. Gos. Inf.* was translated from Syriac and Terian considers *Arm. Gos. Inf.* a "sixth-century translation of a now lost Syriac original" (*Armenian Gospel of the Infancy*, xi, cf. xxii–xxvi).

⁴⁹ Grébaud, "Les miracles de Jésus," 625–42.

⁵⁰ Grohmann, "Reste einer neuen Rezension der Kindheitsgeschichte Jesu," 3–4.

⁵¹ Grébaud, "Aperçu sur les miracles de N. S.," 255; Grohmann, "Reste einer neuen Rezension der Kindheitsgeschichte Jesu," 4.

as the *Apocryphal Gospel of John*,⁵² though *Apocr. Gos. John* does not contain the IGT material. Based on this determination and on the various placements of IGT in the *Ta'amra 'Iyasus* MSS, Victor Arras and Lucas Van Rompay concluded in 1975 that IGT was a late addition to the collection.⁵³

The next early version of IGT to see publication is a poetic paraphrase of the text in Gaelic (Dublin, National Library of Ireland, MS G 50; 17th cent.; =Ir). The text appeared first in a preliminary edition by James Carney in 1958 and then in a definitive edition in 1964.⁵⁴ Carney dated the translation of the text (from Latin) on philological grounds to around 700.⁵⁵ The early date of Ir led Carney to speculate on the origins of the gospel. Noting formal correspondences between Ir and Gb—Ir features chs. 2–9, 11–13 while Gb has chs. 1–11 and 13—he concluded that the two share a common stock of eight episodes, with each eliminating one story.⁵⁶ The additional teacher stories and the more benign miracles found in Ga and LT, he claimed, are the product of later additions made in “an effort to improve the character of Jesus as presented in the primitive text.”⁵⁷ Subsequent Irish scholars fine-tuned this theory, culminating in David Dumville’s conclusion that Ir represents an early Latin text closer to Syr than

⁵² The determination was made by Oscar Löfgren in 1942 (“Fakta och dokument angående”) but the text was not published until 1957 by Iohannes Galbiati (as *Iohannis evangelium apocryphorum arabice*). For further discussion of the text, including the publication of additional MSS and its putative Syriac origins, see Horn, “Apocryphal Gospels in Arabic,” 604–606; idem, “Syriac and Arabic Perspectives,” 285–90. Also helpful is Witakowski, “Miracles of Jesus,” 283–84.

⁵³ Arras and Van Rompay, “Les manuscrits éthiopiens,” 143–44; see also Witakowski, “Miracles of Jesus,” 296–97.

⁵⁴ Carney, “Two Old Irish Poems”; idem, *Poems of Blathmac*. Carney’s text has been reprinted a few times since, and was updated by Herbert and McNamara in “Versified Narrative.”

⁵⁵ Carney, *Poems of Blathmac*, xviii.

⁵⁶ Similar conclusions were reached by Lowe, “IOUDAIOI of the Apocrypha,” 76–78 who wrote, “it seems clear that *SyrW* and *Eth* represent a stage intermediate between *Ir* and *GrB* on the one hand, and *GrA*, *GrC*, *Lat* and *Slav* on the other” (78).

⁵⁷ Carney, *Poems of Blathmac*, xvi–xvii.

the Greek recensions and the related LT text.⁵⁸ The Latin predecessor of Ir was further clarified when Guy Philippart re-examined the Old Latin palimpsest (LV) in 1972.⁵⁹ Philippart stated in his analysis that, contra Tischendorf, LV represents a translation distinct from LT.⁶⁰ This determination was developed further by Sever Voicu who demonstrated that LV and Ir are both witnesses to the Latin form of IGT incorporated into *Ps.-Mt.* (LM).⁶¹ *Ps.-Mt.* has thus become a far more important source for the text than anyone had previously believed.

Additional information about the origins of the other Latin translation (LT) came in 1927, when Armand Delatte published a third Greek recension, Greek D (Gd), from a fifteenth-century MS (Athens, Ethnikê Bibliothêkê, gr. 355).⁶² This version is attributed to James, not Thomas, and features the same prologue of the Holy Family's journey in Egypt that opens LT. The Athens MS is noteworthy also for featuring, once again, a longer version of ch. 6 that agrees well with the early versions. These features, along with other particular readings, clearly indicate that LT is a translation of the Gd recension.

One of the few scholars to take note of Gd is Aurelio de Santos Otero, who integrated its readings in his work on the Slavonic tradition. For *Das kirchenslavische Evangelium des Thomas* published in 1967, de Santos Otero drew on a number of Slavonic MSS published by Russian scholars and constructed a Greek retroversion of the single source from which the tradition is believed to have been translated. This source is dated to the tenth century, five centuries earlier than the Greek MSS known at the time. De Santos Otero's work was heavily criticized by Slavistics scholars, but it is noteworthy for illustrating just how poorly Ga represents the original text of the gospel.⁶³ De Santos Otero also responded to Peeters's theory of Syriac composition, arguing that a

⁵⁸ Dumville, "Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish," 304; see also McNamara, "Notes on the Irish Gospel of Thomas," 43–44; idem, "New Testament Apocrypha," 335–36.

⁵⁹ Philippart, "Fragments palimpsestes latins."

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 407.

⁶¹ Voicu, "Notes," 124 and developed further in idem, "Verso il testo primitivo dei Παιδικά," 29–34.

⁶² Delatte, "Évangile de l'enfance de Jacques."

⁶³ See the works summarized in Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 92.

Greek *Vorlage* is observable behind corruptions in Wright's MS W. Unfortunately, the one example he cites as proof—the phrase “living fruit of judgment” (8:1) is said to be derived from the corrupt phrase ἵνα τοὺς κάτω ῥύσωμαι found in Tischendorf's MSS (Ga 8:2)—is rather unconvincing.⁶⁴ Given the flaws of de Santos Otero's reconstructed text, few scholars have paid the Slavonic tradition much attention. More recent work by Thomas Rosén in 1997 has increased significantly our knowledge of the tradition, but his edition does not include a translation into a Western language, leaving most scholars of IGT unable to adequately assess it.⁶⁵ With the help of T. Allan Smith, I was able to integrate readings from Rosén's Slavonic edition into an edition of Ga prepared for my 2001 doctoral dissertation and to demonstrate that the translation derives from a branch of Ga in existence prior to the tenth century.⁶⁶

By the end of the 1960s, the publication of the versions was beginning to erode scholars' confidence in Tischendorf's popular Ga text. Also, with the publication of the *Gospel of Thomas* found at Nag Hammadi, the belief that IGT was an abbreviation of a longer text had become groundless, leaving open the possibility that it could have begun as a smaller, not longer text. The first effort at integrating these new developments into the study of IGT is Stephen Gero's comprehensive 1971 text-critical study published in *Novum Testamentum*.⁶⁷ The article's primary intent, Gero writes, is “to try to correlate the literary versions with the different stages of the oral tradition.”⁶⁸ Along with assessments of all the witnesses (except for Ir) to both the full text and to the individual stories, the article features form-critical analyses of key episodes, and a detailed stemma of the text's transmission. Among Gero's conclusions is the determination that Syr should replace Ga as the base text for IGT, especially where it is supported by Geo.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ De Santos Otero, *Kirchenslavische*, 150 n. 8.

⁶⁵ Rosén, *Slavonic Translation*.

⁶⁶ These conclusions are given in Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 161–62.

⁶⁷ Gero, “Infancy Gospel of Thomas.”

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 55–57. Gero's preference for the Syriac tradition is reflected also in his 1988 overview of recent Christian apocrypha research for

Gero's position on the value of the versions is echoed in a seminal article by Lucas Van Rompay from 1980.⁷⁰ Comparing readings from IGT 5 and 6 in Ga with their parallels in Eth, Syr (W), Geo, and LV, Van Rompay demonstrates that the four versions derive from a common recension. Eth is shown to be particularly important, with Van Rompay stating that it appears to have been "weinig gewijzigde" ("little changed") in the process of transmission.⁷¹ The absence of IGT in the Arabic predecessor to the *Ta'amra 'Iyasus* had opened up questions about the origins of the Ethiopic IGT. Gero earlier considered the possibility of transmission from Syriac via Coptic.⁷² Now Van Rompay suggested that Eth may have been translated directly from Greek, a process that could only have been possible prior to 700 C.E.⁷³ Gero argued for the same position when he returned to the text in 1988, pointing out specifically the Ethiopic text's use of the names of the Greek letters ("alpha...beta") in the alphabet speculation section in ch. 6.⁷⁴

Van Rompay's work dramatically changed the course of text-critical study of IGT. Tischendorf's late Greek MSS could no longer be relied upon for reconstructions of the text. Fortunately, additional Greek MSS were soon brought into the discussion, allowing scholars to approach nearer the original form of the text in its language of composition, but these new discoveries could not be considered without the awareness that the *textus receptus* was flawed. The expurgation theory had finally lost its footing, demonstrating that the Syriac was not a "much abbreviated" version as M. R. James once wrote.⁷⁵ From here on, the collective evidence of the versions was the yardstick against which the Greek MSS were measured. Of course, change did not come overnight. Oscar Cullmann's entry for the 1987 Hennecke-Schneemelcher

ANRW in which he offers a summary of IGT based not on Ga, but on Syr ("Apocryphal Gospels," 3981–83.)

⁷⁰ Van Rompay, "De ethiopische versie."

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 131–32.

⁷² Gero, "Infancy Gospel of Thomas," 53 n. 4.

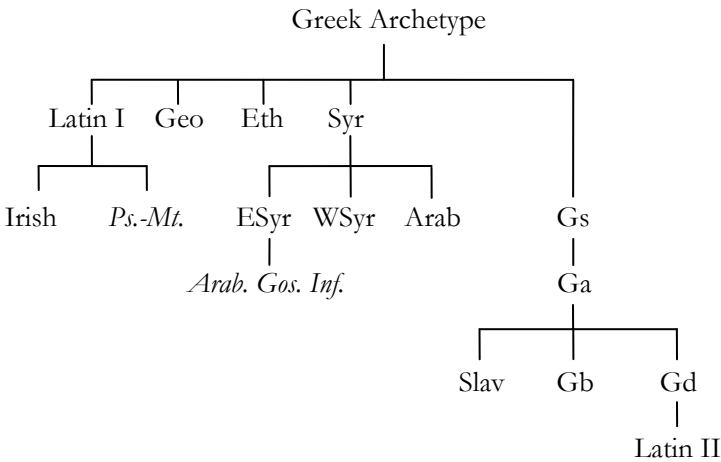
⁷³ Van Rompay, "De ethiopische versie," 132 n. 47.

⁷⁴ Gero, "Ta'amra 'Iyasus," esp. 167. Since Gero, only one other work has appeared devoted solely to the *Ta'amra 'Iyasus*: Witold Witakowski's 1995 survey article, "Miracles of Jesus."

⁷⁵ James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 49.

collection, for example, again focuses on Ga, incorporates readings from de Santos Otero’s much-criticized Slavonic retrotranslation, and pushes Syr W’s version of ch. 6 into an appendix.⁷⁶ J. K. Elliott’s 1993 update of James’s *Apocryphal New Testament* includes the standard Ga, Gb, and longer Latin texts. And Ron Hock’s 1997 Greek and English edition of IGT, while laudable for providing variant readings from the Slavonic text and for drawing on Gd for the material absent in ch. 6,⁷⁷ completely ignores the early versions—they are not mentioned in the introduction and do not appear in the apparatus to his edition.

Relationships between the Traditions



⁷⁶ Cullmann, “Kindheistevangelien” (1990)—note that the 6th edition of 1990 is a minor update of the 5th edition from 1987. Cullmann’s entry for the 1959 Hennecke collection (“Kindheistevangelien” [1959]) also places Syr’s ch. 6 in the appendix but at least includes Syr readings in the notes. The Italian collections by Moraldi (*Apocriifi del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. 1, 247–79) and Erbetta (*Gli Apocriifi del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. 1.2, 78–101) appeared just prior to Van Rompay’s work. Both feature the typical texts (Ga, Gb, and LT), though, as noted above, Moraldi provides also a translation of Geo.

⁷⁷ Hock, *Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas*.

4. RENEWED INTEREST IN THE SYRIAC TRADITION

The past 25 years have been marked by great advances in Christian Apocrypha Studies and cognate disciplines, including Syriac Studies. Associations of Christian apocrypha scholars, such as AELAC (Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne), the Society of Biblical Literature Christian Apocrypha Section, and the recently formed NASSCAL (North American Society for the Study of Christian Apocryphal Literature), have worked to bring attention to neglected branches in the transmission of apocryphal texts, and initiatives such as the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, e-Ktobe, and the Oxford-BYU Syriac Digital Corpus have enriched our knowledge of Syriac literature in all of its forms. IGT has benefitted greatly from these developments, with scholars re-examining previously published sources for Syr and finding new sources that have contributed significantly to reconstructing the complete text of the Syriac translation.

The period begins with the publication of an Arabic version of IGT translated, apparently, from the Syriac. The text was first mentioned by Stephen Gero in 1988⁷⁸ and identified the following year by Luigi Moraldi as Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, G 11 sup.⁷⁹ Sergio Noja presented a French translation of the text in 1990, followed by an Arabic edition in 1991.⁸⁰ In form it follows the text of the early versions, but lacks sections of chs. 6 and 7 and the entire chs. 12, 15, and 19. It also includes two additional stories: Jesus and the Dyer (ch. 6; cf. *Arab. Gos. Inf.* [ed. Genequand] 35/*Arm. Gos. Inf.* 21) and a tale similar to Jesus Turns Jewish Children into Goats (ch. 11; *Arab. Gos. Inf.* [ed. Genequand] 39).

More significant for establishing the original text of Syr is the publication, at last, of MS G, known in scholarship since 1911 but finally made available in a 1993 article by Wilhelm Baars and Jan Heldermaann.⁸¹ The article focuses only on the IGT section of the

⁷⁸ Gero, "Apocryphal Gospels," 3982. No MS is listed; Gero mentions only that the text is extant in Arabic and that, at the time, it was unedited.

⁷⁹ Moraldi, *Nascita e infanzia di Gesù*, 50; and idem, *Vangelo arabo apocryfo dell'apostolo Giovanni*, 28.

⁸⁰ Noja, "L'Évangile arabe apocryphe de Thomas"; idem, "À propos du texte arabe."

⁸¹ Baars and Heldermaann, "Neue Materialien," esp. 194–97.

MS, which features also portions of *Prot. Jas.* and *6 Bks. Dorm.*, and presents the text as a collation against Wright's MS W. Additional leaves from the MS, featuring portions of *Prot. Jas.*, were discovered among the new finds at St. Catherine's monastery in 1975, but the association of the leaves to MS G was not made until 2009 in an article by Alain Desreumaux.⁸²

Baars's and Helderma's collation of G is featured along with other Syriac sources in Sever Voicu's multiple publications on IGT. One of the leading voices on IGT, Voicu built on Van Rompay's pioneering work on the versions and combined his conclusions with evidence from a significant new IGT MS in Greek. In his first study of the text from 1991, Voicu repeats Van Rompay's argument that Eth best represents the original form of IGT, adding that therefore, the story of the Miraculous Harvest in ch. 12 (here placed at the end of the gospel) is not original to the text.⁸³ The same article features the first in-depth discussion of the eleventh-century Greek MS Jerusalem, Patriarchikê bibliothêkê, Saba 259. The MS had been mentioned in 1972 by Jacques Noret in a short note announcing a planned critical edition of the text, an edition that never materialized.⁸⁴ Noret passed along his collation of the MS to Voicu, who noted its significant departures from Tischendorf's Ga text: it lacks chs. 17 and 18 but contains 1 and 10, though ch. 10 is placed between 16 and 19.⁸⁵ Based on this evidence, Voicu determined that Saba 259 represents a stage in IGT's development between the early versions and the later Greek MSS. The MS was assigned to a new recension: Greek S (Gs). As important as Gs is for the study of IGT, Voicu believed the early versions to be more valuable for establishing the text's original form. This position is evident in his subsequent work on the text: a French translation of IGT for the 1997 collection *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* based on Eth and Syr,⁸⁶ and a sprawling "critical synopsis" in 1998⁸⁷ incorporating all of the previously published sources for

⁸² Desreumaux, "Deux anciens manuscrits syriaques," 117–21. Desreumaux credits the initial identification of the pages to Paul Géhin (*ibid.*, 116).

⁸³ Voicu, "Notes," 124.

⁸⁴ Noret, "Pour une édition de l'Évangile de l'enfance selon Thomas."

⁸⁵ Voicu, "Notes," 128–29.

⁸⁶ Voicu, "Histoire de l'Enfance de Jésus."

⁸⁷ Voicu, "Verso il testo primitivo dei Παῖδικά."

the text, though favoring readings from the early versions, including the Syriac witnesses W, P (based on Peeters's partial translation), and a collation of G made for him by Frédéric Rilliet; Budge's edition of *Hist. Vir.*, however, is absent.⁸⁸

Despite Voicu's hesitancy in assigning much value to Saba 259, the MS has been adopted by other scholars as the chief witness to IGT. This determination is based in large part on my work on the text in a 2001 dissertation, updated and expanded for publication in 2010.⁸⁹ The dissertation contains four separate editions of IGT: Gs (presented here for the first time), Ga, Gb, and Gd, the latter three incorporating a number of unpublished MSS.⁹⁰ In addition, notes to the Gs translation feature readings from the early versions (including Syr), indicating places where Gs agrees with the early versions over the other Greek recensions—particularly the much-discussed material from ch. 6 missing in Tischendorf's MSS. The dissertation also provides details about the previously published Syriac MSS; these details were augmented in the 2010 edition with my own firsthand readings of G and P, examined between 2001 and 2010, and some preliminary observations about the West Syriac *Life of Mary*.⁹¹

Overlooked in 2001, however, was a significant survey of both West and East Syrian Life of Mary traditions published in 1994 by Simon Mimouni.⁹² Mimouni's primary research interest is the Dormition traditions but in the course of his discussion he provides an extensive list of Life of Mary MSS, including those noted previously by Baumstark and Graf, and he divides this evidence, long confused in the literature, into Eastern (Nestorian)

⁸⁸ Voicu erroneously describes G as containing 15:2–4 (“Verso il testo primitivo dei Παιδικά,” 89–90), though it is not known whether the error is his or Rilliet's.

⁸⁹ Chartrand-Burke, “*Infancy Gospel of Thomas*,” 101–16 and Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 302–37. Gs was published subsequently in van Aarde, “Die Griekse manuskrip” and in Aasgaard, *Childhood of Jesus*, 219–42.

⁹⁰ Descriptions of all the Greek IGT MSS can be found in Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 127–44. A survey of these witnesses appeared prior to 2001 in Chartrand-Burke, “Greek Manuscript Tradition.”

⁹¹ Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 162–67.

⁹² Mimouni, “Vies de la Vierge.”

and Western (Jacobite) traditions.⁹³ The East Syrian tradition is well-known, represented by Budge's *Hist. Vir.* text; but before Mimouni's article, little had been written about the West Syrian *Life of Mary*, less still on its connection to IGT.

The West Syrian *Life Mary* (CANT 95) is arranged in six books with IGT comprising the fourth book. Books one and two are derived from *Prot. Jas.*, book three details the activities of the Holy Family in Egypt as communicated in the *Vision of Theophilus*,⁹⁴ named for the patriarch of Alexandria from 385–412, and books five and six come from *6 Bks. Dorm.* The collection first came to scholars' attention in a summary presentation by François Nau in 1910.⁹⁵ Nau focused his discussion on *Vis. Theo.*, drawn here from Vatican, Borg. Syr. 128 (dated 1720); other sections of the *Life Mary* collection are mentioned but not IGT, since, unbeknownst to Nau, his MS was missing many of the pages that comprise the fourth book. The full text of *Vis. Theo.* was published in 1917 by Michelangelo Guidi, in Syriac (from Vatican, Borg. Syr. 128) and in Arabic,⁹⁶ and again in 1929 in a Syriac edition and translation by Alphonse Mingana based on Vatican, Borg. Syr. 128 and two MSS in his collection (Syr. 5 and 48).⁹⁷ Again, IGT's presence in *Life Mary* was not made apparent; Mingana mentions that one of the texts was entitled "Of the youth and upbringing of our Lord Jesus Messiah" and states that he decided to publish only *Vis. Theo.* because the other sections had already been published.⁹⁸

⁹³ Ibid., 239–43.

⁹⁴ See CANT 56 and CPG 2628 for references to various versions. See also Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1, 229–32; Gero, "Apocryphal Gospels," 3983–84; and Horn, "Apocryphal Gospels in Arabic," 601–602. For recent work on the text see Monferrer Sala's edition of one of three Arabic recensions (*Vision of Theophilus*).

⁹⁵ Nau, "La version syriaque de la vision de Théophile."

⁹⁶ Guidi, "La omelia di Teofilo di Alessandria," 26 (1917) 441–69 and 30 (1921/1922) 217–37 (Arabic text and Italian translation), 26 (1917) 391–440 (Syriac text), 30 (1921/1922), 274–309 (translation). To be clear, the first full publication of the text was not the Syriac nor the Arabic but an Ethiopic translation by Rossini ("Il discorso su Monte Coscam") published in 1912.

⁹⁷ Mingana, "Vision of Theophilus." Mingana mentioned also at the time the existence of two Garšūnī MSS (Syr. 39 and 114).

⁹⁸ Ibid., 384.

The combining of traditions about Mary seems to have taken place quite early in the Syriac tradition. This compilation process is described in some detail in a 2008 article by Cornelia Horn. Here she traces the origins of the Life of Mary tradition to the fifth century,⁹⁹ the approximate date of the underwriting in a palimpsest containing *Prot. Jas.* and *6 Bks. Dorm.* found at St. Catherine's monastery by Agnes Smith Lewis (Cambridge University Library, Or. 1287).¹⁰⁰ The compilation was soon enlarged with the addition of IGT, an outcome observable in MSS W and G.¹⁰¹ Stephen Shoemaker describes a similar developmental schema in several studies on the *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximus the Confessor. An article from 2009 notes the early collection of Marian apocrypha in the Smith Lewis palimpsest and W and G and suggests that similar compendia were once available in Greek.¹⁰² This is evident from the so-called *Tübingen Theosophy*, composed around 500 C.E., which is said to have drawn upon a work

⁹⁹ Horn, "Syriac and Arabic Perspectives," esp. 273–75, 278–81; and revisited in Horn and Phenix, "Apocryphal Gospels in Syriac," 532–33.

¹⁰⁰ Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*. The overwriting of the MS is an eighth-century Arabic Qur'an. Smith used a *Life Mary* MS (Cambridge Mass., Harvard Houghton Library, Syr. 39) to fill in text missing from *6 Bks. Dorm.* For more on this MS see below pp. 77–80. Additional early fragmentary witnesses to *6 Bks. Dorm.* are noted in Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions*, 48.

¹⁰¹ Smith Lewis's palimpsest, though fragmentary, never contained IGT as it clearly transitions directly from *Prot. Jas.* to *6 Bks. Dorm.* In support of her argument, Horn ("Syriac and Arabic Perspectives," 279) brings in the tenth-century fragment of *Trans. Vir.* printed in Wright, *Contributions*, ۞—۞ (Syriac), 18–41 (English). The text, currently bundled with W as fol. 9^r–11^r, begins with a statement about Jesus' birth and childhood: "the Word of Life, which was with the Father. truly came into the world, and was born of a woman by a great miracle; and went about the streets as a child, to the confirmation of His incarnation; and received the education of growth, after the manner of all the sons of men." Because of the placement of *Trans. Vir.* in W, Horn mistakenly identifies it as *6 Bks. Dorm.* and thus reads in this statement a transition from *Prot. Jas.* and IGT to *6 Bks. Dorm.* While the writer of this later version of *Dorm. Vir.* may have had the infancy gospels in mind, *6 Bks. Dorm.* does not contain such a statement.

¹⁰² Shoemaker, "Virgin Mary's Hidden Past," 12–14. The argument is repeated in idem, *Life of the Virgin*, 17–18.

identified as “the birth and assumption of our Lady the immaculate Theotokos.” Maximus, for his part, certainly incorporated in his work traditions from both *Prot. Jas.* and *Dorm. Vir.*, but not IGT, which he rejects in a statement after his narration of Luke’s story of Jesus in the Temple: “And all this time, from this moment until the baptism, transpired without the working of any public miracles. For the book that is called the *Infancy of Christ* is not to be received, but is alien to the order of the Church and contrary to what the holy evangelists have said and an adversary of truth that was composed for foolish men and storytellers” (62).¹⁰³ Shoemaker takes from this statement that despite his rejection of IGT, Maximus drew upon a Greek Life of Mary compendium that included all three of the texts found in W and G.¹⁰⁴

Shoemaker and Horn focus only on the early witnesses to Life of Mary compendia; discussion of the later branches in this tradition are taken up by Stephen Davis and Charles Naffah. In his 2008 book *Coptic Christology in Practice*, Davis discusses *Vis. Theo.*, book 4 of the West Syriac *Life Mary*, as representative of a body of literature written in Egypt between the sixth and eighth centuries detailing the route of the Holy Family’s Egyptian sojourn.¹⁰⁵ This determination expands upon earlier assessments of the original language of the text. Guidi believed *Vis. Theo.* was composed in Coptic from which it was translated into Arabic;¹⁰⁶ from Arabic it

¹⁰³ Translation by Shoemaker in *Life of the Virgin*, 89.

¹⁰⁴ For a response to this particular argument, see Booth, “On the Life of the Virgin,” 198 n. 177, and Shoemaker’s subsequent defense in “(Pseudo-) Maximus,” 117–18. Shoemaker continues to be interested in the early Syriac compendia and plans to publish them in a critical edition for the Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum.

¹⁰⁵ Davis, *Coptic Christology in Practice*, 131–48; on *Vis. Theo.* in particular see 135–39 (citing in this regard Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1, 228 and others). Davis discusses *Vis. Theo.* also in “Ancient Sources for the Coptic Tradition,” 144–51, though this earlier work does not touch on the origins of the *Life Mary* collection.

¹⁰⁶ Guidi, “La omelia di Teofilo di Alessandria,” 385–86; see also Gero, “Apocryphal Gospels,” 3984; and Monferrer Sala, *Vision of Theophilus*, 12. Mingana (“Vision of Theophilus,” 388) said only that the Syriac version was a translation from Arabic. A Coptic version of *Vis. Theo.* is now more than hypothetical; Alin Suci published a fragment of the text from a MS originating from the White Monastery in “‘Me, This Wretched Sinner.’”

was translated into Ethiopic and Syriac, with subsequent translation into Garšūnī.¹⁰⁷ *Vis. Theo.*, therefore, must have been added to the other three Mary-related texts sometime between the sixth century and the date of the earliest *Life Mary* MS (Mingana Syr. 39, in Garšūnī, is dated 1462), at which time the collection would have achieved its six-book organization.

Naffah added his voice to the discussion in a 2009 study that traces the history of the assembly of Marian materials from the earliest Syr MSS and into the six-book *Life Mary* collection on the one hand and the lengthy East Syriac *Hist. Vir.* on the other.¹⁰⁸ Since there is no early evidence for either the Syriac *Prot. Jas.* or Syriac IGT as an independent text, Naffah concludes that the two texts never existed separately from the Life of Mary compilations. Included in Naffah's evidence is a detailed look at the contents of a range of *Life Mary* MSS, though based largely on information from catalog descriptions rather than firsthand examination.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, he was able to use that information to establish a relationship between three MSS: Harvard Syr. 39, Vatican Borg. Syr. 128, and Charfet, Fonds Rahmani 60, the latter mentioned here in scholarship for the first time. Alain Desreumaux echoed Naffah's position on the Life of Mary compilations in an article appearing in the same volume of the journal as Naffah's study. He argues that the compiling of texts observable in G, W, and Smith Lewis's palimpsest indicates that, "*en syriaque ces différents épisodes n'existent jamais à l'état séparé, mais sont toujours des chapitres d'une Histoire suivie de la Vierge, de sa naissance à sa mort.*"¹¹⁰ However, Peeters's MS P (as well as M, N, and Q, unknown to Desreumaux at the time) would seem to argue against that position.¹¹¹ Desreumaux accounts for P as a text that has "broken off" from the Life of Mary tradition. Naffah soon returned to *Life*

¹⁰⁷ On translation into Garšūnī see Mingana, "Vision of Theophilus," 388.

¹⁰⁸ Naffah, "Les 'histoires' syriaques de la Vierge," 140–59.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 161–66.

¹¹⁰ Desreumaux, "Deux anciens manuscrits syriaques," 119.

¹¹¹ Naffah concedes elsewhere that P and M contain IGT alone but this admission is made only in a footnote ("*Apocalypse de la Vierge*," 103 n. 5) and without reflection on its implications. Desreumaux mentions M elsewhere ("Les apocryphes syriaques sur Jésus et sa famille," 57 n. 26) but characterizes it as "fragmentary."

Mary for a second article, this one focusing on book six of the collection.¹¹² After a brief description of the various Syriac witnesses and their development, Naffah provides a translation of Mary's apocalypse based on Mingana Syr. 560 (erroneously identified as the oldest *Life Mary* MS) with readings from Harvard Syr. 39, based on Smith Lewis's edition, in the notes.

While it is heartening to see such attention finally being paid to the West Syriac compilation, the East Syriac *Hist. Vir.* is still relatively unexplored. In the century since its publication only two articles have appeared on the text. The first of these is Anton Pritula's 2005 study of Giwargis Warda's hymn on the childhood of Christ.¹¹³ Warda is an East Syrian hymnographer of the thirteenth century. His Christmas service hymn, entitled *On the Book of the Childhood of the Lord* (ܩܘܿܬܒܐ ܡܢ ܫܘܿܬܒܐ ܕܥܘܿܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܿܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܿܠܡܐ), is a poetic reworking of the complex of childhood stories in *Hist. Vir.* not derived directly from IGT (the Animation of the Sparrows, the Children Turned into Goats, Jesus is Made King, Simon the Canaanite and the Snake Bite, the Man and the Serpent, and the Fall of Buza; all contained in stanzas 73–82), demonstrating that Warda, or the author writing in his name, drew upon a version of *Hist. Vir.* that did not contain IGT (such as Budge's MS B and related MSS). The second article is Elena Mescherskaja's brief discussion of the section of the text narrating the Adoration of the Magi.¹¹⁴ Building on Peeters's theory that *Hist. Vir.* was composed by Nestorian Christians in Iran,¹¹⁵ Mescherskaja notes a number of elements in the story that situates the text, or at least this particular section, in the final decades of the Sasanian Empire, just prior to the rise of Islam.¹¹⁶ These elements include the identification of the Magi as Persian kings (reflecting the semi-independent kingdoms of the Sasanid state), references to the kings' elaborate crowns (attested in Persian art of the time), the statement that the kings departed from Persia at the cock-crow (an echo, perhaps, of the rooster's

¹¹² Naffah, "*Apocalypse de la Vierge.*"

¹¹³ Pritula, "Hymn by Givargis Warda." Warda's first name is more commonly written as "Giwargis."

¹¹⁴ Mescherskaja, "L'Adoration des mages." The story is found on pp. 34–39 of Budge's translation and *Arab. Gos. Inf.* (ed. Genequand) 5–7. In Sike's MS it is severely shortened (see ch. 5).

¹¹⁵ Peeters, *Évangiles apocryphes*, xxv.

¹¹⁶ Mescherskaja, "L'Adoration des mages," 100.

vation in Iranian mythology), and the burning of the swaddling bands in fire (evoking the practices of Zoroastrianism).¹¹⁷ If Merscherskaja is correct, this evidence provides a *terminus post quem* for *Hist. Vir.* (or at the very least, for its incorporation of the Adoration of the Magi) in the seventh century.

The entire spectrum of sources for Syr is examined in my 2013 article on Peeters's unpublished Vatican MS.¹¹⁸ The article features a diplomatic edition of P with readings from W, G, and a new MS (Mingana Syr. 105; =M) similar to P, in the apparatus. I present also a revised list of *Hist. Vir.* and *Life Mary* MSS, with several additions and clarifications. The MSS are separated into three recensions: Sa for the MSS containing IGT as an independent text, Sw for the version of IGT found in *Life Mary*, and Se for the one contained in *Hist. Vir.* Significant readings from the Sw and Se recensions are found in the notes to the translation of P. The edition and translation are preceded by a brief overview of previous scholarship and a detailed discussion of Peeters's off-handed claim that IGT was composed in Syriac. The claim had been dismissed to some extent by Voicu¹¹⁹ and in a more detailed fashion in my dissertation and edition.¹²⁰ But with the full publication of Peeters's MS providing a more complete text than found in W and G (i.e., the addition of the entire chs. 6–8, 14, and 15), it was worthwhile to revisit Peeters's theory. Alas for Peeters, P presents no compelling reason to doubt that IGT was composed in Greek. Elements of the article were reworked into my entry on the Syriac IGT in the new Christian apocrypha collection, *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*.¹²¹ IGT routinely appears in such collections as a translation of Ga, sometimes accompanied by Gb and the Egyptian prologue from Gd/LT. My contribution to the volume features an introduction to the text with, once again, a full enumeration of the MSS known at the time, and a translation based primarily on W and G.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 98–100.

¹¹⁸ Burke, "Unpublished Syriac Manuscript."

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 53–55.

¹²⁰ Burke, *De infantia Iesu euangelium*, 174–88, a revision of Chartrand-Burke, "Infancy Gospel of Thomas," 247–54.

¹²¹ Burke, "Infancy Gospel of Thomas (Syriac)."

A century and a half have passed since Wright introduced Western scholars to the Syriac tradition of IGT. His MS, though very early in comparison to other witnesses known at the time, suffered from significant lacunae. In the decades since, new MSS have been cataloged, one even contemporary to W, but relatively little attention has been paid to them, and no one until now has sought to establish a new critical edition of the text despite the emerging scholarly consensus about the importance of the Syriac tradition. Reliance on the edition of Wright also obscures the later life of this text, which has been in greater continual use through the centuries than the Greek tradition. Syriac may not be the original language of IGT but it is in the Syriac milieu that this text flourished.

The critical editions in this volume represent a significant step forward in the study of IGT, but there is still much work that remains to be done on the Life of Mary traditions in which the text is embedded. The versions of *Prot. Jas.* and *6 Bks. Dorm.* incorporated into the West Syriac *Life Mary* have not been integrated into text-critical work on those texts; and *Vis. Theo.* is in need of a comprehensive critical edition not only of the Syriac tradition, but also the Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic. As for the East Syriac *Hist. Vir.*, the only edition of this text to appear so far relies on two MSS; at least 19 more are known, and many of these represent earlier stages in the text's development than the one selected by Budge as his base text. As with *Life Mary*, *Hist. Vir.* is a witness to the Syriac *Prot. Jas.* and *6 Bks. Dorm.* but, more importantly, it is the source of infancy materials found otherwise only in *Arab Gos. Inf.*, which also has a rich, largely unevaluated MS tradition. *Hist. Vir.* has been sorely neglected as a source for *Arab Gos. Inf.*; a critical edition drawing on the Syriac and Arabic traditions is a *desideratum*, and further study of this text will add considerably to our knowledge of Arabic Christianity. The following chapter, with its descriptions of the various sources for the Syriac IGT, is far from a complete survey of the various paths taken in the transmission of the two Life of Mary collections, but consider it an invitation to continue work on these neglected expressions of Marian devotion.