

Introduction

THE *GOSPEL OF PSEUDO-MATTHEW* (*Ps.-Mt.*) is one of the most important witnesses in the Latin West to apocryphal stories about the lives of Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and Mary's parents, Anna and Joachim. Among apocryphal gospels in medieval Western Europe, this apocryphon was second in popularity only to the more widely attested *Gospel of Nicodemus*, revealing *Ps.-Mt.* to be a bestseller of mainstream Christianity in the Middle Ages. In many ways, the origins and transmission of the Latin *Ps.-Mt.* are tied up with its source, the Greek *Protevangelium of James* (*Prot. Jas.*), and the transmission of related apocrypha in medieval Western Europe. As an adaptive translation and expansion of *Prot. Jas.*, the Latin apocryphon is a keystone in the explosion of apocryphal literature in the Middle Ages, including competing translations of *Prot. Jas.* as well as rewritings, excerpts, expansions, and translations of *Ps.-Mt.* from the ninth century onward.

Despite its apocryphal status—and medieval writers did acknowledge it to be extrabiblical—*Ps.-Mt.* remained both popular and influential throughout the Middle Ages and into the early modern period. Its popularity and influences may be traced in many pieces of Christian literature (in Latin and vernacular languages), visual arts, liturgy, and theological perspectives still revered by Roman Catholic theologians. *Ps.-Mt.* is also a significant work for considering the history of monasticism and the cult of the Virgin Mary. All of these developments provide evidence for the endurance of both *Prot. Jas.* and *Ps.-Mt.* as a major part of mainstream Christianity in Western Europe during the medieval period.

Summary

After some prefatory material (which varies in the manuscripts: see below), *Ps.-Mt.* begins by introducing Joachim and Anna, who live according to Israelite law but have no children after twenty years of marriage. When Joachim makes a pilgrimage to the temple to offer a sacrifice, a scribe rebukes him and rejects his offering because of his infertility. In shame, Joachim leaves but does not return home; instead, he assumes a self-exile in the mountains as a shepherd for five months. Meanwhile, Anna is left alone at home, ignorant of what has happened to Joachim and believing that he might be dead. In response to her lamentation, an angel visits her and promises that she will bear a child destined for greatness. Around the same time, this angel visits Joachim disguised as a boy and urges him to return home, telling him that Anna will have a daughter who will be blessed above all women. Joachim offers a sacrifice to the angel, who demurs, and at the angel's insistence instead makes his sacrifice to God. After Joachim's companions hear about the angel's visit and announcement, they insist that he return home, but Joachim still hesitates. Again, the angel visits him, this time in a dream, and tells him to return home. Finally, at the shepherds' continued urging, Joachim leaves the mountains to be reunited with Anna.

Nine months later, Mary is born and her parents raise her at home. At the age of three, Anna and Joachim take Mary to the temple and dedicate her to God, leaving her to live in a community of female virgins in an ascetic lifestyle. Mary is specifically singled out for her special status as the most holy of these virgins. The temple priests become anxious when she reaches fourteen years old, so they arrange to have her betrothed, through a ceremony in which they ask God to reveal the most suitable husband among the single men in Israel. Despite his hesitancy—because he is an older widower and has children from a previous marriage—Joseph is selected to be Mary's husband and she is betrothed to him. An angel visits Mary (as with Anna before, while her husband is away) and announces that she will give birth to a son through a miracle of God. When Joseph learns of this he considers quietly divorcing her, but an angel also appears to him (as with Joachim before) and reassures him that Mary is pure. Yet the rumor of Mary's pregnancy spreads, and the temple priests summon Mary and Joseph to appear before them and submit to a test of their purity. After undergoing this trial, they are exonerated of any sins.

Later, Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem for Caesar Augustus' census, but along the way Mary has a prophetic vision of two peoples and shortly afterward goes into labor. Joseph finds a cave for Mary, where she gives birth to Jesus. Joseph brings a midwife named Zahel to Mary, who inspects her postpartum and declares her to be still a virgin. Another midwife, Salome, hears of this, doubts that this could be true, and inspects Mary for herself; as a result, her hand withers, and an angel appears, instructing her to seek healing by touching the baby's swaddling cloths. A series of episodes follow, the point of each one to present the fulfillment of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible. Joseph then takes Jesus to the temple for his circumcision and to offer a sacrifice.

Two years later, three magi visit Jerusalem in search of a new-born king. Fearing that the baby is the king heralded by earlier prophecy, Herod commands that all children in Israel age two and under shall be killed. Joseph is warned in a dream about Herod's command and he flees to Egypt with Mary and Jesus. A series of miracles occur along the way, including Jesus subduing a group of dragons, wild animals venerating Jesus along the road, a palm tree bending to allow Mary to eat its fruit, Jesus creating a shortcut to shorten a thirty-day journey to one day, and Jesus being venerated by the idols of pagan gods and the governor in an Egyptian temple. The gospel in its original form ends at this point.

Over time, the narrative of *Ps.-Mt.* did not remain static. In fact, it is apparent from the manuscript evidence that the text of this apocryphon was dynamic throughout the medieval period—probably due, in large part, to its popularity. The core remained the same, but later compilers and scribes continued to expand the contents with more material about Jesus' childhood. Such expansions are most evident in additions made in the twelfth century, as well as later episodes further appended by the end of the thirteenth century. These will be discussed in the section about Later Transmission and Additions, and are included in this translation to demonstrate the evolution of the textual tradition throughout the Middle Ages.

Transmission and Survival

Transmission of *Ps.-Mt.* was widespread and long-lasting. The manuscript evidence ranges from the turn of the ninth century to the sixteenth century, with origins or provenances as far-flung as modern-day France,

Spain, Ireland, Britain, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovenia. In his 1997 critical edition for the Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum, Jan Gijssels identifies 190 manuscript witnesses, and in a follow-up article he identifies another seven.¹ These manuscripts are divided into four major family recensions: A, P, Q, and R. Within the four major textual families, further distinctions may be made, and some of the manuscripts contain hybrid versions. Gijssels also discusses forty witnesses that are either too fragmentary or have too much of a hybrid form to be conclusively classified. For the most part, the A-text takes precedence in this introduction and the following translation, although it is also useful to consider the P-text in establishing the early form of the apocryphon, and the Q and R texts reveal important aspects of its later transmission.

The A-text represents a version of *Ps.-Mt.* closest to the original, though revised around the year 800 with some slight grammatical changes. The earliest manuscript of the A family was created just a few decades later: London, British Library, Add. 11880, copied around 820 in Regensburg, Germany. Other early manuscripts of the A family include:

Budapest, Széchényi Bibliothek National, Clmae 316 (9th cent.,
Salzburg)

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 5327 (10th cent.,
Saint-Amand-les-Eaux)

Rheims, Bibliothèque municipale 1395 (ca. 850, Rheims)

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 550 (10th cent., Northern
France)

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 289 (10th cent., Salzburg)

The P-text also developed around 800, from the same antecedent version that lies behind the A-text. The earliest manuscripts of the P family include:

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. acq. lat. 1605 (9th cent.,
Orleans)

1. See manuscript descriptions in Gijssels, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 108–217, and full “Listes des manuscrits *Pseudo-Matthieu*” in various groupings at 483–515; see also Gijssels, “Nouveaux témoins.”

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 430 (ca. 840, South-Western Germany)

Of the manuscripts that Gijssel found impossible to classify by family, or for which only tentative classification is possible, particularly noteworthy is Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Fragmentum 94 (Aug. 248), copied around 850 in Reichenau, Austria. Because this manuscript is fragmentary (containing only part of chap. 8) and due to its variant text form, its precise relationship to the A and P recensions is indeterminate, but it remains one of the earliest witnesses to *Ps.-Mt*.

Although the A and P text types share a common ancestor, P exhibits features of more profound revision with both grammatical and substantive changes. Such differences have even led commentators to deride the author of the original text and uphold P as an improved revision. Recently, for example, Ehrman and Pleše followed the general assessment of scholars (including Gijssel) in claiming that the author “was not a particularly gifted writer, hence the rough and occasionally slovenly character of the older A recension, in contrast to the more refined P.”² Yet Rita Beyers has refuted these criticisms through a comparative examination of the lexicographical styles of both A and P, especially calling attention to several uncommon words or rare uses in A that signal some amount of sophistication.³ Indeed, as she says elsewhere about the apocryphon, “*le Pseudo-Matthieu* possède une unité de structure et une richesse de sentiments” (“*Pseudo-Matthew* has a unity of structure and a richness of sentiment”) to be appreciated.⁴

Around the middle of the twelfth century, the Q-text emerged. The earliest surviving witnesses are Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 648 (12th cent., Rheims) and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 288 (12th/13th cent., Cambridge). This family of witnesses derives from P, although some of the manuscripts also demonstrate affinities with A in certain details. The Q-text also incorporates some innovative revisions, especially with major additions to the main narrative: at the beginning, a text now known as the *Trinubium Annae* and, at the end (as chaps. 26–42), a Latin version of the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (*Inf. Gos. Thom.*) commonly referred to as the *pars altera*, or “other part” of the text. While

2. See Gijssel, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 88–89; and Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 75.

3. Beyers, “Transmission of Marian Apocrypha,” 130–33.

4. Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 20.

this *pars altera* is now recognized as an addition to *Ps.-Mt.*, earlier editors and scholars believed it to be part of the original compilation, though from a separate source.⁵

Only some decades later, around the turn of the thirteenth century, the R-text was created, derived directly from Q. The earliest surviving witnesses are Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Theol. lat. qu. 369 (13th cent., Northern France) and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 5560 (13th/14th cent.). The R-text represents a further process of revision and, as Gijssels observes, “témoigne d’un effort constant de réécriture, qui ne porte pas seulement sur le style” (“witnesses to a constant effort to rewrite, which is not solely about the style”).⁶ The composer of R also worked with a variety of other sources to create a newly compiled narrative;⁷ these sources include the *Nativity of Mary* (*Nat. Mary*), which had been written by about the year 1000 as an independent adaptation of *Ps.-Mt.* Finally, some manuscripts of this new revision end with an epilogue in the form of a prayer to Mary:

intercedente sanctissima matre tua ad resurrectionis gloriam
peruenire mereamur, ut te laeti facie ad faciem uideamus domi-
num nostrum Iesum Christum cum patre et spiritu sancto qui
regnat deus per infinita saecula. Amen.

Through your intercession, most holy Mother, may we deserve
to attain the glory of resurrection, so that face to face with you
we might joyfully see our Lord Jesus Christ with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, who reigns as God forever into infinity. Amen.⁸

This intercessory doxology highlights the associations that had grown up between *Ps.-Mt.* and the cult of Mary from the tenth century onward.

Two other apocryphal texts may be brought to bear upon the history of the transmission of *Ps.-Mt.*: the so-called “J Compilation” and the *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris* (“Book of the Nativity of the Savior”). The J Compilation contains several sources pieced together into a single narrative: a Latin version of *Prot. Jas.*, *Ps.-Mt.*, a lost infancy gospel given the

5. For more details on these additions, see the section on “Later Transmission and Additions” below.

6. Gijssels, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 96.

7. For more details on these additions, see the section on “Later Transmission and Additions” below.

8. Gijssels, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 97.

name the *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris*,⁹ and the Latin version of *Inf. Gos. Thom.* (the *pars altera*), though the latter was likely added later in the compilation's transmission. In total, seven manuscripts of this compilation have been identified, grouped into two types known as the Arundel and Hereford forms (based on the first identified manuscripts). The later Hereford version also incorporates, as in the Q-text, portions of *Nat. Mary*, and a Pseudo-Augustinian homily on the Annunciation (*Serm.* 195). Gijssel notes and describes these witnesses in his edition of *Ps.-Mt.* (nine manuscripts to which he assigns the designation J) but does not use them for his collation.¹⁰ Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Martin McNamara edited both forms in a parallel edition in 2001.¹¹ The most significant manuscript of J is Montpellier, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de médecine 55, copied around the year 800 at Metz or in a scriptorium with similar writing style (possibly Worms). It contains only part of the J Compilation (perhaps an early form of its development), made up of an interweaving of a Latin translation of *Prot. Jas.* 1:1–7:3 and *Ps.-Mt.* 1–4. The text (though not the manuscript as a whole) also has certain features that might point to Irish or Hiberno-Latin associations, although Kaestli and McNamara provided no solid conclusions. This manuscript represents the earliest identified witness to the text of *Ps.-Mt.* in any of its extant forms.¹²

The contents of the *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris* have been reconstructed based on later texts that seem to share this source, including the J Compilation, the Irish *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*, and an Irish “gospel history” found in the *Leabhar Breac* and other manuscripts.¹³ The contents that Kaestli and McNamara have reconstructed based on these later texts include: Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem; the birth of Jesus

9. M. R. James first titled this text the “New Source” in his 1927 edition of the J Compilation in *Latin Infancy Gospels*; it has since been named the “Source” or “Special Source” (as in Kaestli and McNamara, “Latin Infancy Gospels”); Kaestli proposed the title *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris* in “Mapping an Unexplored Second Century Apocryphal Gospel.”

10. Gijssel, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 108–217 and 483–515.

11. Kaestli and McNamara, “Latin Infancy Gospels.”

12. Kaestli and McNamara, “Latin Infancy Gospels,” 650–54. Montpellier 55 is also significant because it includes a Latin translation of *Prot. Jas.* 8–25 with interpolations from the canonical Gospels; this Latin version of *Prot. Jas.* and the J Compilation do not belong together, as they are in different sections of the manuscript and thus present witnesses to two different Latin versions of *Prot. Jas.*

13. See Kaestli and McNamara, “Latin Infancy Gospels.”

and testimony of the midwife about Mary's perpetual virginity; as well as the visit of the shepherds, the visit of the magi, and their encounter with Herod.¹⁴ Kaestli and McNamara also concede the possibility (without further evidence one way or the other) that the original text of the *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris* may have also included the flight into Egypt and Jesus' childhood miracles along the way, since these are attested in the *Leabhar Breac*.¹⁵ Kaestli claims that this *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris* should be identified with a work called the *Liber de natiuitate Saluatoris et de Maria uel obstetrice* ("Book on the Nativity of the Savior and on Mary and the Midwife") in a list of apocrypha in the *Pseudo-Gelasian Decree* (6th cent.).¹⁶ Evidence suggests that this apocryphon was composed before 800, since it was incorporated into the J Compilation that was in circulation by this date. Kaestli further argues that the episode of the midwife in the *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris* is independent of and potentially even older than the corresponding episode in *Prot. Jas.*¹⁷ If his suggestions are correct, the *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris* was likely composed in the second century.

A brief history of editions and printings of *Ps.-Mt.* made prior to Gijssel's critical edition is useful for demonstrating some of the issues surrounding the different text types and what they reveal about the transmission of the apocryphon.¹⁸ The earliest printing occurred in Rome only a few decades after Johannes Gutenberg set up his printing press. In 1468 (in fact, the year Gutenberg died), Giovanni Andrea Bussi included fragments of the gospel among the *editio princeps* of Jerome's *Epistolae* (*Letters*) printed by Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz.¹⁹ In England, around 1477, William Caxton printed a version of *Ps.-Mt.* focused on the life of Jesus and omitting the parts before the Nativity.²⁰ Titled *Infantia salvatoris*, this version includes chaps. 13–24, the *pars altera*, and a handful of other added episodes, presumably from a late medieval manuscript

14. Kaestli and McNamara, "Latin Infancy Gospels," esp. 64–102.

15. Kaestli and McNamara, "Latin Infancy Gospels," 67.

16. Kaestli, "Mapping an Unexplored Second Century Apocryphal Gospel."

17. Kaestli, "Recherches nouvelles" and "Mapping an Unexplored Second Century Apocryphal Gospel."

18. See Gijssel, *De nativitate Mariae*, 37–48.

19. Jerome, *Epistolae et Tractatus*.

20. Caxton, *Infantia salvatoris*.

exemplar. Unfortunately, Caxton's book has remained largely overlooked in studies of *Ps.-Mt.*'s reception.²¹

A full printing of *Ps.-Mt.* in its now-familiar form did not appear until more than 350 years after the publication of Caxton's text. In 1832, Johann Karl Thilo printed the *editio princeps* in his Christian apocrypha collection titled *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti*.²² Here Thilo printed *Ps.-Mt.* following *Prot. Jas.* and *Nat. Mary* (because he thought this was older than *Ps.-Mt.* and not based on it), thus solidifying an identified relationship between the three texts. Thilo's text relies on two manuscripts of the P recension: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 5559 A (14th cent.) and lat. 1652 (15th cent.). In 1852, J. A. Giles reprinted Thilo's text in his collection of *The Uncanonical Gospels and Other Writings*.²³

Before Gijssels's critical edition, the most important edition was that of Constantin von Tischendorf, included in his *Evangelia Apocrypha* (1853).²⁴ To the manuscripts used by Thilo, Tischendorf added two others: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 4578 (14th cent.) of the Q recension, and Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Gaddi 208 (14th cent.) of the R recension. Because these two provided witnesses to different text types, they significantly contributed to knowledge about the textual tradition of *Ps.-Mt.* In another major development for modern study, Tischendorf's edition included, for the first time, the *pars altera*. While he acknowledged that this section diverges from the rest of the text, and derives from a separate source (*Inf. Gos. Thom.*), he did not come to the more recent conclusion that these episodes were a later addition to the original narrative of *Ps.-Mt.* After the first edition of Tischendorf's collection, in 1869 Oscar Schade edited the A-text as found in Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. theol. phil. 8° 57 (12th cent., Zwiefalten Abbey), although he also consulted Paris 5559.²⁵ Schade's edition proved influential to German scholarship, and Tischendorf used the Stuttgart manuscript for his second edition of *Evangelia apocrypha* (1876). Tischendorf's edition remained a significant contribution to scholarship, and indeed the sole authoritative text, until it was

21. See Dzon, *Quest for the Christ Child*, with summary at 253–55; and translation in *Middle English Poems*.

22. Thilo, *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, 337–400.

23. Giles, *Uncanonical Gospels*, 1:66–89.

24. Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, 52–112.

25. Schade, *Liber de infantia Mariae et Christi*. On Schade's reliance on Paris 5559, see Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 83 n. 5.

superseded by Gijssel's full critical edition. *Evangelia Apocrypha* remains the only edition to include the full *pars altera*; a new critical edition of this material would be a benefit to the study of this text.

Title

Although the “Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew” is the common title assigned to this apocryphon, it comes from modern convention rather than medieval tradition. Indeed, medieval scribes had altogether different ideas about the title. The oldest manuscript witnesses fall into two types: either they lack a title completely or they offer a title showing interest in the birth of Mary. For example, there is no title at all in early witnesses to A—such as Budapest, Clmae 316 and Vienna, ÖNB 550—nor in the oldest manuscript of Q: Vatican, Reg. Lat. 648. On the other hand, the oldest witnesses that do have titles use variations on the name *Natiuitas sanctae Mariae* (“Nativity of Saint Mary”), some adding *uirginis* (“virgin,” like Rheims 1395 and Paris, nouv. acq. lat. 1605) and others adding *incipit* or *historia* (“beginning” or “history”). Over time, scribes expanded the title beyond a focus on Mary, often adding a phrase like *atque infantiam Iesu Christi* (“and the infancy of Jesus Christ”) or *atque infantia nostri Saluatoris* (“and the infancy of our Savior”). By the later Middle Ages, the expanded text with the *pars altera* was often known as the (*Liber de Infantia saluatoris* (“Book of the Infancy of the Savior”), as in Caxton's version.²⁶ As Gijssel demonstrates, the evolution of titles is especially linked with the history of the text: the titles generally reflect the concerns of the revisions found in each family. Thus, the expansion of the title to include more information about Jesus appears alongside the addition of the *pars altera* relating more of Jesus' childhood miracles in Q and R, shifting the focus of both text and title to include as much about the Christ child as about the Virgin Mary.

Formal elements also influenced the title and its evolution. A set of spurious correspondence purportedly between bishops Chromatius (died ca. 406/407) and Heliodorus (ca. 330–ca. 390) and Jerome (ca. 347–420), appended to manuscripts of the A-text as a preface, provide further evidence. The first letter attributed to the bishops mentions the text as “ortus Mariae et natiuitas atque infantia” (“the birth of Mary and

26. Caxton, *Infantia saluatoris*; see Dzon, “Cecily Neville and the Apocryphal *Infantia saluatoris*”; Quest for the Christ Child, *passim*; and *Middle English Poems*.

also the nativity and the infancy [of Jesus]”), while the letter attributed to Jerome refers to it as a *libellus* (“little book”) and discusses its content about *nostri saluatoris* (“our Savior”)—all phrases that became adopted by various scribes who expanded the title. The history of the text’s translation in the letter attributed to Jerome also contributes to the later perception of the title, as the pseudonymous author explains that it was first written in Hebrew by the evangelist Matthew; from this arises the modern title with its focus on the author rather than content. Curiously, the title never took on elements from the prologue taken from *Prot. Jas.* 25 (in the P manuscripts), with its attribution to the apostle James.

Another formal element that influenced the title concerns the transmission of *Ps.-Mt.* in collections of preaching texts like homiliaries, lectionaries, and legendaries.²⁷ One example is found in a branch of the A family that features extracts from *Ps.-Mt.* to be read for the Feast of Saint Anna; here the title is commonly given as *Lectiones de sancta Anna* (“Readings on Saint Anna”). In another manuscript of the A family (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Preuß. Kulturbesitz, theol. Lat. C. 256), the title is completely reworked as *Vita sanctae Annae et Ioachim et natiuitas sanctae [Mariae] et quomodo uixit in templo* (“The Life of Saints Anna and Joachim and the nativity of Saint [Mary] and how she lived in the temple”). Certain preaching collections include titles with additions like *exordium*, *sermo*, and *omilia* (“address,” “sermon,” and “homily”). All of these instances speak to the influence of *Ps.-Mt.* on liturgy and preaching during the medieval period.

Titles from the manuscripts carried over into print, where they underwent further developments by modern editors. In the *editio princeps*, Thilo uses the title *Historia de nativitate Mariae et de infantia Salvatoris* (“History of the nativity of Mary and the infancy of the Savior”), and he reproduces the manuscript rubric “Incipit Historia de Joachim et Anna et de nativitate beatae deigenitricis semperque virginis Mariae et de infantia Salvatoris” (“Beginning of the History of Joachim and Anna and of the nativity of the blessed Mother of God and perpetual virgin Mary and the infancy of the Savior”). The next development came about in Tischendorf’s edition. Based on new manuscript witnesses, Tischendorf uses the heading “Incipit liber de ortu beatae Mariae et infantia salvatoris. A beato Matthaео evangelista Hebraice scriptus et a beato Ieronimo presbytero in Latinum translatus” (“Beginning of the book of the birth of

27. See Gijssel, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 101–3.

blessed Mary and the infancy of the Savior. Written in Hebrew by blessed Matthew the Evangelist and translated into Latin by blessed Jerome the priest”), although in his table of contents and prolegomena he titles it *Pseudo-Matthaei evangelium*. This development occurred largely because Tischendorf’s added witnesses include the Pseudo-Jerome correspondence, with its fabricated explanation about Matthew’s authorship. From that point onward, the text retained its association with Matthew in traditional attribution and title.

Prefatory Matter

Ps.-Mt. is accompanied in the manuscripts by two different types of prefatory matter: one prologue is seemingly taken from the epilogue of *Prot. Jas.* 25, and the other is the spurious correspondence between Jerome and the bishops Chromatius and Heliodorus. These two prologues are distinguished by their association with the two earliest recensions, the P and A texts, respectively. While the A recension is presumably closer to *Ps.-Mt.*’s original form, it is the P recension that includes an authorial prologue. Both sets of prefatory material are translated together here for the first time, in order to represent the differing prologues in the manuscripts.

In P, the prologue begins “I James” (“Ego Iacobus”) and provides a brief (spurious) identification of the author as the apostle James, “son of Joseph the carpenter” (“filius Joseph fabri”). This prologue generally has been read as an adaptation of the authorial colophon at the end of *Prot. Jas.*, but the two differ in their details. Nonetheless, the prologue follows the widespread tradition found in Christian apocrypha of establishing the author as an eye-witness to the events reported in the narrative. In this case, the author is to be identified with James, the brother of Jesus (as mentioned in Mark 6:3, Gal 1:19, and elsewhere), one of Joseph’s children from a marriage previous to his relationship with Mary. For a text attributed to (pseudo-) Matthew, this may seem an odd authorial ascription, but it is consistent with the compiler’s reliance on *Prot. Jas.* as the main source. This prologue also offers a glimpse into several themes in the apocryphon: a primary focus on the events surrounding the birth of Mary, a secondary interest in the birth of Jesus, and the association between these births and the typological fulfillment of prophecies in the Hebrew Bible.

In A's prefatory matter, the two bishops ask Jerome to translate the apocryphon from its original Hebrew into Latin, so that they may read it, and Jerome hesitantly accepts their request. These letters establish notions of secrecy and dangerousness often linked with apocrypha in the late antique and medieval periods, as well as the traditional idea that Matthew originally wrote his gospel (and, as is claimed, *Ps.-Mt.*) in Hebrew. It is presumably because of these letters that the text is now known by its modern title, since the letter attributed to Jerome cites the evangelist as the original author. It is not surprising that these letters would replace the original, rather than supplement it, since the differing attributions would be at odds with each other. The letters also allude to Manichaeus and Leucius, who are associated in patristic writings with apocrypha, signaling wider intertextual connections with apocryphal literature.

Sources

Infancy Gospels

As mentioned above, a full understanding of *Ps.-Mt.* requires some consideration of its relationship to the Greek *Prot. Jas.* This earlier infancy gospel is the primary source for *Ps.-Mt.*, though it is substantially reworked in the Latin apocryphon. The precise nature of the text of *Prot. Jas.* used by *Ps.-Mt.* remains unknown. Both Gijssels and Beyers maintain that the author of *Ps.-Mt.* should be more properly viewed as a compiler, who relied not on the Greek *Prot. Jas.* for a direct Latin translation, but on some form that had already undergone significant adaptations.²⁸ Without earlier forms of *Ps.-Mt.* to compare with the A and P texts, this view must remain a hypothesis until further evidence is assessed. Yet, as will be seen in the following discussion, there are also a number of other ways that *Ps.-Mt.* is a compilation of disparate sources.

The text of *Ps.-Mt.* certainly reveals a number of adaptations, additions, and omissions in its use of *Prot. Jas.* as a main source. Perhaps the most innovative and substantial adaptation is the depiction of Mary's life in the temple in chap. 6, which is significantly reworked with added details.²⁹ Two other changes concern names of individuals: while Anna's father is not mentioned in *Prot. Jas.*, he is named Issachar (Achar in P)

28. Gijssels, *Liber de nativitate Mariae*, 50–59 and 71–83; and Beyers, “Transmission of Marian Apocrypha,” 126–27.

29. See the discussion below about the *Rule of Benedict* as a source.

in *Ps.-Mt.* 1:5; and while the High Priest presiding over the selection of Mary's husband is named Zechariah in *Prot. Jas.*, he is named Abiathar in *Ps.-Mt.* 7:1, 8, and 12:6 (although see 8:3 for a discrepancy).³⁰ Additions in *Ps.-Mt.* are more abundant: a mention of Joseph's sons and grandchildren, who are older than Mary (presumably because of a previous marriage), in 8:11; the visit from the shepherds (from Luke 2:8–20) and the star announcing Jesus' birth in 13:29–30; an ox and ass worshipping Jesus at his birth (thus fulfilling Isaiah 1:3) in 14:1–2; information about Jesus' circumcision in 15:1–3; and, in some manuscripts of the A-text, a reference to the purification of Mary in 15:2. Such changes seem to present uncertainties about the text in the manuscripts; these instances show some amount of textual instability in the early circulation of *Ps.-Mt.*

The compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* also omits certain material found in *Prot. Jas.* Most outstanding are the exclusions of three major episodes from *Prot. Jas.*: the first-person relation of miracles that Joseph sees when Jesus is born, often called the "catalepsy of nature" (*Prot. Jas.* 18); information about Mary's cousin Elizabeth and her son John the Baptist (*Prot. Jas.* 22–23); and the conflict between John's father Zechariah and Herod (*Prot. Jas.* 23–24). The latter two omissions present evidence that the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* relied on *Prot. Jas.* only as far as chap. 20 (*Ps.-Mt.* 13). All of the material for *Ps.-Mt.* 13:29–17:3 is parallel to the accounts in Luke 2 and Matthew 2. Indeed, the episodes about the magi and Herod's slaughter of the innocents in *Ps.-Mt.* 16–17 are closer in details to Matthew 2, and even the wording of *Ps.-Mt.* presents several verbal parallels with the canonical gospel. *Prot. Jas.* includes a number of details not present in either Matthew or *Ps.-Mt.*: the narrative mentions that Joseph was about to depart for Judea when an uproar took place in Bethlehem in 21:1; Herod's questions to the high priests are quoted directly in 21:4; spoken dialogue between Herod and the magi is quoted in 21:7–8; and the magi find Jesus in the cave where he was born (not in a house, nor even a stable) in 21:10.

Conversely, both Matthew and *Ps.-Mt.* include details not present in *Prot. Jas.*: Micah 5 is quoted as evidence for Jesus' birth in Bethlehem in Matt 2:6 and *Ps.-Mt.* 16:5; and in relating Herod's slaughter of the innocents, both Matt 2:16 and *Ps.-Mt.* 17:1–2 mention Bethlehem and that

30. Historically, the actual High Priest at the time of Jesus' birth (ca. 4/3 BCE) is likely to have been either Joazar ben Boethus (4 BCE) or Eleazar ben Boethus (4–3 BCE), although the canonical Gospels mention only Joseph Caiaphas (18–36 CE) in relation to Jesus' death.

the age of children to be murdered was based on the timing of Herod's questioning of the magi. *Ps.-Mt.* also includes details not found in either *Matt* or *Prot. Jas.*: a transition sentence mentions that two years had passed between the birth of Jesus and the visit of the magi in 16:1; and the magi offer gold, frankincense, and myrrh along with each giving Jesus a piece of gold in 16:9. Questions remain about where the compiler gleaned these details, and it is possible that another source was used—possibly the same source on which chaps. 18–24 rely—or that they were invented for this text. Whatever the case, the evidence indicates that the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* probably stopped relying on *Prot. Jas.* after the episodes with the midwives. Instead, the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* relied on the canonical accounts in Luke 2 and Matthew 2 as major sources for 13:29–17:3.

After narrating the events up to Herod's slaughter of the innocents, *Ps.-Mt.* recounts a series of episodes about the flight into Egypt, including miracles performed by Jesus on the journey and when they arrive (chaps. 18–24). Any specific sources used for these chapters remain unidentified. Some clues are found in parallels from other texts that must rely on a common source, especially those in Irish and Hiberno-Latin literature. The Irish gospel history found in the *Leabhar Breac* and other manuscripts contains parallels to Jesus' childhood miracles on the way to Egypt, as well as the incidents with the Egyptian idols and Afrodissius (sections 126–29 and 133–36). The manuscript witnesses to this text are all from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, although the work they contain is in Middle Irish (in use ca. 900–ca. 1200) and was likely composed in the eleventh or twelfth century.³¹ The flight into Egypt is also mentioned in an eighth-century Hiberno-Latin biblical commentary known as *De enigmatibus* (or the *Reference Bible*) in the section on Matthew, in which the cities “Helipolem” and “Sothinent” are mentioned (see *Ps.-Mt.* 22:4), as is the falling of idols in an Egyptian temple. However, there is no definitive evidence that this commentary relies on *Ps.-Mt.* for these details.³² Finally, the incident of dragons venerating the holy family is also mentioned in an early eighth-century Hiberno-Latin *Glossa in Psalmos* (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 68) in a note on Psalm 148:7—the same psalm used in *Ps.-Mt.* 18:6. While it is possible that the gloss represents an allusion to *Ps.-Mt.*, it is different enough in

31. McNamara et al., “Infancy Narrative of the *Leabhar Breac*.”

32. See McNamara, *Bible and the Apocrypha*, 587–88. My thanks to McNamara and Anthony Harvey for information about this source, in private correspondence.

details to warrant caution when drawing conclusions about its reliance on *Ps.-Mt.* rather than a common source.³³

Other clues about any potential sources used for *Ps.-Mt.* 18–24 are parallels related specifically to the episode of the palm tree in chaps. 20–21. Again, one parallel is found in Irish literature, in an Old Irish translation of the *Dormition of the Virgin* 3–5.³⁴ This story also appears in an early version of the *Dormition*, the fourth- or fifth-century Ethiopic *Liber requiei* 5–9, and its close parallel in the fragmentary Georgian *Dormition* 1–11.³⁵ In all of these texts, Jesus appears to Mary and retells the story of the palm-tree as a testimony to his power and identity as Christ. A generally similar episode is related more abstractly in the Qur’an 19:23–26, in which Mary receives both water and dates from a palm tree in her solitude before Jesus’ birth. Without an intermediary between these texts and *Ps.-Mt.*, we cannot come to any solid conclusions about the relationships that led to the similarities.

Parallels to chaps. 23–24 also pose especially intriguing possibilities concerning the sources of *Ps.-Mt.* Three infancy gospel narratives relate similar episodes: in the *Arabic Infancy Gospel* 10 (itself a translation of the East Syriac *History of the Virgin*), *Armenian Infancy Gospel* 15:13–16 and 16:4, and *Vision of Theophilus* (pp. 19–21 in Mingana’s translation), Jesus causes pagan idols to fall down at his presence. Yet none of these episodes is particularly close to the events in *Ps.-Mt.* A few other sources also seem related to this episode. Pseudo-Rufinus mentions idols falling at Jesus’ arrival in Egypt (with the name Hermopolis) and makes a connection to Isaiah 19:1 in the *Historia monachorum* 7. While it is possible that Pseudo-Rufinus is a source for *Ps.-Mt.*, the latter is greatly expanded. As already mentioned, the Hiberno-Latin *De enigmatibus* refers to the same episode and also notes that it is a fulfillment of Isaiah 19:1; the exact relationship between this text and *Ps.-Mt.* remains uncertain.

Finally, another Greek apocryphon posing parallels to *Ps.-Mt.* 23–24 is the *Legend of Aphroditianus* (the “Narrative of Events Happening in Persia on the Birth of Christ” falsely attributed to Julius Africanus). This pseudo-pagan text is meant to provide arguments for the truth

33. McNamara, *Bible and the Apocrypha*, 565–66.

34. A version from Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 610 is printed in Donoghue, *Testament of Mary*; another version from Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 O 48 (the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*) is translated in Herbert and McNamara, *Irish Biblical Apocrypha*, 119–31. See Clayton, *Apocryphal Gospels of Mary*, 38–40 for discussion.

35. See Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions*, esp. 290–97.

of Christianity to pagans, as it relates various events at Jesus' birth, including an explanation for the journey of the magi to see the child. In the earlier part of the narrative, one of the events at Jesus' birth is that a star descends to the Temple of Here, hovers over the statue of Pege, who represents Mary, and all of the other idols fall down in veneration of this figure. Plot parallels with *Ps.-Mt.* are striking, as are similarities between the names *Aphroditianus* and *Afrodisius* (as in *Ps.-Mt.* 24). Indeed, as Katharina Heyden has demonstrated, the titular name would have been readily available in authorial ascriptions for the *Legend* in the manuscripts.³⁶ This work survives primarily in Greek and Slavonic versions, and there is little evidence for its transmission in Western Europe. The nature of the relationship between the *Legend of Aphroditianus* and *Ps.-Mt.*, therefore, remains elusive but tantalizing. In a related way, there is also a striking similarity with the name of the city *Aphrodisias*, which was established in the second century BCE, associated with the goddess Aphrodite—now known as Geyre in modern-day Turkey.³⁷

All of these examples of parallels to *Ps.-Mt.* 18–24 point to the likelihood that many of these texts share some source (or multiple sources). The possibility remains that the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* relied on the same intermediate source used for the apocryphal narratives in the *Leabhar Breac*—that is, the lost *Liber de nativitate Salvatoris* (“Special Source”). Yet, since this apocryphon does not exist independent of later texts that rely on it, questions remain about this source and the various relationships between all of the seemingly related texts.³⁸ Gijssel argues that *Ps.-Mt.* 18–21 are not part of the original form of the text but were added before the earliest surviving manuscripts were copied, based on four claims.³⁹ First, there is no transition formula at the start of chap. 18. Second, the theological content is not the same as in earlier chapters—it shifts from a focus on Mary to stories about Jesus' childhood miracles. Third, the language and style are markedly different, with significantly more awkwardness. And fourth, the narrative in this portion contains contradictions or inconsistencies with the preceding section, such as differences between Jesus' age in chaps. 16 and 18. In addition, Gijssel also notes that one manuscript of the A family (Oxford, Bodleian Library,

36. Heyden, “Legend of Aphroditianus,” 9 n. a.

37. See Reynolds, “Aphrodisias.”

38. Some of these questions are summarized and discussed in Beyers, “Transmission of Marian Apocrypha.”

39. Gijssel, *Die unmittelbare*, 15–17.

Rawlinson D 1236; 14th cent.)—which is generally a faithful witness to the A-text in many instances, despite its late date—includes a new title at the start of chap. 18: “Narratio Elysiodorii de factis Iesu Christi” (“Narrative of Elysiodorus on the acts of Jesus Christ”).⁴⁰ These points, however, need not lead to Gijssel’s conclusion that the chapters were added after the original compilation of *Ps.-Mt.*; they could also be explained by the compiler’s clumsiness in turning to an altogether new source (or sources) for chaps. 18–24. Thus, the issue remains unresolved.

Omission of details from the last few chapters of *Prot. Jas.* (22–24) and the use of at least one other source for the flight into Egypt raise a number of questions concerning the original form of *Ps.-Mt.* I have already suggested that the compiler did not use *Prot. Jas.* following the birth of Jesus and incidents with the midwives (chap. 13). Nonetheless, relationships between *Ps.-Mt.* and its sources discussed so far leave some issues unaddressed. Many of these issues concern how to explain the shift in sources toward the end of the narrative. Why would the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* ignore material from the primary source in *Prot. Jas.* following the nativity? One explanation presumes that the compiler had the entirety of *Prot. Jas.* but intentionally turned to other sources following the episode with the midwives. It is likely that two of these sources were the canonical accounts in Luke and Matthew, but some details also point to the possibility that the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* turned to at least one other text. This explanation becomes more complicated when considering chaps. 18–24 (recounting the flight into Egypt), which could have been added at the time of its original compilation or (following Gijssel’s claims) at a later stage.

A second explanation is that the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* did not intentionally diverge from *Prot. Jas.* but lacked the ending and sought other sources to finish the narrative. This explanation helps to understand the divergences after 13:28 most cogently. It is true that *Ps.-Mt.* does not particularly remain faithful to the details in *Prot. Jas.*, but most of the adaptations of material from this source are additions, not wholesale omissions. This explanation also allows for accepting Gijssel’s suggestions about chaps. 18–24, although it is not necessarily predicated upon his conclusions. For example, this explanation accords with the possibilities that the ending of *Ps.-Mt.* developed either at once or in stages. In

40. Gijssel, *Die unmittelbare*, 16–17; and Gijssel, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 115 n. 1. I have been unable to identify any other instance of the name *Elysiodorus* in patristic and apocryphal literature.

the former case, perhaps the inconsistencies pointed out by Gijssel were caused merely by weaving multiple sources together. In the latter case, materials from the gospels could have been added first (and perhaps another text for the other details), with other episodes added later from at least one other unknown source about the flight into Egypt.

Admittedly one potential complication to this hypothesis is the circulation of manuscripts in the P family with the Latin “Ego Iacobus” prologue based on *Prot. Jas.* 25. Gijssel has suggested that the *Prot. Jas.* epilogue was turned to a prologue and underwent adaptations in the Latin text of the *Prot. Jas.* before the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* used it.⁴¹ Gijssel’s suggestion helps to support the likelihood that the *Ps.-Mt.* compiler lacked the ending of *Prot. Jas.* It is also feasible that the Latin prologue could have been added later by someone familiar with the source. The possibility of such a later addition helps to make sense of the stark differences between *Prot. Jas.* 25 and the “Ego Iacobus” prologue, as well as why this prologue does not circulate in manuscripts of the A family.

A final explanation (not exclusive of the others proposed) is that the original ending of *Ps.-Mt.* is lost, not having survived in any manuscript. In this case, Gijssel’s judgments about the shifts around chap. 18 could still be accepted, as could the possibility that the compiler lacked the ending of *Prot. Jas.* With this hypothesis, a number of possibilities might be imagined. One is that the ending (whether or not *Ps.-Mt.* followed *Prot. Jas.* all the way through) was lost at an early stage of the text’s transmission and replaced. Another is that an early copyist of the text (or multiple copyists) found the ending unsatisfactory and replaced it, either at once or in stages. This explanation could include all of chaps. 18–24, or only portions of it. At least part of this hypothesis is cogent, since it is difficult to reconstruct any coherent conclusion after the episode with Afrodissius (following 24:5) from the manuscript witnesses. In any case, it is imaginable that a compiler could have replaced or appended the ending before any of the earliest surviving manuscripts were copied, creating an exemplar on which both the A and P texts were based, as well as later developments in the Q and R texts.

Whatever the circumstances of developments from 13:29 to the end of *Ps.-Mt.*, both the A and P families are based on an archetype with a similar ending, though the problems of piecing together sources gave rise to some amount of textual fluidity. Many of the source problems

41. Gijssel, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 71–83.

discussed are due to the fact that *Ps.-Mt.* is—like many medieval apocrypha—a compilation of materials from a variety of sources. It may even be the case that all of these problems are caused by modern assumptions about textual coherence, and that the original compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* would not have seen the same issues in the handling of apocryphal sources.

The Bible

Like its predecessor (*Prot. Jas.*) and other apocryphal gospels, *Ps.-Mt.* naturally relies on the canonical Bible as a major source, as already discussed. Foremost among biblical sources are the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, although occasional references also link the apocryphon to Mark and John. In references to and reliance on Jewish beliefs, practices, and rituals, it also relies on the Hebrew Bible: several passages directly quote from Numbers, several allude to 1 Samuel, and a number of quotations connect Jesus' birth to prophecies in the Psalms, Isaiah, and Habakkuk. Some of these (Numbers and 1 Samuel) are also present in *Prot. Jas.*, but *Ps.-Mt.* contains additions that emphasize fulfillments of the Hebrew Bible in Jesus' life.

The lives of Anna and Joachim in many ways generally reflect certain biblical stories. For example, there are parallels with Abraham (Abram) and Sarah (Sarai) in Genesis: like Abraham, Joachim is a wealthy shepherd; both couples remain childless for many years; they attempt to deal with their situations on their own (Abraham with Hagar, Joachim by fleeing Anna); and both couples are recipients of God's promises of children through miraculous births. Many closer parallels may be found also in the story of the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 1): his mother Hannah is childless, his father Elkana offers a sacrifice at the temple, Hannah offers a prayer and promises her child to God, and Samuel is devoted as a servant of God and later given to the temple. Similarly, Tobit is another plausible model for Joachim, as both are presented as faithful in their piety and sacrifices at the temple, and Tobit's wife is named Anna. Notably, in Greek additions to the Book of Daniel in the Septuagint, the husband of the protagonist Susanna is a wealthy, righteous man named Joakim. There are also notable parallels with the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah in Luke 1. The author of *Ps.-Mt.* gains some of these echoes from *Prot. Jas.*, but certain details (discussed in the commentary) also further accentuate these associations.

Especially noteworthy are allusions to and direct quotations from Jewish practices in Numbers (mainly in chaps. 8 and 12). For example, the ritual of presenting rods for the selection of Mary's husband in chap. 8 is parallel to a similar practice in Numbers 17, and the testing of Joseph and Mary for sexual purity with holy water in chap. 12 is parallel to a similar practice in Numbers 5. The repeated phrase "As the Lord lives" (later "As the Lord of all hosts lives") also poses a direct use of biblical speech often found introducing affirmations and oaths throughout 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Jeremiah, and a number of other scattered verses. All of these echoes help to align the life of Mary, her marriage to Joseph, and her pregnancy with Jewish purity laws and practices, further emphasizing Mary's piety and virginity. In light of the earlier chapters focused on Anna and Joachim, this is a logical extension of the text's emphasis on the lineage of Mary and Jesus as well as an insistence about the piety of their family in Jewish tradition. Such emphasis on Jewish rituals and law as portrayed in the Hebrew Bible also serves to create greater contrast between Jewish and Christian concepts of soteriology.

Some of the key uses of the Bible in *Ps.-Mt.* constitute episodes that establish moments in Jesus' childhood as fulfillments of prophecies in the Hebrew Bible. A first mention is made in the "Ego Iacobus" prologue, which declares that the narrative culminates in Jesus' birth as "fulfillment through the twelve tribes of Israel"—an element not taken over from *Prot. Jas.* but original to *Ps.-Mt.* Later in the gospel, different episodes are recounted and aligned with passages in the Hebrew Bible. Such fulfillments are included in 14:1–4 (Isa 1:3; Hab 3:2 LXX), 18:5–6 (Ps 148:7), 19:6–9 (Isa 65:25), 23:1–2 (Isa 19:1), and 39:3–9 (in the *pars altera*; Ps 64:10). In each case, the author introduces the biblical passage with the formula "Then was fulfilled. . ." ("Tunc adimpletum est. . ."), a technique found also in the canonical Gospels, most prominently in Matthew's infancy narrative (1:22–23; 2:5–6, 15, 17–18, 23).

Notably, variant readings in different biblical versions that circulated before major reforms in the Carolingian era are starkly demonstrated by discrepancies between the A and P families.⁴² The A-text relies on Old Latin forms (based on the LXX) that circulated before Jerome's Latin translation and remained in use into the early Middle Ages. In some cases, Old Latin forms are necessary for the associations between verses in the Hebrew Bible and their perceived fulfillments in the narrative;

42. See Gijssels, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 90.

these same associations disappear in Jerome's translation from Hebrew. This use of Old Latin forms is one reason among others indicating the closer proximity of the A-text to the original text of *Ps.-Mt.* The P-text revision brought many of the biblical sources into conformity with the increasingly standardized Vulgate version of Jerome's translation. Vulgate forms from the P-text were carried over into the Q and R recensions. The reviser of the Q-text, in fact, further systematized biblical quotations to match the Vulgate through additional revisions.⁴³ This process in itself conforms to the more general trajectory of the standardization of the Latin Bible in the medieval period, which largely began with Alcuin (ca. 735–804) at the court of Charlemagne (r. 800–814) and continued in stages through the scholastic movements of the twelfth century. Much of this work on biblical reform was undertaken at Benedictine and other monastic centers, a milieu in which *Ps.-Mt.* took a prominent role during the same period.

Late Antique Literature

Among the Christian literature of late antiquity, one major source that lies behind *Ps.-Mt.* is the *Rule of Benedict* (RB), composed by Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480–ca. 547) between 529 and his death. Émile Amann first observed general parallels between the monastic life and the depiction of Mary's life among the young virgins in the temple in chap. 6.⁴⁴ The text relates that Mary lived “in contubernium uirginum” (“in the company of virgins,” 4:3) and followed a “sibi. . . regulam statuerat” (“rule she had set for herself,” 6:4). The rest of the chapter describes the details of her daily observances, including prayer and labor, within the general framework of devotion to God and asceticism. With this starting point in mind, Amann claims that the depiction relies on a similar daily routine established in the RB. Although he does not point to specific parallels, this association has been accepted by a number of scholars. As Gijssel observes, precise verbal echoes are difficult to demonstrate, although the description does seem to rely on a monastic rule, and parallels with the RB in particular are striking.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, in his commentary, Gijssel lists an assortment

43. Gijssel, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 91.

44. Amann, *Protévangile de Jacques*, 101–9, and his note on Mary's time in the temple in *Ps.-Mt.* 6, at 298–99.

45. Gijssel, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 66.

of parallels between *Ps.-Mt.* and the RB, some of which do feature verbal echoes, and I have demonstrated various parallels elsewhere.⁴⁶

In turning to monastic precepts, however, the RB is not the only source with close parallels to *Ps.-Mt.* Both thematic and verbal parallels are also found in the older *Rule of the Master* (RM), likely composed in the sixth century. At first glance, one might conclude that themes and vocabulary from the RM found also in *Ps.-Mt.* have arrived via the RB, inasmuch as Benedict himself relied on the RM in compiling his own set of precepts. There are, however, certain parallels and even verbal echoes between *Ps.-Mt.* and RM that do not appear in RB. For example, the Greek loanword *heremus* used during the flight into Egypt (17:3 and 20:1) appears in the RM in close proximity to mention of Egypt; the rare, post-classical Latin word *exagilium* for “inheritance” used in *Ps.-Mt.* 21:2 also appears with the same sense in the RM in a passage about sons of nobles donating their possessions before entering a monastery; and this same precept about the division of nobles’ possessions in the RM provides a parallel for the depiction of Joachim’s tripartite division of his goods in *Ps.-Mt.* 1:3—a passage not reliant on any description in *Prot. Jas.* None of these specific details appear in the RB, and the accumulation of evidence points to the influence of the earlier RM on *Ps.-Mt.*⁴⁷

Influences may be found also in patristic literature about virgin ascetics. Beyers has investigated such parallels, arguing that the depiction of Mary’s life in the temple is based more on literary representations of virgin asceticism than on actual monastic life.⁴⁸ Analyzing chap. 6, she points to *De virginibus* by Ambrose (ca. 340–397) as a model for the type of “literary portrait” described in *Ps.-Mt.* In particular, she points to three elements in common between Ambrose’s treatise and *Ps.-Mt.*: the emphasis on virtues for a sacred virgin, which became a popular idea during Ambrose’s time; the use of gospel references highlighting these virtues; and an eschatological feature of the depiction of Mary. Another example that could be added to Beyers’ comparison is Ambrose’s mention of the dual crown of martyrdom and virginity (*aut martyr, aut virgo . . . corona*; *Virg.* 2.4.24), which Mary invokes regarding Abel (*Ps.-Mt.* 7:5–7). Preferring the perspective that both Ambrose and *Ps.-Mt.* provide representative depictions of virgin ascetic life rather than strict adherence

46. See Hawk, “Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew.”

47. See Hawk, “Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew.”

48. Beyers, “La règle de Marie.”

to monastic rules, Beyers suggests a more circumspect consideration of sources than the view that the RB was the only major work on virginity evoked in the adaptations made in *Ps.-Mt.* 6.

Other late antique texts about virgins are also instructive for their influences on *Ps.-Mt.* A host of treatises on virginity share general similarities, though not all parallels with these texts are close enough to warrant calling them sources. Certainly the compiler of *Ps.-Mt.* drew on these types of texts in adapting *Prot. Jas.* as a source and presenting Mary as a model virgin ascetic. A variety of texts with general similarities are cited in the commentary, but a few cases with more specific correspondences are worth singling out. Michael Berthold has demonstrated that the text shares distinct verbal parallels with the Pseudo-Ambrosian *Life of Saint Agnes* for the description of Mary entering and illuminating a cave of darkness in *Ps.-Mt.* 13:8–11.⁴⁹ One specific treatise on virginity that stands out is Jerome's *Epist.* 22 (composed in 384) to Eustochium (ca. 368–419/420), a noblewoman and an ascetic (like her mother Paula), virgin, and Desert Mother. Jerome mentions several aspects of Mary's life that also appear in passages of *Ps.-Mt.* that do not rely on *Prot. Jas.* Most generally, he continually points to Mary as a model virgin and ascetic—just as she is represented throughout *Ps.-Mt.*—and discusses the Annunciation in this regard in chap. 38. Other examples of details held in common appear across the texts: Jerome discusses virgins as “vessels of the Lord's temple” (“*uasa templi,*” 23) and further claims (drawing on 1 Cor 6:19) that, “no gold or silver vessel was ever so dear to God as is the temple of a virgin's body” (“*neque enim aureum uas et argenteum tam carum deo fuit, quam templum corporis uirginalis,*” 23), just as this imagery is applied to Mary as a temple of God in *Ps.-Mt.* 3:6; he mentions the murder of Abel with the epithet “the just” (“*iustus,*” 39), as Mary does in 7:5; and he uses the image of the crown of virginity throughout (“*virginitatis coronam,*” esp. 15), as Mary mentions regarding Abel in 7:7. These last two parallels are not particularly rare in patristic literature (as noted above for the crown of virginity in Ambrose's *Virg.* 2.4.24), but all three details appearing together in Jerome's letter—which was widespread and famous in the medieval period—do point to the likelihood of direct influence on *Ps.-Mt.*

49. Berthold, “Datierung.”