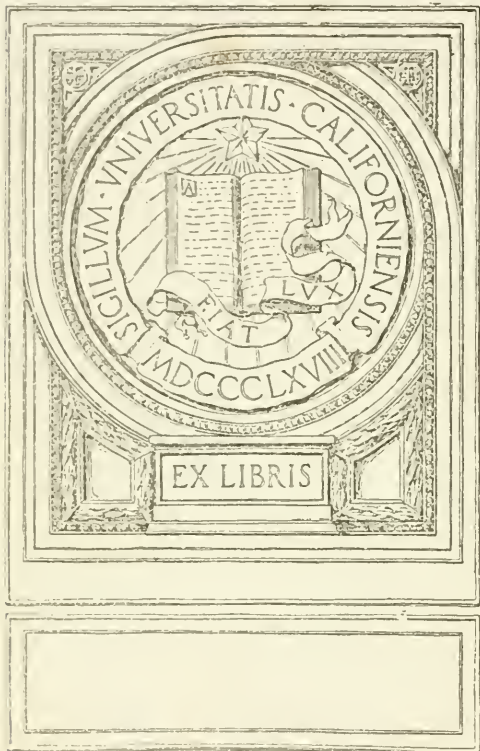




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LEGENDS *of*  
OUR LADY  
MARY *the*

PERPETUAL VIRGIN  
& HER MOTHER HANNÂ  
TRANSLATED FROM THE ETHI-  
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## PREFACE

THE present volume, containing translations of all the important Ethiopic Legends of the Blessed Virgin MARY, and the companion volume of translations of the Ethiopic versions of the Miracles of our Lady, are supplements to the reproductions of the Lady Meux MSS., Nos. 2-5, which Lady Meux printed for private circulation in 1899. Many scholars and others have wondered how these fine MSS. became detached from the great Makdalâ Collection which the British Army brought to England in 1868, and how they found their way into her possession. And as they have also asked why she rendered such a signal service to Ethiopic studies by printing the original texts, with English translations and costly coloured facsimiles of the pictures—a work entailing great expense, and one which none before her had undertaken—I print here a short account of the way in which she acquired them.

In the spring of 1897 Lady Meux went to the establishment of Mr. Bernard Quaritch in Piccadilly to purchase a copy of Ludolf's "Historia Æthiopica." Finding that she had been reading a translation of the Ethiopic Version of the History of Alexander the Great, he took the opportunity of showing her a group of fine Ethiopic MSS., which he had recently acquired from an officer who had served in the British Expedition to Abyssinia in 1867. She telegraphed to me asking me to go and examine the manuscripts and to report upon them to her without delay. I did so, and Mr. Quaritch put the manuscripts before me. The oldest of them was a small 4to volume containing a Life of Hannâ, the mother of the Blessed Virgin MARY; it was illustrated with archaic Ethiopian pictures of Hannâ and her husband Joachim, the Birth of the Virgin, etc., and was written in the XVth century. It was, and still

## Preface

is the only copy of the Life of Hännâ in Ethiopic known to me. Two of the manuscripts were large handsome volumes about 16 inches square, and each contained a good selection of the Miracles of the Virgin MARY, illustrated with many full-page pictures painted in bright colours which were intended to illustrate the texts of the Miracles. The older of these MSS. was written in the XVIth century and the other about a century later; each had been made for the use of a royal personage. Another manuscript contained the Life of Mabâ'a Šeyôn, a comparatively modern Ethiopian saint, and the Life of Gabra Krestôs, a prince who abandoned his royal state and home and parents, and became a mendicant monk. These Lives were illustrated by a large series of coloured pictures, which are of special interest as they portray events in the daily life of the modern Abyssinians. I sent to Lady Meux a description of these MSS., pointing out their interest and importance, and their great value from an artistic point of view. I also told the Keeper of Oriental Manuscripts in the British Museum of them, and urged him to attempt to acquire them for the National Collection. But his official financial position was such that it was impossible for him to make an offer for them which Mr. Quaritch would accept, and so the whole group of MSS., together with a few smaller works, became the property of Lady Meux, who added them to her Collection of Egyptian and Sûdânî antiquities preserved in the museum at Theobalds Park.

The nucleus of this Collection was made by Sir Henry and Lady Meux when they visited Egypt in 1878 and 1882. In the former year Lady Meux with a small party succeeded in getting as far south as Sarras, and they visited Semnah and Kummah, and some of the forts in the Second Cataract between Sarras and Wâdî Halfah. On their way down the Nile from Aswân Lady Meux picked up several objects of interest, among them

## *Preface*

being the important figures of Nebseni and his wife, who flourished about B.C. 1550. A substantial part of the Collection as it was in 1897 was made by myself in Egypt under permission from the Trustees of the British Museum, and the total number of Egyptian objects in the Theobalds Park Museum was one thousand four hundred. In 1886 Mr. Walter Ingram presented to Lady Meux the now notorious mummy and coffin of Nes-Amsu (Nes-Menu), a prophet of the god Menu at Panopolis about B.C. 350. Many absurd stories have been published about this mummy, which it has been alleged caused the death of Mr. Ingram, and it will be well to state the facts concerning its acquisition, which I had direct from him and from the natives at Luxor who were present when he purchased it.

Mr. Ingram and his friends set out from England to go and shoot big game in Somaliland, and visited Egypt on their way thither. At Luxor he saw the coffin and mummy, which had been recently found at Akhmîm, and he began to bargain for them with the dealer who owned them. Mr. Ingram knew no Arabic, and the dealer knew no language except Arabic, and negotiations were carried on chiefly by signs and the counting of fingers. The dealer had set one price on the mummy, of which he was anxious to get rid, and another on the coffin, which he prized highly, and he did not realize that Mr. Ingram was regarding the mummy and coffin as a single object, and that the £60 which he offered was intended to purchase both mummy and coffin. When the bargaining came to a standstill a zealous friend intervened, and misunderstanding the dealer's position told Mr. Ingram that he could carry off the mummy and coffin to the boat, which he did, the dealer in no way opposing. Mummy and coffin were packed in a stout case and despatched to Cairo forthwith. When the day of departure came Mr. Ingram offered the dealer a cheque for £60, which was refused

## Preface

with indignation, and an altercation of a very violent character broke out on the river-bank. Some of the spectators took one side, and some the other, and everybody spoke at once, and at the top of his voice, and in the midst of all this the dealer kept on demanding more money, i.e. higher payment for the mummy, or failing that the return of the mummy. The British Consul, Mustafâ Âgha, advised Mr. Ingram that £60 was a fair price for both the mummy and coffin, and he therefore refused to pay more. On this the dealer, having sworn by his own eyesight and by the life of the Prophet that he would never sell his anticas for £60, accepted the cheque. And going down the steps by which the Consul's house between the columns of the temple of Amenhetep III was reached, he knelt on the ground at the foot of them and said the Afternoon Prayer. He then followed Mr. Ingram to the boat, and called down upon him and upon every member of his family, dead and alive, curses of a most malignant character. After the boat started he ran along the river-bank cursing the boat and its living freight, until he reached the quay near Karnak, where he fell down exhausted.

In due course the coffin and mummy arrived in London, and in response to an application from the *Illustrated London News* Office, Dr. Birch sent me down to examine<sup>1</sup> it. The coffin was a fine example of its class, and was ornamented with brightly painted figures of the gods, and extracts in hieroglyphs from well-known religious funerary texts. Some of these are found in a papyrus in the British Museum, where they are followed by a series of curses on anyone who shall carry off, or injure, or steal, or destroy the papyrus and, of course, the contents of the coffin in which it was placed. Rightly or wrongly, those who knew the story of the acquisition of the mummy and coffin of Nes-

<sup>1</sup> I published a brief account of it in *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 106-108.



## Preface

Ämsu believed that the curses written in the papyrus would fall upon Mr. Ingram, as well as those that were uttered against him by the dealer at Luxor. Two years later Mr. Ingram was terribly mutilated and trampled to death in East Africa by an enraged elephant which he had unwisely provoked, and then people began to say both privately and in the press that this fate had fallen upon him as a result of the curses uttered by the dealer and written in the papyrus. Mr. W. T. Stead, Mr. Douglas Murray, the Rev. W. J. Loftie and others pressed Lady Meux to publish the scenes and texts painted on the coffin, and in 1891 she asked me to prepare a Catalogue of the Egyptian Antiquities in her Museum and to include in it a full description of the mummy of Nes-Ämsu and his coffin. I undertook the work and visited Theobalds Park frequently to write the descriptions of the objects and to superintend the labelling and general mounting of the Collection. Two years later Lady Meux printed for private circulation only the Catalogue which I had written; it appeared under the title of *Some Account of the Collection of Egyptian Antiquities in the possession of Lady Meux of Theobalds Park, Waltham Cross*. London, 1893.

But to return now to the manuscripts that Lady Meux had purchased from Mr. Quaritch. As soon as these were delivered to her she asked me to make a fuller examination of them, and to describe their contents more or less in detail, so that she might come to some decision as to their publication. She had already published for private circulation the Ethiopic Version of the History of Alexander the Great, which I had copied and translated from MSS. in the British Museum,<sup>1</sup> and the very favourable reception which this work met with at the hands of scholars and the literary world in general stimulated her to continue the publication of Ethiopic texts with English translations. And this ver-

<sup>1</sup> *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*. Cambridge, 1896.

## Preface

sion of the famous Alexander-Book was welcomed in Ethiopia and praised by no less a critic than His Majesty the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Měnyělĕk II, King of the Kings of Ethiopia. When the British Mission to Měnyělĕk was received by the King in Addis Abbeba, Sir F. R. Wingate presented to His Majesty, with the other gifts, a copy of the "Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great," which Lady Meux had sent him. And I was told by a member of the Mission that His Majesty was both surprised and pleased with the Ethiopic text, which he began to read forthwith, and that he admired the Ethiopic type and wished to have more books of the kind produced.<sup>1</sup>

Of the Lady Meux MSS. the first to be reproduced was that containing the Lives of Mabâ'a Şĕyôn and Gabra Krestôs, a stout quarto leather-bound volume containing ninety-two pictures illustrating the text. The coloured facsimiles of the pictures were reproduced by the late Mr. W. Griggs and were inserted in their proper places in the English text. The Ethiopic texts were printed by the eminent German firm of W. Drugulin of Leipzig because the necessary fount of type did not exist in England, and were placed at the end of the book. Up to that time hardly any attention had been paid by scholars to the art exhibited by the pictures in the illustrated manuscripts, and some of them went so far as to describe it as "wretched caricature," and the pictures as "horrible daubs." An examination of the pictures in the Lady Meux MSS. convinced me that they were not of native origin (though their painters copied faithfully enough native objects,

<sup>1</sup> "And finally he was given a Life of Alexander the Great printed in Ethiopic. This was a reproduction of a manuscript found in Magdala, and was printed in London by the generosity of Lady Meux. With this, too, the king was delighted, and discussed the possibility of having other books similarly printed."—Gleichen, *With the Mission to Menelik*, 1897. London, 1898, p. 145.

## Preface

animate and inanimate), and that the artists must have had copies of some kind to work from. I went through all the illustrated Ethiopic MSS. in the British Museum, and having selected thirty-two typical examples from MSS. of the XVth, XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, printed them in half-tone in the Introduction to the Lives of Mabâ'a Šëyôn and Gabra Krestôs. These taken together proved to me that the native artists worked from European originals. All the evidence available suggests that coloured pictures were first introduced into Ethiopic manuscripts in the XVth century, and that the European element in them was derived from the pictures that were painted on the walls of the churches by the Venetian painter Niccolò Brancaloneo. When this Venetian went to Ethiopia is unknown, but he lived there for forty years, and he was commissioned by King Zara' Ya'kôb to decorate the walls of many churches with pictures of the saints, the Virgin MARY,<sup>1</sup> etc.

The volume containing the Lives of Mabâ'a Šëyôn and Gabra Krestôs appeared in the summer of 1898, and was so warmly welcomed by scholars and learned societies that Lady Meux decided to reproduce the Miracles of the Virgin and the Life of Hannâ, etc., without delay. This work occupied nearly two years, and the new volume, containing Ethiopic texts, English translations and one hundred and eleven coloured plates, appeared in 1900. As in the first volume it was shown that the Ethiopic pictures were *au fond* of European origin, so it was proved in the second that the greater number of the Miracles printed therein were derived from Collections of the Miracles of the Virgin that had been made in Byzantium, Italy and France. Of the rest some were written in Egypt, and a few were of native origin. Lady Meux distributed the volume

<sup>1</sup> On his picture of the Virgin painted for the 'Atrônša Mâryâm, see p. xlv.

## Preface

among scholars and Libraries where it would be easily accessible for study, and her generosity was greatly appreciated. His Holiness the Pope accepted a copy for his private Library, and sent to Lady Meux a silver bust of himself accompanied by his Blessing. The letter which announced the despatch of the bust and contained the expression of the approbation of His Holiness and His Blessing, was written by his Eminence Cardinal Rampolla. Mr. (now Sir) J. L. Harrington, H.B.M.'s Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of the Emperor Měnyělĕk, presented a copy of the work to His Majesty, who was apparently greatly pleased with the gift. He wrote to Lady Meux in the following terms: "From the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Měnyělĕk, King of the Kings of Ethiopia. I am well. How are you? The book which you sent to me with Mr. Harrington has come to me. I am pleased. And because it is very well done I send you this letter and my seal." At the same time the Emperor sent to His Majesty King Edward VII the Star of Ethiopia, First Class, and to Lady Meux and myself the Star of Ethiopia, Second and Third Class respectively, together with letters in Amharic. Soon after this Lady Meux received many applications from leading ecclesiastics and officers in Ethiopia for copies of the *Miracles of the Virgin Mary*, and it was clear that the publication of her manuscripts was greatly appreciated by the writers.

In 1902 His Highness Râs Makonnen, K.C.M.G., Governor of Harrar and the Dependencies of Ethiopia, came to England to be present at the Coronation of King Edward VII, and as soon as possible, by his Sovereign's orders, he announced his arrival to Lady Meux. He and his suite visited Theobalds Park one Sunday, and he and the ecclesiastics who were with him spent much time in examining her manuscripts and her reproductions of them. His reverence for the manu-

## Preface

scripts was great, and after bowing several times to the older manuscript<sup>1</sup> of the *Miracles of the Virgin Mary*, he knelt on the floor of the Museum and lifting the book on to the top of his head remained in this attitude and prayed for several minutes. A few days later Lady Meux sent to him by me a set of her publications, and when I delivered the books at his lodgings in Westminster the joy of himself and the bishops who were with him was unbounded.

As a very large proportion of the privately printed edition of the *Miracles* (which was limited to three hundred copies) was given away to scholars, learned societies and private friends, it will be readily understood that the number of copies available for the general public was small. When it was found that copies could only be obtained through the second-hand booksellers, friends in Egypt, Syria, Constantinople, M<sup>o</sup>sul and elsewhere suggested that the book should be reprinted in some form. To reproduce the book with over one hundred plates in full colours was outside the scope of publishers generally, and the cost of resetting the Ethiopic texts was prohibitive. As the demand has been constant for some years now, the present edition has been prepared for those to whom the large work is inaccessible, and I believe that in many respects it will be found more useful and instructive. A full translation of the Life of H<sup>a</sup>nn<sup>a</sup> is given, together with half-tone reproductions of all the pictures in MS. No. 4, rather larger than half scale. In addition to the Life of the Virgin MARY which she is said to have related to Archbishop Theophilus, I have given translations of all the Legends about our Lady which are found in Ethiopic. These translations are published for the first time, and contain much traditional lore unknown

<sup>1</sup> By her will Lady Meux left all her manuscripts to the Emperor Menyelek II, but he was dead when she died. What became of the manuscripts I do not know.

## Preface

otherwise. The story of the Virgin's visit to Paradise and Hell is of considerable interest. As the prayers that were daily recited to the Virgin in Ethiopian churches, and on the thirty-two days of festival that were celebrated in her honour, form about half the service, I have given a complete translation of the famous WED-DÂSÊ MÂRYÂM, and a version of a section of the 'ARGÂ-NÔNA DENGEL, or "Virgin's Lyre." These will enable the general reader to realize more easily the almost divine honours that are paid to the Virgin MARY in Ethiopia. The forty-two Miracles which are described and illustrated in the Lady Meux MSS. are not the most characteristic or instructive, and it seems to me that they were selected by the scribe because they could be effectively illustrated. With the view of making the collection more representative, I have added sixty-eight other Miracles, most of which are taken from the venerable MS. in the British Museum, Orient. No. 652. There was no room for these in the present work, and therefore it has been decided to issue them in a separate volume to be published shortly, together with half-tone reproductions of the pictures rather more than one-third in scale.

In the Introduction are given a sketch of Mary-Literature in Ethiopia and a brief account of the origin and growth of the worship of the Virgin MARY in that country. It is often stated that the cult of Isis and the worship of MARY are identical, but it seems to me that the fundamental characteristics of the Sûdânî, or Egyptian, goddess Isis are wholly different from those of the Asiatic woman Mary, the Jewess. The attributes of the universal Mother-goddess were ascribed to both, and the similarity of the pictures of Isis and Horus and MARY and Christ is due to this alone. The short Chapter on the Cult of Isis contains the principal facts about this remarkable goddess that are deducible from the hieratic and hieroglyphic Egyptian texts.

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# *INTRODUCTORY*

# Introduction

## I. DESCRIPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

BY EPIPHANIUS, BISHOP OF CYPRUS

(Born about 320, died 404 A.D.)

Ἦν δὲ τὸ ἦθος καὶ ἡ θέσις τῆς μορφῆς καὶ τῆς ἡλικίας αὐτῆς οὕτω: ἔχοντα, ὡς φησιν Ἐπιφάνιος· Σεμνή, φησὶν, ἦν κατὰ πάντα· ὀλίγα τε καὶ ἀναγκαῖα λαλοῦσα· ταχεῖα πρὸς ὑπακοὴν καὶ εὐπροσήγορος· τιμῶσα πάντας καὶ προσκυνοῦσα. μέση δὲ τὴν ἡλικίαν ἦν. Εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ καὶ πλεον τι τοῦ μέσου ἔχειν αὐτὴν φασι. Τὸ εὐπαρρήσιαστον δὲ πρὸς πάντα ἄνθρωπον εἶχε· πόρρω γέλωτος, ἔξω τε ταραχῆς καὶ ἀόργητος· μάλιστα· σιτόχροος δ' ἦν καὶ ξανθόθριξ· εὐόφθαλμος· ὑποξανθίζούσας καὶ οἰονεὶ ἐλαιώδεις τὰς κόρας τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἔχουσα· περιηγμένας καὶ μελαίνας περιβεβλημένη ὀφρῦς ἀποχρώντως· ἐπίρριν· χεῖλη ἐπανθούντα ἔχουσα καὶ τῆς ἐκ τῶν λόγων γλυκύτητος γέμοντα· Πρόσωπον οὐ στρογγύλον, ἀλλ' ὡσανεὶ ἐπίμηκες κεκτημένη. Μακρόχειρ τε καὶ μακροδάκτυλος ἦν· ἄτυφός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος· μὴ βλαφείαν ἐπιουραμένη τινά· ταπεινῶσιν ὑπερβάλλουσαν ἔχουσα· ἱμάτια ἀπόχροα φοροῦσα, καὶ ἀγαπῶσα, ὁποῖον νῦν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον αὐτῆς μαφόριον δείκνυται· καὶ συνολως εἶπεν, ἐφ' ἅπασιν τοῖς αὐτῆς θείας χάριτος πεπληρωμένη.

Nicephorus Callistus, *Eccles. Hist.* XXIII (ed. Migne, *Patrologiae*, Series Græca, tome 145, col. 815).

# *Introduction*

## I. DESCRIPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

BY EPIPHANIUS, BISHOP OF CYPRUS

(Born about 320, died 404 A.D.)

**T**HE moral character and the material disposition of her youthful form were, according to Epiphanius, in this wise: He says:—

She was grave and dignified in all her actions. She spoke little and only when it was necessary to do so. She listened readily and could be addressed easily. She paid honour and respect (i.e. she saluted) everyone. She was of middle stature, but some say that she was of more than middle height. She was wont to speak to every one fearlessly and clearly, without laughter, and without agitation, and she was specially slow to anger. Her complexion was of the colour of ripe wheat, and her hair was auburn (or reddish). Her eyes were bright and keen, and light brown in colour, and the pupils thereof were of an olive-green tint. Her eyebrows were arched (or semicircular) and deep black. Her nose was long, her lips were red and full, and overflowing with the sweetness of her words. Her face was not round, but somewhat oblong (i.e. oval). Her hand was long and her fingers were long. She was wholly free from all ostentatious pride, and she was simple, unpretentious, and inclined to excessive humility. She wore garments of natural colours (i.e. undyed homespun), and was content with them, a fact which is even now proved by her holy head-cloth. And to sum up, she was filled with divine grace in all her ways.



## *Introduction*

### II. THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA

THE Egyptian Christians, or Copts, believed that when "the fulness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Galatians 4. 4), and that this woman was MARY, a virgin who was "espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David." Before husband and wife "came together" the angel Gabriel was sent from God to Nazareth, and he "came in unto her and said, Hail, highly favoured, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, MARY : for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. . . . Then said MARY unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man ? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God " (Luke 1. 27-35). When Joseph found that his wife had conceived he "was minded to put her away privily. But whilst he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee MARY thy wife ; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost " (Matt. 1. 19, 20). MARY the Virgin brought forth her son in due course, and continued to be a virgin. MARY, though the

## *Legends of the Virgin Mary*

Mother of God, was “ begotten by a human father, and brought forth by a human mother, like every other man.”<sup>1</sup> And she “ tasted death like every other human being, because she was flesh and blood.”<sup>1</sup> The words of the Evangelists were accepted as statements of absolutely historical facts by the early Egyptian Christians. The humanity of MARY, the humanity and Divinity of Christ, His Virgin-birth, which proved the reality of His Natures, the Human and the Divine, perfect God and perfect Man, the Unity of His Person, and the perpetual virginity of MARY, ἡ θεοτόκος, the Mother of God, or the God-bearer, have been the foundations of the belief of the Monophysite Church of Egypt for the last eighteen hundred years. And what the Copts believed and still believe they handed on to the Christian Ethiopians, or Abyssinians, and these have “ kept the Faith ” to this day.

When under the influence of the teaching of the Apostles and Disciples Christ’s Doctrine spread abroad in the regions outside Syria and Palestine, the converts to Christianity demanded more information about the life of Christ when upon earth and that of MARY, both before and after His death, than the Gospels contained. The result of this demand was that many, both those with and those without adequate knowledge, wrote accounts of the manner of the birth and the infancy of Christ, and stories of His childhood, and accounts of MARY, which found general acceptance. If we are to believe all that is written in the works of the Fathers on the subject it would seem that every Apostle, and many of the Disciples wrote Gospels. In any case it is quite clear that even in Apostolic times many works of this kind were current in Syria and Egypt, and that they were soon translated into languages of more remote countries. One of the oldest and best known of

<sup>1</sup> Cyril, *Discourse on Mary Theotokos*. See Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, p. 628.



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these works is the so-called PROTEVANGELION, or the Book of James the Less, the cousin ("brother") of Christ, and the first Bishop of Jerusalem. It was probably written in Hebrew, and it seems to have existed in the first century A.D. A manuscript of the work was brought to Europe by G. Postel (born 1510, died 1581) from Constantinople (?), was translated by him into Latin and was printed at Basle in 1552. From this book we learn that MARY's father and mother were called Joachim and Anna, that Joachim consulted the Urim and Thummim about the birth of the child, whom the angel told him his barren wife should bear to him, and it describes the birth of MARY, the flight of Elisabeth to the mountains, and the murder of Zacharias.<sup>1</sup> Versions and extracts of this work exist in Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic.

Another ancient work of the kind is the GOSPEL OF THE BIRTH OF MARY, which was attributed to St. Matthew, and was regarded as genuine and authentic by many early Christian sects. In the third chapter it is stated that an angel told Joachim that God had shut up the womb of Anna his wife, so that He might open it in a more wonderful manner, and that that which should be born of her would be not the product of human lust, but the gift of God.<sup>2</sup> Hence in later times many Christians asserted that MARY was born of a virgin, just as Christ was born of a virgin. The Ethiopians have turned the History of Hännâ into a service-book for the seven days of the week, and in this it is said a dove entered her body and that she conceived MARY thirty days later. A complete English translation of the

<sup>1</sup> For the Greek text see Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, Leipzig, 1876, p. 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> "et ideo cum alicujus uterum claudit, ad hoc facit ut mirabilius denuo aperiat, et non libidinis esse quod nascitur sed divini muneris cognoscatur."—*De Nativitate Mariæ*, ed. Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

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Ethiopic text will be found on pp. 1-53. A large portion of this Gospel is repeated in the PROTEVANGELION.

A much longer work dealing with the Descent of MARY and the Infancy of Christ, which is attributed to St. Matthew and believed to have been written in Hebrew, was translated into Latin by St. Jerome, who called it, "Liber de Ortu Beatae Mariae et Infantia Salvatoris."<sup>1</sup> It was received by the Gnostics in the second century and is quoted by Epiphanius (Haer. 26. 12), and later Christian Fathers, e.g. Eusebius, Athanasius and Chrysostom, regarded it as authentic and genuine. This book is full of marvellous stories about MARY and the CHILD, and many of these have found their way into the writings of the Fathers of the Syrian, Coptic and Ethiopian Churches. According to one legend the Holy Family were carried swiftly into Egypt from Jerusalem upon a cloud of light, but according to another they travelled thither by caravan and suffered greatly on the road. At one place they took shelter in a cave for the night, and they found it full of dragons and were horribly afraid. But Jesus came down from His mother's bosom, and walked boldly up to the dragons, which at once fell down and worshipped Him. In the desert the lions worshipped Jesus, and went before Him to show Joseph the way. At the command of Jesus some palms bent down their heads so that MARY might gather the dates growing on them, and a branch of one of the palms was taken to Paradise and planted there, and it is still growing there. Jesus shortened the way to Egypt in a miraculous manner, and the Holy Family travelled in one day over a distance that usually required thirty days to traverse. When they came to Hermopolis (Heliopolis?) they found 365 idols in the temple there, and as Jesus came to the temple all these fell down and were broken in pieces. MARY worked miraculous cures by means of her

<sup>1</sup> Published by Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, p. 50 ff.

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Son's swaddling bands, and lepers were healed by bathing in the water in which they had been washed. On the road to Memphis MARY met the two thieves Titus and Dumachus, who thirty years later were crucified with Christ. According to the Gospel of the Infancy the Holy Family remained in Egypt three years, and they saw Pharaoh. When they returned to Bethlehem MARY worked many miracles, and Jesus began to cast out devils. He also made figures of birds which could fly, and of animals which could walk, and He dyed garments different colours by casting them into the fire. When Joseph made doors too narrow or boxes too small, Jesus widened the former and enlarged the latter. At school the master goes to whip Jesus, but his hand withered and he died. All these and many other stories of the same kind found their way into the legendary literature of MARY and Jesus during the first four centuries, and when Gelasius issued his decree for the destruction of books dealing with these subjects the number must have been very considerable.

The older Apocryphal Gospels attributed to MARY the power to work miracles nearly as marvellous as those worked by her Son during His Infancy and Boyhood, and throughout them it was tacitly assumed that her influence over Him was very great, and that He granted all her requests. The natural result of this assumption was that, little by little, men magnified the power of MARY, and in their private prayers, at least, appealed to her in their difficulties, and besought her to intercede with her Son on their behalf. At the same time their interest in her history grew steadily, and stories of her birth and childhood, and of her life in the Temple and after the death of Christ, were in great demand. Every tradition of her was carefully preserved, and every detail was regarded as a piece of precious information worthy to be written down for perusal by the faithful. The authorities of the Church prepared nar-

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ratives of her life which they declared they had received from MARY herself, who appeared to them in answer to their urgent petitions; the substance of such narratives was derived chiefly from the Apocryphal Gospels mentioned above. Thus we have one narrative attributed to Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria (see pp. 61-80), and another to Timothy, another Patriarch of Alexandria (see pp. 81-101). An account of her death (see pp. 152-167), which was believed to have been written by St. John, and a short history of how the manuscript of it was discovered (see pp. 143-151), were regarded as authentic and genuine, and treasured accordingly. Many of the Fathers wrote Homilies upon MARY, and the short extracts from some of them given below illustrate the manner in which her life was treated by them.<sup>1</sup>

Of her life in the Temple Cyril of Jerusalem says\*: "They (i.e. Joakim and Anna) were in the habit of visiting their daughter once each month, when they carried to her whatsoever things of which she had need. And their little virgin daughter ministered in the Temple with the other women, who were aged virgins, and they taught her to work with her hands. And when she had become somewhat master of herself she used to go alone into the court of the Temple, but no man whatsoever saw her, with the exception of the priest and her father. Her food consisted of bread and water and a few green herbs, and she did not fast for long periods at a time. . . . The little Virgin MARY was in the Temple, and she remained by herself before the Archangel Gabriel came to her with a sweet odour. . . . There was no limit to her beauty, and the Temple was wont to be filled with angels because of her sweet odour,

<sup>1</sup> The extracts are from the Coptic Homilies by Cyril of Jerusalem, Demetrius of Antioch, and Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, edited and translated by E. A. Wallis Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London, 1915.

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and they used to visit her for the sake of her conversation. . . . The whole time of her life was sixty years.”

Demetrius, Archbishop of Antioch, said on the birthday of our Lord on the 29th day of the month Khoiak :—

When MARY was three years old Anna took her to the Temple. “At the moment when her mother Anna set her upon her feet, inside the door of the Temple, before the priests, she walked by herself into the Temple, and went on until she arrived in the place behind the veil of the altar, whereon were offered up the sacrifices of the Lord. And when she had gone in she did not turn back to come out again, neither did one thought of her parents rise up in her heart, nor any thought of any earthly thing. . . . And when she had grown, and was eight or ten years old, she became a type to the priests, and they were afraid to meet her, for her whole body was pure, and her heart was firm in the Lord. She was pure in her body and in her soul, she never put her face outside the door of the Temple, she never looked at a strange man, and she never moved herself to gaze upon the face of a young man. And she lived in chastity, and in the service of God, and in the ordered service of the Temple. Her apparel was dainty. Her tunic came down over her seal, and her headcloth came down over her eyes. She wore a girdle round her tunic, and her tunic was never soiled or torn. She never put eye-paint on her eyes, and she did not lay crocus-flower unguent on her cheeks. She did not put slippers on her feet as ornaments, and she wore neither armlets nor bracelets, nor trinkets nor jewellery on her arms and hands. She never craved for much food, neither did she ever walk about in the market-place of her city. She never lusted for the works of this world. She never stripped herself naked, and she never washed in the [public] bath, and she never examined with careful attention the members of her body.”

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After Joseph had taken her to his house "she went into her own room and took up her abode therein, and she never came down the stairs except on the day when she departed to Torine,<sup>1</sup> and also on the day wherein Joseph took her to Bethlehem to register his own name, and the names of herself and her Child. . . . And she sat in his house, and she worked at weaving purple into the veil of the Temple, according to the rule concerning virgins. She never saw any man whatsoever, but the angels came and ministered unto her, and they passed the whole day standing before her in the form of young doves, and they gave her courage, and they comforted her. And she sat in Joseph's house for three years, and his sons ministered unto her."

Another description of Mary's life before the Annunciation is given us by Cyril of Alexandria, who says to the women in his congregation, "Come, O all ye women who desire virginity, emulate the example of MARY, the mother of thy Lord. Consider ye her coarse and meagre food and her sleeping on the ground. She craved for none of the things of this world. The mention of her was always in the mouths of the priests. She never washed herself in a [public] bath. She never adorned herself with face-paint, and eye-paint, and powder. She never decked herself out in brightly coloured raiment, as do all women who love fine clothes. She never tasted wine. She used to sit always with her face turned towards the east, for she was always awaiting the Creator of the world. She never met and talked to any one, except her father, and her mother, and her brethren."

For the Discourse of Demetrius of Antioch on the Virgin MARY following the Annunciation of Gabriel we have a very interesting group of Salutations to MARY which summarizes in a remarkable way the views that both Egyptians and Ethiopians held concerning

<sup>1</sup> The village near Jerusalem where Mary's cousin Elisabeth lived.

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the mother of Jesus. The manuscript in which they are found (Oriental No. 7027) was written in the 721st year of the Era of the Martyrs (A.D. 1005), and the scribe was Victor, the son of Mercurius, a deacon of the Church of St. Mercurius at Esnâ, or Asnâ (Latopolis). Of the archetype we know nothing, but we may assume that it was old and authoritative. These Aves, or "Hail Marys," are so important that I transcribe them in full.<sup>1</sup>

Hail, MARY, thou woman whose fruit shall give salvation to the world and to all mankind!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, thou spotless Dove! in whom there is no blemish, to whom is sent the choice, sweet odour by me, Gabriel.

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, who shalt clothe the whole world in the apparel of salvation!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, through whom salvation shall come to the whole world, because of thy walking in it!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, thou who art the choicest thing in heaven and upon the earth!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, thou Tower, wherein is the King's treasure!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, who hast given us an entrance into heaven!

<sup>1</sup> See Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, p. 662 ff.

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Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, who hast opened to us the door of Paradise, which was closed through the transgression of Adam and Eve!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], thou second Ark which hath saved the world from the destruction of impiety!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], thou beautiful Lamb, who hast provided us with the pure wool and the apparel of incorruption!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], thou Pot of gold, wherein was the manna!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], who didst remove the enmity which existed between God and us!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], Sweet Perfume that mounted up before God Almighty until He became reconciled to His creation which He created!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], Tent of the Godhead, wherein the Only-begotten of the Father hath reposed!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], thou Ark, covered all over with gold, wherein God the Father sojourned in the Form of His Holy Word!



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[Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.]

Hail [MARY], thou Bread that hath come from heaven to satisfy hungry souls and to fill them with good things !

Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], thou who dost deliver every one from the storm of the Devil, and dost bring them into the haven of salvation !

Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.

Hail [MARY], Bride unpolluted and unblemished, who hast prepared for us the path of salvation !

Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, through and by whom all the women of the world have acquired freedom of speech with her Lord !

Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, thou holy Table, whereon the Sacrifice that reasoneth is slain !

Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, the light of whose Son hath filled the whole world !

Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, whose holy birth-pangs were awaited by heaven and by earth !

Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, thou good Root who hast made to blossom for us the fruit of righteousness !

Hail, thou who hast found favour ! The Lord is with thee.

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Hail, MARY, who hast made to sprout the blessed seed of the fruit of righteousness of the Tree of Life!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, thou Golden Candlestick!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Hail, MARY, thou new Cistern wherein is the salt which will sweeten that which is bitter!

Hail, thou who hast found favour! The Lord is with thee.

Concerning MARY as the loving mother of Jesus Cyril of Alexandria writes as follows:—

“O my beloved, ye God-fearing people, open ye the ears of your hearts, and hearken unto [the story of] the honour of the Mother of God, the Queen of all women, the true Bride, whom the Son of God held in high esteem. He came and dwelt in her womb for nine months, and she brought Him forth for our sakes in Bethlehem. She wrapped Him in strips of ragged stuff, she laid Him in a cattle manger, and the beasts looked upon Him and recognized Him and protected Him. Thou didst stretch out thy right arm, thou didst take Him and make Him to lie on thy left arm. Thou didst bend thy neck, and let thy hair fall down over Him. Thou didst kiss His mouth as the Father kissed His mouth in heaven, and thou didst seat Him upon thy knees. He lifted up His eyes to thy face. He stretched forth His hand. He took thy breast, and He drew into His mouth the milk which was sweeter than manna. The savour of thy sacrifice was sweeter to Him than the savour of the sacrifice of Noah. He drank from thy immaculate breasts, He called thee ‘My Mother.’

“Come ye and behold God calling MARY ‘My Mother’ and kissing her mouth. And as she kissed His mouth she called Him always ‘My Lord, and my Son.’

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She worshipped Him ; for when she used to give Him her breast she bowed down her head towards Him, whilst He stood like a tower ; and then she worshipped Him, saying, ‘ My Lord, and my Son.’ And after these things she used to take hold of His hand, and lead Him along the roads, saying, ‘ My sweet Son, walk a little way,’ in the same manner as all other babes are taught to walk. And He, Jesus, the Very God, followed after her without trouble. He clung to her with His little fingers. He stopped from time to time, and He hung on to the skirts of MARY His mother—He upon Whom all creation hangeth ! He used to look up into her face—He upon Whom the whole universe hangeth and by Whom it is sustained—and she would snatch Him to her body, and lift Him up in her arms, and carry Him along. Come, O all ye women, and look upon MARY, and behold God, Who clave her side, lifting up His face and kissing her ! Walk on, walk on, O daughter of Sion, I mean thee, MARY. Behold, the KING, the CHRIST, [resteth] on thee, for the KING, the CHRIST, is with thee, He is sitting in thy arms ! The Father hath made Himself a fellow-worker with thee, the Son hath made Himself thy kinsman, and the Holy Spirit is inseparable from thee. The angels are subject unto thee, for He loveth thee, and hath sojourned with thee because of thy purity. For thou alone among all women hast found favour with God, for the Lord is with thee. Lift up thine hands on high and receive from God the Father the Image of His Son and carry it on thy head.”<sup>1</sup>

· But it was not angels and men alone who honoured MARY and worshipped her as the Mother of God, for Christ Himself, when He rose from the dead and appeared to her and the other women at the tomb mounted on the chariot of the Father of the Universe, cried out, saying, “ MARI KHAR MARIATH,” that is to

<sup>1</sup> Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, p. 717 f.

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say, "MARY, the Mother of the Son of God." Then MARY, who knew the meaning of the words, said, "HĪRAMBOUNE KATHIATHARI MIÔTH," whereof the interpretation is, "The Son of the Almighty, and my Son." And He said unto her, "Hail, My Mother! Hail, My holy Ark! Hail, thou who art the Sustainer of the life of the whole world! Hail, My holy Garment, wherein I arrayed Myself! Hail, My Waterpot, which is full of holy water! Hail, My Mother, My House, My Place of Abode! Hail, My Mother, My City, My Place of Refuge! Hail, thou who hast received into thine own composition the SEVEN ÆONS! Hail, thou Table, set in the Paradise of the Seventh Heaven, the name of which is 'KHÔMTHÔMAKH!' All Paradise rejoiceth in thee. I say unto thee, O My Mother, He who loveth thee loveth Life. Hail, thou who didst sustain the Life of the Universe in thy womb! . . . I will give My peace, which I have received from My Holy Father, to My disciples, and to every one who shall believe in My Name and in MARY, My Mother, the Virgin in very truth, My spiritual Womb, My Treasure of Pearl, the Ark of the sons of Adam, who carried the body of the Son of God, and the Blood of Him Who indeed took away the sin of the world."

And round and about Him there were standing hundreds of thousands of Archangels, and hundreds of thousands of the Cherubim, and millions of the Seraphim, and millions of the Powers, and their heads were bowed, and they made answer to the blessing, saying, "Amen, Hallelujah," to that which the Son did speak with His mouth to MARY. Then our Saviour stretched out His right hand, which was full of blessing, and He blessed the womb of MARY, His Mother. And I [Bartholomew] saw the heavens open, and the Seven Firmaments were opened together. I saw a man of light shining brightly, like unto a pearl upon which it was

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impossible for any man to look. And [I saw] also a hand of fire which was of the colour of snow, and it rested upon the belly of MARY and [her] breast. Now this hand was the right hand of the Father, and the right hand of the Son, and the right hand of the Holy Ghost. And He blessed . . .<sup>1</sup> [and said] . . . Thou shalt be called 'Pearl of the Father,' and on earth men shall call thee 'Mother of God' and 'our Salvation.' The blessing of the Father shall be with thee always. Amen. Hallelujah. The might of the Son shall overshadow thee. Amen. Hallelujah. The joy of the Holy Spirit shall continue to remain with thee at all times. Amen. Hallelujah. And when thou shalt come forth from the body I Myself will come with My Father, and Michael, and all the angels, and thou shalt be with Us in My kingdom. And over thy body I will make the Cherubim, having a sword of fire, to keep watch, and twelve hundred angels also shall watch over it until the day of My appearance and of My [kingdom]."<sup>2</sup>

It follows of necessity that men and women who attributed such power and glory to MARY would not fail to beseech her to help them in their daily troubles and afflictions, and to be their intercessor with Christ in heaven. That such was the case is proved by the Discourses of many eminent spiritual heads, and from those which have come down to us in Coptic the following passages are quoted:—

Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, says:—"I beseech thee, O Virgin, Mother of God, to help me Epiphanius, thy worthless servant, and to make supplication to Christ on behalf of all the people of my city, nay more, of the whole world, and to be nigh unto me at all times. For unto thee more than to all the saints belongeth the power to make supplication unto Him, so

<sup>1</sup> The text is mutilated.

<sup>2</sup> I quote from the *Book of the Resurrection of Christ*, by Bartholomew the Apostle (ed. Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha*, p. 191).

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that He may fill the hungry with bread, and may heal the sick, and may lead those who have gone astray back into His holy fold.”<sup>1</sup>

Cyril of Alexandria says :—“ O wise Virgin, I beseech thee to bring the favour of God, Who is thy Son, upon us, and may He forgive us our sins, and deliver us from all the crafts of the Adversary the Devil. Take us all to thyself, lest the Devil take delight in us and draw us down into the Gehenna of fire. O MARY, do thou draw nigh unto the King, the Christ, that He may receive thy supplication on our behalf, for He is thy Son and thy Beloved, and thou didst bear Him, and He called thee ‘ My Mother.’ Verily, O MARY the Virgin, thy honour is greater than that of all the other women in the world. He Who breathed breath into every created being called thee ‘ My Mother ’ ! Thou art more exalted than the Cherubim and the Seraphim, thou art more blessed than the Thrones, because the Christ loved thee. He sojourned with thee because thou art Saint MARY, the perpetual Virgin.”<sup>2</sup>

When and by what means Egyptian Christianity entered Ethiopia is not known with certainty. Communication by caravans must always have been kept up between Syria and the more north-easterly parts of Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, and it is very probable that some knowledge of Christianity was carried into them before the time of Frumentius by caravans and traders of various nationalities. And individual travellers, like the eunuch whom St. Philip baptized, may well have carried back into Ethiopia the news of the Gospel. The Christians in Egypt were sufficiently numerous at the end of the second century to incur the wrath of the Romans, who started a general persecution of them in the reign of Severus. The persecution of the Christians continued under Decius, Valerian and Diocletian, and

<sup>1</sup> Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, p. 714.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 723.

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large numbers of them fled into Upper Egypt, Nubia and the Northern Sûdân. If we may believe Bar-Hebraeus (*Hist. Dynast.*, text p. 135) Christianity had penetrated into the Sûdân, Nûba and Abyssinia, as well as all Egypt, in the time of Constantine. Before the close of the VIth century, and during the reign of Silko, the official religion of Nubia was Christian, and the capital of the new Christian kingdom was Old Dongola. In process of time Christianity spread southwards, and during the Middle Ages there were four hundred churches in the kingdom of 'Alwa, which was probably situated near the modern town of Kharṭûm. Alvarez talked to a certain "John of Syria" who stated that there were still in the country one hundred and fifty churches which contained crucifixes and pictures of the Virgin MARY painted on the walls, and that they all were old.<sup>1</sup> These facts justify the assumption that there were many Christians in all parts of Ethiopia at this time; but the oldest and finest remains of early Christianity in the country were to be found in Aksum and its neighbourhood.

When the worship or cult of the Virgin began in Ethiopia cannot be stated with certainty, but there seems to be no reason for doubting that invocations were made to her as soon as her history was known and accepted by the people. Pictures of the Virgin must have been common in Egypt before the close of the third century, and it is probable that the figures of Isis and Horus suggested the form they should take. In the fifth century pictures of MARY and the Child became commoner still, and this may have been the result of the overthrow of Nestorius and his heresy at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The Monophysites, or Christians who believed that the divine and human were blended in one incarnate Nature in Christ, were convinced that MARY was the Mother of God, and the

<sup>1</sup> See Butler's note in Abu Şâlih (ed. Evetts), p. 264.

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original form of the group known as the "Madonna and Child" became once and for all the expression of the Orthodox Faith. Wherever the knowledge of the Monophysite, or Jacobite, or Eutychian Faith penetrated, there went pictures of the Virgin. Saint Augustine (born 354, died 430) did not believe that any of the existing portraits of the Virgin were authentic, but very great veneration was paid to the picture of the Virgin and Child which Eudocia Aelia (born 393, died 450), wife of Theodosius, acquired in the Holy Land and sent to her sister-in-law Pulcheria in Constantinople. It was believed to be very old, and tradition asserted that it was painted from life. Many enthusiasts assumed that St. Luke was the painter. Be this as it may, in the sixth century the churches in Syria and Egypt were full of pictures of Christ and the Virgin, and saints and martyrs. During the second half of the seventh century the Copts held under the Arabs, the new masters of Egypt, many lucrative positions, and they were able to assist materially the offshoot Christian community of Ethiopia. It was probably about this time that many Coptic books, including the great service "Theotokia," whence was derived the Ethiopic *Wëddâsê Mâryâm*, or "Book of Praise of Mary," were translated into Arabic and Ethiopic.

Little is known of the Ethiopian Church, but its members suffered much at the hands of the Arabs when they extended their conquests in East Africa in general and in the Eastern Desert and Ethiopia in particular. Both the native pagans and the foreign Arabs attacked the Christians and burnt their churches and books, and during the rule of the eleven *Zâguê* (A.D. 914-1268) kings the Christian literature of Ethiopia was almost wiped out. When the rule of the Solomonic line of kings was restored in the second half of the thirteenth century, the monks brought from their hiding-places the few manuscripts that had escaped the fury of the



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Arabs, and such scribes as were available began to make copies from them. But the old Ethiopic versions of many books had been entirely destroyed, and new translations had to be made from Arabic versions. There seems to have been increased literary activity in Ethiopia during the XIVth century, and believers were greatly stimulated in their faith through the arrival there of a piece of the wood of the Cross on which Christ died; this was in the reign of Wedem Asgârî (A.D. 1380-1409), commonly known as David II. It is doubtful if any of the manuscripts written in the XIVth century have found their way into European Libraries, though some scholars have thought that the Brit. Mus. MS. No. 719<sup>1</sup> may have been copied during the closing years of that century. All that is certain about it is that it was written by one 'Abbâ 'Amhâ, for the Church of Golgotha, before the reign of Zar'a Yâ'kôb, or Constantine, i.e. before A.D. 1434, the first regnal year of this king.

Under the patronage of Zar'a Yâ'kôb (A.D. 1434-1468) many copies of ancient works were made, for the king was religious as well as wise, and the peaceable relations that existed between him and the Khalîfah of Egypt gave him time to consider other matters than fighting and war. He endowed an Abyssinian monastery at Jerusalem, and obtained permission from the Pope to establish another in Rome. He also encouraged public or semi-public discussions on religion, and on one occasion 'Abbâ George succeeded in overcoming in argument the European who was disputing with him. The European was probably Brancalone, the Venetian painter, of whom more will be said presently. Zar'a Yâ'kôb was succeeded by his son Ba'ëda Mâryâm (A.D. 1468-1478), who was a prudent and peaceful king, and who introduced into his Government men of honesty

<sup>1</sup> This MS. contains the History of King Lâlibalâ of Lâstâ. See Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 193 (No. CCXCIV).

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and high principle. But his reign was disturbed by religious quarrels among the clergy, for many of his people adopted the heresy of certain teachers who denied that Christ was very man, because His flesh was composed of some substance which was entirely different from that of ordinary men and women. A native Council condemned the heresy, and tortured its adherents, and killed many by starvation in the prisons. A more serious disturbance was caused in religious circles by a certain Niccolò Brancaleone, a Venetian painter, who was commonly called in the country "Macoreo" or "Marcoreos." The exact year of his coming to Ethiopia is unknown, but he lived there for forty years, and knew the language well, and could when necessary live like the natives and eat and drink what they did. Alvarez calls him Nicolas Brancoliam, and says that he "was a very honourable person, and a great gentleman, although a painter . . . they said that he was a friar before he came to this country."<sup>1</sup> When Alvarez performed the Mass he acted as the fogleman of the priests and canons and told them what was being done in the Mass. This painter had been employed by Zar'a Yâ'kôb to decorate the churches with pictures of saints and of incidents and events described in the Bible, and he was greatly favoured by Ba'ëda Mâryâm. This king was building, or rather restoring, a church dedicated to MARY the Virgin, and he commissioned Brancaleone to paint an altar piece for it, the subject to be the Virgin and Child. Now in the native pictures of the Virgin and Child the Child was represented as being encircled by His mother's right arm, as we may see from the annexed plate which is reproduced from a fifteenth-century Book of Miracles of the Virgin in Ethiopic in the British Museum. Brancaleone painted a very fine picture, and, according to the Italian fashion and that

<sup>1</sup> Alvarez, F., *Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Abyssinia*, translated by Lord Stanley of Alderley. London, 1881, p. 210.

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of the Copts, represented the Child as encircled by His mother's left arm. When the clergy and the monks saw the picture they were fired with rage, partly because the picture was the work of Brancalone, who had been mixed up with the heresy mentioned above, and partly because they thought that an insult had been offered to our Lord by him in representing the Child as encircled by MARY's left arm. As the Ethiopians used the left hand in washing the body it was regarded by them as "the hand of dishonour," and they saluted with the right hand only, and dipped the right hand only into the dish at meal times. The king admired the picture, and gave his people to understand that their objections were absurd, and when the malcontents saw that their objections were not going to be considered, they ceased to complain and quickly disappeared. The picture was placed in the church of MARY, where it remained until the first half of the XVIIIth century, when it was destroyed, together with the church, by the Gallas.

Many important manuscripts were copied in the XVth century, e.g. the *GADLA HAWÂRYÂT* or "Contentings of the Apostles" (Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 678); the book of Homilies of the Jacobite Fathers, recently acquired by the British Museum (Orient. No. 8192); and the Acts of Basilides, which are attributed to Celestinus, Bishop of Rome (Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 706). These Acts were translated from Coptic into Ethiopic A.M. 6889 = A.D. 1397, by 'Ab Sim'ôn, a monk of the Monastery of St. Anthony (Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 186). That the worship of MARY was restored completely is proved by the existence of the XVth century copy of the *Wëddâsê Mâryâm* in the British Museum (Add. 18994). This book is bound up with the Psalms of David and the Canticles and prayers for the canonical hours, and it is quite clear that it formed a prominent section of the daily service-book. More instructive still is the fine manuscript Oriental No. 650, which con-

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tains the Miracles of the Blessed Virgin MARY, fifty-five in number, and a tract on her Festivals. It was written for Zar'a Yâ'kôb (A.D. 1434-1468) and was given by him to a church of the Virgin MARY. On the upper margins are written deeds of gifts made by various kings down to A.D. 1714, lists of church property, etc. Equally important for the study of the worship of MARY in Ethiopia is Orient. No. 652, which also contains Miracles of the Virgin MARY, 160 in number. These are for the most part translations from the Coptic of miracles that were worked by the Virgin in Greece, Italy, Rûm (Byzantium), France, etc., and are evidently derived from works like the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobo di Voragine. (Translations of all of them by me will be given in a forthcoming volume.) In the XVth century there came into common use the service-book called 'ARGÂNÔNA DENGEL, i.e. the "Virgin's Organ," or the "Virgin's Lyre." It was composed by 'Abbâ George in the first half of the century, and was quickly adopted as a companion to the Wëddâsê Mâryâm. It is highly prized for the purity of its language, and for the variety and beauty of its metaphors, and the consummate knowledge of the Scriptures displayed therein. A translation of a few pages of it will be found on pp. 297 of this volume.

The worship of the Virgin increased greatly in the XVIth century, probably as a result of the influence of the Church in Jerusalem and in Alexandria. These cities voiced the great, profound and widespread interest in MARY and her mother Hännâ that sprang up in the East as a result of the Crusades, and the eager desire of the nations to know all that history, legend and tradition could tell them about these saints. Caravans left Ethiopia for Egypt and Jerusalem at regular intervals, and the merchants who conducted them brought tidings of the happenings there, and pictures of saints and the Virgin painted from Byzantine origi-

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nals in Cairo, Jerusalem and Constantinople. Copies of the Apocryphal Gospels and legends of all kinds were multiplied freely, and the imaginations of devout scribes filled the lacunæ which accident or wilful mutilation had made in the manuscripts from which they worked. In the XVIIth century the Ethiopians demanded from their teachers always more and more miracles, and, as though the words of the text were not sufficiently vivid or descriptive, they insisted on coloured illustrations being added. Kings and queens commissioned scribes and artists to produce large handsome manuscripts; as specimens of these we may mention Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 644, which was written for Ḥamalmâla Warḳ, the mother of King Susenyôs (A.D. 1607-1632), and contains 154 miracles, and Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 640, written for King Theophilus (A.D. 1708-1711), which contains 154 miracles and many pictures. Copies of pictures that illustrated the miracles were frequently painted on large skins and hung on the walls of the churches. As at this time there were hundreds of churches in Ethiopia sacred artists were always busily employed, and probably well remunerated.

The festivals of the Virgin MARY were numerous. A general festival was celebrated on the 21st day of each month. Her birth was celebrated on the 10th of Maskarram (Sept. 7) and the 1st of Genbôt (May 1); her entry into the Temple on the 3rd of Tâkhshâsh (Nov. 29); her conception on the 16th of Tâkhshâsh (Dec. 11); the dedication of her temple on the 8th of Senê (June 2); her death on the 21st of Tër (Jan. 16); her ascension on the 16th of Naḥassê (Aug. 9); the embalmment of her body for burial on the 15th of Naḥassê (Aug. 8); and there were other festivals held in her honour locally. Some authorities state that thirty-two festivals of the Virgin were celebrated throughout the year.<sup>1</sup> On these festivals the History of the Life of

<sup>1</sup> Ludolf, *Historia Æthiopica*, Commentarius, p. 361 (Not. XLV).

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MARY was read, and the clergy found it necessary to provide large manuscripts from which the priests might read to their congregations. A complete Lectionary of this kind was in reality a *Corpus* of all the Mary-Literature, and a very good example of such a work is Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604.

It is very difficult to state exactly what were the views that the Ethiopians held about the Virgin MARY, but a perusal of the Books of Praise of the Virgin suggests that they were not all authorized by the Church. The "Mother of God" and the "Queen of Heaven" and the "Chieftainess of all the Saints," as she was called by her worshippers, was in reality considered by them to be a goddess, or at all events a being far superior to any woman, both materially and spiritually. In their heart of hearts large numbers of them believed that MARY and CHRIST were formed of a substance different from that of other men, and this heresy seems never to have been stamped out entirely. The perpetual virginity of MARY was to them a sure proof of her divine origin. They made her to share divinity with Christ, and in some praises of her of an extravagant character she is grouped with the Persons of the Trinity as an equal. In later times even her mother Hännâ was regarded as semi-divine. They ascribed to MARY boundless power in heaven and upon earth, and if in furtherance of her benevolent designs she asked her Son for help which was not given, they made her appeal to God Almighty Himself, Who at once granted her petitions. Her influence over the Father and the Son was, in their opinion, so great that they thought and believed she was, to all intents and purposes, the controller of the destiny of human souls in the Day of Judgement. Many of their services consisted of nothing but prayers to God the Father and prayers to the Virgin, and the number of manuscripts of the Wëddâsê Mâryâm and the Mazmûra Dengel (Virgin's Psalter), and the 'Argânôna

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Dengel (Virgin's Lyre) which have come down to us prove the universality and supremeness of her worship in Ethiopia. But the Ethiopians never lost sight of the humanity of MARY in their devotions, and they appealed to her as the great and tender-hearted woman of sorrows and the loving mother, especially in all affairs of daily life. She was to them all-knowing, all-wise and all-understanding, as far as the weaknesses and sins of men and women were concerned, and they went to her shrines in simple faith, told their troubles to the pictures of her, and trusted to her all-embracing sympathy and pity to relieve their troubles and remove their afflictions. In their pictures they represent her as one of themselves, with thick, black, woolly hair, and eyes with jet-black pupils and large whites, and with the large breasts that are the joy of all mothers in Ethiopia and the Sûdân. They are never tired of extolling her physical beauty, and some of their addresses to her more resemble the rhapsodies of a lover than the devout glorifying of the Mother of God.

III. THE CULT OF ISIS AND THE WORSHIP  
OF THE VIRGIN MARY COMPARED

IT has been well said that the Egyptians were better prepared to receive and accept Christianity than any of the nations round about them. For thousands of years before St. Mark came to Alexandria to preach the Gospel of his Master Christ, the Egyptians believed in Osiris the Man-god who raised himself from the dead. He was held to possess the power of bestowing immortality on his followers because he had triumphed over Death, and had vanquished the Powers of Darkness. He was the Judge of souls and the supreme lord of the Judgement of the Dead ; he was all-wise, all-knowing, all-just, and his decrees were final and absolute. No man could hope to dwell with him in his kingdom unless he had lived a life of moral excellence upon earth, and the only passports to his favour were truth-speaking, honest intent, and the observance of the commands of the Law (*Maāt*), coupled with charity, almsgiving and humane actions. It is very probable that in the earliest form of the cult of Osiris the fulfilment of the Law was all that the god demanded from his followers, but in later times, and especially under the New Empire, when men had learned to make personal prayers to him, he certainly required from them the strict observance of the spirit as well as the letter of the Law. In the Vignettes of Chap. CXXV of the Book of the Dead we see him sitting in his shrine as supreme Judge, whilst the weighing of the heart of the dead man is carried out under the supervision of Thoth, the great Advocate, in the presence of a jury of gods and god-



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desses. With him in his shrine is the goddess Isis, and her divine sister Nephthys, and her son Horus is leading the truth-speaking deceased to the foot of the steps of the throne of the Great God. < Although it was Thoth who spake the words that caused Creation to be, and who secured the acquittal of Osiris at the Great Judgement when Set, the Arch-Liar, was vanquished, yet it is not he who leads the deceased before Osiris, but "Horus, the son of Isis." > Horus reports that Thoth has found the deceased innocent, and recommends that the reward which is usually bestowed on the Follower of Horus be granted to him. It is impossible not to think that Horus, the son of Isis, had some special influence with Osiris, and that he possessed this influence because he was the son of Isis, who is always present in the shrine of Osiris when hearts are being weighed in the Great Balance. There were many goddesses in Egypt, but none save Isis, together with her shadowy dual counterpart, appears with Osiris in his shrine at the Judgement. It is clear that the Egyptians attributed to her powers and qualities which no other goddess possessed, and what some of these were we may learn from the religious texts of all periods.

Nothing is known about the cult of Isis in the early Neolithic Period in Egypt, but when the first king of all Egypt reigned, her position as the chief goddess in the land was generally recognized. During the Archaic Period she was regarded as the female counterpart of Osiris, and her forms, characteristics and powers changed as those of Osiris changed, but towards the close of the Dynastic Period she became the chief deity of all Egypt, and, in late times, her worship wholly eclipsed that of her male counterpart Osiris. Under the Ancient Empire Osiris and Isis and Set and Nephthys were regarded as the deified members of a human family, and Isis was the most powerful of them. Under the Middle Empire the cult of Osiris and Isis at Abydos

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and in the Delta increased greatly, and they became the ancestor and ancestress of every Egyptian. The spread of their cult was largely caused by the annual performance of the great Miracle Play at Abydos, in which the principal events in the life, death, funeral ceremonies, and resurrection of Osiris were represented. The Play was based on Legends which had been current in Egypt for untold centuries, and in it Isis was shown to be the faithful and loving wife, who brought away her husband's body from the battle-field, and saved it from falling into the hands of Set, the Arch-Enemy of Osiris, and the personification of Evil. In all these Legends great magical powers were attributed to her, for Thoth, the heart and intelligence of the God, had taught her the spells, incantations, magical names and words of power which he had employed in making the wishes of this God to take concrete form, and he had also taught her how to use them. By means of them Isis drew seed into herself from Osiris after his death, and conceived Horus, "the son of Isis" mentioned above. By these spells she, assisted by her son Horus and by Anubis, the divine physician, reconstituted and revived the body of Osiris, and thus she created her son Horus, and re-created Osiris. She became the personification of the great feminine creative power which conceived and brought forth every living creature and thing; what she brought forth she protected, and fed and nourished.

Of the many Legends of Isis that existed there was none that appealed more to the imagination of the Egyptians of all periods than that which described her persecution by Set, and her flight to the Delta to hide from him. Set tried to seize the kingdom of Osiris and take possession of his wife Isis, who was then with child, as the result of her union with Osiris after his death. She escaped with difficulty from the place where he had shut her up and, accompanied by the Seven Scorpion-goddesses, fled to Per-sui near the Papyrus Swamps. She

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applied for a night's lodging to a rich woman at Teb, who drove her from her door. Tefen, one of the seven goddesses, enraged at this, got under the door, stung a child to death, and set the house on fire. Isis restored the child to life and extinguished the fire. At the invitation of a peasant woman she went to her house and stayed there. Soon afterwards she brought forth Horus on a bed of papyrus-plants in the Swamps, and she hid him carefully, so that Set might not find him. But during her absence in the city of Am, where she had gone to buy food, Set, in the form of a scorpion, found the child and stung him, and when Isis returned she found him lying dead. When her first burst of grief was over she cried out to Rā, the Sun-god, who stopped his Boat and sent Thoth down to earth to help her. Thoth taught her certain words of power and how to use them, and as soon as she uttered them over Horus, the child was restored to life. Thoth ascended into the sky and took his place in the Boat, and the Sun-god resumed his journey.<sup>1</sup>

Another ancient Legend of Isis described how she obtained the knowledge of the most secret name of Rā, the Sun-god. She made a model of a most deadly viper, endowed it with life and filled it with venom, and set it by the path of Rā in the heavens with instructions to attack the god as he passed by. This the serpent did, and Rā became sick unto death. Then Isis went to him and offered to drive the poison out of him if he would tell her his secret name, the name whereby he maintained his existence in the sky. At first Rā refused, but when he felt that his collapse and death were imminent, he revealed his name to Isis, who recited the words which expelled the poison from the body of the god,

<sup>1</sup> I quote from the text found on the great Metternich Stele, which was discovered in Alexandria in 1828. Text and translation were published by Golénischeff, *Die Metternichstele*, Leipzig, 1877. A handy English rendering will be found in my *Legends of the Gods*, p. 142 ff.

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and restored him to health and strength.<sup>1</sup> The great Codices of the Book of the Dead written under the XVIIIth dynasty prove that the blood of Isis was believed to possess great magical protective powers, and models of the internal organs of the goddess which produced this blood were buried with the dead to preserve them from harm. The great amulet of Isis, called "Tet," was made of blood-coloured or red stone, or red glass paste, and was worn by the living, and laid on the bodies of the dead; and on many coffins the right hand of the deceased is seen to be clasping the Tet. The rubric of Chap. CLVI of the Book of the Dead orders that it be steeped in water and placed on the neck of the deceased, and it is probable that this water, which was supposed to possess the same power as the blood of Isis, was used for ceremonial sprinklings of the dead.

Towards the close of the XIXth dynasty the cult of Isis in her character of faithful and loving wife and tender mother increased greatly. One of the best proofs of the growth of this phase of her cult is afforded by the numerous small figures of the goddess that are found in the tombs of this period, and apparently not earlier. Usually the figures are made of bronze, and the goddess is represented seated on a throne, the symbol of her name, and suckling her son Horus, whom she clasps to her left breast. As time went on they were made of different kinds of valuable stones and gilded. A fine example in hard stone is that which was dedicated to Panub, the son of Nekht, who flourished in the reign of Psammetichus I; see 5th Egyptian Room in the British Museum, No. 23050. Another example (No. 35089) is made of lapis-lazuli, and is a fine piece of work. On the side of the throne is cut the symbol of "life," and on the back is the same symbol with the symbol of "strength" or "power" on each side of it. It is im-

<sup>1</sup> See my *Legends of the Gods*, p. 142.

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portant to note that the throne of Osiris is a funerary coffer, which contained dead things, but the throne of Isis is the seat of LIFE. Figures of this kind were dedicated to the goddess by parents who desired offspring. In connection with this may be recalled the fact that the statue of Isis of Philæ was solemnly taken by the Blemmyes year by year from Philæ to various towns in Nubia in order that the women might make petitions to her for offspring. The Romans in their treaty with the Blemmyes agreed to allow this to be done, and the Blemmyes visited Philæ and observed their ancient customs in respect of Isis for at least fifty years after the famous Edict of Theodosius I.<sup>1</sup> What form the figure of Isis, the mother of the god, took at Philæ is unknown, but it must have been one that satisfied the eminently realistic folk of the Egyptian Sûdân.

The position that Isis occupied among the goddesses of Egypt was unique, for none but she is ever represented as a mother suckling her child, and none of them conceived a son under such circumstances, or reconstituted her husband, or restored her son to life. From the long list of titles which the Egyptians<sup>2</sup> gave her come the following :—Lady of Many Names, Great Lady from Primeval time, Divine Lady, Only One, Greatest of gods and goddesses, Queen of the gods, Prototype of all beings, Queen of goddesses and women, Queen of the Dekan stars, Maker of the sunrise, Lady of heaven, Holy one of heaven, Queen of the earth, Queen of the South and North, The fire-producer, Great goddess of the Other World, Mother of Horus, Mother of the God, Lady of the Birth Chamber, Lady of Life, Bestower of Life, Giver of gifts to gods and spirits, Lady of bread and beer, Lady of abundance, Lady of joy and gladness, Lady of love, Lady of beauty, The Beauty of Thebes, The Majesty of Heliopolis, The

<sup>1</sup> Revillout, *Mémoire sur les Blemmyes*, Paris, 1864, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> See Brugsch, *Thesaurus*, pp. 102, 217-219.

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Beneficent one in Memphis, Lady of spells, words of power and incantations, Daughter of Keb and Nut (i.e. Heaven and Earth), Daughter of Neb-er-tcher (i.e. God Almighty), Lady of weaving and fulling, She whose son is Lord of the Earth and whose husband is Lord of the Deep, Lady of the Nile-flood, etc. Her spirit caused the star Sept, or Sothis, the Dog-Star, to rise annually to warn the Egyptians of the coming of the Inundation of the Nile, and it was believed that the Nile Flood itself was the result of the tear-drop which Isis let fall into the Nile each summer.

Like Osiris, Isis had many shrines in Egypt, and she united in her own person the powers, qualities and attributes of all the great goddesses and of all the small local female deities throughout the land. Her names were many and in each great city she had a special name. Thus she was called Userit in Philæ, Âait and Menhit in Heliopolis, Menkhit and Renpit in Memphis, Septit in Abydos, Seshetaït in Hermopolis, Anit in Denderah. She was the Queen of heaven, the Queen of all the goddesses both in Egypt and the Sûdân, the Mother of the god, and the Lady of all women. Most important of all to the Egyptians, Isis was Queen of the Other World, and in the earliest times she shared the rule and authority of Osiris as "Khenti-Amentt," or "President of Amentt," as the Other World was called. Though only Osiris could admit souls into his kingdom, it was Isis who directed all matters connected with the maintenance of the Spirit-bodies who succeeded in reaching that region. She also presided over the re-birth of the righteous in Amentt, and their existence was bound up in her. As time went on men began to ascribe to her powers greater than those of Osiris, and, thanks to the action of the priests of Memphis in the seventh century B.C., her votaries exalted her to the rank of Lady of all the Gods. And this result came about in this manner. The chief god of Memphis was

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Ptah, and the chief sacred animal of the city was the Apis Bull, who was believed to be the "renewed life of Ptah." As the attributes of Apis had assumed a funereal character, and as Osiris was called the "Bull of Amentt," the priests fused the two gods into one great funerary god whom they called "Asâr-Hep," which is the original of the Greek name "Sarapis." Now Ptolemy I Soter was very anxious to build a shrine at Alexandria at which both Egyptians and Greeks could worship their gods of the dead. He wished to find a god who could represent the Egyptian Osiris Khenti-Amentt and the Greek Dis, and be the chief god of both Amentt and Hades. Ptolemy found his shrine, but had some difficulty in obtaining a suitable statue for it. Finally a statue of Pluto, a god of Sinope, embarked of its own accord in a ship, and came to Alexandria, and Ptolemy placed it in the Serapeum which he built there. When the Egyptians at Alexandria were told that the statue represented Pluto, or Hades, they were content to call that god Asâr-Hep, or Sarapis. But when it became known in the country generally that Osiris was identified with Pluto, his power and influence declined rapidly, for the Death-god could not be a "Giver of Life" nor a god "who made men and women to be born a second time." In the final state of the cult of Osiris and Isis the god was the symbol of Death and the goddess the symbol of Life and the personification of Life in this world and the next.

As soon as the Greeks obtained power over Egypt, the worship of Isis spread among the Islands of the Mediterranean, e.g. Cyprus, Rhodes, Samos, Chios, Lesbos, Delos, Crete, etc. The bas-reliefs, coins and other antiquities found in Thessaly, Epirus, Megara, Corinth, Argos and other places prove that Isis and Osiris, and their son Horus the child (Harpocrates), and Nephthys and Anubis were worshipped in many Grecian cities some four or five centuries before the Christian Era. In

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the first century B.C. Isis was regarded as one of the principal goddesses of Rome, and many temples were built in her honour, and orders of priestesses were endowed to perform her "mysteries." From Rome her cult spread to the provinces, and it passed by way of Marseilles to Carthage and the countries of North Africa. The rapidity with which the cult of Isis and Osiris spread proves that it offered to peoples of many climes and tongues a form of worship of God which satisfied their needs. Being of Egyptian origin it was mysterious, as well as ancient, and this added to its natural attraction for foreigners. The ceremonies connected with the worship of Isis impressed all beholders, and the acting of the miracle-play itself roused ideas and beliefs of an unusual character in their minds. The resurrection of Osiris taught them to believe in the resurrection of the dead, the conception and birth of Horus preached the doctrine of life arising out of death, the triumph of Horus over Set symbolized the ultimate victory of good over evil, and the sorrows of Isis and her tender mother-love touched all hearts. The old crude and semi-savage ideas that centred in Isis in early dynastic times were forgotten, and purer, more refined sublimated conceptions of the divine woman, the Queen of heaven, took their place. She became the personification of all that was good in goddesses and in women. <The best description of her is perhaps that which she gives of herself to Lucius in the "Golden Ass" of Apuleius of Madaura. In answer to his prayer she says:—"Lo, Lucius, I am come. . . . I, nature's mother, mistress of all the elements, the first-begotten of all the ages, of deities mightiest, queen of the dead, first of heaven's denizens, in whose aspect are blent the aspects of all gods and goddesses. With my rod I rule the shining heights of heaven, the health-giving breezes of the sea, the mournful silence of the Underworld. The whole earth worships my godhead, one and indi-



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vidual, under many a changing shape, with varied rites, and by many diverse names. There the Phrygians, first-born of men, call me the mother of the gods that dwell at Pessinus ; there the Athenians, sprung from the soil they till, know me as Cecropian Minerva ; there the wave-beaten Cyprians style me Venus of Paphos ; the archer Cretans, Diana of the hunter's net; the Sicilians, with their threefold speech, Stygian Proserpine ; the Eleusinians, the ancient goddess Ceres. Others call me Juno, others Bellona, others Hecate, others the Rhamnusian, but those on whom shine the first rays of the Sun-god as each day he springs to new birth, the Aarii and the Ethiopians, and the Egyptians, mighty in ancient lore, honour me with my peculiar rites, and call me by my true name Isis the Queen."<sup>1</sup>

It has often been said and written that the cult of Isis and Horus and the worship of MARY the Virgin and the Child are one and the same thing, but the above summary of facts, which are derived from Egyptian religious texts, has been prepared to show that such is not the case. The original Isis was an African goddess who appeared in human form, and married the god-man Osiris, and conceived a son begotten by him after he had been murdered. MARY was a woman, the daughter of well-known parents, and although the circumstances that attended her conception were so unusual as to be miraculous, she was not divine. MARY became with child of the Holy Ghost, and when she had given birth to the Son of God she remained a virgin. The wanderings of MARY during her flight from Herod's wrath recall the wanderings of Isis, especially as both Isis and MARY raised the dead and worked other miracles. Horus was killed by a scorpion, and was raised up again through the spells of Thoth, but Jesus did not die until He was crucified. Osiris, more than Horus, resembles Jesus in respect of His murder by the Jews. Isis bewailed Osiris

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 5 (Butler's translation).

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in the shrines of Egypt, as MARY bewailed her Son at Golgotha. The seven scorpion-goddesses who attended Isis seem to have their counterpart in the seven maidens who were associated with MARY in weaving the Veil of the Temple. Osiris was raised from the dead by the spells of Isis, which she had learned from Thoth, but Jesus raised Himself from the dead. Again, Osiris had to do battle with the powers of the Underworld in order to maintain his life and position therein ; but Jesus shattered the bolts of the gates of hell, and tore down the doors, and vanquished Death and his six sons and Satan, and extinguished the fiery cauldrons, in order to save Adam and his posterity and take them out of hell. Isis appears in the Judgement Hall of Osiris, presumably as co-judge with Osiris, but MARY only watches the Judgement of the Dead so that she may in certain cases entreat Christ and the Father to show mercy. In one particular Isis and MARY the Virgin have a common fate ; the grave of each is unknown.

IV. ETHIOPIC LITERATURE OF THE  
VIRGIN MARY

WHEN the British Army occupied Maḳdalâ in 1867, and, after the suicide of King Theodore, began to examine the contents of the outlying buildings in which the royal property was stored, they found heaped up in a shed a huge mass of vellum and paper manuscripts of all sizes. They were over a thousand in number,<sup>1</sup> and were covered with dust, and many of them had suffered greatly from damp, which had caused the leaves to stick together. The greater number of them were stolen by Theodore from the libraries and churches in various parts of the country of Abyssinia (or Ethioḳia), and from private owners of books, and he intended them to form the Library of the Church of MADHÂNÊ 'ĀLAM, i.e. the "Saviour of the World," which he proposed to build at Maḳdalâ. No one had charge of the heap of manuscripts, and once having got them into his possession the king seems to have taken no further trouble about them. The British Army took possession of them as a matter of course, and took them away when they returned to the coast. On their way thither General Napier gave many of the copies of the Old and New Testaments and Service-Books to the archimandrites and priests who prayed to have their property restored to them, and in this way more than one half of the entire collection was disposed of. When the rest of the Maḳdalâ Collection reached London in

<sup>1</sup> See Markham, *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition*, London, 1869, p. 357; Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia*, London, 1868, p. 210.

## *Legends of the Virgin Mary*

1868 the Secretary of State for India handed them over to the Trustees of the British Museum. But, strange to say, whilst General Napier was doing his utmost to keep the manuscripts in the country, many of the inferior clergy were selling their books to British officers and privateers, who brought them to England where, scattered throughout the land, some hundreds of them now are. The portion of the Maḡdalâ Collection that came to the British Museum consisted of about three hundred and fifty manuscripts, and about one-seventh of this number contains texts concerning the Virgin MARY or her miracles, or homilies upon events in her life, or prayers or sermons that were written for her festivals. A very considerable number of the one hundred and seventeen Ethiopic MSS. that were purchased by the Trustees for the British Museum from travellers or presented to them by the Church Missionary Society prior to 1867 also contain Texts concerning the Virgin MARY. The Ethiopic Literature of the Virgin MARY in the British Museum may be summarized thus<sup>1</sup> :—

1. The History of the Conception and Birth of the Blessed Virgin which was read on the 1st day of the month Gënbôt, and on the 21st day of the month Sanê (Orient. 604, No. 10, and 606, No. 9). 2. An anonymous Discourse on the Birth of the Virgin in a manuscript of the XVth century (Orient. 692, No. 4). 3. The History of the Birth of the Virgin MARY. A Discourse for the 3rd of Tâhsās (Orient. 604, No. 3, and 606, No. 3). 4. Discourse on her Birth, Marriage to Joseph and her visit to Elisabeth (Orient. 692, No. 2). 5. On the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin (Orient. 604, No. 8, and 606, No. 8). 6. Dialogue between MARY and the angel of the Annunciation. (This is extant in

<sup>1</sup> For full descriptions of the MSS. see Dillmann, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium Musei Britannici (Codices Æthiopici)*, Pars III, London, 1847; Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic MSS. in the British Museum*, London, 1877.

## *Ethiopic Literature of the Virgin Mary*

several MSS. (Orient. 650, fol. 134a)). 7. Story of how MARY concealed herself from Herod in Mount Lebanon, and the History of Gîgâr, the judge in Syria, and Domitianus (Orient. 604, No. 15; Orient. 606, No. 14). 8. The History of the Death of MARY as narrated on the authority of St. John. It is called 'Astar'ëyô, and was read on the 21st day of the month Tër (Orient. 604, No. 4; Orient. 606, No. 4). 9. The Book of the Death of MARY in a manuscript of the XVth century (Orient. 692, No. 7). 10. History of the Assumption of the Virgin MARY (Orient. 604, No. 6; Orient. 605, No. 2; Orient. 606, No. 6). 11. Homily on the Assumption of the Virgin (Orient. 641, fol. 268a). 12. The History of the Covenant which Christ made with His mother, commonly called the "Covenant of Mercy" (Orient. 604, No. 7; Orient. 606, No. 7). 13. A Discourse on the building of MARY's house (Orient. 604, No. 11; Orient. 606, No. 10). 14. Story of the discovery of the History of the Virgin MARY (Orient. 604, No. 5; Orient. 606, No. 5). 15. Discourse by St. John the Evangelist on the Virgin MARY (Orient. 593, No. 3; Orient. 818, fol. 161b). 16. Discourse by John, Metropolitan of Ethiopia, on the Virgin MARY (Orient. 616, fol. 124b). 17. Discourse by Theophilus of Alexandria on the Virgin MARY (Orient. 604, No. 1; Orient. 606, No. 1). 18. Encomium on the Virgin MARY by Cyriacus, Bishop of Bëhnësâ (Orient. 604, No. 16; Add. 16250, foll. 335-365). 19. Discourse on the Virgin MARY by Basil of Cæsarea (Orient. 604, No. 12; Orient. 605, fol. 150). 20. Two Discourses on the Virgin MARY (anonymous, Orient. 593, Nos. 1 and 2). 21. Prayers of the Virgin MARY at Golgotha (Add. 16233, No. 5; Orient. 565, No. 1). 22. Prayers of the Virgin MARY at Bârtôs, or Bêrût (Add. 16245, No. 6; Orient. 564, No. 4). 23. The Vision which MARY described to John the son of Zebedee (Orient. 605, No. 2, fol. 94a). 24. Salutations to the

## *Legends of the Virgin Mary*

members of the body of the Virgin MARY (Add. 1622, foll. 43-52). 25. Selections of the MIRACLES of the Virgin MARY are contained in a great many manuscripts, and as these are all described in a companion volume to this nothing need be said about them here. 26. In connection with this group of manuscripts reference must be made to the extraordinary compilation contained in Add. 16193, which Dillmann describes as, "Liber crassis fabulis refertus est."<sup>1</sup> The text pretends to be a narrative of the period of three years and six months which MARY, and the Child, and Joseph and Salome passed in Ethiopia as the guests of the King of Ethiopia. It further describes their journey from Ethiopia, which they undertook by God's command, through the desert to Palestine, and what happened to them by the way. Both MARY and the Child worked many miracles, and were greatly beloved by the various peoples with whom they came in contact and to whom they did much good. The MS. was presented to the Trustees of the British Museum by the Church Missionary Society in August, 1846, and consists of 12 quires, each containing 8 folios measuring 8½ in. by 6¼ in. Each page contains two columns of writing, with 24 lines in each. The handwriting is firm and bold, and probably dates from the XVIIIth century. The MS. has neither title nor colophon. It was intended to be used as a Service-book, probably in connection with the WĒDDÂSÊ MÂRYÂM, or Book of Prayers to the Virgin MARY, for the text is divided into seven sections, one of which was to be read daily, beginning with Monday. The following brief sketch of the contents of the manuscript will enable the reader to judge for himself about the value of the work.

The text opens with the statement that whilst MARY was fleeing from Herod, the Child always pronounced His blessing with His face turned towards the South

<sup>1</sup> *Cat. Codd. Æthiopicæ*, p. 48.

## *Ethiopic Literature of the Virgin Mary*

(ʿAzêb). By this act He indicated that He wished to go to the South, and thither, after months of wandering, and flight from city to city, and village to village, and suffering from repeated attacks of wild beasts and still wilder men, MARY directed her steps. In due course she arrived in Ethiopia, which the text describes as “the most glorious country under heaven.” There the Holy Family and Salômê lived in great peace and content for 3 years and 6 months, but neither the king ʿAKÂRYÔs (Fol. 3b) nor his people knew that MARY was a virgin, or that the Child was the future Redeemer of the world, for God caused these things to be hidden from him and his people. At length God told Joseph to return to Syria, but the people were most unwilling to let them go. On their way northwards the Holy Family came to Bêt Barbaysadâs, which was near the sea, and camped near the city gate. The people took them into a palace made of gold, and gave them bread, wine, honey, sugar, milk, etc. Whilst there the town was attacked by large numbers of mighty men and soldiers, and Christ, whose name is written in red and black letters alternately, determined to help His hosts. On His demand nineteen companies of angels came down and attacked the forces of the king of Persia (*sic*), and they slew so many of the enemy that the stream of blood which flowed round the horses’ legs reached their bridles (Fol. 4a). Passing through Gêdâbêryâ, a region filled with cannibals, (Fol. 4b) the Holy Family came to a city which had for some reason been laid waste and was deserted. Here the Holy Family stayed for one month, and the Virgin MARY, with the Child’s consent, raised to life, presumably from the cemeteries, 900,000 men, 900,000 women, and hundreds of thousands of old men and children (Fol. 6a). Then they passed on and came to Kâkîrôs, which was near Persia (*sic*), and at this place the text refers to the miracles which MARY performed in Arabia, Nôbâ and Sôba, the two last names suggesting that she had

## *Legends of the Virgin Mary*

visited the Egyptian Sûdân. Passing through Bêt T'ê-mân (Fol. 7a) they came to another city of the dead, and here MARY raised up 604 men, 530 women, 50,000 virgins and 500 old men (Fol. 8b). In this neighbourhood the people were kind to MARY and the Child, and she wished to do good to them in some way. Whilst she was pondering how she could do it, Gabriel appeared and told her to follow him and to bring the people with her. When she had gathered the people together Gabriel set out for the sea coast, and when he and his followers had arrived there he stood up and uttered these words of power :—KÎBAR'ÔS DERMÔNÂD'ES RÔ-BAM ME'ÊR. Then straightway the sea was divided into two parts, one part going to the left and the other part to the right, leaving a dry road between them. Gabriel led the people down on to the bed of the sea and they took away from it houses of gold, 10,000 silver coins, 10,000 brass coins, 7000 beryls, 10,000 sapphires, 7000 gems, 5000 pearls, and a great number of other kinds of precious stones (Fol. 9b). Passing on, MARY came to a region where she saw animals fourteen cubits high, with seven wings and seven legs (Fol. 10a). She next came to a district where the women were barren and the cattle brought forth no young, but having prayed MARY bestowed upon the women power to have children, and all the flocks and herds became exceedingly prolific (Fol. 11a).

Next, accompanied by the Archangels Gabriel, Michael, Rufael, and Uriel, MARY set out for Syria. At a place called Şêmadar, a magician came out and reviled her and cast a stone at her, but MARY caused the stone to be deflected in its course and, instead of striking her, it turned back and smote the people close by and killed 36 of them (Fol. 12b). In another place a number of men attacked the Holy Family, and by the command of the Child a wild beast rushed upon them and slew 320 of those who tried to hurt MARY (Fol. 15a). From this point the text of the manuscript becomes much



## *Ethiopic Literature of the Virgin Mary*

confused, and it is difficult to follow the course of the Holy Family. The narrative describes the persecution of Herod (Fol. 18b), and the wanderings of MARY in and about Mount Lebanon (Fol. 20b). At Mount Kônâ MARY fell asleep under a tree, and she had a vision in which the angels carried her soul up to heaven, and God the Father welcomed her and kissed her, and she saw David and the Prophets (Fol. 21a). She next came to Gêdrâs of Kôhól, a city of Maḵsîmârrâ. Somewhere in this neighbourhood she had another vision, and an angel carried her away to show her heaven. When they arrived at the gates of heaven they found them closed, but the angel pronounced the magical words PÎLÂSÔRÂN PÎLÂSÂR PÎPÎRÂS PÎRAYÂPÎS LÎMÂNÂNÛS, and straightway the doors flew open and the angel led MARY in (Fol. 26b ff). Further wanderings in Mount Libanus followed this vision (Fol. 41b). At Rôfân the people stoned MARY, and as a punishment she caused horns two cubits long to grow out of their heads (Fol. 44a). At Kêdrôs, which was near Arabia (*sic*), a man possessed of a devil came to her for deliverance from his cruelty. MARY stood up and uttered the following words of power : YÂRÔŞÂS GEBTÔMÂR PÎLÂ'ÔS, and straightway a serpent 70 cubits long came forth from him. MARY next went to Mount Sîkâ (Fol. 44b), to Dûrdîs (Fol. 45a), to Kâkrâ, to Barbôy (Fol. 46a). On Fol. 76 ff. is a version of the story of Herod and Gîgâr, the governor of Syria, and parts of it resemble the text which is translated on pp. 202 ff of the present volume. At Mesârîs there was a cave inhabited by a serpent (Fol. 93a) which spread terror and death throughout the country ; this serpent was 360 cubits long and 49 cubits wide (in girth?). MARY pronounced the following words of power : KÊMÂSO'Î DABRÂTKAÔN KAKAEWÔS 'ASNÂBÂS, and straightway Gabriel came down and cut the monster into sixteen pieces, and a devil in the form of a raven came out of its belly. The manuscript closes

## *Legends of the Virgin Mary*

with a prayer that mercy may be shown by Christ, through the prayers of MARY, on the man who had the book written, the scribe, and the reader and the translator of it. The text seems to me to be a compilation made from comparatively modern legends of the Virgin current in Ethiopia by some imperfectly educated scribe, who made many mistakes, both in his facts and in his writing. Like many another Oriental scribe, he had no idea of the historical sequence of events in the world, and his geographical knowledge was very limited. He was an ardent lover of his own country, and says boldly that Ethiopia is the finest country under heaven. Though an orthodox Monophysite, he saw nothing unusual in making the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin MARY use magical formulæ to bring about the performance of their wishes.

27. Service Books containing series of prayers and hymns to the Virgin MARY. The following are the most important of these :—1. The 'ARGÂNÔNA DENGEL, i.e. the Organ of the Praise of the Blessed Virgin MARY, also known as the "Harp of the Psalter," and the "Lyre of Praise." This work is arranged for the days of the week, beginning with Monday and ending with Sunday. The reader will gain a general idea of the contents and character of the work from the translation of a few folios which I have given on p. 297. There are several copies of the 'Argânôna in the British Museum (Add. 16,191, Harl. 7629, Orient. 559, 560, 591, 592, 595).

2. The WĒDDÂSÊ MÂRYÂM, or [Book of] Praise of MARY. This book is arranged for the days of the week, but some MSS. begin with the section for Sunday, and some with the section for Monday. Which arrangement is the older cannot be said; there are several MSS. of each class in the British Museum (Sunday, Add. 11,621, 18,994, 16,659; Monday, Add. 16,203, 16,225, Orient. 535, 541, etc.). Many portions of this work

## *Ethiopic Literature of the Virgin Mary*

seem to have been translated from some Coptic text similar to that which was published by Tuki in his *BOOK OF THEOTOKIA* (Rome, 1764?), and it is probable that the first Ethiopic translation was made from a Coptic Service-book in Ethiopia in the VIIth century A.D. The greatest importance is attached to the Wěddâsê Mâryâm in Ethiopia, and it seems to rank only second in importance to the Wěddâsê 'AMLÂK, i.e. the "Book of Praise of God." It is of such importance that I have given a complete English translation of the work on pp. 279-296. A careful edition of the Ethiopic text was printed by Karl Fries in his *Inaugural Dissertation Wěddâsê MARJAM* (Leipzig, 1892), and from this I have made my translation. Copies of the work appear in manuscripts side by side with the Psalms of David, the Song of Solomon, and the Canticles, and the Wěddâsê Mâryâm is considered as of equal merit and authority with them. In *Orient.* 594 we find the 'ARGÂNÔNÂ Wěddâsê, and the Wěddâsê 'AMLÂK, and the Wěddâsê MÂRYÂM combined. The Wěddâsê 'Amlâk, or "Praises of God," is arranged according to the seven days of the week. On Monday prayers of Basil of Cæsarea are recited, on Tuesday and Wednesday prayers of Ephraim Syrus, on Thursday the prayer of the 'Aragâwî Manfasâwî, on Friday prayers of 'Abbâ Sînôdâ (Shenuti), on Saturday prayers of Athanasius, and on Sunday prayers of Cyril of Alexandria.

28. The *Mazmûra Dengel*, or Psalter of the Virgin MARY, is often found side by side with the Psalter of David, the Song of Songs, and the Canticles, but it was not considered a work of great importance (*Add.* 24,992, *Orient.* 535, etc.). A work of similar character is the *Mazmûra Krestôs*, or Psalter of Christ, and in one manuscript (*Orient.* 537) we have the Psalms of David, and the Psalters of Christ and the Virgin combined.

29. Prayers for the dead, ascribed to the Virgin MARY, are found in *Add.* 16,194, foll. 33-35.

## Introduction

### V. THE TRANSLATIONS PRINTED HEREIN

1. **T**HE HISTORY OF HANNÂ. This section is the result of a revision and rearrangement of the translation which I made from the unique MS. in the possession of the late Lady Meux and printed in her *Miracles of the Virgin*, London, 1899. This MS. was written in the XVth century and was used as a service-book, the History of Hannâ being arranged in sections for the days of the week. It is illustrated with pictures of an archaic character, all of which have been reproduced photographically in this volume. This work shows that as early as the XVth century the deification of Hannâ had begun in Ethiopia, and that her birth was regarded as having been brought about by miraculous means. It describes at length how MARY, in the form of a White Pearl, was inserted in the body of Adam by God, and how it passed from body to body until it entered Hannâ, when it developed into the Lady MARY. A further proof of the equality of Hannâ and MARY in the minds of the Ethiopians is the series of SALUTATIONS, or GREETINGS, to the members of Hannâ's body. The Ethiopic text is printed in Lady Meux's edition of the *Miracles of the Virgin* mentioned above.

2. THE COVENANT OF MERCY, i.e. the Covenant which Christ made with the Virgin MARY when He promised that as a reward for the Five Sorrows which she endured, He would forgive the sins of every one who remembered them and the salutation of Gabriel. Two versions of the Covenant are given herein, to-

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gether with the SEVEN SALUTATIONS to it, which are uncommon. For the Ethiopic texts see the *Miracles of the Virgin*, London, 1899, and Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604.

3. THE HISTORY OF THE VIRGIN MARY AS TOLD BY HER TO THEOPHILUS, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA. Translated from the Lady Meux MS. No. 2 and Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604. Theophilus succeeded Timothy as the twenty-second Archbishop of Alexandria in July, A.D. 385, and died A.D. 412. The text here translated is an extract from the Discourse which Theophilus is said to have pronounced on the Virgin MARY on the 6th day of the month of Ḥadâr. In this Discourse the Archbishop described at considerable length the life of MARY, but as the greater part of his work is given more fully in the other sections printed herein I have only reproduced the words that the Virgin herself is said to have spoken to Theophilus. It was a well-known rhetorical device, and was much used by great preachers among the Copts, to address MARY by name in the course of their discourses, and then to recite to the congregations what purported to be her answer.

4. THE NARRATIVE OF THE VIRGIN MARY AS TOLD BY HERSELF TO TIMOTHY, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA. This translation is made from Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 25b ff. This large and well-written manuscript was copied early in the XVIIIth century from very much older MSS. and was intended to be a service-book for use in a church on the festival days of the Virgin. The most interesting portion of the narrative is that which describes the journey of the Holy Family to Egypt, and the troubles that came upon them as they travelled down the old caravan road by the sea-coast and across the desert to the Eastern Delta and Heliopolis. The writer held the view that they tra-

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velled southwards as far as Hermopolis Magna (the Khemenu and Shmûn of the Egyptians, and the modern Ashmûnên, or Eshmûnên), which lies about 180 miles south of Cairo, but it is possible that some confusion between Heliopolis and Hermopolis occurred in the MSS. at an early period. There was a very famous church of the Virgin at Ashmûnên in the Xth century, and on one of its pillars there was said to be the impress of the hand of our Lord. The names of the places mentioned in the narrative are too corrupt to be identifiable.

5. THE ANNUNCIATION OF GABRIEL TO MARY, translated from Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 67a ff. This Discourse, of unknown authorship, is not found in the oldest Ethiopic MSS., and it is probably the work of a comparatively modern writer. It was pronounced on the 29th day of Magâbît, i.e. March 26, which is the day on which the festival of the Archangel Gabriel is celebrated, and it may have been, in an original form, written in honour rather of Gabriel than of MARY. Some parts of this composition seem to be derived from the Dialogue of MARY and the Angel which is found in a single manuscript of the XVth century. See Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 650, fol. 134a.

6. THE CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF OUR LADY MARY, THE BEARER OF GOD, translated from Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 78a ff. This composition is based upon Coptic and Arabic versions of such works as the *Protevangelium Jacobi* and the *Evangelium de Nativitate Mariæ*. See Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus*, Leipzig, 1832, and Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, Leipzig, 1876.

7. A TRACT WHICH DESCRIBETH HOW THE HISTORY OF ST. MARY WAS DISCOVERED, translated from Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 50a. This Tract is probably based upon an ancient tradition to the effect that the

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libraries of the oldest monasteries on Mount Sinai, i.e. those that were in existence before the reign of Justinian, contained many ancient manuscripts, some of which were as old as the time of the Apostles. In its present form it seems to be a translation from the Coptic.

8. THE HISTORY OF THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN MARY AS TOLD BY SAINT JOHN, translated from Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 45a. This is a late Recension of the work called "'ASTAR'YÔ," probably because it describes the sudden appearance of the Apostles from the various countries wherein they were, together with myriads of archangels and angels, just before the departure of the soul of MARY from this world. It is based upon very ancient traditions extant in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic and Arabic, and was read in all the churches on the 21st day of Tër (January 16). The Greek and Latin Churches celebrate the Obdormitio S. Mariæ Virginis (or Obitus S. Mariæ Virginis) and the Assumptio S. Mariæ Virginis on the same day, but the Ethiopians commemorate her death on the 21st day of Tër, and her Translation, or Ascent of her body into heaven, on the 16th day of Naḥassê (August 9). On this point see Ludolf, *Hist. Æthiop. Commentarius*, p. 436, No. XLIX. For the *Liber de Dormitione Mariæ* (in Greek) and the *Transitus Mariæ*, A and B (in Latin), see Tischendorf, *Apocalypses Apocryphæ*, Leipzig, 1866, p. 95 ff.

9. HISTORY OF THE PERSECUTION AND DEATH OF THE VIRGIN MARY, translated from Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 53a. Another version of the life of the Virgin MARY after the Crucifixion, and her Death, and the ascension of her body into heaven. The title of the work in the manuscript gives no author's name, and it is not stated when it was to be read.

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10. THE HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT OF THE VIRGIN MARY TO MOUNT LEBANON, translated from the rare text found in Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 112a. This work describes the persecution of Herod and his attempts to find MARY and the Child in order to slay them. Warned by an angel Joseph flees from the desert of Lebanon, whilst Herod is searching for the Child in the desert of Lebanon and Barçâs (Bêrût?). MARY was greatly helped by Domitianus, the Governor of Syria, and by Gîgâr, who seems to have been his Deputy or Judge. Herod doubted the loyalty of Gîgâr, and tortured him because he befriended the Holy Family, and at length put him to death. If the statements in this work be historical, we must assume that Joseph and MARY fled to the desert east of the Jordan, and wandered about there, suffering great hardships, for some time before they set out for Egypt. If this be so they probably hid themselves until they could join one of the large caravans trading between Persia and Egypt, or Mesopotamia and Egypt. With the money with which Domitianus provided them this would be an easy matter. I have not been able to find any ancient version of this History, and it is probably founded on native Ethiopian tradition.

11. SALUTATIONS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, translated from the Lady Meux MS. No. 3.

12. THE VISION OF MARY CONCERNING PARADISE AND HELL AS RELATED BY HER TO JOHN, THE SON OF ZEBEDEE, translated from Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 605. The Virgin, under the guidance of our Lord, visited the abode of the righteous and the place of punishment of the wicked, and in answer to her questions our Lord explained to her the causes why some souls suffer one kind of punishment and some another. The narrative seems



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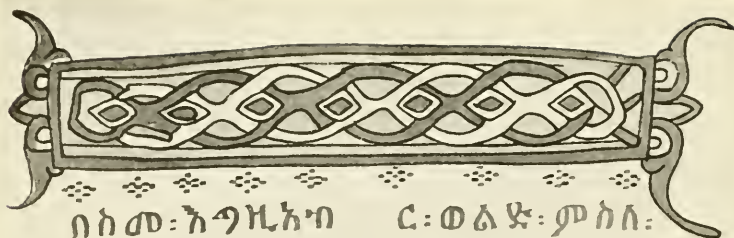
to be based on ancient Coptic legends which have made their way into Ethiopic through Arabic translations, for the Hell which is described in it is clearly derived from ancient Egyptian works. The title gives no directions as to the day on which the Vision is to be read, a fact which suggests that its appearance in Ethiopic is not very ancient.

13. THE WĒDDÂSÊ MÂRYÂM, or Book of Daily Praises of MARY, is translated from Add. 18994 (written in the XVth century) and other MSS. of the work in the British Museum; the variants in these MSS. are numerous but are not important. See page 279.

14. A specimen of the 'ARGÂNÔNÂ WĒDDÂSÊ, translated from Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 560. This work was, according to Bruce, written by 'Abbâ Gabriel in the first half of the XVth century, during the reign of Zar'a Yâ'ḳôb. See page 297.



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*From the Life of Hannâ, Lady Meux MS. No. 4.*

Facsimile of a page of text of the Life of Hannâ

THE HISTORY OF HANNÂ, THE MOTHER  
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
[Lady Meux MS. No. 4.]

THE PREFACE WHICH IS TO BE READ ON THE FIRST DAY  
OF THE WEEK

LET us return and again praise the daughter of Joachim and Hannâ, that is to say, the Virgin MARY, the seat of the Flame Whose Name is 'Emmanuel,' and let us tell the story of her begetting by an honourable and righteous old man, whose works were pure and who kept watch like the angels. It is, moreover, a good thing to tell the story of the begetting of our Lady MARY, the God-bearer, the Virgin, and it is sweeter far than honey and sugar. It is like sweet wine to the taste, and like ointment to the bones, and like the hearing of a word of wisdom (Fol. 61a) by the ear of the man of understanding, and like the purple wherewith a man decketh himself, and like a crown of gold to the head, and like eye-paint to the eyes, and like earrings to the ears, and like a collar to the neck, and like seals (or, bracelets) to the wrists, and like rings to the hands, and like a tunic that reacheth from the loins to the thighs.

Exalted then is the memorial of the praise of the Virgin, who became like a plant in the house of God, and like the cedar tree on Lebanon, and like the cypress tree on the mountains of Hermon, and like a palm tree on the river bank, (Fol. 61b) and like a rose on the margin of a pool, and like a beautiful olive tree in the sanctuary of God. The odour of her mouth is like unto that of the cinnamon tree and oil of cinnamon, and it

## *The History of Hannâ*

is like unto the smell of the incense in the place of the sanctuary, and her branches are branches of glory and grace. The memorial of the praise of the Virgin is abundant like the flood of Pison and Euphrates, and is like unto the flood of Gihon (i.e. the Nile) and Tigris, it is like unto [the light of] the moon when full, it is like unto the sun in the month of Marmûdâ (April) in splendour, and it is like unto a lamp that is set upon a stand. Who hath such praise, who hath such glorification, who hath such sweetness as the woman whom Joachim begot? I desire greatly to be her servant, for I know that she will become unto me a counsellor for good, and that she will console me in my sorrow and affliction, and that through her I shall find affection with the multitude and honour with the elders (Fol. 62a). I shall make myself to be considered marvellous before the face of the mighty, even though I hold my peace, and they shall wait until I speak. They shall draw nigh unto me, and I shall appear as a good man among the congregation; for in sorrow and weeping there is nought but joy and gladness. The will of the Virgin is deathless, and her love for man is abundant, happiness and goodness are in her hands and never-ending riches, in her speech are doctrine, and knowledge, and honour, and in her words are peace and love. For this reason I preach and I tell the story of the birth of our Lady MARY from the loins of Joachim, the staff of the kingdom, and from the womb of Hannâ, the staff of the priesthood. Come then, O ye prophets of the Good God, and be ye my helpers (Fol. 62b) that I may declare the sweetness of the glory of your daughter, the mother of light.

We will ask you, and you shall inform us, for thus is it written in the Book, which saith, "Ask thy father, and he shall teach thee; and thine elders, and they shall relate it unto thee" (Deut. xxxii, 7). And again it is written in the Book, which saith, "With Thy







## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

hidden things they have filled full their bellies ; they have filled full their children, and have left their superabundance to their children ” (Psalm xvii, 14). It is you whose bellies are filled full with the mystery of the hidden things of God, and your children who have been filled full are the Apostles, according to my belief. And again the Prophet saith, “ Instead of thy fathers children shall be born unto thee, whom thou mayest establish as angels for all the earth ” (Psalm xlv, 16). Verily they have become filled full (Fol. 63a) with the hidden things of the mystery of the Godhead, for they have established in all the earth the new ordinances of the prophecy of the Prophets and of none others, and they have left their superabundance unto their babes, of whom the Book saith, “ These are the peoples whose offspring and children are [occupied] in the ordinances thereof.” Some of them have become archbishops, and metropolitans, and bishops ; and some of them have become priests, and deacons, and sub-deacons, and readers, and singers ; and unto some of them hath been given the power to prophesy ; and unto some of them hath it been given to know the interpretation of the word that is hidden.

Come then, and gather yourselves together, O all ye nations, (Fol. 63b) and peoples, and congregations of Jacob, in the house of Joachim, the pure man, wherein ye will find a holy marriage feast, without blemish and without grief, which is like unto the drinking of wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and unto ointment that maketh the face to shine, wherein is neither trouble nor labour. When the Virgin MARY (Sôlyânâ), the daughter of Joachim and Hännâ, gave birth unto Christ the King, the mountains became the bread of life, and the hills produced grapes of blessing, and the waters of the sea became milk and honey. In this house there are none of the many spirits of sickness that have been smitten with the sharp arrows of sin, and we

## *The History of Hannâ*

declare that it is meet that we should be gathered together in the marriage chamber, that is to say, in (Fol. 64a) the house of Joachim, the father of MARY, [and of Hannâ], who bore the mother of our Redeemer Jesus Christ.

In the beginning God made the heavens that are above, and all that is therein, and He created this [earth], and after that the Garden of Life. And He also created the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the sea, and the abysses, and the fish, and the birds of the heavens which fly, and beasts great and small, and the winds, and the clouds, and rain and dew ; and He created everything and ordered it well. And when He had made an end of creating His creation, He created our father Adam in His own form and likeness, and He breathed upon him (Fol. 64b) the spirit of life. At that time MARY, the daughter of Joachim, existed in the belly of Adam in the form of a White Pearl, which shone in his right side, and was a perfect likeness [of her] ; and the similitude of her flew up into the heights of heaven. Again, God showed it unto Moses in the desert when He was telling him how to make the building of her Tabernacle. And God commanded him to make a Tabernacle of wood that could not be eaten by worms, and to cover it over with gold, both the inside and the outside thereof. In that holy Tabernacle God commanded him to place the Two Tables of stone, whereon were written the Ten Words, the writing whereof was the writing of God. And above that Tabernacle was the mercy-seat of gold, and above (Fol. 65a) the mercy-seat were the Cherubim which were made of carved gold ; and from this Tabernacle God was wont to appear unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto many of the priests to whom He wished to appear. And Solomon also built a Sanctuary in the form of this Tabernacle made of cedar wood and pine wood, and he covered the floor, and the roof, and the walls thereof

## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

with plates of gold, and on the doors thereof were engraved figures of palm branches, and of animals that were like unto cherubs in fine gold. And inside the Holy of Holies, at the place where the holy Tabernacle rested, was a figure of MARY, the daughter of Joachim. And Solomon made two Cherubim of red gold which overshadowed her with their wings, and God was wont to appear there, sometimes in visible form, and sometimes (Fol. 65b) in a dream, and sometimes in a vision, unto those to whom He wished to appear, from Moses to Zechariah. Then, after a few days, God spake unto the children of Israel, when they provoked Him to wrath, saying, "Where is the house which ye can build for My resting place? Where is the place [fit for] My habitation? Behold, the habitation whereunto I will come is that which the hand of man hath not made, and which shall be the salvation of Adam and his posterity" (Isaiah lxvi, 1).

TO BE READ ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

*Here beginneth the Book of the Generations of our Lady Mary, the daughter of Joachim, the son of David.*

Solomon begat Nathan, Nathan begat Levi, Levi begat Mattatha and Ƙesrâhâ, and Ƙesrâhâ (Fol. 66a) begat Joachim, the father of our Lady MARY, the holy Virgin. Now, Matthat begat three daughters. The name of the eldest was MARY, the name of the second was Sophia, and the [name of the] third was Hännâ. And Mary bore Salômê, and Sophia bore Elisabeth, the mother of John, and Hännâ bore MARY [the Virgin]. Similarly, Joseph was descended from David the king, for when Nathan, the brother of James, died, Matthat married his widow, so that he might raise up seed to his brother. And he begat Eli (now Eli and James were brothers), and Eli begat Joseph; behold then [Joseph and MARY] were related to each other. And the

## *The History of Hännâ*

daughter of Joachim became the child of K̄esra, (Fol. 66b) the brother of Matthat, and Joseph was the son of the brother of Joachim her father ; therefore Joachim is said to be of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David. Now Nathan begat two sons, that is to say, James and Joachim, and when Nathan died Mattatthias, the son of Levi, married his widow, who was of the family of Solomon of the tribe of Judah ; and he begat by her a son and called his name Eli. So, then, he became the brother of James and of Joachim. And Eli married a wife, and he died without begetting a son ; then James took his widow to wife and begat by her Joseph, the spouse of our Lady MARY.

And we will also declare unto you how our Lady MARY was descended (Fol. 67a) from Adam. [From Adam] she came down into the body of Seth, shining like a White Pearl ; and from Seth she came into the body of Enos ; and from Enos to Cainan, and from Cainan to Mahalaleel, and from Mahalaleel to Jared, and from Jared to Enoch, and from Enoch to Methuselah, and from Methuselah to Lamech, and from Lamech to Noah ; and in this wise she dwelt in their bodies, passing from the body of the one into the body of the other. And again she dwelt in the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and from Jacob she came to Judah. Then she came to David and to Solomon, and passing from one to the other she came to Joachim. And Joachim (Fol. 67b) said unto Hännâ his wife, “ I saw the heavens opened, and a white bird went forth therefrom and hovered over my head.” And likewise Hännâ said unto him, “ I had a dream this day, and I saw a dove sitting upon my head, and it entered into my belly.” And thirty days after they had told each other these things, that is, on the seventh day of the month Naḥassê (August 31), Hännâ conceived our Lady MARY, on the day that God blessed. Blessed is he who shall clothe the naked. Blessed is he who shall feed the

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*From the Life of Hannâ, Lady Meux MS. No. 4.*

Hannâ and Joachim praying earnestly for offspring



## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

hungry. Blessed is he who shall set free him that is in prison. Blessed is he who shall visit the sick on that day, for he shall obtain a portion in the kingdom of heaven (Fol. 68a) with Joachim, and with Hānnâ, and with MARY the Virgin, for ever and ever. Amen.

And six months after it had become known that the blessed Hānnâ had conceived, the kinsfolk of Joachim her husband and those of herself heard thereof, and they came unto her and said, "Is the matter that we hear concerning thee [true]? What is this thing that hath come upon thee after thy days [for child-bearing] are passed?" Now there was a certain woman among the kinsfolk of Hānnâ who was blind in one eye, and she touched the belly of Hānnâ, saying, "Is it true, what I have heard? My sister, how canst thou conceive, being an old woman?" And afterwards the woman touched her eye which was blind, and straightway (Fol. 68b) it was opened for her, and she saw the light. Then she said unto Hānnâ, "O Hānnâ, blessed art thou because thou hast in thy womb a child who whilst unborn can heal the sick; when he hath made himself manifest, and hath come forth from thee, how many will be the people whom he shall heal!" And many sick folk came and touched Hānnâ, even as the woman had done, and they were made whole and recovered from their sicknesses; and this matter became a hard one unto all the elders of Israel. May the prayer of Hānnâ and the prayer of Joachim protect as a thing well-pleasing unto her daughter [MARY] her servant Gabra Mâryâm for ever and ever! Amen. May our Lord Jesus Christ write down the name of Gabra Mâryâm, the poor and miserable sinner, who at his own expense has had written the "Book of the History of the blessed Hānnâ (Fol. 69a) and the History of the Generations of Joachim," with a pen of light that shall never be destroyed. And may their intercession on the day of retribution and rebuke deliver both Gabra Mâryâm

## *The History of Hännâ*

and the scribe Gabra Krestôs, the defiled one who is not fit to be touched, from the path of sin for ever and ever! Amen.

SALUTATIONS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF HÄNNÄ,  
THE MOTHER OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

SALUTATION to the mention of thy name, which is more pleasant than the [sound of the] singing of a song.

SALUTATION to thy members and to the black hair of thy head, O Hännâ, mother of MARY, thou life of all the world. In thee are established the qualities of beings of flesh and blood and of the angels which are in the heights of heaven above.

SALUTATION to thy head and to thy face [which is] the morning.

SALUTATION to thine eyebrows and to thy bright eyes. Deliver me, O Hännâ, from sorrow, and woe, and lamentation, even as Noah, the righteous man, who was faithful with his children, was delivered through thee from the abyss of transgression and from the Flood.

SALUTATION to thine ears, and to thy cheeks be the words of salutation.

SALUTATION to thy nostrils and to thy lips with words of praise. O Hännâ, mother of MARY, let not the sword of the flood come to me, and if my enemy build his palace in heaven let the sword of death quickly purify him.

SALUTATION to thy mouth, and to thy crystal (i.e. white) teeth, and to thine awesome voice, and to thy breathings, and to thy throat, and to whatsoever appertaineth to thy neck. Behold, I wait in this place for thee to show me, O Hännâ, the passing away of the foolish enemy.

SALUTATION to thy shoulders, which are the curtains of the back and are joined to thy dainty breast, and to



## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

thy tender bosom. O Book of Life, Ḥannâ, thou mother of MARY, Sâyadâ, let mine enemies be destroyed, and let them not be left for a reward, even as thou didst destroy Judas, the son of perdition.

SALUTATION to thy hands and arms.

SALUTATION to thy fore-arms, and to thine elbows, and to the palms of thine hands. O Ḥannâ, mother of MARY, the mother of Christ God, let mine enemies be destroyed by the spear of the Hidden God, even as Eglon [King of Moab] was destroyed (Judges iii, 21, 22).

SALUTATION to thy white fingers, and to thy [*henna*] covered nails.

SALUTATION to thy breasts and to whatsoever belongeth to thy side. O Ḥannâ, thy majesty is hard to describe. Let mine enemy receive as his reward punishment and affliction, and let the back of the serpent be accursed.

SALUTATION to thy belly and to thy heart.

SALUTATION that is meet be to thy bowels and to every member that is in thee, and to thy mind, whereof the like cannot be found. O Ḥannâ, celestial and terrestrial beings make their boast of thee, and they make their prayers unto thee.

SALUTATION to thy navel and to thy blessed womb.

SALUTATION to thy thighs and to thy knees.

O Ḥannâ, mother of MARY, the mother of Christ God, if mine enemies would fight against me at morn or eventide, let the path of my enemy be choked with thorns.

SALUTATION to thy feet and to the heels thereof, and to the sinews.

SALUTATION to the soles of thy feet, and to the toes thereof, which are adorned with nails.

O Ḥannâ, mother of MARY, let me ask thee one thing: How long, O my Lady, shall I live together with those who hate men and peace and love?

## *The History of Hännâ*

SALUTATION to thy stature which neither diminisheth nor shrinketh.

SALUTATION to thy person, and to the going forth of thy soul, and to thy body of flesh. O Hännâ, mother of MARY, the mother of Christ, Who is the Firstfruit of grace, let the tongue of mine enemy be tied in the time of temptation and trial with a strong chain, and with a rough shackle.

SALUTATION to the burial of thy body in purple indestructible.

SALUTATION to thy grave in the field of Yophônî, which was in the inheritance of thy father. O Hännâ, mother of MARY, the mother of Christ the Redeemer, let no one send me to my death in this world [suddenly], but let me wait a while until I repent, not, I say, with the multiplying of words and much speech, and let me sing thy praise a little longer and not keep silence concerning it. O Hännâ, make my heart to please Him. If mine enemy put forth branches, and if he increase in his stature, then let the sword of death cut down his trunk. Praise, and worship, and the singing of psalms are meet for MARY and for Hännâ, the mother of MARY, who are together like unto the two precious stones onyx and topaz. May mine enemies be destroyed and left without posterity, even as the children of Korah were destroyed (Numbers xvi).

SALUTATION to thee, whose name is sweet, whose memorial is salted with the salt of the Godhead, Hännâ, thou holy woman, thou mother of MARY whose King is in the heights.

SALUTATION to thee, O Hännâ, thou who art the morning, and to thee, O MARY, who art the heaven that gave birth unto Christ, the Sun, Who burneth up the thorns of error.

SALUTATION to thee, O thou stone of chalcedony, Hännâ, thou brilliant pearl, wherefrom went forth MARY the Virgin, who gave birth to the Flame.



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*From the Life of Hanná, Lady Meux MS. No. 4.*

Joachim holding a bird. The birth of Mary from Hanná's Right Side



## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

SALUTATION to thee with the salutation of the martyrs Basilides and Claudius.<sup>1</sup> O Hānnâ, may thy people, the people who gather together in thy name, receive the fruit of righteousness.

SALUTATION to thee. When I heard the rumour of thy wisdom, which is as high as the heavens, my mind said, "Let Hānnâ perform the saving of my soul."

SALUTATION to thee, O thou innocent woman Hānnâ, thou spiritual dove, from whom went forth MARY, who bore the Word of the Father.

SALUTATION to thee, O Hānnâ, thou pure one, and unto MARY, the thorn bush, who gave birth to Christ the King, Who destroyeth sin.

SALUTATION to thee. When the Angel of Death, who plucketh away, cometh unto me, O Hānnâ, separate not thyself from me ; and tear thou in pieces the writing of my debt, and turn lamentation into gladness.

### TO BE READ ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE WEEK

IN THE NAME (Fol. 11a) OF GOD THE FATHER, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, Whose BEING cannot be comprehended by the heart of mortal man, the Hidden One Whom it is impossible to describe, since He was the Word in the beginning, but He Himself comprehended His own Being ; and IN THE NAME OF GOD THE SON, Whose BEING was mingled with [that of] His Father before the world was created, Who begot Him in a mystery before the universe was set in order, Who is equal unto God the Father, and of like position; and IN THE NAME OF GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, Who sprang into being before (Fol. 11b) the fountains of water went forth from the womb of the ocean, and before the light went forth from the great temple in the form of a spark to keep alive all created beings and things, both those that are visible and those that are invisible : To HIM be praise and thanksgiving from the

<sup>1</sup> They are commemorated on September 4 and June 5 respectively.

## *The History of Hannâ*

mouths of men and angels, and from the tongue of every created being, and thing, both on the earth and in the heavens, without silence and without ceasing, for ever and ever ! Amen.

Open Thou, O my Lord, the doors of my tongue, O Thou Who didst open the doors of the tongue of Ezra Sûtû'êl,<sup>1</sup> so that he might declare Thy greatness, and the greatness of our father Adam, whom Thou didst create in Thine own image and likeness, and didst bring into the Garden which Thy right hand did plant, (Fol. 12a) when as yet the earth had not been established. Now I have the desire to declare the majesty of that Garden, and of the earth, the earth because of Hannâ, and the Garden (i.e. Paradise) because of our Lady MARY, and the fruit thereof because of her Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise ! [May the prayer of Saint Hannâ save Gabra Mâryâm for ever and ever ! Amen.]<sup>2</sup>

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD, I begin [to write] by the help of God, and by the gift of His grace, which is given unto each and every one according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Now, it was He Who ascended [into heaven], and it was He Who descended [into hell], and (Fol. 12b) it was He Who lived above the heavens that He might fulfil everything, first for the Prophets, and secondly for the Apostles, and thirdly for the elders, and then grace and mercy were given unto us through Hannâ and Îyâkêm (Joachim), who brought forth fruit for us, that is to say, the blessed, and pure, and holy woman MARY, like unto whom there is none in the heavens or on the earth.

<sup>1</sup> Or Sût'êl, or Sûtâ'êl, a title given to Ezra the Scribe, who edited the Books of the Old Testament for the Jews who had been carried off into captivity in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar II. See Ludolf, *Hist. Aeth.*, Frankfort, 1591, p. 421 (July vi).

<sup>2</sup> This is a prayer by the owner of the manuscript. It occurs frequently in the manuscript but henceforward will be omitted.

## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Incline then your ears unto me with understanding, and I will declare unto you concerning the honourable estate of Hānnâ. Now she was the daughter of noble parents who offered up offerings before God Almighty, and who were Levites belonging to the priesthood. Her mother was [called] Faustina, who was of the house of Israel, and who before seven (Fol. 13a) generations of daughters were born unto her, saw her descendants in a dream, and said, "The seventh daughter of my daughter shall bring forth the blessed moon," that is to say, Hānnâ, the wife of Joachim. Now the Tabernacle of Testimony which abode with our fathers in the desert God commanded Moses to make, according to the pattern that He showed unto him when He said, "The Exalted One cannot dwell in the work of the hand of man. Now the heavens are My throne, and the earth is My footstool; where then is the house which ye can build for My habitation? saith the Lord."<sup>1</sup> And the Temple that was builded and the Tabernacle that was made in the days of Moses and Solomon, were intended for the abiding place of the Tables of the Law, on the sides of which the Law (Fol. 13b) and the Covenant, that is to say, the Ten Words, had been written by the Fingers of God. Now the cuttings of the letters were like unto the footprints of a man, and in appearance they were like unto sapphire, and they resembled the strength of heaven. In these (i.e. the Temple and the Tabernacle) did God make His Feet to stand, and He hid His glory, and His Voice only could be heard, even as He spake unto Moses, "No living man shall see My Face, but I will hold converse with him whom I love from out of the cloud."<sup>2</sup> Because of this I say that the Tabernacle of Testimony is Hānnâ, who made beautiful her works on the twenty pillars thereof,<sup>3</sup> on

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lxvi, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 20; Leviticus xvi, 2.

<sup>3</sup> "And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets" (Exodus xxvii, 9, 10).

## *The History of Hännâ*

the right hand and on the left, on the west and on the east, and the things that were to come forth from each of these were to exist in order to complete (Fol. 14a) the work that was to be wrought, so that it might be a memorial from generation unto generation, and for ever and ever.

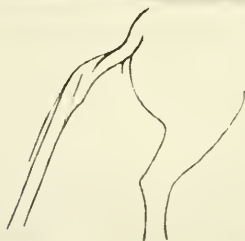
These are the gardens whence sprang Joachim and Hännâ. In the double [name] of Hännâ were many nations [included], for the peoples of Israel, in their various families and tribes, were linked unto her, and honour and majesty were ascribed unto them because of her. And thus was it with Joachim also, for all the peoples of Israel, in their various families and tribes, were reckoned in him for a testimony and a memorial, even as they were reckoned in the courtyard of the Tabernacle of the Sanctuary, when they slaughtered the bull (*or* ox) and sang praises, and the blood [was sprinkled] on the sides of the courtyard, and when Aaron and Moses went into the Tabernacle to make atonement (Fol. 14b) for the sins of the people.

Blessings be upon thee, O Hännâ! All the world shall proclaim thee blessed in return for thy sorrow and tears because thou hadst neither son nor daughter; and thy Son shall be the joy wherewith all the world shall rejoice in thy name. So therefore thou shalt be consoled for Mërâsâ, the son of Tâlêk, who died in the house of Dâyëk—now he was thy father's brother—and at the time of his death, because thou hadst no children, thou didst multiply weeping for him, saying, "Woe is me! Woe is me! I have neither son nor daughter. He who hath died is thine, O my Father, and I greatly desire [O dead one,] that thou shouldst come back to me." Then straightway the dead man spake unto thee, saying, "Why weepest thou for me? For thou shalt (Fol. 15a) give birth to the sun." Now that sun is the Lady MARY, the mother of the Sun of righteousness. All these things have I heard from the





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*From the Life of Hanná, Lady Meux MS. No. 4.*

Saint George spearing the dragon. Below in outline is a part of a sketch of a horse

## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

angels, and [I have learnt them also] from the ancient Scriptures.

Rejoice thou, O Hännâ ! For all the world shall rejoice because of thee, and we ourselves rejoice when we hear concerning thee. Thou hast given fruit unto us, that is to say, MARY, who prayeth for life for all the world. This blessed woman Hännâ was God-fearing, and she shall be praised in the assembly of the people and in the gates, and the people shall give thanks unto Joachim her husband. She put on strength and beauty, and she rejoiced during the days of her life to the end thereof. Her mouth ate not the grain (i.e. bread) of idleness (Fol. 15b). She judged according to wisdom, she made manifest the Law, and she stablished rules for her tongue ; and her husband Joachim praised her when she made a tunic and a cloak of byssus cloth and purple for his apparel. And moreover, when he saw in her hand the garments made of good cloth and of fine Canaanitish linen, which she gave to the poor and the orphans, she became to her husband Joachim a crown of honour wherewith he was well pleased. And she set up seven pillars, and she killed animals and made ready a splendid feast, and the blessed woman Hännâ sent out [her] servants [into the highways], and they said [unto those who were passing by], “ Come ye, and eat of the bread that I have prepared for you, that is to say, bread that is not the bread of wickedness that may not be (Fol. 16a) spoken of at the time of consecration. Come ye, and drink of the wine that I have poured out for you, that is to say, the wine of joy and gladness, and not the wine of sugar whereof the taste is bitter in the mouth as soon as its season is past, for the wine that I will give you to drink shall last for ever, and it shall neither come to an end, nor cease from generation unto generation.”

The word of prophecy which was uttered by Solomon was fulfilled in Hännâ, for Hännâ was a good and

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beautiful woman. And our Lord saith in the Gospel of the kingdom: "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a tree shall be known by its fruit."<sup>1</sup> And how shall a good tree be distinguished from a bad one? Of the good tree there is hope, even after it hath become withered and decayed, for if rain fall upon it, (Fol. 16b) and the winds blow upon it, that tree will clothe itself with bark, and will send forth shoots that will bear fruit from its branches and from the top thereof; and of its branches some will bear fruit thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold. And now leave the tree concerning which the word of this [passage] speaketh.

And again He spake concerning the twelve dry bones, which were the Twelve Sons of Israel, concerning whom Ezekiel prophesied when he saw that they were dry bones. And straightway God said unto Ezekiel,<sup>2</sup> "Prophesy over these dry bones." And he prophesied over them, and the spirit of life breathed upon them, and threw skin upon them, until at length they rose up because of (Fol. 17a) the blessed woman Hannâ; and when Hannâ put forth a bud from them, life came unto them through her giving birth to MARY, the Lady of us all. A good name is better than the anointing with oil and sweet scents;<sup>3</sup> and one child is better than thousands of children.

Now these words did the prophet speak concerning Hannâ. Verily she is the best and most lovely of all the created things that are in the heavens or upon the earth, that is to say, our Lady, the blessed MARY, the Pearl of great renown. She was in the belly of Adam, which she cleansed from its impurity, in the form of a White Pearl. And from him she was delivered to Seth, and from Seth to Hênôs, and from Hênôs to Abraham; that Pearl passed from (Fol. 17b) body to body, even as saith Solomon the wise man, "It shall pass into the

<sup>1</sup> Matthew vii, 17, 20.    <sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxxvii, 1-10.    <sup>3</sup> Eccles. vii, 1.

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souls of the righteous, and it shall be sent from the holy ones in the heavens so that it may live again." And this Pearl passed from Abraham unto the royal father, David, and from David to Hānnâ, being one half dust and the other half White Pearl, until at length it entered into the womb of Hānnâ at the appointed season and after long delay.

Now from the time when Adam was born from the dust of the earth, although it neither came to an end nor made itself manifest, this Pearl did not enter into the womb of any one of the women to whom a name hath been given, howsoever many they may have been, from Eve unto the blessed Hānnâ. And the Pearl fulfilled its advent into her (Fol. 18a) nine years after her husband Joachim had taken her to wife, and it did so when she was shedding burning tears and weeping abundantly because she had given birth neither to son nor to daughter. And all the people of Israel had thrust her away and said unto her, "Thou art a barren woman, and thou hast neither offspring nor progeny in Israel that can stand up for Joachim and his house, and thou wilt bring his house to an end. Get thee out from among us from this time forth. Thou shalt depart from our city and shalt not dwell with us; and when it is our duty to offer up offerings we will have neither lot nor part with thee, for we have a law that those who have no children, whether they be men or women, shall be driven forth from the house of sacrifice, and be made to take their stand outside (Fol. 18b) it and be separated from their fellow-worshippers; therefore get thee out from our congregation. What canst thou do for us, O Hānnâ? for thy womb is closed, and God will not open it for thee." In this wise did they speak to her husband Joachim also.

Then Hānnâ prayed before God, and her soul took refuge with Him, saying, "O Lord God of Israel, Thou God of our fathers Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,

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Who didst exist before the world and Who shalt endure for ever and for ever, Whose Name is sweet unto every being, (Fol. 19a) to Whom nothing is impossible, Whose existence never had any beginning, and to Whose kingdom there shall never be an end, unto Whom everything belongeth, and before Whom everything standeth revealed, Who killest and makest alive, Who shuttest up and makest to be open, open Thou for me my womb, and give unto me a fair offspring that shall be well pleasing unto Thee, and it shall be Thine, and I will make it an oblation and a pure offering, according to the command that Thou hast given [us]. Harken unto my prayer, and unto my petition, even as Thou didst unto the prayer of Hännâ, the wife of Elkanah, the mother of Samuel. If Thou wilt not hearken unto me, and wilt not give me offspring, then destroy me and blot me out, so that I may depart unto the everlasting inheritance of my fathers. Of what benefit is it to me to live upon the earth, if I am [to see] evil days, and be sorrowful in spirit, whilst all the [other] daughters (Fol. 19b) of Israel, who can bear children and are able to be glad and rejoice in them, point the finger of scorn at me when they see me and laugh at me? Look, O Lord, and behold the suffering of Thine handmaiden Hännâ, who is cast away and rejected among the daughters of Israel.”

And Joachim her husband also spake thus : and keeping his eyes [fixed] upon the ground and his thoughts and mind directed upwards unto the heavens, he said, “ O my Lord, Thou Lord God of Israel, Who knowest everything before it cometh to pass, and Who hast good understanding of everything before men can declare it unto Thee, why hast Thou made me a laughing-stock and a derision unto mine enemies? Look Thou upon my suffering and upon the tribulations of my soul, O Thou Who hast made the world to come forth (Fol. 20a) out of nothing, and hast created the Sun and the



From the Life of Hannâ, Lady Meux MS. No. 4.

The Virgin and Child. On her right stands Michael and on her left Gabriel; at her feet lies 'Abbâ Gabra Mâryâm





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Moon without an effort of thought! Hearken Thou unto my prayer, and incline Thine ear unto my voice, and lighten the grief of my heart, O Spirit of wisdom and knowledge which is in Thee, and give me a son whom I can make an offering unto Thee, and make me not to be cast away from among all Israel; for Thou art able to take away from him that hath much, and to give increase unto him that hath a little only.”

Then, after they had finished their prayer, and God had seen Hānnâ's sorrow, He appeared unto her that day in a vision of the night, in the form of a White Bird which came down from heaven. Now, this Bird had its being (i.e. existed) in the days of old, for it overshadowed the Cherubim of glory; (Fol. 20b) and there was the hand of a man beneath the wing thereof, and it held in it the cord of life. Now this was the Spirit of Life, in the form of a White Bird, and it took up its abode in the person of Hānnâ, and became incarnate in her womb, at the time when the Pearl went forth from the loins of Joachim, and when, according to the ordinance of carnal union Hānnâ received the Pearl, which was the Body (or, Flesh) of our Lady MARY. Now the White Pearl is mentioned because of its purity, and the White Bird because her soul [existed] aforetime [with] the Ancient of Days, and it was with Him on the right hand of His Father; thus the White Bird and the White Pearl are alike and equal. And when (Fol. 21a) it (i.e. the Pearl) took up its abode in the womb of Hānnâ, her womb was moved even like the water of the sea, for it was unaccustomed to this thing. See now how greatly blessed our Lady MARY is, for who hath been born of woman [in this wise]? God, Who alone is, alone created her. He Who alone is holy alone sanctified her. He Who alone is decked with honour alone decked her with honour. He Who alone is pure alone made her pure.

Who among men is like unto our Lady MARY in her

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virginity? Among men there is none to be found who is like unto our Lady MARY in her heavenly virginity ; none can attain unto the abundant measure of her purity before God and His angels, (Fol. 21b) and none can become pure in mind and body like unto our Lady MARY. And her soul was with His soul, so that she might cleave closely unto the knowledge of Him. He guarded her and treasured her more than silver and gold, and esteemed her more highly than glorious apparel ; and He prepared her, and gave her unto Hannâ so that she might be a benefit and advantage [unto her], even as it is said, “ It is better to bring forth no children than to bear those that are without profit.” Blessed be God Who did not give her children when her husband Joachim [first] took her from the house of her father ! For if she had given birth unto children speedily, as other women are wont to do, she would then have brought forth children that were without profit. But although it appeared strange in the language of man, God shut up Hannâ’s womb until His own [good] time, (Fol. 22a) and He opened Hannâ’s womb in His own [good] time, so that she might give birth unto a good, and noble, and beautiful daughter, adorned [with virtue] and beloved by all. In the place of her weeping and sorrow Hannâ found joy ; in the place of her lamentation and cries of grief she found gladness without measure ; in the place of her contumely and disgrace she found majesty and honour. Our Lady MARY rejoiced in her Son Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and Hannâ rejoiced in her daughter, our Lady MARY, the Mother of our Lord. Forsake, O Hannâ, the joy that is in this fleeting world, for it speedily passeth away ; for the joy that befitteth thee is in heaven, and it never cometh to an end. Now Eve brought forth many [children], thirty male children and (Fol. 22b) thirty female children, but of what advantage were they unto her ? For she found no happi-

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ness [in them], and there was nothing [in them] for her except suffering and sickness and the breaking of bones. And she was obliged to wait for thy coming [O Hānnâ], and she bowed down before thee when she found resurrection in the Son of thy daughter. O blessed Hānnâ, who can praise thee overmuch? For of all the women who were before thee and who have been after thee Divine Grace hath alighted upon none save thee. Now Bârkâ, the wife of Yârêd (Jared), who gave birth to Enoch, did not find happiness and did not escape death, for her bones were scattered abroad in Sheol; but Enoch did escape death by mounting whilst still alive upon a whirlwind, and he passed to the Place of Life where he liveth until this present. And why (Fol. 23a) should she have given birth to one who performed not an act of graciousness for her? For he dwelleth in the Place of Joy, which abideth for ever, whilst she is crying out and groaning in a place of misery unto this day.

✠ Now when Hānnâ had given birth to [her] daughter, she was not able to see death a second time, for her flesh was the flesh of the Godhead. O Hānnâ, thou art greater than Hāykal, who gave birth to Noah, who was saved from the waters of the Flood, and who alone left behind him a plant of righteousness which shall endure for ever. And thou art very much more honourable than Ednâ, the mother of Abraham, who received the seal of circumcision; and God established a covenant between Himself and the seed of Abraham for ever. O Hānnâ, the blessed women Sarah and Rebekah could not [together] equal the value of one of the nails of thy feet, for (Fol. 23b) thou art the Mother of the Life, and that Life was MARY, in whom the heavens and the earth rejoice, and in whom God became incarnate. The persecution that thou didst suffer was as vast as are the heavens, O thou blessed woman Hānnâ, and it covered thee even as a cloud covereth the face of the earth. And thou didst find the joy that was boundless, and

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that was as great as the persecution that thou didst endure because of thy daughter MARY, our mother.

It is customary for the word of God to be hard [to understand], and for His handiwork to be marvellous ; and He first of all maketh trial of a man. As a man trieth gold in the fire, even so doth God try His chosen ones by suffering and by misery. Now Hannâ was born in sin, and in sin [she ate her] food, and God tried her first of all so that she might [at length] remove oppression from (Fol. 24a) all the tribes of Israel. He knew the patience of her mind under manifold sorrow and suffering, and He gave unto her a beautiful and twofold reward, which no man can take away from her. The Prophets said, "Through much labour and suffering we must enter into the kingdom of heaven."<sup>1</sup> And this prophecy was fulfilled in Hannâ, for she endured patiently all her burden and all the heat of the day ; and because of this she inherited the kingdom of heaven. Now the kingdom of heaven of which I speak is the Son of Hannâ's daughter [MARY], that is to say, our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ. For many have desired to receive the majesty and honour of Hannâ by calling their daughters "Mary," even as Jochebed called her first daughter by that name, (Fol. 24b) and He (i.e. the Law) called her "Miriam" (i.e. Mary), which was unsuitable for her. And for this reason she fell sick and the scab of leprosy took hold upon her, and she went forth outside the camp<sup>2</sup> ; for in the Law this is said in the passage wherein it blameth Moses. Now I say that, when God wished to destroy Miriam because of His jealousy for His Mother, He sought out this means of doing it, for He did not wish her to be called by the name of His Mother. And many of those who have been called by the name of "Mary" the

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiv, 22.

<sup>2</sup> "And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days" (Numbers xii, 13).





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daughter of Hännâ, have not found life, for some of them have become possessed of devils, and some have been taken in adultery, all of which things have happened through the jealousy of God for His Mother. Therefore, from the earliest times, God hath neither caused nor wished that other women should be (Fol. 25a) called by the name of His Mother.

Hearken now unto Moses, who when he spake concerning jealousy (i.e. blasphemy) for a name said unto the house of Israel, "God shall take for you from among your brethren [one] who shall be like unto me. And He shall call his name 'Lord.'" And this spirit was rooted out from among the people by that same prophet who magnified His command. For when a certain Egyptian woman<sup>1</sup> of the tribe of Dan heard this, she gave birth to a son and called his name "Lord."<sup>2</sup> Now when the children of Israel heard thereof, they murmured against her, and they brought the young man unto Moses, and he put him in prison. And Moses went to enquire [concerning him] before God, and he took his (Fol. 25b) shoes from off his feet, and said, "Wilt Thou send this young man, whose name is 'Lord,' to be a prophet in my days? Or wilt Thou send another? I enquire of Thee concerning the blaspheming of Thy Name; tell me what I shall do with this young man, and whether I shall set him before Thee." And straightway God answered and said unto Moses, "Am not I HE? But Satan shall lie in wait for Dan from his roots even unto his branches—the 'Askôrôtâwî, (i.e. the Iscariot)—Whosoever curseth the Name of God shall surely die, and they shall stone him with stones." And when all the companies of Israel had gathered themselves together they stoned that young man with stones outside the camp, and he

<sup>1</sup> I.e. Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan; see the whole passage in Leviticus xxiv, 10-23. See also Deut. xviii, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Our author naturally adopts the Ethiopian version of the story.

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died an evil death. And I say likewise that whosoever curseth the Name of the (Fol. 26a) Virgin MARY, the blessed woman, the daughter of Hannâ and Joachim, the Mother of Emmanuel our God, shall die the death, and his soul and his body shall die, and he shall not find happiness for ever and ever. Amen.

### TO BE READ ON THE THIRD DAY OF THE WEEK

Therefore come ye and let us ascribe praises unto Hannâ, for God hath ascribed praise unto her, and in His praise of her He took up His abode in the womb of her daughter. Come ye and let us magnify Hannâ, for God hath magnified her, because she is His mother according to the flesh. Hannâ is to be more highly esteemed than gold and silver, and she is better by far than the Twelve Gems,<sup>1</sup> whether considered one by one or all together. She is more beautiful than the Sun, and the Moon, and all created beings and things that are in the heavens and on the earth. No woman can be compared with her for beauty, and grace, and majesty, (Fol. 26b) and honour, although she is inferior to our Lady MARY, and she is more honourable than every other woman because she gave birth to the Virgin MARY. Her odour is more fragrant than that of every kind of flower, yea, sweeter than the smell of all sweet-smelling plants and of galbanum,<sup>2</sup> and the odour of cinnamon oil and cassia cannot be compared unto her sweet smell. Inasmuch as she was pure her odour was the sweeter when the blessed MARY was in her womb, and for sweetness nothing could be like unto her odour and smell. She had no desire to adorn herself after the manner of women, for she said in her heart and with

<sup>1</sup> See Exodus xxviii, 15-21, a sardius, a topaz, a carbuncle, an emerald, a sapphire, a diamond, a ligure, an agate, an amethyst, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper, which were arranged in four rows in the "breast-plate of judgment."

<sup>2</sup> One of the ingredients of the holy incense mentioned in Exodus xxx, 34.



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her tongue, " My adornment and my joy, both during my life and after my death, for my soul and for my body, are my Lady, the blessed MARY, and she is the anointing of my face ; I have no desire (Fol. 27a) to anoint myself after the manner of women, for my anointing is the blessed MARY." And straightway she rejoiced in her heart, and said, " Henceforth I will rejoice and be glad, for my weeping hath departed from me ; and all mine enemies shall be confounded and put to shame. O ye daughters of Israel, come ye and hearken unto my voice, and behold ye me with my child on my shoulders sucking milk from my breasts ! Behold, I am the woman whom in times past ye did drive forth from your houses because of your contempt for me, and ye lifted up your voices against me. Look ye and see that my daughter is more excellent than your daughters. The heavens, and the earth, and all the creations of men and of angels, are not worth in value one hair of the head (Fol. 27b) of my daughter." After this manner did Hännâ speak.

And again Hännâ said, " Let everything that belongeth unto me rejoice, for God hath opened my womb, and my husband Joachim, who in the time past hated me, now loveth me. Whenever I saw him he would speak words of mockery unto me, saying, ' Indeed I have good reason to rejoice,' and I used to sit down, and my limbs melted like wax ; and when he held his peace I was sorrowful and suffered pain. But from this time onwards, whether he shall laugh at me, or whether he shall hold his peace, my mind shall not cease from rejoicing, and I shall not suffer sorrow through him, because I have a daughter who shall be adorned with praise. Come, O all ye peoples of the earth, and call my daughter blessed ! And offer ye salutations unto her (Fol. 28a), for God hath given her unto me. Who among all women hath given birth unto such a child as I have done ? The Prophets

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prophesied concerning me and my daughter, and my father Aaron, the son of Levi, shall be praised through my daughter for ever and ever, and his priesthood shall never be done away. What doth it profit you to give birth unto sons and daughters? For the kings and the royal people who shall be begotten by you shall do no manner of good for you, and although they roar like lions they shall neither save themselves, nor have the power to save others, and the tigers that rend and tear cattle and sheep shall become a vain thing and shall nevermore appear to the sight; but the Son of my daughter hath become life unto Abraham and his seed for ever. Concerning my daughter MARY the Prophet (Fol. 28b) spake saying, 'The barren woman hath brought forth seven children, and she who is the mother of children is unable to bring forth [again].'<sup>1</sup>

Now the barren woman of whom he spake is Hannâ, who gave birth to one daughter instead of seven sons; and through her one bringing forth she shall judge and bring into subjection those who shall be born in seven thousand years. They shall wait for her coming, and afterwards they shall rejoice because of her, saying, "Come ye, let us rejoice and be glad in her; come ye, let us give praise and sing psalms unto her!" Now this woman is the prophetess Hannâ. She was the daughter of the prophets, and her own daughter [MARY] prophesied and said, "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, for He that is mighty hath done great things for me, and Holy is His Name. He hath magnified those who are of no account, and He hath filled (Fol. 29a) the hungry with His blessing."<sup>2</sup> Now Hannâ was hungry and had been brought exceedingly low in the house of Israel, and afterwards she became filled, and being satisfied she was moved to tenderness. But she had no wish either to eat or to drink like the people of [this] world, when

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel ii, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Luke i, 46-55.



*From Lady Meux MS. No. 1.*

The Crucifixion as represented in the XVIIth or XVIIIth century



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she had given birth for us to MARY, the door of joy and gladness. And she said, "The prophecy of David my father hath been fulfilled in me; and I am filled (*or*, satisfied) with the sight of the glory of God."

Now the body of MARY and the glorious occupation thereof by God may be interpreted in two ways, that is to say, either as an adoption or as a reward; and His Trinity is to be interpreted as a hidden thing (*or*, mystery). And again the Prophet saith, "Who maketh the barren woman to dwell in His house, and Who maketh to rejoice the mother of children."<sup>1</sup> Verily Hānnâ (Fol. 29b) remained [in His] house, and God tried her mind in every way possible in this world, until at length He gave her the power to bring forth for Him His mother MARY; and Hānnâ rejoiced exceedingly in embracing her daughter, and in suckling her at her breasts. And because of this thing when the children of Israel heard that Christ was born of the daughter of Hānnâ, they rose up against Hānnâ in wrath, and spake unto her with words of contempt, saying, "Is it true that thou sayest, My daughter hath given birth to God? Wouldst thou call her the 'Mother of God'? Wouldst thou that all the people of the world should bow down at thy feet? Why thinkest thou in this wise? Why dost thou utter falsehood with thy tongue? Put away this thought from thy heart, for thou art a woman of low estate, and thou hast not goods, (Fol. 30a) or possessions, or clean raiment, and thou imaginest this thing only through thine exceeding boldness." This was the beginning of the wickedness of the Jews.

Then did the blessed Hānnâ say unto the elders of Israel, "Come ye, and hearken unto me with [your] minds. Is there anything too exalted for God [to do]? Do not the Scriptures say that, when David offered up his offerings unto God with a sincere spirit, and with a lowly and innocent heart, God did not reject them?"

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxiii, 9.

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And by the mouth of Elijah the Prophet God spake and said, 'Unto whom shall I look except to him who is sincere and lowly, who hearkeneth unto My voice, and who doeth My commandments? Upon such shall My spirit rest, for I am lowly and humble in heart.'<sup>1</sup> God desireth (Fol. 30b) not the rich man, neither seeketh He anything from the great, but He looketh unto those who are humble, and for this reason His compassion shall not be remote from me." Now this was the woman whom the Prophets have named compassionate.

"Have ye never heard what they spake aforetime concerning my daughter, and how even a dead man spake before you and said that she should be born, even before I had conceived her? And shall I restrain you? Why are ye envious of me on account of what God hath now given me because He closed my womb? And He said unto me, 'I give thee this daughter instead of thousands of children'; and He is my hope. What have ye against me, seeing that I have not committed an offence against you? For (Fol. 31a) I have done unto you no injury like unto that which ye have done unto me. When I was living shut up in my house during the period wherein my womb was closed ye hated me, and ye thrust me away utterly from you; and now that God hath opened for me my womb, and I have given birth unto a daughter, ye still reject me. O men of Israel, how long will ye reject me? How long must I bear with you? How long must I flee before your face? Is not my flesh your flesh? Are not my bones your bones? Why do ye treat me as though I had not been born of your people? My tears shall come back upon you, and your daughters shall be stricken with sorrow, and your wives shall not rejoice, for their wombs shall be shut up, and they shall not be able to bring forth children. They shall never give birth (Fol. 31b) to vigorous sons who shall be helpful

<sup>1</sup> Compare Exodus xv, 26; Isaiah xi, 2; xlii, 1; Matthew xi, 29.

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unto the city and country, and no wise and understanding king shall go forth from among you. Is there none among you who will shew mercy? Why treat ye me in this wise? And why do ye heap insult upon my daughter, seeing that she shall conceive and bring forth the Christ? How great is the oppression wherewith ye oppress my daughter! And how greatly do ye disgrace her! I could wish that my soul had gone forth before I had seen the sorrow, and the weeping, and the cry of lamentation in the highway and in the desert, and all the persecution that shall come upon her."

Then all the companies of Israel said, "Wherefore doth this woman abuse us? In times past she was a barren woman, but now that she hath gotten a daughter she doth magnify herself over us, (Fol. 32a) and doth say, My daughter shall become the mother of the heavenly King. Come now, let us weave a plot against her, and let us make a firm compact to stone both her and her daughter with stones, so that the report of these things may not wax great after her [death]." But one half of the people said, "What have we to do with this woman? If this report be true we shall know it." And all Israel rose up and departed unto their houses. Then Hännâ went into her house praising God, and giving thanks unto Him because she had found grace and favour which could not be brought into judgment by other women. No women are to be praised like her for noble deeds and gracious goodness except Judith and Esther, who (Fol. 32b) through zeal for their houses vanquished strong men; the one slew Holofernes,<sup>1</sup> and the other slew Haman by hanging upon the gallows.<sup>2</sup> Now these women must not be praised equally with Hännâ, but only in their proper measure, for each of them arose in her appointed time, and they only came into being when Israel was without a king and without a judge. For if it were otherwise why,

<sup>1</sup> Judith (Chap. viii, ff.).

<sup>2</sup> Esther vii, 10.

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when they tell the story and declare the generations of the patriarchs from Adam and Eve until Joachim and Hannâ, do they place their names at the beginning of the Scriptures for a testimony? And the Prophet said, "The stone which the builders rejected hath become the head of the corner of the house"<sup>1</sup>; and Hannâ, who was rejected by the nobles and the shepherds, hath become the corner stone (Fol. 33a) of the house. Now the house of which I speak is the Lady MARY, who was the house of God, and the habitation of the Most High. For she became a mediator between the heavens and the earth, and through her all the world became united in peace, and she slew hatred, and whatsoever was hateful was destroyed, and she wrought peace for those who were afar off, and salvation for those who were near.

But let us return to the beginning of the matter. Now whilst Hannâ was in her house she meditated in her heart, and said concerning her daughter, "What can I do for this my daughter? For if that which hath been said be true, and if God shall take up His abode in her womb, where shall I hide her from the envy of all the people of Israel? (Fol. 33b) When they hear the sound of the report of her Son my Lord Jesus Christ, [they will call Him] a righteous man [only], but her they will persecute and drive from city to city, and as for her Son they will crucify Him and slay Him outside Jerusalem. What shall I do for my daughter? For she is my only child, and she hath neither brother nor sister. It grieveth me sorely, and I suffer pain on her account when I think that she shall be held up to disgrace by Israel; nevertheless, afterwards there shall blossom the peace of compassion and righteousness for all the peoples of the earth. And those who hate her shall become hateful creatures unto angels and men; moreover, wild beasts shall consume them, and only Sheol shall rejoice (Fol. 34a) when it findeth that they

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxviii, 22.





*From the Life of Hannâ, Lady Meux MS, No. 4.*

Saint Gabra Manfas Kēdūs.

Saint Takla Hāymânôt.



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have become its food. But those who love my daughter, and pay honour unto her, shall be beloved and held in honour by every one, and by her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord God of Israel, judge Thou my cause, and deliver me, and for Thy Word's sake make me to live ; but let my life be remote from sinners. Thy compassion is exceedingly abundant, O make Thou me to live according to Thy judgment. Those who persecute me and inflict pain upon me are many, but I have never withdrawn myself from Thy testimony ; O God, deliver Thou my soul. God is merciful and righteous, and our Lord is compassionate. Thou, O God, art the guardian of children, O keep Thou in safety my child, my (Fol. 34b) daughter, and I will give her unto Thee as a pledge. Be Thou her defender, and do Thou be unto her a helper for ever and ever. And as for me, my soul desireth to go forth [from my body] rather than to look upon the tears and the sorrow of mine only daughter. What can I do for her ? Thou knowest how feeble I am, and how my strength hath become worn out. O God, receive my soul and destroy me, so that I may depart unto my everlasting fathers."

And it came to pass that when Hānnâ had made an end of this her prayer, pain laid hold upon her, and she became ill for a short space of time ; and then she went to her rest and departed this life on the eleventh day of the month Hādâr (November 7), which is Tâsrîn, the second month of the Hebrews, and the November of the Romans, at the sixth [hour of the day]. And they buried (Fol. 35a) her in the grave of her fathers, according to the law of the children of Aaron, with Mâtât, her father. May her prayer and her blessing be with her servant Gabra Mâryâm for ever and ever ! Amen.

TO BE READ ON THE FOURTH DAY OF THE WEEK

Now all these things concerning the death of Hānnâ took place whilst our Lady MARY was in the sanctuary.

## *The History of Hannâ*

And they told her that Hannâ her mother had died, and when our Lady MARY heard it, she wept and said, "Woe is me! Woe is me! My mother hath left me a sorrowful woman. Woe is me! Woe is me! O mother, who will be unto me like thee? Unto whom hast thou left me? Woe is me, O my mother! O daughters of Israel, come ye and weep for me and cast ye me not away; for I am an only daughter, (Fol. 35b) and I have none [to take her place]. Come, O Jeremiah, and make a lamentation for my mother Hannâ, for she hath forsaken me, and I am alone in the house of brass. Who will pour water upon my hands? And the tears start in my eyes."

Now whilst our Lady MARY was weeping in this wise she remained by herself in the house of the sanctuary, and there was none to give her consolation. And it came to pass that, twelve years after she had left her mother's breast, Gabriel came and said unto her, "Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace, God is with thee. Behold, thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus; He shall be great and shall be called, Son of God Most High." Then our Lady MARY said unto (Fol. 36a) Gabriel, "Let it be unto me even as thou sayest"; and the Angel departed from her. Then straightway our Lady MARY said, "Can it be true what my mother Hannâ spake unto me? For she said unto me, 'The Son of God shall be born of thee.'"

Now God made her a handmaiden unto Him. Verily the Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of Rebekah when she said, "The elder shall serve the younger."<sup>1</sup> And through Him Hannâ became great and exceedingly honourable beyond all gainsaying, for she became blessed above all women, and whosoever believeth on her shall be blessed. Blessed is he that shall celebrate her commemoration with incense and with offering [s]!

<sup>1</sup> Genesis xxv, 23.

## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Blessed is he that shall give a loaf of bread or a cup of water for the sake of the holy woman Hannâ! He shall receive [in return] a hundredfold, (Fol. 36b) together with salvation of body in this world, and in the world that is to come a fair reward and the life that never passeth away. And her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, saith, "Whosoever receiveth a prophet shall receive the reward of a prophet; and whosoever receiveth a righteous man shall receive the reward of a righteous man and the wages of a righteous man; and whosoever shall give one of these little ones a cup of cold water [to drink] in My Name, or in the name of a disciple of Mine, shall not lose his reward."<sup>1</sup> For this reason, I the poor and miserable man say, Celebrate ye the commemoration of the blessed Hannâ, so far as [it lieth] in your power, and forget not her memorial. Pray ye unto her, with ready hearts, and she will pray for you unto God, the Son of her (Fol. 37a) daughter, our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye may find forgiveness of your sins. And celebrate ye joyfully, from the bottom of your heart, the commemoration of Hannâ with greater zeal, and glory, and honour, than the commemorations of all the companies of those who have the pre-eminence, and than the commemorations of the martyrs and righteous men who have endured with patience and quietness a cruel death for the sake of her daughter's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and who dwell in righteousness. Can ye pay honour unto the Son without paying honour unto the Father? Can ye pay honour unto the daughter without paying honour unto the mother? Honour ye then the mother, even as ye honour her daughter, and celebrate ye a festival in her honour. And neglect ye not her a second time, even as the children of Israel neglected her because she had not gotten a child, (Fol. 37b) for her oppression was remembered before God because of those who had

<sup>1</sup> Matthew x, 41, 42.

## *The History of Hannâ*

neglected her. Now all those who neglected and oppressed the blessed woman Hannâ shall weep when they see her in honour and in majesty, standing at the right hand of her blessed daughter. And I, the poor and miserable one, who am unworthy to call myself a priest before you, say that when a brother is made to be a partaker in the love of Hannâ, his existence is more beautiful than that of all those who are called [priests]. And the Holy Spirit hath proclaimed concerning me that I shall be a witness on behalf of Hannâ, the wife of Joachim, and the mother of the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. God be with you, O ye my fathers and brethren, who have gathered yourselves together here to celebrate the commemoration of the blessed Hannâ, (Fol. 38a), for ever and ever. Amen.

IN THE NAME OF THE TRIUNE GOD, INDIVISIBLE, HIDDEN, INVISIBLE, PERFECT, IMPASSIBLE, THE ROOT OF THE FAITH THAT CANNOT BE CUT ASUNDER, THE TREASURY OF THE BLESSING THAT IS PUT INTO THE HEART OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE, UNTO WHOM EACH AND EVERY ONE MUST BOW DOWN IN ADORATION, AND EACH AND EVERY ONE ASCRIBE PRAISE, AND EACH AND EVERY ONE PRAY. TO Him be praise on earth and in heaven, in the sea and in the abyss, for ever and ever. Amen. Praise, salutation, and homage be unto Hannâ, the mother of the mother of Adonây, who made to rise a second Sun. May the great might of her prayers keep us and all the children of the Church from all evil for ever and ever. Amen.

GLAD TIDINGS be unto thee, O my Lady Hannâ, thou (Fol. 38b) bride of the heavenly Father, thou habitation of the mother of the Son Who hath the pre-eminence, thou tabernacle of the vivifying Holy Spirit.

GLAD TIDINGS be unto thee, O my Lady Hannâ, thou saviour of Adam, the sorrowful one, thou foundation of the offering of Abel who was slain.



*From the Life of Ḥannā, Lady Meux MS. No. 4.*

'Abūna Stephen.

'Abūna 'Abakarazūn.





## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

GLAD TIDINGS be unto thee, O thou Queen of all women.

GLAD TIDINGS be unto thee, O my Lady Ḥannâ, thou goddess of Sârâ and Kêtûrâ.<sup>1</sup>

GLAD TIDINGS be unto thee, O my Lady Ḥannâ, thou life of the happiness of Rebḳâ (Rebekah), and Sârâ, and Rachel, and Leah.

GLAD TIDINGS be unto thee, O my Lady Ḥannâ, thou majesty of the Seraphim, when they cry out, thou who art the burnt-offering at the offering up of the sacrifice, thou who art the wings of the Cherubim at the spreading out thereof, thou prophecy of the Prophets (Fol. 39a) when light burst forth, thou preaching of the Apostles at the time of morning. O my Lady Ḥannâ, at the majesty of thy sovereignty there is exultation [among] our mothers Mêlkâ (Milcah), and Têrsâ (Tirzah), and Hêglâ (Hoglah), and Nûḥâ (Noah), and Mahalâ (Mahalah), the five children of Salapad (Zelophehad).<sup>2</sup> On the day wherein died the righteous woman Ḥannâ, the mother of our Lady MARY, who gave birth to our Lord, the Word of the Living God, honour and purity were ascribed unto her by the glorious beings as unto the ancient fathers.

Now this righteous woman [came] from the city of Jerusalem, and she was the daughter of Mâtât, the son of Levi, the son of Mêlkâ, of the tribe of Levi. Now Mâtât had three daughters. The name of the eldest was Mary, of the second Sophia, (Fol. 39b) and of the third Ḥannâ; Mary married and gave birth to Salômê, and she it was who became the helper of our Lady MARY when she brought forth our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And Sophia married and gave birth to Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist; and the holy woman Ḥannâ married Joachim, who was of the tribe of Judah, and gave birth to our Lady MARY. Now Elisabeth, and Salômê, and Ḥannâ were the daughters

<sup>1</sup> Genesis xxv, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers xxvi, 33.

## *The History of Hännâ*

of one wife. But the holy woman Hännâ became more honourable than all the [other] women of the world, and at length she was worthy to give birth to the Mother of God in the flesh, and it is well known that her honour and righteousness are greater than the honour and righteousness of all other women.

And Hännâ was a barren woman, but because of her exceedingly great strenuousness in fasting, and in prayer, and in making supplications unto God, He gave her this daughter MARY; and God having seen her sorrow and weeping made her to rejoice, and in her all the sons of the children of men rejoiced also. For this reason it is meet for us to magnify her, and henceforth we must not revile Hännâ as did Reuben, who said unto Hännâ and Joachim, "It is not right for you to offer up your offerings before the Lord your God, because ye have no seed according to the commandment of the Law." O how these words (Fol. 40a) would break the bones, and make the heart to burn, and set the bowels on fire! And when Joachim heard them he was exceedingly sorrowful, and he began to pray, saying, "O my Lord and God and King, behold, all the children of Israel have seed and offspring, but I have none." Then he thought of the righteous, and of the chosen men, and how they all had children and offspring, and how God remembered Abraham when he was an hundred years old, and how he begot a son in his old age, and called him Isaac. And the blessed Joachim also remembered many of the fathers, and Manoah, [the father] of Samson, and Hännâ, the wife of Elkanah. But he did not tell this sorrow unto his wife, nor how Reuben had reviled him and had spoken words of insult unto him. Then he withdrew into the desert and went afar off, and he fasted forty days and forty nights, and made supplication unto the Lord his God, saying, "No food shall enter into my mouth until God shall look upon my sorrow and my weeping, and shall hear my petition.

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My prayer shall be my food, and the tears that go forth from mine eyes shall be my prayer.” And his wife Ḥannâ began to weep and lament, and her bosom heaved with sobs, and she lifted up her eyes to God and [besought] Him to give her a child, and to take away her reproach from her.

And it came to pass that when the festival of the Jews had come (Fol. 40b), a certain woman from among her neighbours came and said unto Ḥannâ, “How long wilt thou continue to be sorrowful, without eating, and without drinking, and without sleeping? How long wilt thou punish thyself with this severe grief? Since thou hast declared it [unto God], let Him make thee to forget it. Behold, the appointed festival hath come, the day wherein six hundred thousand of [the children of] Israel went out from Egypt on foot; rejoice thou, therefore, together with those women who are like unto thee, and who also rejoice. And behold, I have brought rich apparel unto thee, take it, and put it on, and adorn thyself therewith, for thou art of a noble family, and it is meet that thou shouldst array thyself in this glorious apparel.”

Then Ḥannâ answered and said unto her, “O my sister, leave me to weep (Fol. 41a) over my misery until God shall look upon my sorrow, for unto me shall be sorrow, and grief, and bitter tears; and I will not put off my garb of mourning until the day of my death. I will not array myself [in fine apparel] like a woman who is joyful of heart. Unto what am I to be likened? Is it not to a tree that hath neither leaves nor fruit? Am I not like unto one who hath been killed and destroyed in the city? I am sad of soul and sorrowful of heart, and I will not put on this apparel concerning which I know not whence it hath come. It may have been stolen, or it may be the hire of fornication, concerning which God gave a law unto Moses, and said unto him: Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, ‘Go not unto

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the wicked woman, (Fol. 41b) and commit not fornication,' *et cetera*. I will not put on [this apparel], for it may be the hire of the fornicators."

Then the woman answered her with wrath and anger, and with her heart burning like fire she said unto Hännâ, "In that God shut up thy womb, and did withhold from thee the fruit of blessing, and did not give unto thee children like all the daughters of Israel, He did well, yea, verily, He did rightly. I was wishing to do good unto thee, and thou didst reward me with abuse, and didst bring upon me words of reviling." And when the blessed woman Hännâ heard these words she sorrowed with a great sorrow.

Then Hännâ rose up quickly, and put off her wretched apparel, and she washed herself, and beautified herself, (Fol. 42a) and adorned herself; then she put on fine apparel, and went into the house of the sanctuary of God Almighty to pray. And as she was going along the road she saw a high tree, wherein were certain birds with their young ones, and Hännâ said, "God hath blessed them, and hath multiplied them exceedingly. Hearken Thou unto the prayer of me, Thine handmaiden, and grant unto me the petition of my lips, and bless me, O Thou Who didst bless the womb of Sarah, and didst give unto her a child in her old age." And Hännâ lifted up her eyes to heaven, and she began to weep and to say unto God, "Woe is me! Woe is me! Unto what can I be compared? (Fol. 42b) Can I be likened unto a bird? [nay, for] the birds have young ones. Woe then is me! Unto what can I be compared?—unto the beasts of the field and forest? [nay, for] they also have young ones."

And whilst she was weeping and lamenting in this wise, and was looking up into heaven, behold, the Angel of God came down from heaven to the place where she was in the house of the sanctuary. Then he stood up before her, and said unto her, "Behold, God hath





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heard thy petition, and hath received thy prayer, and lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a child.” And the blessed woman said unto Gabriel, who was the teller of the joyful news and the bearer of the glad tidings, “O my Lord and God, if I get either a son or a daughter, I will give the child to be a servant unto God, and I will dedicate him (Fol. 43a) unto the house of His sanctuary, and he shall not depart therefrom all the days of his life.” Then the Angel, who was one of the Seven Archangels, said unto her, “Behold, Joachim hath come from the field (or, desert); tell him what I have said unto thee. And let him take a kid of the goats and a young lamb, and carry them into the Tabernacle, and offer them up as offerings unto God.” And the Angel went to Joachim also, and said unto him, “Hail to thee! Behold, God hath heard thy petition and received thy offering. Thy wife *Hannâ* shall conceive, and shall bear unto thee a lovely and beautiful daughter, whose Son shall rule over the house of Jacob for ever (Fol. 43b), and His kingdom shall have no end.” Now when Joachim had heard him, he rejoiced and gave thanks unto God, saying, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, Who hath not rejected my petition but hath received my prayer, even as it saith in the Psalm, ‘Blessed is the man unto whom God hath not imputed his iniquity.’<sup>1</sup> Verily not untrue is the word of the Prophet, who said, ‘God is nigh unto those that are meek of heart, and He helpeth those who are lowly in spirit.’”<sup>2</sup>

Then Joachim cried out unto the shepherds of his sheep and herds, and said unto them, “Bring me two sheep as an offering for God”; and they brought unto him oxen (Fol. 44a) and sheep, and he made an offering unto God; then he came into his house and made a feast for the poor and needy and for all his kinsfolk. And on the third day the noble Joachim meditated in his heart, and said, “If it indeed be true what the

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxxii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xxxiv, 18.

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angel said in the vision I will again offer up offerings unto God, a ram without spot and a calf without blemish, and I will bring them unto the Tabernacle that [the priests] may offer them up, and then I shall see my face in the crown of the house of the sanctuary." Now there was a crown made of precious stones and [mother-of-] pearl which was set in the altar, and when one of the children of Israel brought (Fol. 44b) offerings, whether obligatory, or free will, or because sin had appeared in him, and offered them up, if God accepted his offerings from him, the face of him that had brought the offering used to appear in the crown of mother-of-pearl as in a mirror. And if God had not accepted his offerings, his face did not appear in the crown that was made of mother-of-pearl. Then straightway the blessed Joachim took sheep and oxen, and offered [them] up before God, saying, "If Thou art pleased, O God, with the offering which I have offered up on Thine altar, let Thy Face appear in the crown of mother-of-pearl." And forthwith the blessed Joachim saw the Face of God in (Fol. 45a) the crown, and he said, "Behold, I know that God hath had mercy upon me, and hath accepted me, and that the vision which He shewed me is true." Then Joachim returned unto his house, and with joy and gladness he praised God, unto Whom glory and praise are meet for ever and ever. Amen.

TO BE READ ON THE FIFTH DAY OF THE WEEK

We will now make known [unto you] the statement of the prophets who are witnesses that God said unto our father Adam, "I myself will come in five days and half a day, and I shall be born of thy daughter; then I will have mercy upon thee and show compassion unto thee with the abundance of My mercy."<sup>1</sup> He made the

<sup>1</sup> The explanation of this passage is found in the *Book of Adam and Eve* (Malan's translation, Chap. ii, p. 1 ff.): "God said unto Adam: 'I have ordained on this earth days and years, and thou and thy seed



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five thousand years to be as five days, and He made the five hundred years to be as six hours of a day. And (Fol. 45b) moreover, our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ saith in the Book of the Covenant, "In one hundred and fifty years, at the end thereof, at Pentecost and Easter, the coming of My Father shall take place"; that is to say, He [considered] one hundred to be as one thousand, and five hundred as five. And Isâyayâs (Isaiah?) said, "He shall dwell in the world five hundred and forty-five days." Behold, we have established [our] testimony from the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New, as concerning the coming of our Lord unto the Lady Hännâ.

Now when the holy woman Hännâ had conceived, she dwelt and gave thanks unto God for nine months; and it came to pass that, when nine months [had passed over] her, she gave birth unto a daughter. Then Hännâ said unto the midwife, "To what have I given birth?" (Fol. 46a) and the midwife said unto her, "Thou hast given birth unto a daughter." And Hännâ said, "My soul doth magnify God"; and she called the name of the child "Mary." And when forty days had passed, Hännâ purified herself, and put on her apparel, and suckled the child. Now she was the "only" child of her mother; the Book calleth MARY the "only" child, just as aforetime it called Hännâ, her mother, the shall dwell and walk in it until the days and years are fulfilled; when I shall send the Word that created thee, and against which thou hast transgressed, the Word that made thee come out of the garden, and that raised thee when thou wast fallen. Yea, the Word that will again save thee when the five days and a half are fulfilled.' But when Adam heard these words from God, and [of] the great five days and a half, he did not understand the meaning of them. For Adam was thinking that there would be but five days and a half for him, to the end of the world. And Adam wept, and prayed God to explain it to him. Then God in His mercy for Adam [who was made after] His own image and similitude, explained to him, that those were five thousand and five hundred years; and how One would then come and save him and his seed." (See also Trumpp, *Der Kampf Adams*, p. 5.)

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“only” child. And it came to pass that when six months were ended to our Lady MARY, she walked five steps on her feet, and then she returned unto her mother’s bosom. Then Hannâ said, “As God Almighty liveth I will not let this child walk about (Fol. 46b) on the ground until I have taken her into the house of the sanctuary of God.” And she made a habitation (*or*, chamber) for MARY to live in alone, and she made her to dwell therein until she was one year old.

Then did Joachim make a great feast in honour of MARY, and he invited the priests, and the princes of Israel, and their nobles, and the elders of the people, and he made ready a feast, and satisfied them all. And her father brought MARY unto the priests, and they all blessed her, saying, “May God our God, Who hath the dominion over all things, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, bless this child, and grant unto her fair offspring (Fol. 47a) who shall set us free from destruction; and may He grant unto her power and strength, and magnify her for ever and ever. Amen.” And all the people said, “Amen, and Amen.” Then Joachim took her unto all the chief priests and elders of the people, and they all blessed her, each one according to his rank and birth, and said unto her, “May God, the Sustainer of the world, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, Who dwelleth in the heights, bless her outwardly and inwardly, both her soul and her body.” And when they had blessed her in this wise, her mother took her and brought her into the habitation which she had built for her. Then Hannâ (Fol. 47b) said, “I praise God Almighty with the praises of the saints, I bless Him, I laud Him, I proclaim Him holy, I give thanks unto Him, I exalt Him, I magnify Him, I love Him, and I offer gratitude unto Him, because He hath removed the word of reproach and the word of shame in respect of me from the nation of Israel. For they said unto me: ‘We will not





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receive thine offering and oblation because thou hast neither seed nor offspring of blessing.' Therefore I sat down for forty days and forty nights and ate nothing whatsoever, and I cast away care for my apparel. And my heart was full of grief and sorrow, and I took no pleasure in my life. All these things came upon me through the people of my nation, at the hands of themselves and their women, yea, even at the hands of maid-servants and menservants, (Fol. 48a) who reviled me; and my meat and my drink became bitter unto me. And my brother, and my sister, and my father, and my mother, and my kinsfolk, persecuted me, and reproached me, and offered me no comfort. The tribe of Reuben, with its various peoples and women, according to their families (*or*, houses), and all the tribes of Israel, even unto the tribe of Benjamin, and each and every one of their women on her own behalf, reviled me without ceasing, and they stood up together and heaped insults upon me. Praise be unto God 'Adônây. Praise be unto God Šabâ'ôt (i.e. God of Hosts). Praise be unto God 'Elôhê.

“ O praise God in His holiness.

Praise Him in the strength of His might.

Praise Him (Fol. 48b) in His power.

Praise Him according to the abundance of His greatness.

Praise Him with the sound of the horn.

Praise Him with the singing of psalms and the harp.

Praise Him with the drum and with gladness.

Praise Him with the strings and pipes.

Praise Him with cymbals of sweet sound.

Let every soul praise God Almighty (Psalm cl).

Through me Moses and Joshua shall rejoice and be glad. Through my giving birth to a child, David, the son of Jesse, shall rejoice. And through this I shall not be a stranger and a sojourner. Henceforth it is meet for me to say, My ascent is in my mountain. Praise

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be unto Thee, O Lord, my God, Who hast forgiven her transgression. Praise be unto Thee, O Lord, my God, Who hast (Fol. 49a) become a doer of good unto me, for Thou hast holpen my misery."

And whilst Hannâ was praying in this wise, she saw the Ten Archangels who were singing psalms and hymns in sweet and beautiful tones, and each of them overshadowed her with his six fiery wings; and these were they: Michael, Gabriel, the Seraphim and Cherubim, Raphael, Uriel, Salathiel, Saḳûêl, Râmûêl, Sadâkyâl, and Anânyâl; and they were veiled in a flame of fire. And Hannâ heard them saying, "Praise be unto thee, O MARY, thou bride of the Father, thou blessed woman who art most holy.

"Rejoice, O MARY, thou Mistress of the assemblies of the Christians.

"Rejoice, O MARY, thou Mistress of the happiness of the Nazarenes (Fol. 49b).

"Rejoice, O MARY, for thou art the key of the kingdom of heaven.

"Rejoice, O MARY, for thou art Mistress of the freedom of the sons of Adam.

"Rejoice, O MARY, for thou hast been held worthy to become a mediator between the denizens of heaven and the beings of earth.

"Rejoice, O MARY, for thou shalt become the Mother of the Creator.

"And it is meet that thou also, O Hannâ, shouldst be called blessed; long didst thou remain a barren woman, but when thou didst bring forth thou didst give birth unto the Mistress of celestial and terrestrial beings.

"Blessed art thou, O Hannâ, for thou hast become the mother of God.

"Blessed art thou, O Hannâ, for (Fol. 50a) thou hast become the goddess of David and of all the kings of Israel.

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“Blessed art thou, O Hännâ, for we have been bidden to receive thee into the congregation of heaven.”

And having said these things the Archangels were hidden from her. And when Hännâ had heard these words of mystery concerning what should come to pass, she wondered and gave praise unto God ; and she marvelled within herself exceedingly. Praise be unto God Who graciously bestowed upon the blessed woman Hännâ more honour and exaltation than upon all the daughters of Israel. May her prayer, etc.

NOW HEARKEN, O MY CHRISTIAN BRETHERN, unto the story which we have found after much (Fol. 50b) searching. There was a certain God-fearing man who prayed without ceasing, and he kept vigil both by day and by night like the angels, and he celebrated the festivals of the angels and of holy men, and the festivals of the martyrs and of those who fought for the Faith, and the festivals of the virgins and monks, and he was wont to see mysteries. And he spake thus : I saw Joachim and Hännâ arrayed in shining apparel, and with crowns of light upon their heads, and they were standing before the throne of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and they were praising the Trinity, saying, “ O Lord God, our King, our Messiah, and our Creator, we are endowed with honour because Thou hast made us honourable, and Thou hast exalted us because we begot Thee (Fol. 51a). By whom then wilt Thou not make our names to be heard and known throughout all the world ? For if Thou wilt make our names to be thus heard of men will then celebrate our commemoration and festival, even as we see them celebrating the commemorations and festivals of the Martyrs, and of the Angels, and of the Righteous, and of the Virgins, and of all those who have found favour before Thee. O God, grant Thou favour unto him that shall celebrate the commemoration of us, and shall give

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alms in our name. And what shall be the reward from Thee of him that shall do this ? ” And God said unto them, “ Whosoever shall celebrate the commemoration of you, or shall build a church in your names, or shall write your history, I will make him to rejoice in the world that is to come, and I will forgive him all his sins, and I will destroy the bond for his debt.”

So (Fol. 51b) then, O beloved brethren in Christ, pay ye honour unto Joachim and Hannâ, and magnify them and love them, for it was they who begat our Lady MARY, the God-bearer. Celebrate ye their festivals,<sup>1</sup> so that they may become your helpers in heaven on the day of retribution and judgement, when the mother shall not be able to save our children, and when the Pearl shall have no power. Verily I say unto you that they shall make intercession for you with our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, that He may show compassion upon you. Amen. For He Himself said, “ Whosoever shall give unto those who believe on Me a cup of cold water in [My] Name shall not lose his reward with Me ”<sup>2</sup>; and blessed is he who honoureth them, (Fol. 52a) for unto him shall they pay honour. Blessed is he who loveth them, for Thou wilt love him. Blessed is he who giveth thanks unto them, for they will give thanks unto him in the heavens. Blessed is he who shall proclaim them holy, for they shall proclaim him holy. Blessed and holy is Hannâ, and blessed and pure is Joachim. They shall make supplication unto our Lady, the mother of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, on behalf of him that celebrateth their commemoration, when judgement is about to be passed upon him. And our holy Lady, the Virgin MARY, shall stand before her beloved Son, our Redeemer, and shall make intercession on behalf of those who celebrate the commemoration

<sup>1</sup> I.e. the 7th of Miyâzyâ (April 2) for Joachim, and the 11th of Hadâr (November 7) for Hannâ.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew x, 42; Mark ix, 41.





*From the Life of Ḥannā, Lady Meux MS. No. 4.*

Saint Theodore slaying a viper in human form



## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

of her father and mother, Joachim and Hännâ, and she will cause all their sins to be forgiven, and will lead them (Fol. 52b) unto the life which is everlasting.

O blessed Hännâ, daughter of mercy,  
O blessed Hännâ, daughter of salvation,  
O blessed Hännâ, daughter of compassion,  
O blessed Hännâ, daughter of majesty,  
O blessed Hännâ, daughter of righteousness,  
O blessed Hännâ, daughter of glory,  
O blessed Hännâ, daughter of Adam and Eve,  
O blessed Hännâ, the new lamb,  
O blessed Hännâ, I say unto thee, O our Lady,  
“Here am I.”

I say unto thee, “Thou art the ship of life for my soul, [which shall deliver it] from the sea of fire that would engulf it.” O Lady (Fol. 53a), O glorious one, O exalted one, let the gift of thy enduring blessing descend like the rain upon the heads of us (because of thy special covenant which thine only Son gave unto thee), who are gathered together this day, which is the day of the festival of this country. Through thy prayers let not the fruit of our trafficking be diminished; and save us from death by pestilence, and from locusts, and from hailstorms; and let the darkness of sin be removed from over us; and may our adversary be trodden under foot throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

### COLOPHON

May our Lord Jesus Christ write upon the pillar of gold, which shall never be moved out of its place and shall never be thrown down, with a pen of light emitting brilliant splendour and radiance the name of Gabra Mâryâm, who had written the Book of the History of the holy and pious woman Hännâ, the mother of our Lady, the Holy Virgin MARY, the God-bearer, for he had it written with the greatest diligence, and with

## The History of Hannâ

exceeding great care (Fol. 53b). And when the doers of the good pleasure of the God of righteousness are gathered together, may Gabra Mâryâm be among them, and may he sit down [with them at the feast] with joy and gladness, being through her prayers arrayed in shining wedding apparel. And through the prayer of Hannâ, the smell of whose raiment is like unto that of myrrh and balsam, may the Son of her daughter, our Lord Jesus Christ, destroy and do away the bond of the sins of the scribe Gabra Krestôs, who was swallowed up in the working of sin, but whose nature became changed into that of a monk, and may he allot unto him a place (Fol. 54a) with her on the right hand in His kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and shall not pass away for ever and ever. Amen. And Amen. May it be! May it be!

TO BE READ ON THE SIXTH DAY OF THE WEEK

*In the Name of God Almighty Who stablished the heavens; and in the Name of God, the Son, the Only One, Who brought the world out of nothing; and in the Name of God, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the Spirit Who gave him wisdom and understanding, we begin to write the following discourse on Joachim, of glorious name and of exalted memory, the Father of our Lady, the God-bearer, the Virgin Mary. Unto him that readeth it shall accrue benefit, unto him that heareth it and marketh it well shall come advantage, and his prayers shall guard him in this world from the craft and wiles of the Devil, who will attack him ceaselessly, (Fol. 54b) and in the world to come God will allot unto him a place with the saints.*

O Lord God, open Thou for me my mouth for a little space that I may speak with my halting tongue and my feeble voice, and may proclaim and declare the History of the Birth of our Lady MARY from the loins of Joachim, of the rod of sovereignty, and from the womb of Hannâ, of the rod of priesthood. Now the

## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Lord God chose this man Joachim, who was of exalted position, from among all the families of Judah, and from among all the men of the house of David the king, who was chosen to rule over the house of Israel from among the seven sons of Jesse (1 Samuel xvi), who were well grown and of fine stature, and who had been reared with careful admonitions (Fol. 55a). Now David was the least among his brethren. And God sent Samuel the Prophet unto the house of Jesse, and into the house of Ephratah of Bethlehem, and when Samuel had arrived there, he said unto Jesse, "Call thy sons, and bring them hither unto me that I may declare unto them the word that God hath spoken unto me." Then Jesse went and called Eliab his firstborn; now he was the oldest of David's brethren, and he was of goodly stature and handsome in person. And Samuel said, "God hath not chosen him." And again Jesse called unto his second son, and of this one Samuel said, "The Lord hath not chosen him." Then Jesse called unto each and all his sons and brought them unto Samuel, and (Fol. 55b) when Samuel saw them, he said unto him, "God hath not chosen them, and He hath no pleasure in them." And after these things Samuel said unto Jesse, "Hast thou not another son besides these whom I have seen?" Then Jesse said unto him, "There is yet a little son who is among the flocks, and he watcheth the sheep"; and Samuel said unto him, "Call him unto me"; and Jesse called David. And when he had come, Samuel saw that his face was joyful, and his eyes were blue in colour, and his stature was as that of a cedar of Lebanon, and his teeth were like white milk, and he was altogether ruddy like a rose, and his arms were like unto the limbs of young lions. Then God said unto Samuel (Fol. 56a) the Prophet, "Behold, this is he whom I have chosen to reign over the house of Israel. Rise up and anoint him, and make the horn to increase for him, and make ready a lamp for Mine

## *The History of Hannà*

anointed, David ; and I will make a staff to sprout from his roots, and a flower that shall never perish from his stem." Then straightway Samuel rose up from where he was sitting, and he took the horn of oil and poured it out upon his head, and said unto him, " God hath anointed thee, and He hath appointed thee to rule Israel His inheritance " ; and after he had anointed David, Samuel came into the house of Jesse to eat meat. And in that same night God appeared unto Samuel, and said unto him, " I have made a covenant with My chosen one, (Fol. 56b) and I have sworn an oath unto David My servant that I will preserve unto him seed for ever and ever, and that I will build his throne from generation unto generation."

And when Samuel the Prophet rose up in the morning, he called unto David and said unto him, " Thus saith the Lord : Behold, I have exalted My chosen one from among My people, and I have anointed him with holy oil. His seed shall stand fast for ever and ever, and his throne shall be like unto the days of heaven." Now the seed of which he spake is our Lord Jesus Christ, and his throne is our Lady MARY, who blossomed from the loins of Joachim her father, the holy son of David. She was sown in the womb of Hannà the barren woman, even as the angel [Gabriel] had announced unto her father the mention [of her being sown in the womb of his pure (Fol. 57a) wife, who from being a barren woman became a woman who gave suck. How greatly then shall Abraham rejoice because there was born unto him MARY, his daughter, our mother, [from] his son Joachim, that she might reign over the wide extent of the whole world, and not in Hebron and Heshbon [only]! And how great is the rejoicing of Isaac, who was offered up as an offering unto God by the hand of his father Abraham, for from his seed was born our Lord and Redeemer Christ, Who offered up Himself as a sacrifice which was well-pleasing unto God.

## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Blessed art thou, O Jacob, thou stem of Joachim, for the ladder of thy prophecy shall be found in the city of the Book that it may be a support unto God. And thou, O Judah, thy bride Tamar (Genesis xxxviii, 6) shall not be called "harlot," because she was (Fol. 57b) saved from being stoned with stones by the daughter of thy son Joachim, that is to say, MARY. Again, let us pass on and give consolation unto Naomi, and say unto her, Henceforth weep not for thy sons, and call not thyself "Marâra,"<sup>1</sup> for thy daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabite hath given birth unto a son by Boaz who shall be seven times better than thy sons [for thee], because from his seed the salvation of Israel hath been found this day. And thou, O David, sing thy psalms to thy harp of strings, because of the glory of thy daughter who hath sprung from Joachim thy son, and declare all the glory of the daughter of the king of Heshbon, inasmuch as she is clothed in raiment of many colours, and is girt about with fringes of gold (Psalm xlv, 9); and again it is said (Fol. 58a), "Silver wing like that of the dove whose sides are green gold" (Psalm lxviii, 13). And yet a third time, "Her foundations are in the holy mountains; God loveth the gates of Zion more than all the habitations (*or*, camps) of Jacob" (Psalm lxxxvii, 2). And thou also, O Solomon, sing [thy] Song, and say unto her, "Come, O my beautiful dove, thy speech is pleasant"; and say unto her, "Turn back, turn back, in peace, O thou who dost possess pleasant things, and in thee we shall see peace" (Song of Solomon ii, 13, 14).

And now let us return to the praising of Hännâ and Joachim, whose marriage was pure, whose marriage was holy, for in it was mingled the Holy Ghost. Their marriage was sweeter than musk and aspalathus, yea,

<sup>1</sup> And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi (i.e. Pleasant), call me Mara (i.e. Bitter), for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me (Ruth i, 20).

## *The History of Hanná*

their marriage was better than the marriage of the good ancestors who were before them, (Fol. 58b) for in their old age, after they were crowned, they begat MARY, the Candlestick, the Mother of the Great Light, who was likened unto the Tabernacle of Moses and Aaron, the priests and Levites, and who hath become unto us the means of our freedom from the works of sin. Blessed art thou, O Joachim, thou beautiful old man, thou boast of holy men, for the hidden God made Himself manifest in the flesh of thy daughter. O blessed Joachim, O Joachim who wast beautiful in thine old age, thy blessedness exceedeth that of the chosen ones who were of olden time. O blessed Joachim, who wast beautiful in thine old age, thy blessedness is more to be desired than precious stones. Unto whom shall we liken thee? Shall it be unto our father Adam, who was created in the form of God, or unto Abel, whose offering was accepted? O blessed Joachim, unto whom shall we liken thee? (Fol. 59a) Shall it be unto Seth or unto Hênôs, who first called upon the Name of God? O blessed Joachim, unto whom shall we liken thee? Shall it be unto Enoch who pleased God, whom God removed from the face of the earth, and he continueth above unto this present? O blessed Joachim, unto whom shall we liken thee? Unto Noah, or unto his three sons, who were saved from the waters of the Flood, together with their wives? O blessed Joachim, thou beauty of the blessed, behold, there have been found in thy house the riches of the rich, that is to say, the Queen of all the kingdoms of the world. It is she whom the Angel Watchers praise, and the hosts of light proclaim her holy as they stand before her in sixty companies of mighty ones. Of her the armies of the house of David and Solomon (Fol. 59b) make their boast, from Dan even unto Beersheba. She is the Tables of the Law of Moses, and the almond rod of Aaron, and the inheritance of the priests of the Levites, and the



## *The Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

breeches of fine linen, and the mitre and the tunic. Her fruit is the food of those who hunger, and the blood of her grape clusters is the drink of those who thirst. She is the refuge of those who are cast away, and the freedom of those who are enslaved.

O blessed Joachim, O blessed Hännâ, ye beautiful aged ones, ye are as exalted as the heavens, and as firm as the earth, and as shining as the pearl, and ye are like unto the gold that hath been tried [in the furnace]; and God hath chosen your flesh wherewith to cover Himself. O blessed Joachim, thy memorial is greater than the glory of the world, yea, it is more to be desired than the sardonyx stone, and it is more beautiful than the gold of Taprobane. The memory of thee shall be praised (Fol. 69a) until the end of the world, yea, even until the heavenly Jerusalem, the citadel of the heights, shall appear, the city that shall come down from above, together with the foundation and the twelve gates thereof. Now each of its gates shall be a pearl. None shall enter therein who putteth on cursing, neither shalt there be within it any who utter revilings. O blessed Joachim, thou wast the father of our Lady MARY, who was the Mother of the August Godhead, according to the Annunciation of Gabriel. When He was born in Bethlehem the breath of the ass and the ox gave warmth, for the prophecy of the Prophet Habakkuk was fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> O glorious one, O exalted one, O thou who art to be praised, O righteous one, O chosen one, O man of virtue, O good one of all the good, O Joachim (Fol. 60b), make thou prayer and supplication that the most miserable Gabra Mâryâm, who loveth thee exceedingly, may do the works of goodness and righteousness, and that upon him, the faint and weary one, thy blessing may be poured out like the rain, henceforth and for ever and ever! Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 1, 3 : Habakkuk III, 2.

THE COVENANT OF CHRIST WITH THE  
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, COMMONLY CALLED  
THE "COVENANT OF MERCY."

[Version I. A. Fol. 75a, 1 ; Orient. No. 604, Fol. 65a.]

ON THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH YAKÂTÎT (FEBRUARY 10) SHALL BE CELEBRATED THE COMMEMORATION OF OUR HOLY LADY, THE VIRGIN, TWOFOLD MARY, THE GOD-BEARER, BECAUSE SHE RECEIVED THEREIN THE COVENANT OF MERCY FROM HER SON, OUR REDEEMER, JESUS CHRIST. WHOSOEVER SHALL CELEBRATE HER COMMEMORATION, AND SHALL CALL UPON HER NAME, AND SHALL GIVE ALMS UNTO THE POOR AND NEEDY, EVEN IF IT BE A CUP OF COLD WATER ONLY [SHALL RECEIVE HIS REWARD].

**N**OW when the Son of this holy woman MARY, whose pure flesh He had taken upon Himself, went up into heaven, He sat down on the right hand of His Father, having fulfilled all the Law, and taken upon Himself human nature, with the exception of sin, and gained dominion over the pains of the Cross by His own free will which He exercised for our redemption. And He left His mother MARY in the house of John His disciple, whom He loved, and whom He committed unto her protection, saying, "Behold thy son," and also to that disciple He said, "Behold thy mother." And our Lady MARY dwelt [there], and she was wont to go unto the grave of her Son, that is to say, to Golgotha, to pray there. And it came to pass that when the Jews saw her they were filled with wrath and jealousy, and they wished to stone her, but God made her to disappear from their sight. Then they took counsel together and appointed guards over His grave, so that she might not be able to come and pray there again ; but she ceased not to go there each day. Now the



*Lady Meux M.S. No. 2, fol. 80a.*

Christ in heaven making the Covenant of Mercy with Mary His mother



## *The Covenant of Christ with Mary*

guards never saw her, for the mantle of the glory of her Son made her to be invisible, and angels came unto her at all times to minister unto her, and her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, watched over her continually, and fulfilled for her all her desires.

And after this He made her to ascend into heaven, and He shewed her the place where the righteous rest, and where dwell Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; and the spirits of all the Fathers who had died from Adam unto Christ received her. And they bowed down before her and said, " Glory be unto God Who hath created thee for us, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone ; in thee we have found redemption. And thou hast become the Gate of Life leading away from destruction, through the Incarnation of the Son of God of thee." Then the angels lifted her up and carried her unto her beloved Son, [Who was seated upon] His throne ; and flames of fire covered Him round about on the right hand and on the left. Then our Lord took her hand, and He kissed her mouth and said unto her, " Hast thou come, O My mother ? " Then He made her to ascend His throne of glory, and to sit by His side, and He described unto her the joy and gladness which eye hath never seen, and ear hath never heard, and the heart of man hath never imagined, that He had prepared for her. And below the throne she saw David her father, the King of Israel, together with all the Company of the Prophets and the angels ; and the souls of the righteous were standing round about them. And David was singing psalms to his harp, and saying, " Hearken, O my daughter, see and incline thine ear, forget thy people in thy father's house, for the King hath desired thy beauty, and He is thy Lord " (Psalm xlv, 10, 11).

And again the angels set her so that she might see the place of judgement, and they brought her unto the place which was the boundary of the darkness that had been prepared for Satan and his angels, and for all

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

those who walked in his ways. Then our Lady MARY said, "Woe is me! Who will announce to the children of men that they shall come here?" And an angel said unto her, "Fear thou not, O MARY, God is with thee. He is with thee, and He will be with those who shall come after thee." Then the angels carried her along and brought her back to her [former] place. And straightway our Lady MARY sat down, being exceedingly sorrowful for all the sinners. Now that day was the sixteenth day of the month Yakâtî, and she stood up on the "place of the skull" (Golgotha), and she made supplication unto her Son, saying, "I adjure Thee, O my Son, by God Almighty Thy Father, and by Thy Name Christ, by the Paraclete Thy Spirit, and by my womb which bore Thee, Whom earth is not able to bear, and Whom even the angels are not able to approach, for nine months and five days; I adjure Thee, O my Son, by Thy going forth from me without pain, and by Thy birth; I adjure Thee by my breasts which gave Thee suck, and by my lips which kissed Thee, and by my arms which embraced Thee, and by my feet which walked about with Thee; I adjure Thee by the cradle wherein Thou didst lie, and by the swaddling bands wherewith Thou wast swathed; O my Son, my beloved One, I entreat and make supplication unto Thee that Thou mayest hearken unto the voice of my petition, and mayest come unto me, and mayest fulfil everything which is in my heart."

And it came to pass that when our Lady, the holy Virgin MARY, the Mother of the Light, had thus spoken, our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ came down, and with Him and round about Him were thousands of thousands and tens of thousands of angels. And He said unto her, "What shall I do for thee, O MARY My Mother? And what wish is it that thou wishest Me to fulfil for thee?" Then our Lady, the Holy Virgin MARY, made answer

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*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 78a.*

1. Mary standing by the Sepulchre of Christ
2. The Watchmen appointed by the Jews
3. Our Lord, risen from the tomb, addressing Mary





## *The Covenant of Christ with Mary*

unto her beloved Son, and said unto Him, "O my Son, my beloved One, my Lord and my Redeemer, my Hope, and my Refuge, in Whom is my trust, in Thee have I my strength, and in Thy asylum do Thou protect me; Thou art He Whom I remember always. And now, hearken Thou unto my prayer and unto my entreaty, and incline Thine ear unto the words of my mouth. I who speak unto Thee am Thy Mother MARY, and I am Thine handmaiden. Whosoever shall celebrate the festival of my commemoration, or shall build a church in my name, or shall clothe the naked, or shall visit the sick, or shall feed the hungry, or shall give drink to him that is athirst, or shall comfort him that is sorrowful, or shall make to rejoice him that is broken in spirit, or shall write a book of my praises, or shall meditate upon the hymns [sung] to me on the day of my festival, reward Thou him, O Lord, with a good reward from Thyself, the which eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard, nor mind of man hath conceived. I beseech Thee and I make supplication unto Thee, O Lord, on behalf of all those who shall believe on me, that Thou wilt make them to be free from Sheol; and that Thou wilt remember him that is an hungered and him that is athirst, and all the trials which came upon me with Thee."

And our Lord Jesus Christ answered and said unto her, "It shall be even as thou sayest, and I will fulfil for thee all thy petition. Did I not become man through thee? I swear by Myself that I will not break My Covenant with thee."

Salutation unto thee, O Book of the Law and the Covenant like unto the Tables of stone,

For each and every one who shall call upon thy name!

Let the hearts of sinners be softened, let the hearts of the oppressors be softened,

Let the hearts of those who are afflicted with sorrow be softened, O MARY. Amen.

# *The History of the Virgin Mary*

## THE COVENANT OF MERCY

[Version II. A.Fol. 1b, 1.]

One day our Lord Jesus Christ said unto MARY, "What sorrow can be greater than that which came upon thee for My sake?"

And our Lady MARY said unto Him, "O my Lord and God, there were Five Sorrows that came upon me for Thy sake, and they overcame me mightily. The first of them was that which came upon me when Simeon prophesied concerning Thee in the Sanctuary, saying that the Jews would slay Thee. The second was the sorrow I endured when I lost Thee in the Sanctuary, and I was seeking for Thee for three days. The third was the sorrow I endured when I remembered how they had bound Thee hand and foot, and how Pilate's men scourged Thy back. The fourth was the sorrow I endured when they crucified Thee between two thieves on the day of the Eve of the Sabbath, and Thou wast naked, and they drove five nails through Thy flesh. The fifth sorrow I endured when I remembered how Joseph and Nicodemus took Thee down from the Cross, and swathed Thee in fine linen, and laid Thee in the tomb."

And our Lord said unto her who had given Him birth, "Thus saith our Father Who is in heaven: Whosoever shall keep in remembrance the sorrows and sufferings which have come upon thee for My sake, and the salutation of Gabriel, I will remit to him his sins. And whosoever shall give an offering for thy name's sake I will remit to him his sins, and I will make him to inherit the kingdom of heaven. And I will come unto him with thee, O thou who didst give Me birth, and I will appear to him three days before his death."

This was the Covenant which Christ made with His mother, and she told it unto Dexius, who wrote it



*From the Book of the Miracles of the Virgin Mary (edited by Budge, London, 1900, frontispiece).*

Portrait of Our Blessed Lady Mary, the two-fold Virgin, and Child.  
By her side stand the Archangels Michael and Gabriel



## *The Covenant of Christ with Mary*

down, together with her Miracles, so that [all] believers might read it. May her prayer and blessing be with us for ever and ever.

What sorrow can be greater than the sorrows that came upon thee, O Virgin?

For thou didst utter a cry when He cried unto thee a cry

On the Eve of the Sabbath, the day upon which He was on the holy wood, the Cross.

By the Five Sorrows, O deliver me from perdition,  
And from the mighty terror of the terrible Sheol.

## THE SEVEN SALUTATIONS TO THE COVENANT OF MERCY

SALUTATION to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, my hope, the justifier of the sinner, the seeker after the one sheep of the ninety and nine which hath become cast away.

SALUTATION to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, thou pillar set up by God ; be thou a sign of salvation unto all sinners, O thou whose love strengtheneth.

SALUTATION to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, thou gold that embraceth all riches, the storehouse of the poor and needy, and the wealth of him that is in heaven.

SALUTATION to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, who weighest the heavens in a balance ; my trust is in thee, grant thou unto me both the strife and the conquest thereof.

SALUTATION to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, earnest of the kingdom of heaven ; whosoever loveth thee shall live in hope until the resurrection of all [mankind] shall take place.

SALUTATION to thee, O Covenant of Mercy. If I cannot justify myself by strivings and good works, let me rely upon thee, O Virgin Covenant, to save my soul from perdition.

SALUTATION to thee. Upon him that shall build a temple in the name of thy Covenant, and upon those of us who pray in thy name, O MARY, bestow a portion of thy blessing, and make supplication unto thy Good Son [on our behalf].

THE HISTORY OF THE VIRGIN MARY AS  
TOLD BY HER TO THEOPHILUS, PATRIARCH  
OF ALEXANDRIA

[A.Fol. 90a, 1 ; Brit. Mus. Oriental No. 604, Fol. 5a  
and No. 605, Fol. 162a.]

**H**ERE beginneth the story of how our Lady MARY appeared unto the Archbishop Theophilus, and how she spake with him and strengthened him after the weariness of the way. He said :

O my fathers and brethren, hearken ye unto what I shall say unto you with fear, and with true faith, how our holy Lady, the twofold Virgin, MARY, the God-bearer, appeared unto me. On the Sunday which hath just passed by we had brought to an end our prayers for the night, and the fathers who were bishops had departed to sleep by themselves. And I went up on the raised platform whercon abideth our holy Lady, the twofold Virgin, MARY, the God-bearer, and I stood up and stretched out my hands, and I made supplication unto God, saying, "Hearken Thou unto me, O my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who didst hearken unto those who were gathered together at Nicæa until at length they established the Law (i.e. Creed) of God. Hearken unto me, O Thou Who didst hearken unto Abbâ Athanasius the Apostle, and Who didst help him out of his tribulation. I am prepared to do service for Thee, and I know that Thou wilt hearken unto me always, and that Thou art for ever nigh unto those who love Thy Name, O my Lord and God. Have compassion upon me and turn Thou me not backwards, for I have yoked myself unto Thee from my youth up, even unto this hour. I beseech Thee to show me how Thou

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

didst come into this world, and how Thou didst take up Thine abode in this house in the wilderness. And help Thou me to build this house in such wise that it may become a great church wherein men shall exalt and glorify Thy holy Name. Unto Thee belong power and forgiveness, and Thou art the Good One, together with Thy Father and the Holy Spirit, now, henceforth, and for ever and ever." Amen.

And it came to pass that when I had prayed in this wise a mighty light appeared unto me, and I thought that the sun had risen ; and I saw a marvellously great light whereon sat the Queen of women, our holy Lady, the twofold Virgin, MARY, the God-bearer. Her face shone like the sun by reason of the light that was upon her, and she was arrayed in such a brilliant light that at length I said, " There is none in this world who can bear to look upon such glory " ; and Michael, and Gabriel, and thousands of angels were going round about her. And it came to pass that when I saw them I fell upon the ground, and I became like a dead man, but Michael raised me up, and removed fear and dread from me. Then our holy Lady herself spake unto me, saying, I am the holy Lady, the twofold Virgin, MARY, the God-bearer : arise, be not afraid. Salutation unto thee, O thou horseman and warrior who doest battle for the Faith. Salutation to thee, O thou strong cornerstone in the Church of God. Rise up, be strong, and know that I am the Mother of the King of the heavens and the earth. He Whom the heavens and the earth cannot contain did I bear in my womb for nine months, and by His Will I suckled with the milk of my breasts Him that giveth food unto all flesh. I am MARY, the daughter of Joachim and Hannâ, of the tribe of Judah and of the seed of David, and I have appeared unto thee by the desire of my beloved Son. And I will shew thee that which thou hast asked and sought from me concerning this house, and concerning my coming





*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 5b.*

1. Mary accepting from Bishop Dexius his work on her life and miracles

2. Mary presenting to Dexius a throne and priestly raiment which had been woven by the command of Christ



*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

into the country of Egypt from Jerusalem. Now as concerning this house He desireth to leave it in this state, so that it may be a testimony unto all the generations that shall come into the world concerning the lowly estate which came upon us ; for my blessed Son did not desire to be exalted upon the earth. He rode upon the clouds, and not upon horses whereon men ride, which is a sign of the earth ; but He was carried in my arms from Jerusalem unto this house. And we dwelt in humble state in those days, but I remembered the word of Elisabeth, who said, “ Who am I that the mother of my Lord Jesus Christ should come unto me ? (Luke i, 43). Thou hast honoured me more than my station [meriteth].”

And our holy Lady answered and said unto me, Theophilus, uncover the ear of thine heart, and understand what I shall say unto thee in this hour ; and write it down upon paper, and cause it to come into all cities and regions for the commemoration of me until the end of the world. Now as concerning the manner in which I brought forth Jesus Christ. A star from out of the East appeared [unto me], and in its great light was hidden the light of [all the other] stars. Now I was abiding in my house, and I was afraid of everything, and there was none to minister unto me. I was a virgin, and I knew nothing whatsoever, and was the first-born of my mother. I had never at any time dwelt with women who had given birth to children except Elisabeth, the barren woman, who when she was nigh to bring forth had everything that was necessary made ready for her by her neighbours. As for me, I had no clothing, and I sought therefor, but found nothing except swathings of sackcloth, and in these swathings I wrapped His holy Body. Nigh at hand was a stable wherein they fed the oxen, and therein was my bed, and I laid the Child to sleep upon it. And there were there an ass and an ox which bowed down in homage

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

to Him, and they kept Him warm with their breath ; now at that season of the year the days were cold, for it was the 29th day of the month Tâkshâsh (Dec. 25). And straightway I looked, and behold, the Angels, and the Archangels, and the Seraphim, and the Cherubim came in their companies, and they bowed down in adoration before Him, and they ascribed praise unto Him, each according to his tongue, and said, ‘ This is the day that God hath made and blessed.’ Then they came unto me and they paid honour unto me, for honour had been given unto me by the Father. And they said, ‘ Blessed art thou above women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, which hath come forth to benefit its nation which sin hath destroyed. Thou art the spotless Bride, and in thee there is no guile. Thou art the blessed Dove, the Mother of God, the Queen, the Mother of the Living King, Who hath appeared from thee, and Who shall become the life of the world. Blessed, moreover, are we, for we have seen our Lord born in the flesh.’

Then Saint Gabriel drew nigh unto me with his shining and joyful countenance, and he bowed down before me, and said unto me, “ This is He of Whom I told thee, and concerning Whom I brought thee glad tidings in the times that are past, saying that He would appear through thee, and that He would give mercy and strength unto all the peoples who shall believe in His Name, and render service unto His glory.” Then came Joseph, and with him were Salômê and the midwife, and when they had seen what had happened they rejoiced with a great joy. And when the midwife saw the Child in the stable she bowed down unto Him, and she lifted Him up in her arms, and said, “ Blessed am I whose eyes have seen Thy joy this day, O Thou Who hast come into the world to forgive the sins of sinners, of whom am I.” And she turned towards me and said unto me, “ Blessed art thou, O Mother of God, con-

*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

cerning whom the Prophets have cried, saying : Our God shall appear from a virgin. As for me, I am thine handmaiden. And I will never separate myself from thee, and I will minister unto thee until I die."

Then came the shepherds unto whom He had appeared in the light, and they bowed down in adoration before Him in the stable, and they cried out, and said, "Thou art the Saviour of the world, even as they have told us, and Thou art indeed the Son of God. Blessed are we who have seen the glory of Thy Godhead, because we were swift to come as soon as we heard [of Thee]." And they drew nigh unto me, and they bowed low before me, and they said unto me, "Blessed art thou above all the women that are upon the earth. And blessed is thy womb which bare Him, and blessed are thy breasts which suckled Him, for thou hast given birth for our sakes to Him that is the Life of the World." And all the companies of the angels that were there declared what they had seen and heard, saying, "Glory to God in the heavens. Let there be peace on the earth unto the children of men with whom He is pleased"; and every one who heard marvelled, and I said, "What shall I become?"

And after these things, on the eighth day, He came that they might circumcise Him according to the Law of the Jews; and they called His Name Jesus, according to what the Angel had said unto me before I had conceived Him. And in those days there came certain men who were Magians from the country of the East, and they were making enquiries in the cities and districts round about, saying, "Where is Christ born? For we have seen His star in the East, and we have come to worship Him." When Herod heard this he was greatly moved, together with [the people] of all the borders of Jerusalem. Then Herod gathered together all the nobles, and the priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, and he asked them, saying, "Where

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

is Christ born? And when was His appointed time?" And they said unto him, "He hath been born in these [last] days, in Bethlehem of Judea, even as the prophet Micah saith, And thou, Bethlehem of the country of Ephrâthâh, art not the least of the provinces of Judah, for from thee shall go forth the King Who shall rule My people Israel" (Micah v, 2). Then Herod said unto the Magians, "Go ye and seek out the Child, and when ye have found Him come and tell me, that I may worship Him"—not that he wanted to worship Him, but in order that he might kill Him; for he thought that the Child was an earthly being, and that His kingdom was earthly. And when the Magians had heard those things from the king they went forth to seek for the Child. Now that star which guided them from their own country, until it brought them unto the place where my beloved Son was, left them and was no more seen. And when they had entered into [the stable] they saw the Child in my arms, and they worshipped Him, and with joy and gladness they brought forth gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; and they cried out, saying, "Blessed be the Great King Who shall destroy the kingdoms of the earth. And moreover, Thou shalt descend into the earth, and thou shalt bind Satan in chains, even according to what we have found in the Book of the Prophets and wise Fathers." And that night they slept [there], thinking that on the morrow they would go to Herod and tell him that they had found the Child and His mother. But the Angel of the Lord appeared and said unto them, "Get ye to your own country in peace"; and they went there according as the Angel of the Lord had said unto them.

Now when forty days were ended we brought Him up to the Temple that they might do unto Him [according to] the Law of Moses, and according as they are wont to do unto the children of Israel. And when we had brought Him into the house of the Sanctuary

*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

[we found] there a priest whose name was Simeon, and he was waiting to see the Saviour before he died. And I gave him the Child, and he took Him and carried Him in his arms, and he blessed Him and bore him round about in the Temple. Now he was a blind man, and my beloved Son opened his eyes when He saw him. And Simeon opened his mouth and said, "Now straightway let Thy servant depart in peace, O Lord, according as Thou hast commanded; for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation which Thou hast prepared before all Thy people. [To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be] the glory of Thy people Israel." And when he had ended these words he gave me the Child, and we came [back] in peace with joy and gladness; and the old man Simeon the priest died on that same day.

And Herod waited two years for the Magians to return unto him, but they came not back, for they had returned to their native land; and Herod was greatly moved, and he and all his servants were afraid. Then Satan appeared unto him by night in the form of a wise man, and said unto him, "Wherefore remainest thou [thus idle]? For thou and all thy kingdom shall be destroyed." And Herod answered and said unto him, "What shall I do?" Then Satan said unto him, "On the morrow, early in the morning, send thy servants and command them not to leave [alive] in Bethlehem any child which is two years old and under, and let them slay them; and as the Child [Jesus] shall be found among those who shall be slain, He shall not grow up and shall not take thy kingdom." Now on that day the Angel of God appeared unto Joseph, and said unto him, "Rise up, and take the Child and His mother, and depart unto the country of Egypt until I give thee His word; for Herod seeketh the Child to slay Him." Then straightway we rose up and departed into the country of Egypt, and Salômê was with us.

And it came to pass that, when the morrow had come,

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

Herod commanded them to slay the children in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof and in all the districts thereof, in accordance with the information that he had obtained from the Magians, and according to the word of Satan, the father of all iniquity. So we rose up [and went] on our way, and Joseph was in front of me. And I carried my Child sometimes on my shoulders, and sometimes on my back, and sometimes in my arms, and by reason of the length of the way, and the weariness of the journey, Salômê [carried Him] in turn. Then, sometimes, I set Him down upon the ground that He might follow me, even as do women when they teach their children to walk, for I was a delicate woman, and it had not been my lot to toil hard. And He would walk along a little way at a time, holding on to the hem of my skirt, and then, like all children who cry out to their mothers to carry them, He expected me to carry Him ; and I did so immediately on my back. Then I would embrace Him and would rejoice in His walking, and at the same time I cast imprecations upon Herod, and cursed him and all his kingdom, because he had treated innocent and sinless children in such a cruel manner, and had slain them, and had put sorrow into the breasts of their mothers and fathers. Now when Joseph saw Salômê carrying the Child upon her shoulders he would carry our food for the way.

And it came to pass that, when we arrived in the country of Egypt, we sat down outside a city, under the shadow of a tree, so that we might rest from the heat of the sun, for the season was summer, and the day was the twenty-seventh of the month Genbôt (May 22) ; now Joseph and Salômê slept by reason of the weariness of the way, but I suckled my Child. Now His apparel was in colour like wine, being the same as mine own wherein my father and my mother arrayed me when they brought me into the house of the Sanctuary, and since the time when I first put it on I had never taken





*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 38a.*

Mary rescuing from devils the souls of two scribes who had sinned whilst copying her Book of Miracles



*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

it off, and the sandals that were on the feet of my Son were like unto gold. And behold, on that road [we met] two thieves, one of whom belonged to the country of Egypt, and the other to the country of the Hebrews. And the Hebrew said unto the Egyptian, "I wish to carry off the apparel of this woman and that of her Son, for it is like unto royal raiment. If we had met them in the desert I would have taken it, but they are nigh unto a city." Then the Egyptian said unto his companion, "Let them alone and let us depart, for I have not seen such a child as this since I was born." Now whilst they were talking in this wise I took out my breast and suckled the Child, for I wished to give Him milk to drink, and when I looked round about me I found them not. Then I rose up and took the Child into the city, and asked the women thereof to give Him some water to drink; but there was none who gave me any, for the people of that city were without mercy. Now when the thieves saw that I had gone away they came back and, going into the place where Joseph was sleeping, they carried off the shoes of my Son. And when I returned I woke up Joseph and Salômê, and I said unto them, "Rise up, and let us depart from this city, for the people thereof have no mercy. I sought for water, but there was none who would give me any. I have lost nothing except the sandals of my Son which the thieves have taken." Now as I said these words I wept, and when my beloved Son saw my weeping He sought [to stay] my tears with His hand. And He thrust His fingers down into the ground a little way, and forthwith beautiful water welled up; and we drank thereof. Now the water was as sweet as honey and as white as milk. Then He made the sign of the Cross over the water, and said, "Let this water be unto every one who wisheth to drink thereof healing and pleasant, except unto the people of this city; unto them let it be as gall in their mouths, and let not any one of them

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

have benefit therefrom." Then when we had eaten a little food I took my beloved Child upon my back, and we rose up to depart. And straightway their temples fell down in the twinkling of an eye, and not one of them was left [standing], and the idols thereof were broken and dashed to pieces; and in like manner the gods thereof were thrown down, one upon the other, and were broken.

Now, as we were making our way up into Egypt the mountains and the wild beasts came and worshipped my Son, and when we journeyed onwards they also journeyed with us. Then my Son turned towards them, and placing His right hand upon the mountain that was towards the East, and His left hand upon the mountain that was towards the West, said unto them, "Stand ye still, and behold, make firm your roots deep in the rock like things fixed therein"; and thus do they appear unto this day. And He said unto them, "Be ye a sign unto those who shall not believe in Me and unto those who shall deny My coming, and unto the sinful Jews, and unto Herod the accursed and his kingdom, and unto all those who shall not believe in My holy Name." And He said unto these mountains, "Ye have recognized Me, and ye have believed on Me, O things that have neither soul nor body, but the kings whom I have created in Mine own form and likeness believe not in Me, and they will not render homage unto My glory. Those for whose sake I have come into the world will neither pay homage unto Me nor receive Me; nay, they seek to slay Me, and I have been [constrained to] come and stay in this country. But My Name and that of My pure mother shall be magnified and glorified from generation unto generation."

And next we arrived in the city of Ashmûnên,<sup>1</sup> where

<sup>1</sup> The capital of the 15th nome of Upper Egypt, which lay on the west bank of the Nile about 182 miles south of Memphis. The town was the centre of the cult of the old Egyptian god Thoth, the scribe

*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

in the forepart of the gate was a huge building which, with its four towers,<sup>1</sup> reared itself above the city, and it, too, fell down and was broken, because they worshipped idols therein. Then our Lord Jesus said, "Thou shalt be the sign (or, memorial) of this city and of the people thereof for ever"; and this took place even as He said, for the fortress became a ruin, [and it remaineth so] unto this day. And there was a tree<sup>2</sup> in that place, and it bowed down at the feet of my Son and said unto Him, "Prosperous be Thy coming, O Jesus, Thou Son of God!" And the Lord answered and said unto it, "No worm shall ever enter into thee, and thou shalt keep in memory My coming into this city to-day." And all the people, from the greatest to the least, marvelled at the glory that was on my Son, and said, "We have never at any time seen a Child like unto this."

Now as we were passing on through one of the market places of the city, behold, five camels crowded us on the road, and when my Son saw them He said unto them, "Stand still"; and they became stones even unto this day.<sup>3</sup> And there was a certain man whose name was of the gods; the Greeks identified this god with Hermes and called his city Hermopolis Magna. The Coptic name of the town, "Shmoun," represents the old Egyptian "Khemen," or "Khemenu," whence also comes the Arabic name Ashmûn.

<sup>1</sup> These towers were probably the pylons of the temple of Thoth, the ruins of which were to be seen at Ashmûnên until the early Middle Ages.

<sup>2</sup> According to Abû Sâlih (ed. Evetts, p. 222) there was outside the church a Syrian tree bearing the fruit called "sebestan," which is of a red colour. The tree stood near the ancient temple. The governor of the town wished to cut it down; but the patriarch Agatho was standing under the tree, and when the woodman struck it with his axe, the axe flew back into his face and wounded him grievously.

<sup>3</sup> Abû Sâlih (pp. 220, 221) says: It is said that there was on the highest point of the town a cock, and beneath it a row of dromedaries. When a stranger approached the town the cock crowed, and the dromedaries came out to destroy that stranger. But when our Lord Christ, to Whom be glory! came to this town, the cock crowed and the dromedaries went out, according to their custom. And when they saw the

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

Teflem, upon whom was the mercy of God, and he received us and made us to abide in his house ; and all the idols [therein] fell down and were broken to pieces. Then all the ministrants of the gods were afraid, and they hid themselves in their houses. Now when the morning had come all the people gathered themselves together to the place wherein we were, and [among them] were many who were dumb, and deaf, and sick of every kind of disease. And my Son laid His hand upon them and healed them of all their sicknesses, and He wrought in that city many miracles, the which if I were to describe them to thee, no paper would be sufficient to contain them. Then multitudes of people came to us and pressed upon us, by reason of the miracles which He wrought that day.

And we departed from that place and came unto a city the name of which is Pantôs (Funkus?), and the inhabitants thereof were humane and we abode there : and my Son wrought innumerable miracles therein. And He said, “ My Name, and the name of My mother MARY, shall be in this city even to the most remote days.” And they brought those who were suffering from sickness and diseases unto Him, and in His abundant mercy He healed them. And a certain man who was a blacksmith heard [of these things], and he came unto us—now he belonged to [one of] the greatest families in Jerusalem—and he made the old man Joseph and us also to take up our abode in his house ; and he had a son who was possessed of a mighty devil. And it came to pass that his devil returned unto him on that day, and as soon as he saw the Child, he cried out to Him, and said, “ What have I to do with Thee, O Jesus, the Nazarene ? Hast Thou come unto us to condemn us ?

Lord Christ and the Lady, and Joseph the carpenter, they worshipped them ; and on the spot they were changed into stone ; and their number was five. On this island there are 300 villages. Our Lord entered by the eastern gate. Here the dromedaries worshipped Him.

*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

We left Jerusalem through Thee and fled to this city, and Thou hast followed after us to judge us, for indeed Thou art the Son of God." Then Jesus said unto him, "Make an end [of thy words] and go forth out of him"; and straightway the young man recovered from his sickness. And he and his father and mother rose up and worshipped, saying, "Blessed are we, in that we have been considered worthy of this act of grace above all [other] folk, for although we are sinners Thou hast come into our house"—now when we came in the blessing of God came unto them. And very many people in that place believed when they saw the miracle that the Lord Jesus had wrought.

Then the nobles of the city enquired of the priests of the gods, and said unto them, "Wherefore do ye hide yourselves and forsake your gods?" And the priests said, "From the moment when this woman and her Child came [here], the idols have been broken in pieces, and the temples of the gods have fallen down; although we keep watch over them during the night yet in the morning they are broken in pieces." Then the nobles of the city sent for us to be taken to them, but we withdrew into the chambers in the upper part of the house. Then the priests seized the master of the house, and took him before the nobles of the city, who said unto him, "Where are the people who were living in thy house?" And he said unto them, "It is three days this day since they departed from my house, and I know not where they are"; and, although they scourged him, he said nothing whatsoever except, "I know not where they are." And when he came forth from the elders of the city he told me what had taken place before them.

And in the morning we departed from them and we arrived at a city the name of which was *Ḳuësyâ*,<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Probably *Munyatû bû Ḳais*, the *Mônê* of the Copts and the *Men-t* of the ancient Egyptians, i.e. the metropolis of the 16th nome of

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

therein was a temple whereon stood a statue with seven steps; and those who ministered unto the statue allowed none except a noble of the city to enter into the temple. Now the statue was wont to step forward and to bow to those who made offerings [in the temple]. And it came to pass that when we had arrived at the gates of the city the pedestal with seven steps and the statue that was on them were overturned, and the statue fell to the ground and was broken in pieces. Then the devil that was in the statue cried out and said unto the priests, "If ye do not go to this woman and her Son, and the old man who travelleth with her, and the woman [Salômê], and drive them away whensoever they would enter into this city, your occupation will be destroyed, and in three days' time they will make you to go forth [from your temple]. And I warn you that they will come into your country, for they seek [to invade] all the provinces of Egypt, and when they have once entered into this city, the temple of the gods shall be overthrown, and the work of our city shall be destroyed, and our enemies shall rise up against us and make an end of our city, and our glory shall be cast to the ground." Then when the priests of the gods had heard these things they appointed one hundred men to come against us with sticks and staves, and they cursed and reviled us exceedingly, and said, "What want ye here with us? Get ye gone, lest our soldiers come and slay you, for our gods have told us that our city shall be destroyed through you"; and their women and children came forth and reviled and cursed us. Then I took my Son in my arms and departed, being sorrowful, and I wept, and my heart was sad because the people would neither receive us nor let us dwell [in their city].

Upper Egypt, the modern Minyah, which lies on the west bank of the Nile, and is about 157 miles south of Memphis (or, Cairo.) In Coptic times the town contained several churches, two dedicated to the Virgin, one to St. George, and one to St. Michael.



*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

And it came to pass that when we had departed from the city, the name of which was "Kuěsyâ," my Son turned and cursed it and said unto the inhabitants thereof, "Ye shall be the fewest in number, and the feeblest, and the most despised of all the peoples of Egypt. Nothing shall increase in your land except toil and the workings of the sorcerer, and your country shall not be fertile, and your priests shall not increase in numbers, but shall follow each other only one by one. And the blessing of My Mother shall not be upon you; and according to that which hath gone forth from My mouth even so shall your land be." And having said these words He went on His way.

And we travelled onwards and sat down to rest ourselves a little. Now there was a staff of olive wood in the hand of Joseph, and Jesus took it in His holy hand, and planted it in the ground in that place, and said, "It shall be a blessing unto the people of this place for ever, and a memorial of My journeying along this road." Then straightway the twigs on the stick budded and became green, and it bore fruit even as it had done upon the tree in times past. And we wished to go forward on our way. Now there were very many fields round about the place where we were, and Joseph, pointing with his finger, said, "Unto which village shall we go? For the day hath waned into evening, and the night hath come." And I said unto him, "Let us not journey on through the fields, but let us go out into the desert."

And as we were going along by the side of a mountain at the time of sunset, behold, the two thieves, whom we had met before outside the city, and who had followed us from thence to this place, as soon as they saw us rushed upon us with their swords, which were drawn, in their hands. And they said, "For many days ye have given us great trouble, for we have followed you, and we could not find where ye had gone

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

until this day; behold, ye have now fallen into our hands." And thus saying they snatched my beloved Son from out of my arms, and they stripped off His raiment and mine also, and they carried off my head-cloth, and then they turned towards Joseph, who was like a simple sheep, and snatched away his apparel also. And when Salômê saw all these things happening she stripped off her apparel and cast it away. Then having carried off our apparel the two thieves stood a little distance away, and held converse, the one with the other; and when I saw them plotting together I was afraid with a great fear, and I said in my heart, "They will come to me next and will kill my Son." And I lifted Him up in my arms, and weeping I laid my face upon His, and said, "Woe is me, O my beloved Son! Whither shall I escape from this hour? Whither shall I run? I fled with Thee from Jerusalem through fear of the enemy Herod, lest they should kill Thee, O my beloved Son. O my Son, beloved One of my soul, it is better for me to go down into mine own country and to die than to see all [this] suffering. And behold, I am afraid lest those who are more wicked than Herod lay hands upon Thee. It is better for me to be in Bethlehem with those who know Joseph than to be making supplication unto them (i.e. the thieves) on Thy behalf, that they slay Thee not. O my beloved Son, it is a calamity unto me that I am a virgin and of no account, and that I know nothing of all these things. O Light of mine eyes, whom do I know in this country? And behold, I am in the wilderness, and I know neither place nor city whither I can go. Where are all those who know me? All the women who have borne children would weep with me if they saw this day the sorrow and the tribulation which have come upon me, and the fear which hath entered into my heart and mind this day. O my beloved Son, did not I endure hardship with Thee when I was fleeing lest evil should

*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

befall Thee, O Thou Light of mine eyes, and when they drove me from one place unto another and cast me forth from the city and the fields [about it]? O my Son, what shall I do if I see them kill Thee in this place? Great would be the grief that I should feel should I see it; and if they slay Thee here I shall kill myself with mine own hand. And what should I do without the sweet and gracious words that Thou dost speak unto us each day? What shall I do, O Thou Light of mine eyes, Thou Life of my soul and body? When I see the women who are suckling their children at their breasts, I wish that the women, whose children Herod slaughtered at their very breasts, could weep for them this day with me. It would be better for me to be in Jerusalem or in Bethlehem, but then I should not find many to lament their children with me. Where are my holy fathers and the prophets, that they may weep with me this day? I would that the Angel who announced to me concerning Thy birth could see my lamentation, and that Elisabeth, who belonged to my family, and her son John could be with me and see the sorrow of my heart. O Lord, have mercy upon me in the matter of my death, and be not silent concerning my sorrow."

Now whilst I was pouring out lamentation in this wise, and was weeping, and my tears were streaming down my cheeks, and those of my Son, one of the thieves saw our weeping, and his bowels were moved, and he spake unto the Jew, and said unto him, "I beseech thee, O my brother and friend, not to carry off the apparel of these wayfarers, for I see on their faces a light which is brighter than that which is on the faces of all other people; and as for this Child, He is like unto the son of a king, and I have never seen any other child who is like unto Him." And the Jew said, "I will not hearken unto thee this day; nay, I will take their apparel, for it is the raiment of kings, and [the

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

merchants] will give me much money for it." And when the Jew refused him [his request], and his companion [the Egyptian] was unable to turn him, the Egyptian said unto the Jew, "From the time when we were in Bethlehem until this day we have robbed together. Last night we obtained much booty, and the portion that is my share shall be thine, only let me keep the apparel of these wayfarers as my own possession, so that I may give it back to them; for it is hard for me [to see] this Child standing more naked than any other child of man." And when he had spoken in this wise the Jew said, "Take the apparel"; and he took it from him and gave it unto us, and I dressed my Son therein joyfully. Now when my beloved Son saw him do this He made the sign of the Cross over him with His fingers, and the two thieves departed together. Then Jesus said unto me, "Seest thou these two thieves? They shall be crucified with Me, one on My right hand and one on My left, in Jerusalem by the Jews. And the thief on whom it hath been in My heart [to shew] the mercy of My Good Father shall believe on Me on the wood of the Cross, and he shall enter into the Garden (i.e. Paradise) at the head of Adam and his seed. And as for this place where they stripped Me naked, and where thou hast wept over Me with the sweet tears of thine eyes, it shall be a healing of every person who is sick and ill and who washeth therein, and I will give them life because of the green grass and herbs that are therein. And thy tears, which have fallen upon My body and dropped upon the ground, shall give them life, and they shall arrive in their own countries with joy and gladness."

And when He had said these words the night fell, and Joseph chided me, and said unto me, "I wanted to go on into the village, but thou wouldst not hearken unto me, and therefore we have come into this desert place, and darkness hath fallen upon us, and we know not



*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 27b.*

The Virgin removing a monastery from an unsuitable place to the side of a stream



*by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria*

whither we are going. But God hath delivered His people, for if He had not done so the thieves would have killed us." And at that moment My Son looked into Joseph's face, and said unto him, "Speak not, O My father, to My Mother in this wise. It was the wish of the Good God that I should become man; it is not for you to give Me commands, for it is I Who give commandments to the whole world, but I will go whithersoever thou wishest." And having said these words we went up into a mountain, and we came into this house, and I stood up therein, and I put my Son down upon the ground from my bosom. And when He stood up on His holy feet upon the ground He lifted up His hands, and at that moment the house shone with light as though the sun had risen therein; and I gave thanks unto God Who had delivered us and brought us to this place and had saved us from the doers of iniquity and violence. And we took up our abode therein joyfully, and we blessed God the whole night long.

And in the morning we found a cistern of water, and we rejoiced because we could drink and could wash the Child, and I took Him to the cistern, and He stretched out His fingers and blessed it, and it became full of water. And straightway He opened His mouth and blessed it, and said, "Be thou sweet in the mouth of everyone, and be thou like unto the stream of the river of the land of Egypt (i.e. the Nile). And it shall heal everyone who shall be a believer in the true Faith and in it of his sickness or disease when they assemble in [this] house."

And we dwelt [there] with the Child and Joseph, and Salômê went round about the house and found a pitcher and a bucket which they had prepared for us; and she washed the Child continually, and I suckled Him at my breasts. And they brought me my food from God, and I saw the angels and the hosts of heaven

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

worshipping at the feet of my beloved Son continually, whilst my nipple was in His mouth. And they said in their own language, “Blessed be Thou, O God, Who hast come in this lowly state to give life unto Adam and unto his seed, because they are the work of Thy hand, and Thou hast fashioned therein Thine own image and likeness. And blessed be He Who hath the pre-eminence, the Word Who hath proceeded from the mouth of the Father, the Upholder of the Universe. And honour be unto the Holy Virgin who was in labour with Thee in giving Thee birth.” So we tarried there, and we rested from the toil which had come upon us. And the angels came and ministered unto us and made supplication unto us.



THE NARRATIVE OF THE VIRGIN MARY AS  
TOLD BY HERSELF TO TIMOTHY, PATRI-  
ARCH OF ALEXANDRIA

[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, Fol. 25b ff.]

**I** AM MARY the Virgin, the Mother of God, King of the living and the dead. I am the woman who was vowed to God by her father, I am (Fol. 25b, col. 2) the daughter of a barren woman. I was begotten by Joachim, who was from Jerusalem, and like every man I was begotten by carnal union. And they vowed me to the House of the Sanctuary (i.e. Temple) from the breasts of my mother. And I learned all the learning that is written in books and [the rules of virginity] from Zacharias the priest and Simeon, until the day when they betrothed me to the holy old man Joseph the carpenter. And I lived in his house, and I did the work of my hands in my habitation (or, chamber). And when the Ruler of all things looked upon the humility of me His handmaiden—my Son is the King of kings—He sent Gabriel unto me, and behold, he heard my voice. He who is all truth came to me on the 29th day of the month Magâbît, even as it is written in the holy books, and announced to me the coming of the King to me. But how was it that I did not know of the operation of God in respect of me? And He never told me how (Fol. 25b, col. 3) He would come unto me, or when, but He came unto me and dwelt in me, and I was occupied with this matter all day long, and the matter was only revealed unto me later when I went to Elisabeth. And I feared and marvelled at the word of Gabriel and at his greatness and majesty. And when my Lord came to me He was in

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

the chariot of the Cherubim, and I knew nothing whatsoever about the exaltedness of His work, and I did not comprehend in my mind the greatness of His power that He had placed in me. And I knew nothing about the operations that were effected in women nor about their desires when they were with child. And I saw no sign in my breasts that I had conceived, and my belly did not grow large, and I did not remove from my body my habitual apparel. And He came to me and I knew not how He came, and He dwelt in my belly, and I did not hear any voice [speaking] to Him, and I did not see that He had any chariot, and (Fol. 26a, col. 1) I saw nothing of His throne. And I did not know whether He dwelt in my belly or not, until my kinswoman Elisabeth informed me concerning Him, when I went to her according to the word of the Angel Gabriel to me. And she said, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy belly. Whence cometh this to me that the mother of my Lord cometh to me?" And from that time my heart became strong. And I reckoned nine months His time, like all women. And when I returned from her I did not know the appearance of His coming until my pearl shone brightly by His good pleasure, and became lighted up throughout, and I saw the splendour of His light and heard His voice. And I knew nothing about the way wherein I brought Him forth, nor the mystery of my conception, and I was ignorant about the one matter and the other.

(Fol. 26a, col. 2) XI. And that Angel who brought the midwife to me made a star to shine in the east, and Wise Men came to Him, and praised His birth of me, and they brought to Him gold, and frankincense, and myrrh; these were the things that they brought for the birth of my Son. First the incense which was brought to my Son, and secondly the vessel in which it was offered up to my Son on the day of His birth by the Wise Men, became the first Offering that was

*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

offered up to the Father on the day of the birth of my Son by the Wise Men, and He forgave them their sins, and again, the second libation to my Son which ascended to the Father was the blood of the children whom Herod slew, and it was this that raised up great terror in all Israel. And he slew their children because of my Son Jesus. For the Wise Men informed Joseph about his cunning when they came and worshipped Him, (Fol. 26a, col. 3) and they made Joseph take good heed that no one among the people knew this mystery. And they said unto him, "Watch well, and observe this Child, and think well concerning the matter of Him. And take good heed if it be that Herod send for thee with the brethren, or if he seek for thee, in respect of going to him; for he will deceive thee, and he wisheth to slay the Child, and he hath already given himself much trouble about this matter." And the old man Joseph told me these words when he sent us away because of Herod. I tell thee, O Timothy, I was afflicted with grievous sorrow and pain with my Son. I could find no beasts at all, and all day long I wandered about, and I went from one place to another with Him, and I took Him up and went with Him to the houses of my neighbours and kinsfolk, for I was afraid for Him because of (Fol. 26b, col. 1) Herod and his soldiers. And when I heard the shrieks of the children, and the bitter cries of anguish of their mothers, it seemed to me as if my soul must be torn out of me, and I was afraid that the soldiers would come to me, and again I felt that I must fly from house to house, I and my Son, my darling Jesus. And I went to Jerusalem to find the women and their children, and the women were without children, and they were filled with bitter anger over their death. And I went to the Galileans, who were my kinsfolk, and I found the women with their clothes rent, and their heads uncovered, and they were wailing and lamenting for their children. And I went

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to Bethlehem, and I found the women, and their shrieks reached the gates of heaven, and they were cursing Herod, that wicked serpent. And I went (Fol. 26b, col. 2) to the land of Judah, but I did not find my sister Elisabeth, for she had hidden herself through fear of Herod, the hypocritical king. And in every place to which I went, from the borders thereof to Jerusalem, I found sorrow; [the mothers] mourning for their sons, the children who had been slain. One woman I found with the head of her child in her hands, and the rest of his body was with the soldiers. Another woman had the hand of her boy. When they were going to kill him the mother seized him thereby—he was her only son—but they carried him off from her and killed him, even whilst she was looking on. And the [murdered] child of another woman was an orphan—fatherless. And another woman said, “Pain in my breasts afflicted me, and the milk that was in them made me to endure agony, but these sufferings were simple as compared with those that Herod caused [me] by slaying the children, for (Fol. 26b, col. 3) there were none like these last.” But the Lord God made affection to be present in the heart of the Israelites, and they neither sought out my Son, nor did they take Him away to deliver Him over in the place of their own children.

XII. And whilst we were in Judah the old man, Joseph the carpenter, ministered unto us and fed us. And behold the Angel Gabriel appeared unto him, saying, “Rise up, take the Child and His Mother, and depart to the land of Egypt, for those folk are seeking for the Child to destroy Him.” And Joseph informed me of the words that Gabriel had spoken to him; and we rose up and departed to Egypt by road with exceedingly great fatigue. Now whilst we were dwelling together Salômê was with us. And we went from one place to another in the cities and districts of the Children of Israel, and we neither found a soldier of Herod

*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

nor any fear of him, and none of (Fol. 27a, col. 1) his afflictions, and when we looked we saw that all Israel was without men children. And we came and went up to Faṣṭarûn, which is Baṣṭâ, and they did not welcome us rightly. Then the heart of the old man Joseph became hot because of the fatigue of the roads. And I wept for him, and I said, "O my darling Son, behold, we are suffering all this affliction for Thy sake. What sin canst Thou have committed? Behold, the heart of this old man who feedeth us is weary because of the abuse that they heap upon him for our sakes, and also because of my weeping, and he hath not found any rest for a single day." At one time I wept for my darling Son through fear of Herod's soldiers, and at another I was terrified because of the highway robbers who followed us. In short, no other mother was ever afflicted with such anxieties as those that afflicted me. And when (Fol. 27a, col. 2) I looked at Joseph, behold, he began to contend against me, saying, "Behold, I am toiling in a manner that is above my strength, and I cannot [go on] doing so because of my old age." And I dropped my face downwards towards my darling Son, and He was sucking at my breasts. And I was weeping and saying "O my darling Son, what sin hast Thou committed, that all these things have happened unto us through Thee, and even this old man's heart waxeth hot as we see?" And again I wept and said, "What is this sin, I ask, which Thou hast committed? Behold, the heart of this old man waxeth hot." And He ceased to suck milk from my breasts when He was about to hold converse with me, and said, "O My beloved Mother, make strong thy heart, and be not sad because all these things have happened unto thee for My sake. But let thy heart be strong and like unto a rock, (Fol. 27a, col. 3) O My beloved Mother, for I cannot leave the state of humility which I have come to make perfect in the world until I have made it perfect. Carry

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thou Me, O My father Joseph, for a little while in order that I may lay My hand upon thy breast so that thy soul may become strong." And I laughed, and I said unto the old man Joseph, "O my father, be not angry with me, and do not let me only carry this Child. Behold now, I am tired, O my father, and see how He is looking to thee to carry Him." And when I said this to the old man Joseph he put away his displeasure immediately, and he lifted up the Child, my darling Son, upon his shoulder. And as soon as ever my Son had laid His hand upon Joseph's breast, and the old man Joseph had taken hold of the hand of the Child to kiss it, straightway all discomfort was removed from him, and he forgot the fatigue of the journeyings, and he kissed the Child from (Fol. 27b, col. 1) His head to the sole of His feet, and he embraced Him, saying, "Verily, O MARY, behold, thou hast found grace far greater than all the circle of our kinsfolk, for, behold, we are made worthy by walking with Him in Whom there is no sin. Verily we are made worthy by the sight of this Child, and more especially by carrying Him in my arms, for these arms wherewith we received Him with thee were awearied. There shall be no measure to the price (?) of the glory that shall appear with us from Him, even as we have already seen the glory that appeared unto us from Him in Bethlehem." And when the old man Joseph had said this word unto me he comforted me, and I knew because of it that the grace of my Son Jesus had found me, and I worshipped Him and His Good Father and the Holy Spirit for ever.

XIII. And having gone through and passed by all the trials and experiences which met us during these travels, (Fol. 27b, col. 2) we went forth from the land of Israel, and we came to the land of Egypt, and to a place wherein there were thorn bushes, [called] Tarëwâ. And we found (or, met) a certain man, a shepherd, whose name was Joseph, and we lodged with him for

*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

four days, with him and his. And the thought entered the mind of my darling Son to perform an act of blessing in this place Tarēwâ, and He planted there three trees, and they gave us shade from the heat that day. And He blessed this place, and He assigned a name to this place Tarēwâ, and this place was called Yabûs after the name of my Son Who had dwelt there. And with very great difficulty, because of the affection of this shepherd who lived there, we passed on from this place. From there we traversed many hilly districts on that road, and we came to a road by the sea where we were in fear because of highway robbers. And we came to a city (Fol. 27b, col. 3) wherein there were great numbers of statues of the gods that were worshipped, and it was called Bardôna. And we met therein an old man who dwelt in the gate of the city, and this man made a sign of derision at us, and he treated the old man Joseph with contempt. And when we saw the manner of mind which the people of the city had concerning us, and the way in which they behaved towards us, we did not eat their bread or drink their water, and we held no intercourse with any of them. And there was . . . a stone, and it ascribed blessing to my Son. And the stone began to roll after us as if it were walking, and it went about after us. And when my Son saw the stone going about and following us, He made a sign to it with His fingers, and spake a word of blessing to it. And my Son Jesus made another sign to it, and said unto it, "I say unto thee, O stone, which art speechless, that thou shalt never return to infirmity. And rest (Fol. 28a, col. 1) here until the punishment of my Father cometh, and all the stripes of Egypt be . . ."

XXIV. And after this we passed on to another city, but fear did not allow us to dwell there, because we were afraid of the robbers on the roads. And we sought the sea, and in the evening we came to the coast of the sea which is on the west. They told us that there were

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

temples of idols on our road which lay to the west of the sea, and that there were many trees on it and idols. And we were afraid to go their roads to 'Ĕsmânên, and we made to avoid them. And we asked the old man Joseph to take us by the eastern passage if we could find a way whereby we might go up to the city of 'Ĕsmânên, for we were afraid to travel by the road whereon there were idols. And at that moment (Fol. 28a, col. 2) a storm wind arose upon the sea, and mighty waves were running, and there was a tremendous noise as the billows dashed themselves one against the other. And behold, we saw a small ship out on the sea, and there were in it two brethren who were toiling with all their might. And Joseph called out to them, saying, "O brethren, show us an act of kindness, and let us take passage with you to the eastern passage." Now it was eventide. And Joseph continued to shout to them for a very long time, but they did not hear his voice. And when he had shouted to them for a long time they answered him with great sadness, saying, "What dost thou want, O simple old man? Dost thou not see that we are in sore tribulation through this storm, and that we are in a state of utter exhaustion?" And when my Son saw that we could not go up with them He put out His hand, and straightway the wind dropped, and (Fol. 28a, col. 3) the sea went down before it. And a rock came to us, and we passed over the sea upon it without any fatigue. And when Joseph saw the act of grace that had come to us, and how we had crossed the sea without a ship, large or small, he said unto me, "Did I not tell thee that we had found more favour than any other company of our kinsfolk? And didst thou not see how the rock which carried us came, and how at the movement of His hand the wind ceased from us, and how the waves went down from us at the mere motion of His fingers? If He doeth such a thing as this when He is a Child, what will happen through Him when He is





*Lady Meux MS. No. 3, fol. 22a.*

The Devil upsets the scaffold on which a painter is painting a picture of the blessed and the damned. The Virgin grasps the falling painter and saves his life



*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

grown up? And if there is to be one to reign over Israel it will be He, and in truth it is He Who will judge the living and the dead. And as for myself, I say that the grace of God hath certainly abounded, for it is I who have begotten the worker of this (Fol. 28b, col. 1) miracle." And having remained in that place the light (i.e. the day) shone; now when we rested ourselves upon that rock it was eventide.

XV. And we also saw a woman who was a mistress of magic and of the devils that dwelt in her, and they used to lay hold upon ships and the winds, and to take money from men before they allowed them to set out on their journey. And this woman was called "Tâlûdâr," and her daughter-in-law was called "Tâmâr." And she lived in a temple of idols facing the west of the sea, and she used to disturb every man by her magic and prevent his attempting to put to sea (?), and . . . the magicians of Egypt. And when that woman, the mistress of magic, together with the hosts of Satans that were in attendance upon her, saw that rock she was greatly troubled and distressed, for she used to receive (Fol. 28b, col. 2) gifts because of her magic from all those who embarked and disembarked there. And when my Son passed on to sit upon that rock her Satans saw us and were afraid, and one half of them went (?) to Dâlûdâr and Tâmar her daughter, and they informed her of what had happened and what they had seen. And she said unto them, "Why are ye perturbed?" And they said unto her, "Our fear and our perturbation are very, very great indeed, greater than we have felt any day during which we have been in the service of thyself and thy daughter-in-law." And she said unto them, "Tell me what it is that hath frightened you." And the Satans said unto her, "It is this miracle that we have seen take place this day on the rock; we have never seen anything [like] it. And by this miracle we are driven away. Since the days of

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Solomon the King we have never seen such a miracle as this upon the face of the earth, nor hath such ever been made manifest. And we rejoiced when Solomon was taken from us, because he afflicted us, (Fol. 28b, col. 3) and behold this One Who hath appeared this day is greater than Solomon." And the mistress of magic said unto them, "What was His miracle, and what was the like thereof?" And the Satans said unto her, "It had the appearance of the hand of a man stretched out, and it made a sign behind it, and we do not know whether it was in heaven or not; and the appearance of the hand was like that of the hand of Michael our adversary, and because of this we made ourselves strong. And by the form of the hand was written, 'In the Name of God the Great.' This is what we saw, and behold, we have come and informed thee." And when the mistress of magic heard this she meditated in her heart, and she admonished those devils. And then she summoned other Satans, about sixteen in number, and she said unto them, "Haste ye to this rock, and tear it asunder, and surround it, and sink it in the deep. And whomsoever ye find upon this (Fol. 29a, col. 1) rock bring him to me in fetters." And when those Satans that were sent by the mistress of magic came to us and wanted to snatch us away, my Son Jesus rebuked them, and they went back and took to flight, being ashamed and disgraced. And when they returned to her baffled and ashamed they said unto her, "Why art thou sitting here in this fashion? Behold, we found a Child sucking at the breasts of His mother. And lo, it is He Who shall put an end to all the magic that is in the world. And we have never seen the like of this Child, nor any likeness thereto among all those who are born of women, and we have never seen deeds like unto this. Thou art to Him like all other magicians. By the mere putting forth of His fingers He destroyed us, and He made us to melt away by a

*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

sign from Him.” And that mistress of great magic said unto her servants (Fol. 29a, col. 2) the Satans, “Woe be unto you! Can it be that this Child hath terrified you, and vanquished you, and driven you away? As for me, I will not sit down until I have snatched away this Child and His mother, and those who are with Him; and I will work mightily upon them. But haste ye and make ready for me a chariot, and bring ye hither to me all my satellites that I myself may go and see the miracle that is upon this rock which hath set you in such a state of perturbation.” And she said also unto those priests that were standing before her, “Make ready for me a fine booth, and light a fire therein by the time that I return, and I will burn up this woman and her Child.” And straightway she mounted upon this chariot of devils which was full of evil spirits. And she came to us, and with her were gathered together very many Satans, (Fol. 29a, col. 3) and they circled round about her and sang unto her. And when she came to the middle of the sea, my Son made a sign with His little finger which He shot forth, and He said, “I say unto thee, O evil cloud of devils, be thou destroyed and melt away and become like the smoke of a fire. And moreover, let everyone who is on thee go down into the depths of hell for ever.” And straightway that chariot was shattered and became like a fragment, and the mistress of magic and her daughter went down to Tartarus-deep for ever, and the water covered them. And in like manner all the Satans departed to the depths with her, and their memory was blotted out from this rock for ever. And my darling Son commanded me MARY, saying, “O My mother, look down and see what hath happened.” And when I heard this from Him I looked and saw, (Fol. 29b, col. 1) and behold, all the people had their heads bowed and their knees bent (?) to my Son, and He was in their midst. And I looked at my arms and I said, “Will He, peradventure, go with

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them?" And I found Him sucking at my breasts, and then I leaned over Him with my face to kiss Him. And when I found His head between my hands I lifted up my eyes to heaven, and I praised Him, and I saw Him seated, and all the heavenly chiefs were praising Him as He was seated upon His throne, and straightway I was perturbed and frightened, and I said, "When will this [Child] come to His Father in the heavens?" And I made haste and felt for Him, and I found both His hands holding my breasts, and as He was drinking my milk I bent down my face and kissed Him, and His head was between my breasts and He said unto me, "O My mother, know thou that whilst I am in (Fol. 29b, col. 2) the depth of the earth I am [also] in the height of heaven, and observe that whilst I am clasping thy breast with My hand I am also grasping the ends of the earth, and again, it is that same hand that hath made strong the heavens. And I am never separated from the Father, not even for a moment." And when my Son, the Word, had said this to me He commanded the depths to mingle each with the other, and the stones likewise. And this which I tell thee, O Timothy, is what happened to us on this rock.

XVII. And after this there came unto us 'Akharûpâs, the angel who guarded the land of Egypt, and he did homage to my darling Son; and he was like one in sorrow, and his hands were on his head, and he was weeping. And my Son said unto him, "What hath happened to thee, O 'Akharûpâs, thou angel of might, and why art thou thus sorrowful? But I also know thy suffering and thy sorrow." And the angel 'Akharûpâs (Fol. 29b, col. 3) answered, saying, "My Lord and my God, I am very weary, and I am destitute without all the angels. And Thou hast placed me in this country, which is by far the worst place in all the world. My fields are circumscribed, the thorns and brambles break up my vineyards, and my waters are bitter through the

*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

sins of those who dwell on the land. And the men of the city are polluted with sin, and the foulness of the smell of them goeth up above my head. The sun goeth dark because of the smell of the incense that they offer up to idols, and fathers slay their sons, and pour out their blood as a sacrifice to the Satans. And brethren go a whoring with their sisters, and in brief, behold, the men of this country commit every kind of sin." This is what 'Akharûpâs said unto my darling Son, when he was making a complaint against the men of the borders of Egypt. And he said, "O my Lord, I (Fol. 30a, col. 1) do not wish to dwell [here] an hour." And my Son consoled him and said unto him, "Everything that thou sayest is true, O 'Akhrûpôs. And I know them far better than thou dost, but be strong, for thy sorrow and thy pain are removed this day, and it is not thou who hast to bear their weaknesses. But henceforward they shall be filled with joy and blessing, for My coming unto them this day, O 'Akhrûpôs, is to purify all the land of Egypt, and I have come to cut the roots of the worshippers of idols this day, and I will send all the idols into the depths, and I will pluck up from this country thorns and brambles and I will burn them up in the fire of My Godhead. Behold, I will make My garden and My vines to blossom and bear fruit. And I will set incense to the Father in this land in the place of that which existed in it formerly through the weeping that was therein and that was multiplied therein. Behold, I will make joy (Fol. 30a, col. 2) and gladness to increase therein in the place of the might of Satan that was therein. Behold, I will make the angels and My hosts to dwell with all men because of the multitude of odours, and they shall be from pure men. And like Moses My servant I will make My servants to blossom, making them to dwell in the garden for one thousand years, their cause for boasting being the odours of the perfumes. And now, O 'Akhrûpôs, Angel

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of joy and gladness, behold, there hath come He that shall set thee free from thy captivity, and thou shalt think about thy people, and shalt deliver them from the evil that hath bound them. And behold, this country shall be called The Land of Hope for ever. And now, O 'Akhrûpôs, Angel of might, be relieved of thy sorrow."

And when the Angel 'Akhrûpôs heard this from my Son, he rejoiced exceedingly, and cried out, saying, "Behold, (Fol. 30a, col. 3) all countries are filled with the praise of God." And my Son commanded the Angel to go before us, now he had a staff in his right hand, and commanded him to set fire to the temple of idols of that mistress of magic whom my Son had sent down into the depths, and he pulled it down from the top (i.e. overthrew it) and not a trace of it was left.

XVIII. And we tarried another three days upon that rock, and I washed Him thereon. And after three days, at the turn of the evening, behold, a ship came to this place from the city of Alexandria. And when the sailors saw the old man Joseph and Salômê standing up, they cried out, saying, "We adjure you, O servants of the mistress of great magic, not to sink our ship, for behold, the pirates have taken everything that we had before we arrived (Fol. 30b, col. 1) at this place." Now they said these things because they thought that we were the familiars of Dâlûdâr, the mistress of great magic. And the old man Joseph said unto them, "Fear ye not, for behold, God hath put away for ever the power of that sorceress, who if she had the power would have destroyed you. Let your ship sail on." And after the old man Joseph had held converse with them he boarded their ship and sailed over to the west. And Joseph tied a rope to the mast in the ship whereon we passed over to dry land, and the rock began to travel with us; and my Son laid His hand upon it, and He



*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

said unto it, "Remain here and remove not thyself from thy place." This sign shall never pass away from that place . . . (Fol. 30b, col. 2) it is my Son. And they did not permit me to go with my Son, and the old man Joseph, and Salômê. And we were terrified and perturbed until we arrived at the boundary of 'Asmûnên. And my Son worked miracles and raised the dead. And we were terrified and sorrowful in the city of 'Asmûnên, and filthy horses of brass neighed derisively at us, and beasts that devoured men, that is to say, camels, came out against us. And my darling Son rebuked them, and the spirits went forth from them, and they remain there as a proof to this day, O man, even as the old man Joseph said.

And the old man Joseph had knowledge of a certain man, who was a carpenter, on our arrival in the land of Egypt, and he received us into his abode. And there was in his city a large crowd of sick folk, and the people brought them (Fol. 30b, col. 3) to the house of this old man, and we took them with us to the place that is called Dabra Kûësķuâm, and they were washed at this pillar, and they were all healed by the might of my Son. And I went to this place of the pillar and my Son also, so that we might see His power over the pillar, and it bowed its head and worshipped Him. And there came forth a command from my Son that His Name should be associated with this place as it was with the rock, and it is so to this day. And the name of the carpenter who made us to live in his house was Dayânûs, and he marvelled at the grace that had come to this pillar, and the same thing happened to one pillar after the other (?). And in the year wherein I gave birth [to my Son] the splendour of a star shone in this place, and it was a reminder (?) of our coming to Egypt. And I did not find any place wherein I could reveal the birth of my darling Son, except this, (Fol. 31a, col. 1) that is to say, Kûësķuâm.

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

And very great fear came upon us after we had gone forth from this place, for thieves rushed out upon us and terrified us exceedingly with their appearance, which was like that of savages. And their looks were most terrifying, and the smaller of them was more evil than the greater. And when I saw them I thought that they were some of Herod's soldiers, for their faces and forms, and their swords, were frightful. And the place where they found us was waste and desolate, and one of the thieves snatched away my Son and the apparel that was on Him at one and the same time. And the bigger cried out and said unto him, "Let them alone to-day, and to-morrow thou canst keep for thyself my share of whatever may come in my way." And by the Will of God they did us no harm whatsoever. And the second thief stood up with my Son, and departed, and his companion said, here (Fol. 31a, col. 2) and there (?) Then I wept exceedingly, saying, "O my father Joseph, among all the tribulations wherewith we have been afflicted, behold, I have forgotten one, that is to say, my remembrance of the Israelites who weep for their children." And I wept also, and I said, "Woe is me, O my darling Son, Whom they snatched away from the shoulder of Thy mother! And behold, my belly is torn and rent, and there is none to help me, O my darling, and I do not know the speech of these barbarian thieves, and I am afraid because of them. And I am a woman, a virgin, and these are barbarians, and I do not know whether this [manner of] death is hidden for Thee. And I am in this desert by myself, and I have never dwelt in a city. Perhaps there is some place that will hide me in safety for Thy sake. And I have no one who knoweth me (Fol. 31a, col. 3) in this place, as these thieves are aware. My heart and my soul are sick. And the Israelitish women whose children have been killed, they magnify their sufferings more than mine. I have been an orphan from my earliest

*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

years, and I have none unto whom I can flee. And I am like the beasts who cry out when [men] kill their offspring, and I do even as do they. And these thieves have not had compassion on my weeping. And the birds lament when their young are taken away from under their wings, and in like manner I stretch out my hands above my head. And these thieves spared me not, neither have they had compassion upon the cries of the beasts, and upon their being driven away from their lairs through them, and I do even as do they. These thieves have had no compassion upon me, and I have been persecuted (or, followed) by them from place to place.”

And when I saw the nakedness of my Son, I remembered my wandering, and my weariness, and (Fol. 31b, col. 1) my virginity, and I went back. And the old man Joseph saw that sorrow and suffering had descended upon me, and his head rolled down, and he covered his face with his head-cloth and wept. And Salômê also picked up her head-cloth which had fallen off her, and she wrapped her head therein, for her head was uncovered. And the Lord God put compassion in the heart of the older thief, and he went to the younger thief and quarrelled with him, and he took my Son and His apparel and brought them to me, and he carried my Son on his shoulder, and kissed Him, and this man spake both unto us and unto Joseph the old man many words of consolation. Now the thief who had snatched away my Son was a bad man, and his eyes were wholly like fiery lamps, and his eyes shot out evil [looks], and all his actions made it clear that he was a wicked (Fol. 31b, col. 2) and depraved man, even as Salômê told us. But my suffering and my weeping did not depart from me because I had looked upon this man, for I was thinking that it had never been my habit to look at a man, least of all upon a man who was a highway robber, and who had besides snatched away my Son from me with

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

violence. And when they had gone away from us a little, my Son blessed the older thief and gave him a portion of the Tree of Life. And He remembered my weeping and made [him] a friend of the Cherubim; and He remembered the sweet and consoling words that the thief spake unto me, and He gave him manna for his tongue; and He remembered the wanderings of His mother and gave him rest in Paradise. And He remembered that He was stripped naked by the wicked thief when he carried off His apparel and He covered Himself with perfect light ten thousandfold bright. O the greatness of the goodness that He promised to that thief (Fol. 31b, col. 3) who showed us but a small kindness!

XVIII. And when we had passed on a little way after the trial that we had suffered through the lesser thief, and the kindness that the greater showed us, my Son knew the thought of my heart. And He said unto me, "O My mother, let not thy heart be wearied because of that which hath happened unto us through the thief. This is My Father's Will, and He will not permit Me to leave it unfulfilled, and every trial that shall come upon Me in this world He will not permit Me to leave incomplete. As for these two thieves, one of them is a man of Satan, and he is sprung from the seed of the unbelievers. And now, O My mother, let not thine heart be sorrowful because of this humiliation that I have received, for it is [due to] the command of the Father. Endure patiently with Me, O My mother, tribulations in this world, for thou art the Gates of Jerusalem, and thou art the Consoler, and (Fol. 32a, col. 1) the Garb of Light that shall not be destroyed." And my Son spake unto me many words of consolation.

And we were on the road to Dabra Kušķuâm. Now when we arrived there we went about hither and thither so that we might perchance find a good place wherein

*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

we might dwell. And my darling Son pointed to a place with His finger and said, "Let us go to this good place to dwell therein, for it is a very fine place, O My mother. And this is the race of Judah and the root of the people whence I have sprung, and it is more ready for My blessing than all the [other] places that are ours." And when we had sat down therein we found a little storey in its upper part, with a little opening (or, window) on the northern (or, river) side of it. And I found in it everything that women need for washing children, a washing basin, a bucket, a water channel (drain?), and a well (Fol. 32a, col. 2) of water. And when the ninth day had come after we had descended into Dabra K̄uēs̄k̄uâm, Deyânôs the carpenter, the friend of the old man Joseph, arrived, riding upon his beast, and he had with him a few things that we wanted from him. And we told him what the thieves had done to us, and what they were like, and he knew them. And he said, "These thieves dwell opposite 'Asmônên, and they are like brothers each to the other, like sons of the same woman. The father of the bigger of them was from the land of Egypt, and the father of the other one, whose compassion was small, was of the people of Judah." And in short we sat down [there] for six months. And we dwelt in Dabra K̄uēs̄k̄uâm, I and my Son Jesus. Mûsîs came to us with the story of his fear, and Mûsîs died, and we buried him there. (Fol. 32a, col. 3). He troubled us because there came to us with him some rumours; and he was buried in this place [and is there] to this day. And after his death we dwelt in this place but a short time. And behold, the announcement of the Angel Gabriel came to us and informed us of the destruction of Herod, and we returned to the land of Jerusalem, in which the Jews crucified my darling Son.

And now, O Timothy, open the mind of thy heart, and understand what I will say to thy heart, and write

## *The History of the Virgin Mary related*

down a commemorative narrative of our coming and of our dwelling upon this rock. For this that I make known unto thee I did not reveal to my father Theophilus ; and thou art a flowering branch like Mark, a new plant, which shall never depart.

XIX. And my Lady [MARY] the Virgin took me round the place, and she showed me where she washed her darling Son, the place [pointed out by] His finger, (Fol. 32b, col. 1) the place where she set Him down, and His abode, so that we might build a church there. And she informed me concerning everything that would happen unto us in the house of Saint Abbâ Pachomius in Upper Egypt. And she said unto me, "Behold, Abbâ Pachomius shall come to thee on the day when thou dost dedicate a church to him. And there shall come to thee hosts of the heavenly beings shining with light, and many bishops and archbishops, and their leader shall be Mark the Evangelist, and thy father Dioscoros shall come, and very many companies of the monks, and Saint Abbâ Bûlâ (Paule?) the great, and Abbâ Palâmôn, and to the third generation all the monks shall come to thee at the consecration of the martyrrium of Saint Abbâ Pachomius. And, greater than these, my darling Son shall come unto thee at the (Fol. 32b, col. 2) consecration, and shall precede thee in the work. And multitudes from the tribes of the children of Israel shall be gathered together to thee at the time of consecration, and I also will come together with my hosts, and I will celebrate the Offering by the hand of My darling Son. And the day of the first consecration shall be the first day of the month Genbôt, which is the day on which I was born. [Now the Egyptians celebrate the birthday of our Lady on the first day of Genbôt, and the rest of the Christian peoples on the tenth day of Maskarram.] Now, O Timothy, behold, I have told thee the day whereon thou shalt consecrate the church of Abbâ Pachomius

*by Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria*

publicly. And now, take good heed to everything that I have told thee, and thou shalt fulfil it on the rock as a memorial of myself and of my Son in this place for ever." And when she had said this she disappeared from me; may her blessing be with us for ever and ever.

## THE ANNUNCIATION OF GABRIEL TO MARY

[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604. Fol. 67a ff.]

**I**N THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD. (Fol. 67a, col. 1) Christ, my God and my hope, and my Lady MARY, pray for me ! A Homily describing how Gabriel made his announcement to MARY on the 29th day of the month Magâbît, and the words of praise which he spake unto her. The Angel, on whom was the Sign of the Cross, came to her carrying a staff of fire, and his wings were resplendent, and his eyes sparkled, and his stature filled the courtyard, and his eyes were brighter than the sun ; his face was long, his legs were straight, his feet and his hands were shapely, his appearance was handsome, and his form goodly. This holy Angel, whose name was Gabriel, did the Father send to the Virgin ; and that angel in coming down delivered the martyrs.

I. And when (Fol. 67a, col. 2) the Virgin saw the Angel, she was greatly troubled and said, "What hath the Lord God allotted for me in visiting me ?" And the Angel (who was rejoicing over the incarnation of the Glorious One, and over the direct announcement to the bearer of the Glorious Son) said unto her, "Hail to thee, Virgin ! thou shalt bring forth in thy virginity a perfect Son, the numbering of Whose years hath no end. He shall come and sojourn in thy womb, and tarry there for nine months, and shall be born in the form of a Boy, and He shall go forth from thy womb without the fetter of thy virginity being broken. O Virgin, thou shalt carry Him that cannot be comprehended, and Him that cannot be carried ; Him that heaven and earth cannot contain thou shalt carry, Him



## *Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel*

at Whose word all the earth trembleth, Him that is almighty and all-knowing, Him by Whose power everything subsisteth, and every soul is created. O Virgin, thou shalt bring forth, and shalt carry a Child, (Fol. 67a, col. 3) and there shall be born of thee Him that maketh the heavens to stand up without a pillar, and layeth the foundations of the earth upon the sea. O Virgin, thou shalt bring forth and bear the Creator of the light and of the darkness, Who overthroweth the wicked and bringeth the pure nigh unto Him ; and He rideth upon the chariot of the Cherubim and Seraphim, who ride in the fire. O Virgin, thou shalt bring forth and bear joy wherein there is no sorrow, and the healthy One in Whom there is no sickness, and the blessed One in Whom there is no evil, He Who is not an orphan, the helper of mortals, Who raiseth the dead, holy among the holy ones, exalted among the exalted ones, Whom the angels praise who ever keep watch. O Virgin, thou shalt bear and shalt bring forth Him Whom the angels envelop in their wings of fire, and they shall crown Him and overshadow Him when He goeth forth from thy womb. And He shall be born of thee more easily than men are born, and He shall lie like a (Fol. 67b, col. 1) child in a crib, and He shall be covered with earthly flesh, and He shall rule over everything, and He shall reign over the whole world, and His kingdom shall have no end. O Virgin, thou shalt bear and bring forth Him to Whom kings shall present gifts, and the exalted ones shall give thanks unto Him, and the wise men shall bring gifts unto Him, gold, frankincense, and incense. O Virgin, thou shalt bear and shalt bring forth the Great God, Whom the shepherds shall tell of and they shall go round about the fields by the city in their joy over the birth of the Salvation of the world. O Virgin, thou shalt bear Him Whose days it is impossible to compute with accuracy. O Mother of God, whose image is that of man and woman, thou shalt live with Joseph,

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

the pure, and God-fearing, and righteous man. And as for thee, thou hast no affinity with him in flesh, and no member of thy body (Fol. 67b, col. 2) shall be mingled with his, because of the power of the Holy Spirit Who shall come down upon thee even as a dove alighteth on the water. O Virgin, thou shalt conceive and bring forth without the taint of the flesh. And when He hath been born of thee the righteous and the martyrs shall rejoice over His birth, and His incarnation, and the might of His right hand and holy arm; and His covenant shall be revealed before the nations.

II. "O Mother of the Great God, I will declare unto thee and make thee to know concerning the Child that shall be born of thee, and how great is the majesty and wisdom of Him that shall be perfected in thy womb. How vast is the number of His years, how vast His greatness which I will explain unto thee, and the extent of the kingdom of Him Who never cometh to an end! O holy Lady, no man knoweth the vastness of His mind, and no man knoweth what are the design and the work and deep wisdom of Him that shall go forth from thy virginity without union with man. O strength (Fol. 67b, col. 3) above those who are exhausted! How vast is His greatness! But no word can describe Him to Whom belongeth everything, the Power which thou shalt bear, which shall never be consumed for thee, the Power which the heavens and the earth cannot contain, and all created beings shall minister unto thee. O Virgin, what beginning was there to Him Who is? As there is stability in His existence He shall deliver the world, and at His coming He shall illumine the whole world. O Virgin, who is able to bear Him Who in His might is able to bear the universe? O thou White Dove, the wings of the Spirit shall overshadow thee, they shall rejoice over thee and watch over Him that shall be conceived. O Mother of God, this day hath come to thee He Who cannot be

## *Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel*

separated, the Word hath taken flesh in the sixth month, O Mother of God, the Bearer of the Living One Who never dieth. The Apostles shall reverence thy prayer, and they shall be awestruck when (Fol. 68a, col. 1) thy mouth shall be opened to speak, and they shall become like corpses. The Son shall descend and come to thee, and shall raise them up and make them to ascend a high mountain with thee. O Mother of God, the kings of the earth shall lick thy dust, the heavens and the earth shall minister to the majesty of what thou bearest, and it shall not be difficult for thy womb to carry the fire that shall be in thy belly and shall go forth from thy flesh to save the world. For thou art a lamb of rejoicing to everyone everywhere, O blessed one of the Father, Whose mind hath come down unto thy mind, O MARY."

And whilst he whose name was Gabriel was announcing these glad tidings to the holy woman MARY, she made him no answer, for she was terrified and afraid. And God looked at her, and descended into the womb of the holy woman, and all the saints rejoiced over her, the deliverer of the world, and when they saw her they prostrated themselves before her, and said, "O Mother of God, (Fol. 68a, col. 2) our Lady and redeemer, pray for us! Thou hast become the habitation of glory. He shall be conceived, and formed, and brought forth from thy womb, and shall put on thy flesh. O Mother of God, thou shalt carry [Him] in thy belly, and thou shalt become the habitation of the Godhead. O Mother of God, our Lady and our redeemer, pray thou for us, and lay peace and safety upon those who are in this thy house! O Mother of God, Bearer of Life, glorious one, a Son exalted by those who are exalted shall be born of thee, and He shall enter into thy womb, and shall be perfected and formed therein. O our Lady and deliverer, pray thou and make supplication on behalf of all the world; thou wast an earthly being and hast

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

become a heavenly being through carrying the One. O God, the Creator of the universe, Who art master of everything, Who rulest everything, Who art over everything, Who judgest (Fol. 68a, col. 3) everyone, Whose dominion none can resist, Whose sovereignty none can dispute, Whose designs none can frustrate, Whose wisdom no man can understand, Who art inexplicable, Who art incomprehensible, who can declare Thy years and who can count Thy Name[s]? Who can interpret His hidden things? Who can reveal His revelations? Who can go round about His throne, and who can make His word to draw near? Who can explain Him at Whose voice every soul quaketh? The light and the darkness belong to Him, and He maketh the lightnings to play [in the skies]. And all souls worship Him Whom the heavens and the earth cannot carry, He having been formed and fashioned. O our Lady and deliverer, pray thou for us, and make supplication for us to Him before Whose awfulness the might of every soul trembleth; thou shalt be able to carry Him Whose form cannot be carried, I beseech thee, O benefactress and bountiful giver. O Mother of God, thy (Fol. 68b, col. 1) prayer and thy petition have joined themselves unto us sinners, O thou who shalt be—and He hath made thee—the Mother of the Light of all the world. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have joined themselves unto all sinners. The awesome powers shall serve Him, and the mighty angels shall tremble. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have joined themselves unto us sinners; thou shalt be able to carry in thy belly Him Whose memorial is for ever, Who maketh the upright to love justice and to hate oppression. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have joined themselves unto us sinners; thou shalt be able to carry [in thy belly] the righteous One in Whom is no injustice and no sin, the Judge Who shall not accept the person of sinners, and Who shall make righteous. O Mother

## *Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel*

of God, thy prayer and thy petition have joined themselves unto us sinners ; thou shalt fashion and make perfect Him that is the Keeper of the soul, the Redeemer of the body, Who setteth free in the light (Fol. 68b, col. 2) those who are in darkness, the Looser of the bond of injustice (or, oppression). O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have joined themselves unto us ; the fashioning and completion of Him Who existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit shall become possible in thy belly. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have united themselves unto us sinners ; shall not the fashioning and completion of Him Who buildeth His pavilion on the waters, and by Whose feet the clouds are trodden, become possible [in thy belly]? O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have united themselves unto us ; He Whose habitation is in the heights, Whose throne is crowned with fire, Who dwelleth in the Cherubim and Seraphim, shall come and be conceived in thy womb and dwell therein. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have united themselves unto us sinners ; He Whom ten thousand times ten thousand angels cannot seek out (Fol. 68b, col. 3) shall come and unite unto Himself thy flesh and make thee His abode. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have united themselves unto us sinners. And that fire shall not consume thy body, He Who rideth upon the chariot of the Cherubim and Seraphim shall ride upon thy body. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have united themselves unto us sinners ; Him Who maketh all who are sad to rejoice, Who magnifieth the feeble ones, Who is the eyes of the blind, Who healeth those who are distraught, Who is able to make the dumb to speak, and the ears of the deaf to hear, Who can do everything by His word, Who strengtheneth all, Who feedeth all, thou shalt be able to fashion. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition shall come to us,

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

and shall make us sinners to unite with thee, and shall make strong the power of souls. And by His command He had dominion over everything before (Fol. 69a, col. 1) the world was created. Him to Whom praise belongeth, and to His Begetter, it is possible [for thee] to carry and perfect.

III. "O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition have united themselves unto us sinners; the shepherds saw Him, and the angels ascribed thanks unto Him. O Mother of the pure God, it is meet that thou shouldst be able to fashion the Glorious One completely. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition with thee have united themselves unto us sinners; thou shalt fashion completely Him that cannot be deprived of His throne of glory, Who existed before everything, Who hath soul in Him, Whose Divinity is almighty. O Mother of God, our Lady, thy prayer and thy petition with thee have united themselves unto us sinners; thou shalt fashion completely Him Who is set over everything, Who appointeth king[s], Who establisheth him that putteth his trust in Him, and giveth glory and grace. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition with thee have united themselves unto us sinners, we praise thee because He Who appointed Twelve Tribes (Fol. 69a, col. 2) shall be fashioned in thy womb, and put on thy flesh, the Holy One Whom thou shalt be able to fashion. O Mother of God, thy prayer and thy petition with thee have united themselves unto us sinners; He Who shall become man in every respect, sin alone excepted, and shall come down of His own free will and be hidden in thy belly, without being stripped of His glory, shall dwell in and be formed completely by thee. O Mother of God, the deliverer of those who have been stolen away, and the rescuer of those who follow after Him, may thy prayer and thy petition be with us. O Mother of God, the salvation of the whole world, Peter recited thy praise, and said unto thee,

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*Lady Meux MS. No. 3, fol. 58b.*

The Virgin rescues a woman in childbirth from the waves of the sea,  
and shelters both mother and child





## *Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel*

O blessed woman, Mother of God, thou wast smitten with trembling when thy thought (or, mind) entered into the heads of all the Twelve Tribes of the people. And thou didst converse with them on the matter of the hidden things of thee, and a flame of fire went forth (Fol. 69a, col. 3) from thy mouth. And the shepherds who were with thee were terrified and became like dead men, O our Lady of beautiful things, the mind of the Father and His spiritual grace descended to them, and set free and raised up all the dead bodies. O Mother of God, thou shalt become the guide of all women.”

IV. And Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, said, “Of what kind was the angel who came unto thee, from whom thou couldst not escape? And what said he unto thee, O our Lady? And how is it possible that He Whom the heavens and the earth cannot contain can be carried in thy belly? Is it possible for fire to be mingled with human flesh? O my Lady, there is a torrent of fire in His mouth. O my Lady, Mother of God, holy and to be praised, O Mother of God, O our Lady, is it possible for milk to be associated with virginity? And how can He Who is marvellous in His operation and wisdom be carried [by thee] and made perfect? (Fol. 69b, col. 1) O our Lady, how is the perfecting [by thee] of Him Who put together the heavens and the earth possible? O our Lady, how can the carrying and perfecting be possible [by thee] of Him Who hath become the heir of every being of flesh, Who is glorified and thanked for His power, Whose kingdom governeth everything? O our Lady, how can the carrying and perfect fashioning be possible of Him [Who spreadeth out] the water of the sea, Who quieteth the billows, and maketh the fish to dwell therein? O our Lady and Mother of God, how can it be possible [for thee] to carry Him Who came like a little child into a little cave, seeing that He was able to make the heavens and the earth, the mountains and the hills, Who

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commandeth everything to be by His word, and for Whom nothing is impossible? O my Lady, how canst thou carry Him?

V. "Thou sayest: I will magnify Him that is so mighty, the Lord of all, all creation serveth His power, and every one believeth, by His Word the Father made (Fol. 69b, col. 2) everything, Who is over every one, Who hath dominion over everything that is in the heavens, in the earth, in the sea, and in the abysses; Who founded the mountains and the hills, and created the sun and moon, and the light and the darkness; the subject of the preaching of the Apostles, the coming [announced by] the Prophets, the birth for all the world, the baptism for every man. Can He, the Almighty, ride upon a womb made of dust? Can He, a Being of heaven, without defilement and sin, ride upon a womb made of dust? Can He Who had no form take the form of a man? Can He, Who is enveloped in fire, Whom ten thousand times ten thousand angels hover round about, be carried in a belly? Can He, [before Whom] august priests with their incense and sacrifices and burnt offerings tremble, be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who is alone King of kings, and God of gods, and Lord of lords, be carried in the womb of a virgin? Can He, Whom everyone serveth and Who Himself serveth none, (Fol. 69b, col. 3) be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Whose throne is heaven and Whose footstool is earth, in Whose hand are contained the waters of the sea, be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who was swathed in birth clothes and lay in a manger, be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who grew up like a man in every respect—sin alone excepted—and went about like a man, Who is able [to do] everything, be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who in His might kindled fire and contended against wicked men, be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who was alone in the man-

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ner of His birth, Whose palace is in the heights, Whose abode is crowned with and surrounded by fire—Him do I serve, His holy Name do I praise, with His exalted arm and His stretched-out right hand—be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who is conceived like a man—sin alone excepted—Who cannot be robbed of His throne—be carried in the belly [of a virgin]? Can He, Who gathereth together the whole world and (Fol. 70a, col. 1) hath given joy to those who follow Him, be carried in the belly [of a virgin]? Thou being a creature of the dust, art chosen by our God, the Heavenly One, and art His habitation, can He, in truth, be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who is enveloped in the light, joy [being] before Him, from Whose mouth righteousness and peace issue, Who is almighty, Him do the Cherubim and Seraphim carry, and they cease not to do this when He sendeth forth the lightnings and their wings tremble at His voice, can He come and is it possible for Him to be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who looketh upon the world to its fullest extent, Whom no man can see, come and be carried in a human belly? O Mother of God, Mother of the Light, can He, Who is indeed the Giver of food to every being of flesh, Who maketh every one to rejoice, from Whom are all souls, come and be carried in a human belly? Can He, Who is the boast and the guide of all, Who hath created [everything] in His wisdom, (Fol. 70a, col. 2) Who maketh heaven to stand without a pillar, come and be carried in the belly of a virgin? Can He, Who hath made strong the earth upon the waters, the waters having nothing to stand upon except His Being, He Who maketh possible His design, come and be carried in a human belly? Can He, Who maketh strong everything by His wisdom, and by His counsel, and by His work, and by His knowledge, and by His right hand, Who is almighty, Who speaketh and it indeed cometh to pass, come and be carried in a

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human belly, the fire touching the flesh thereof, which is of the dust and is derived from Adam, and place His Godhead within it? Who can hold fire in his hands without tongs? Yet that fire hath put on the flesh which is of the dust, and hath come and is carried in a human belly. He to Whom, with His Father, praise belongeth, Who appeared in His appointed time, hath come and is carried in a human belly. He Whose kingdom everyone confesseth, (Fol. 70a, col. 3) Whose majesty everyone serveth, and worshippeth, at Whose might everyone trembleth, by Whose wisdom the heavens and the earth stand, Whom all the ends of the earth confess, hath come and is carried in a human belly; and He willed to be able to come into a human belly. Behold, a virgin hath put on fire!"

V (*sic*). To the praise of our Lady MARY by the Prophets and Apostles, we will add our praise. With praises will we praise thee, O our Lady, and we will magnify thee, and we will bless thee; we will glorify thee and present gifts unto thee, and we will make entreaty and supplication unto thee always. O Mother of God, our Lady, we pray unto thee. The Fathers of olden time worshipped the Son Who was born of thy virginity, the righteous men and the martyrs gave praise to thy name, they compare thee to thy Son, Who redeemeth all. O our Lady, Mother of God, we make supplication unto thee. The angels tremble at His Word, and everyone is obedient to His command. O our Lady, Mother of God, we make supplication unto thee, the refuge of the oppressed, (Fol. 70b, col. 1) the reliever of the oppressed, He was swift to enter thy belly. O our Lady and our deliverer, may thy prayer and supplication come to us, and bless us, and be with us with abundant compassion! Thou hast become the habitation of the Most High, O our Lady. He, the Most Exalted of the exalted ones, was carried according to His own design and brought forth according to

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His intent, by a virgin, and after He was born her virginity was found intact. His birth and His coming [are] the light. We confess and worship the Godhead of Him Who came from His exalted position and descended for the salvation of the world. We confess and worship His Godhead, and He is declared to be with the Father in His Being, and He came down from heaven by the command of His Father. We confess and worship Him Who hung out the heavens like a chamber, and Who fashioned man in His own image and likeness. We confess and worship the Godhead of Him Who created His pavilion in the waters (Fol. 70b, col. 2), Who maketh the rains to fall from the roof of heaven, Who feedeth all souls and satisfieth the hungry. We confess and worship the Divinity of Him Who, whilst the earth, and the world, and the heavens were not completed, was Himself completed in the womb of the holy woman MARY ; Who dwelt there and became incarnate so that He might show His power over many brethren. We confess and worship the Godhead of Him Who stablisheth justice for the orphans, Who willeth to be done the desire of the poor, and giveth food to all flesh, to Whom all men give thanks. We confess and worship the Godhead of Him Who made the dumb to speak, and opened the ears of the deaf, and endowed the blind with light, Who speaketh with His word and everything cometh to pass. Of Him Who stablished the mountains in equilibrium with the sea we confess and worship the Godhead, Who compacted heaven and earth. Him Who provided (Fol. 70b, col. 3) the advent of the Prophets, and the preaching of the Prophets, Him do we worship, and Him do we confess. Him Who came and put on mortal human flesh in order to redeem men, and women, and children—the Son of God, diminished in no wise, came, He came and was conceived like a man by a woman—Him do we confess and His Godhead do we worship. The sun and the

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moon are subject unto Him. He Who is called the firstborn of the Father came into the belly of the holy woman [MARY] according to the declaration of the witnesses (or, martyrs).

[Here follows (Fol. 70b, col. 3, l. 17—Fol. 72a, col. 1, l. 17) a very long prayer for all those who were present in the church that day; at the end of it the author puts into the mouth of the Virgin MARY the following:]

And MARY said thus :

I praise Him and hymn Him, giving thanks unto Him. And I bless and exalt Him and magnify Him, and He maketh my heart to rejoice. And I sing my joyful song, and I make music with my mouth, and I praise Him with my lips, and I adore with my belly, and I set the fear of Thy Name in my heart. And I declare, and I fear, and I tremble at what hath happened to me, the wonder of (Fol. 72a, col. 2) His work and wisdom, which cannot be described by me. The God of the exalted ones, the Lord of the mighty ones, Whom the heavens and the earth cannot contain, how can He be contained and how can He be carried by me? I will magnify my God, the Lord of all created things. What can I say, and what shall I tell of His greatness, concerning which the angel made declaration? For he said unto me, “Thou shalt bear a Son to Whose kingdom there is no end.” How can He be contained and carried by me? I will magnify my God and the God of all creation. How great is the majesty which is His! Shall He Who cannot be contained be contained and carried? How many are the years and the number of the days of Him Who is to be carried in my belly! How can He, Whom ten thousand times ten thousand holy angels cannot carry, be contained and carried in my belly? How can He, Who beareth all creation by His power, Who ruleth everything (Fol. 72a, col. 3) from the ends of the heavens to the ends of the earth,

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come and be carried [by me]? How can my belly carry Him by Whose word everything becometh, at Whose words the thunders and the lightnings tremble, Who is the Lord of all, Who conceiveth the thunders, and Who maketh the waters to descend in their floods? By me the Word hath become flesh; He hath come Who shall kindle fire round about me. And a cloud came in my face and shone upon me. And dew came upon me and wetted me from my head to my feet: this was from Him. I have found what He is able to do. How can it be that He cometh to me to be conceived, and to enter into a virgin belly? O Lord, Lord of the mighty ones, Who hath visited me, the fire being holy, none is able to touch it. And He came into [my] belly, which was in truth virgin, and the fire of divinity did not burn up my flesh, nay, (Fol. 72b, col. 1) it made me its abode, and set me to be its tabernacle. He made strong His Godhead in His holy flesh, and His Godhead was carried in a virgin. Though a Being of heaven He came down and became incarnate by me. It was not difficult for my flesh to carry His Godhead, and that fire drew nigh to my flesh, and did not consume my body, and my flesh mingled with His holy Godhead. My flesh, which is from Adam, mingled with His holy flesh. With the form of a man He did all this work; He Whose dominion cannot be taken from Him was carried in my belly. He Who cannot be contended against in the world was carried in a human belly; He Who maketh the mountains to quake with fear was carried in the womb of a virgin.

IX. And certain of the holy Apostles answered and said unto her: How couldst thou carry and contain, O our Lady, Him (Fol. 72b, col. 2) Whom a belly cannot carry? How couldst thou carry and contain, O our Lady, Him Whose tabernacle is in the waters, and Whose habitation is crowned with fire? How couldst thou carry and contain, O our Lady, Him Whose foot

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treadeth the water of the sea? How couldst thou carry and contain, O our Lady, Him Who setteth bounds to the sea by His command, Who bringeth the summer and all greenness? How couldst thou carry and contain Him Whose Nature no man understandeth, Who sitteth above all? O our Lady, how couldst thou carry Him Who provideth clothes for the naked, bread for the hungry, and a fountain of water for the thirsty? O our Lady, how couldst thou carry and contain Him Who raiseth up the fallen, and exalteth the believers, and judgeth the oppressed? O our Lady, Mother of God, how couldst thou (Fol. 72b, col. 3) carry and contain, without thy womb finding it difficult to carry fire, Him Whose every act is justice and judgement? O our Lady and deliverer, how couldst thou carry Him? And the fire drew nigh unto thee, the virgin, the Mother of the heavenly King, Who restoreth righteousness to sinners on their repentance. How couldst thou carry and contain Him, the Fire that could do all these things, Who is a father to orphans, a support to the widower, and a protection for the widow? O Mother of God, our Lady, Mother of the Heavenly King, the King of heaven and earth, how couldst thou carry and put on the fire? O Mother of God, may thy prayer and thy petition make the Holy Spirit to be our associate, for the forgiveness of sins and for the mingling in the kingdom of the heavens, and the renewal of the Holy Spirit! O our Lady, everything, whatsoever they ask from thee do thou grant it unto them graciously. O our Lady, the Mother of the Light, if they draw nigh and knock at thy gates, grant that they (Fol. 73a, col. 1) may be free from blemish. O mother of Him Whom heaven and earth cannot contain, who didst carry and embrace Him, pray for us, so that through thy petition everyone may live, even as we live by His coming, and that we may inherit the kingdom of heaven which He hath prepared for those who love Him.



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[Here follows a short prayer for those who are present in church.]

X. As Gabriel spake unto MARY when he announced glad tidings unto her : Power be to the Father Who came down to dwell in the womb of the Virgin, Who came by His love—grant unto me a mouth that I may declare thy sublime announcement—Who came in His mercy to the daughter of David His beloved, that He might see that she became to Him the Mother of Him Who created Adam (Fol. 73a, col. 2) and all the world, Whose Name existed before the sun was. He called the Angel [Gabriel] and sent him to the pure Virgin to announce to her the taking up of the mission in a mystery hidden from the world, and full of peace for the Virgin, and of a good hope for all the world. The being of the spirit descended and came to the Virgin ; he blessed her and embraced her and told her concerning her conception which would make everyone wonder. And he said unto the Virgin, “ Peace be unto thee, O Mother of my Lord, blessed among women ! And blessed be the fruit of thy womb.”

XI. MARY answered and said unto the Angel, “Who art thou, my Lord ? And what is the announcement which thou wouldst declare ? What thou sayest is strange to me, and the manner thereof I do not understand.” And the Angel said unto her, “ Blessed art thou among women. A great One is pleased to make His abode in thee. Be not afraid : through thee Divine grace hath decided to pour out His mercy for ever and ever.” MARY answered and said unto the Angel, (Fol. 73a, col. 3) “ My lord, I beseech thee not to frighten me. I cannot receive [thy news]. What thou sayest is far from me ; I cannot find out the import thereof.” And the Angel said unto her, “ The Father hath revealed it unto me, and I will reveal the mystery unto thee, because I was with Them, with His Son, when He sent me [to tell thee] that from thee He was going

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to arise in the world." And MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "Thou art fire, and thine apparel is coals of fire; frighten thou me not, O fire. Why dost thou disturb me? For all that thou sayest unto me is new." And the Angel said unto her, "It is a wonderful thing for thee; a mother thou shalt change into (?). I took the announcement, and I come to thee concerning the conception of the Most High, Who hath wished to make His abode in thy womb." MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "My lord, I am afraid to receive it, for when my mother Eve hearkened to the serpent that spake to her like a friend, he caused her expulsion from Paradise." And the Angel said unto the Virgin, "He was a deceiver, and he deceived thy mother Eve when he spake to her. But I am not to be compared unto him, (Fol. 73b, col. 1) for I have come from God, and have been sent [by Him]." And MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "What thou sayest to me is a hard thing, and I cannot produce divine offspring." And the Angel said unto MARY, "Nevertheless the Father deputed me to come and declare to thee that His Son will spring from thy womb, and thou sayest that thou wilt not accept Him." And MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "Thy speech is fair, yet nevertheless I accept nature; there can be no offspring to a virgin." And the Angel said unto her, "We are stupefied watching His word, but when He hath commanded us we cannot refuse [to obey]. As for thee, why shouldst thou not blossom? Wilt thou resist all that the Father wisheth?" And MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "My lord, I am disturbed, and I am afraid. Thou makest me to appeal to nature: a virgin cannot bring forth a child." And the Angel said unto MARY, "The beloved of the Father will come down thus, that thou mayest bring forth in thy virgin state in truth. Accept the Will of the Father, and do not make thyself hard and obstinate."

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XII. And MARY answered and said unto him, (Fol. 73b, col. 2) "Thine honourable appearance, and thy awesome announcement, and thy burning fire, and the love of God I cannot gainsay, nevertheless, for me to accept thee is difficult." And the Angel said unto her, "I brought unto thee the goodly announcement that thou shalt bring forth thy Lord; I have brought unto thee a Child. I give thanks unto Him Who hath been pleased that thou shalt become a mother, He being thy Child." And MARY said unto the Angel, "I am a child, and I a woman am unable to receive fire; and thine announcement is hard [to me], and I cannot accept it as thou sayest." And the Angel said unto the blessed woman, "This day hath hope arisen for Adam in thee, for God hath willed to come down and to dwell in thee, and He will set him free. Receive this [announcement] and be thankful." And MARY said unto the Angel, "This day have I marvelled, and I marvel at this which thou sayest. Peradventure there is some guile in thy word." And the Angel said unto her, "When thou hast accepted I will announce unto thee peace, and I will bring unto thee truly my Lord Himself. (Fol. 73b, col. 3) For even thus hath He wished to arise from thee in the world." And MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "All thy words are [hard]. I beseech thee, my lord, not to lie unto me. I find hard the announcement that thou declarest unto me, and I cannot accept it." And the Angel said unto her, "He shall come unto thee, and He shall dwell in thy womb. Hold not to be difficult [to understand] the operation of grace; ascribe praise unto Him Who hath been pleased to make His abode in thee." And MARY answered and said unto him, "My lord, I know no man, and I have had union with none; how can there be a child?" And the Angel said unto her, "Thou shalt conceive by the Holy Spirit, Who cannot be sought out, and Who hath union with none. And

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the power of the Most High shall dwell upon thee, and it shall rise from thy womb." And MARY said unto him, "Watch now, His word cannot be gainsaid. If the Holy Spirit cometh to me, I am His Mother, and I will serve Him, and He shall be my Lord, according to thy word." And the Angel said unto her, "Let thy head be lifted up, (Fol. 74a, col. 1) O Virgin, let thy heart rejoice, O holy woman; a second heaven is in thee, the world shall be delivered, and in thy Son shall be peace." And MARY answered and said unto him, "My head, according to thy word, and the appearance of thy Lord, rejoiceth. If the face of thee, who art His servant, be thus, what is the face of thy Lord and God like?" And the Angel said unto her, "We are not able to see Him that sent us, and we greatly fear Him Whose Father is covered with fire, and hidden in fire." And MARY answered, "Thou sayest, I fear greatly, and thou hast made me greatly afraid. Now if He is like fire, as thou tellest me, how can my womb help being injured by His flame wherein He dwelleth?" And the Angel said unto her, "Thy womb truly is filled and is sealed with holy virginity, the place that the Holy One loveth exceedingly. The angel came that he might appear therein." MARY answered and said unto him, "Reveal to me why He is pleased to take up His abode in my humble [body]. For behold, (Fol. 74a, col. 2) the daughters of kings fill the world, and why should He desire me?" And the Angel said unto her, "He hath the power to dwell in the rich, but He loveth thy humility, so that He may become a companion of the poor and needy, and enrich them. And with this [intent] He will make Himself manifest." And MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "Explain to me also, if it be that thou knowest, when doth He wish to come to me, and when, according to thy word, He dwelleth in me whether the fire will come when He appeareth unto me?" And the Angel said

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unto her, "He hath desired and will come, and behold, He will take up His abode in thee, but that He may not terrify thee thou wilt not apprehend Him. And I cannot see thee filled with burning fire." And MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "My lord, I wish to ask thee of another matter. Explain to me clearly concerning my Son Who shall dwell with me, for I know not what to do in respect of Him, and I would not err." And the Angel said unto her, "Say Holy, Holy, Holy. For the angels say nothing (Fol. 74a, col. 3) except Holy. We have nothing to say about thy Son except this." And MARY answered and said unto him, "Holy, blessed, and praised is the Name of Him Who hath looked upon the lowly estate of His Mother. Behold, from now and henceforth all the generations of the world shall bless me." And the Angel said unto her, "The heavens and the watching angels exalt Him, the depths and men praise Him Who hath come down and dwelt in a virgin in order to set free all [men]. His mercy is great. And He Whom the heavens cannot support cannot be estimated with the lip. And behold, His substance [is] in a belly. Beneath it heaven and earth are mingled. And the angels give thanks unto Him and to the Virgin, and minister unto the hidden mystery. Heaven rejoiceth, keeping vigil because of Him, and the earth rejoiceth over the Virgin. And the two rejoicing together ascribe praise unto the Son of God, and they all keep vigil together, and men praise the Son Who hath made peace (Fol. 74b, col. 1) among them. And being full [of joy] they incite thanks from all the world to Thee, the invisible fire, and from every mouth in the world [come] praise and singing. To Thee be praise for ever. Amen."

THE CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF OUR  
LADY MARY, THE BEARER OF GOD

[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 78a.]

TO BE READ ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH GENBÔT

(Fol. 78a, col. 1) IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD, WE BEGIN AND WRITE WITH THE HELP OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE HISTORY OF THE CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF OUR LADY MARY, THE BEARER OF GOD. MAY HER BLESSING BE WITH US FOR EVER ! AMEN.

**T**HERE was a certain man of the twelve tribes of Israel whose name was *Ïyâkêm* (Joachim), who was of the descendants of David, and he was exceedingly rich. And his wife was of the children of Aaron, and her name was *Hannâ*, and they both were lovers of fasting and prayer. And when he brought offerings to God he doubled them, and none did as he did among the children of Israel, and he thought and said, "This my offering shall be on behalf of all the children of Israel, so that God shall pardon all their sins." And when the festival of the Jews arrived, all the children of Israel brought and offered up their offerings. And a certain man (Fol. 78a, col. 2) of the children of Israel, whose name was *Rôbêl* (Reuben), came, and he said unto *Ïyâkêm*, "It is not seemly for thee to present [thine] offering before us, because thou hast no seed in Israel."

I. And when *Ïyâkêm* heard this word he was sad with a great sadness, and he began to think and to say, "Behold, all the children of Israel have seed, but I have none"; and then he thought about the righteous and

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good men [of old], and how they had seed and sons. And he remembered our father Abraham, the first one, and he knew how God had given him a son in his old age, and how he had called him Isaac. And İyâkêm was sorrowful, and he did not speak to his wife because of his sorrow, and because of what Rôbêl had said unto him. And he withdrew himself and departed into the desert, and he fasted to God forty days and forty nights. And he said in his mind, "No food shall enter my belly until God shall grant me my petition and judge my prayer, neither meat nor drink." (Fol. 78a, col. 3) And his wife Hännâ gave herself up to weeping and lamentation, and she made entreaty and supplication to God that He would give her a son, and remove from her [her] disgrace. And it came to pass that when their great festival arrived, a certain woman from among her neighbours came and said unto her, "How much longer wilt thou exalt sorrow in thine heart, and punish thyself with this sorrow? Behold, the festival hath arrived, and therefore it is not seemly for thee to sorrow so exceedingly. But take this garment which my teacher hath given unto me, and array thyself in it, for this garment belongeth to the apparel of kings; and it is meet for thee to put it on." And Hännâ said unto her, "Take it away from me, for I cannot put it on by reason of the great sorrow which is mine because I have no son. Perhaps one dear to thee hath given thee this garment; wouldst thou associate thyself with me in thy sin?" And the woman answered (Fol. 78b, col. 1) and said unto Hännâ, "He hath done well; God hath shut up thy womb so that thou canst obtain neither son nor seed among the children of Israel."

II. And when Hännâ heard her she sorrowed with a great sorrow. Then she rose up quickly, and she stripped off her apparel, and she washed herself and put on fine raiment, and when the ninth hour of the day had come she went to pray in the house of the sanc-

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tuary. And as she was going along she saw a high tree, and in it were birds with their young ones, and Hännâ said, "Let Thy blessing be upon them, O Lord, and multiply them exceedingly, and hearken unto my prayer, and grant me my petition; and bless me even as Thou didst bless the belly of Sârâ, and didst give her a son in her old age." And then she lifted up her eyes to heaven, and she began to weep and to make lamentation, saying, "Woe is me! Unto whom shall I liken myself? Must I then liken myself (Fol. 78b, col. 2) to the beasts and the birds? But [how can I,] for the beasts and the birds have [their] young ones. Woe is me! Unto what shall I liken myself? Must I liken myself to the earth? But even the earth hath fruit in it."

III. And whilst she was weeping and making lamentation in this manner—now she did not raise her eyes to heaven—behold, the Angel of the Lord came down from heaven. And he stood up before her, and he said unto her, "Behold, God hath heard thy prayer, and He hath accepted thy petition, and He hath given thee a son." And Hännâ said, "My Lord and my God! If it be that Thou hast given me a son I will give him to God, and I will dedicate him to the service of the sanctuary all the days of his life." And then the Angel said unto her, "Behold, İyâkêm thy husband hath come from the desert, and there is a young goat with him; take thou and eat."

IV. And the Angel of the Lord went to İyâkêm, and he said unto him, "God hath heard thy prayer, and He hath accepted (Fol. 78b, col. 3) thy petition; and as for thy wife Hännâ she shall conceive." And when İyâkêm heard these words, he rejoiced with a great joy, and gave thanks unto the Lord his God. Then İyâkêm called the shepherds of his flocks and herds, and he said [unto them] "Bring ye two rams for a sacrifice and an offering unto my Lord and my God. And bring me



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twelve oxen for an offering to the house of the sanctuary of God, and bring me eight sheep for the evening meal of the festival." And they did as he commanded them, and Īyâkêm came [back] with the shepherds of his flock. And Ḥannâ rose up and stood before the door of the house, and when she saw her husband coming to her she went to him, and she embraced his neck, and she said unto him, "Dost thou not know that God hath had mercy upon me, and hath shown me compassion, and hath blessed me with a great blessing? For she who was barren shall not henceforth be barren, and she who had no children is now with child." And having (Fol. 79a, col. 1) entered his house Īyâkêm rested therein that day. And on the morrow Īyâkêm rose up, and took his offering with him, and he thought in his heart, saying, "If God accepteth my offering from me, behold, I shall see my face in the crown that is in the place of the sanctuary." Now there was in the place of the sanctuary a crown that rested on the altar. And when any one of the children of Israel brought an offering or oblation to God, if it were accepted by Him his face appeared in the crown as in a mirror unto him that brought the offering. But if his offering were not accepted his face did not appear in the crown. And when Īyâkêm brought the offering he saw the vision of his face in the mirror, and he said, "Behold, I know that God, the Compassionate, hath hearkened unto my prayer, and hath received my petition, and hath given me a child."

V. Then Īyâkêm (Fol. 79a, col. 2) turned aside from inside the place of the sanctuary of God, and he went into his house with joy and gladness, and praising the Lord God. And when Ḥannâ had passed nine months she brought forth a daughter; and Ḥannâ said unto the midwife, "What have I brought forth?" And she said unto Ḥannâ, "Thou hast brought forth a daughter." And Ḥannâ said, "My soul doth magnify the

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Lord this day." And she called the name of that daughter MARY (Mâryâm). And when Hännâ had passed forty days, she was purified, and she put on her raiment, and suckled that daughter.

VI. And when six months had been fulfilled for that maiden, Hännâ made her stand on the ground to make her try to walk with her feet, and the maiden took six steps with her feet and went back to her mother's bosom. And Saint Hännâ said, "As God liveth, I will not let the maiden walk on the ground until (Fol. 79a, col. 3) I take her into the house of the sanctuary of God"; and then she built for her a little chamber, and made her to live therein until she was one year old. And at that time İyâķêm made a great feast, and he invited the priests and the Rabbis of the children of Israel, and their great men and their elders, and satisfied all of them with food. And İyâķêm brought the maiden to the priests, and they all blessed her, saying, "May the Lord God bless this maiden, and give her strength, and power, and greatness of name (or, renown) for ever and ever"; and the people of the company said, "Amen, and Amen."

VII. And then İyâķêm took her to the chief priests and the elders of the people, and they all blessed her, each according to their names, saying, "May the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Who dwelleth in the heights, bless this maiden with a great blessing which shall (Fol. 79b, col. 1) never be removed from her"; and then her mother took her and brought her into the chamber which she had built for her. And Hännâ said, "I will praise God with the praise of His saints. I will bless Him, I will give thanks unto Him, I will call Him holy, and I will exalt Him, because He hath removed from me the word of reproach and disgrace, and hath given me a daughter among the children of Israel." And when they had made an end of the feast, they rose up and came into their houses with

## *Her Conception and Birth*

joy, and gladness, and thanksgiving to the God of Israel.

VIII. And when the maiden was two years of age İyâkêm said unto Hännâ, "Let us take this maiden into the house of the sanctuary of God, according to what we vowed long ago, so that God may not be wroth with us." And her mother Saint Hännâ said, "Wait until she shall be three years of age, so that she may not fret for her father and her mother." And when the maiden was three years old İyâkêm called his pure, Hebrew maidservants, (Fol. 79b, col. 2) and put candlesticks with wax candles in their hands, and they walked before the maiden and brought her into the house of the sanctuary. And the priest received her, and blessed her, and said unto her, "God shall magnify thy name in that day wherein He shall appear from thee." Then the priests took her, and established her in the third storey of the house of the sanctuary, and the priests, and the elders, and all the children of Israel blessed her, and God made great joy to come upon her. And her kinsfolk and the people of her household turned and went back to their houses in great joyfulness, and they praised the Lord God, and gave thanks unto Him because she had not turned back when they carried her into the house of the sanctuary. And MARY dwelt in the house of the sanctuary of God like a pure dove, and the Angel of the Lord brought down food for her at all times.

IX. And when MARY (Fol. 79b, col. 3) had dwelt there for twelve years, the nobles and teachers of the children of Israel gathered together, and they said, "Behold, MARY hath dwelt for twelve years in the house of the sanctuary of God, and we are afraid that she is now too old to be here." Then they went to Zacharias and said unto him, "Go into the house of the sanctuary and ask the Lord God to show thee what we shall do with this maiden, and hearken unto what

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God shall say unto thee that we may deal with her." And straightway Zacharias rose up and went into the Holy of Holies, and he made supplication, and he lifted up his eyes to God, and said, "My Lord and my God, my Teacher and Saviour, I beseech and entreat Thee to show us what to do in respect of this maiden." And straightway the Angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and stood before Zacharias, and said unto him, "O Zacharias, gather together from among the children of Israel all the men (Fol. 80a, col. 1) who are unmarried, and let each one of them bring his rod, and thou shalt know that it is meet that the man, in whose rod a sign shall appear, shall take this maiden; give her to him and set him as a faithful guardian of her." And when Zacharias heard this word he went forth from the house of the sanctuary, and sent a crier through all the land of Judah [to cry out] concerning this matter. And when Joseph the carpenter heard this, he cast his saw from his hand and went into the house of the sanctuary, together with all the [other] people. And when they were all gathered together to Zacharias the priest, he took their rods from them, and took them into the house of the sanctuary, and he made supplication and lifted up his eyes to God. And when he had finished his prayer, he took those rods and brought them out, and gave unto each man his rod. And one rod was left behind, that which belonged to Joseph, and when Zacharias the priest gave Joseph his rod, there went forth from that rod a dove, and it perched (Fol. 80a, col. 2) upon Joseph's head. Thereupon Zacharias the priest said unto Joseph, "O Joseph, thou art he whom God hath chosen, and He hath set thee to be a faithful guardian of the holy Virgin; take her now, and guard her." And Joseph answered and said unto Zacharias, "How can I take to wife MARY? For I am an old man and advanced in years, and this is a maiden who hath just come to the age for marriage. If I take

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*Lady Meux MS. No. 2 fol. 65b.*

1. A cannibal gives a leprous beggar a drink of water
2. Mary prevents the Devil from carrying off the cannibal's soul to hell
3. The archangel weighs the drink of water against seventy-eight murders committed by the cannibal and it counterbalances his sins
4. The soul of the cannibal under Mary's protection



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her I shall become an object of contempt among the children of Israel." And Zacharias the priest said unto Joseph, "Take good heed to thyself lest God become wroth with thee. Remember what God did to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up alive, because they had sinned and had resisted the command of the Lord God. Now therefore, O Joseph, take heed unto thyself, lest what came upon them come upon thee." And when Joseph heard this word from Zacharias the priest, he feared (Fol. 80a, col. 3) with a great fear. And he took the maiden to himself, and he said unto her, "Behold, O MARY, I have taken thee from the house of the sanctuary of God, but I wish to go on a journey, and behold, the time [for going] hath arrived. Take care of thyself until I return to thee, and I will ask the Lord God to protect thee and to be with thee."

X. And then the priests of the children of Israel were gathered together to make curtains for the house of the sanctuary, and Zacharias said, "Bring ye unto me eight pure maidens, who are virgins, from the descendants of David"; and they brought unto him eight maidens even as he had commanded them. And [Zacharias] the priest remembered MARY, and he knew that she was holy and pure, and he sent for her, and she came to him.

XI. Then Zacharias commanded these virgins to come unto him, and [they did so,] and he said unto them, "Cast lots among yourselves, and she upon whom the lot shall fall shall weave scarlet (or, purple) wool (Fol. 80b, col. 1) into the curtains of the house of the sanctuary." And they did as the priest commanded them, and they cast lots among themselves, and the lot fell upon Saint MARY; and she took scarlet wool and went into her house. And in those days Zacharias the priest withdrew himself to silence, and a priest whose name was Samuel was appointed in his place, and he

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continued to perform the duties of the priestly office until the angel of God came down and loosed the fetter of Zacharias's tongue.

XII. And then Saint MARY gave herself up to the weaving of the scarlet [wool]. And one day the blessed MARY rose up to draw water at the well of Nazareth, in the city of David, and God sent the Angel Gabriel to her, and he said unto her, "Peace be unto thee, O pure and holy MARY, for God hath blessed thee, and He is with thee, and thou hast found grace with Him, and thou shalt be the greatest of all the women who have been created in the world." And when (Fol. 8ob, col. 2) our Lady MARY heard this word, she turned to the right and to the left, to see who it was that was talking to her; and there was no one talking to her, no one that she could see whatsoever. Therefore she was afraid with a great fear, and she dropped her water pot, and betook herself to her house, and began to weave the scarlet wool. And the Angel of the Lord came to her a second time, and the Angel said unto her, "Fear thou not, O MARY, for thou hast found grace with God, and great joy. Now thou shalt conceive by the word of God and by the Holy Spirit." And MARY answered and said unto him, "How can this happen unto me, seeing that I have known no man?" And the Angel said unto her, "Now know thou, O MARY, that thou shalt not become with child after the manner of [other] women, but only the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee. And He Who shall be born of thee shall be holy, and He shall be called the Son of the Most High, and His Name shall be called Jesus, and He shall deliver (Fol. 8ob, col. 3) His people from their sins." And MARY answered and said unto the Angel, "Behold me, the handmaiden of God; my soul is in His hand, and He shall do with me according to His will. May it be unto me even as thou hast said unto me."

XIII. And when MARY had finished weaving the



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scarlet wool she carried it to Zacharias the priest, and he took it from her, and blessed her, and said unto her, "O MARY, behold, God shall magnify thy name, for blessed shalt thou be above all the women in the world." And when MARY heard this word she rejoiced with a great joy, and gave thanks unto God. And having gone forth from Zacharias she went to Elisabeth, her father's sister. And when Elisabeth heard that MARY had come to her, she went out, and opened the doors to her, and entreated her [to come in], and said unto her, "Who am I that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me? When I heard thy voice saluting me, (Fol. 81a, col. 1) the child in my belly leaped with joy and gladness, and made obeisance unto Him that is in thy belly." And when MARY heard this word from Elisabeth she lifted up her eyes to heaven and said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in my God and Saviour. For He hath seen the suffering of His handmaiden. Behold, henceforth every generation shall hold me blessed. For the Mighty One hath done great things for me, and His Name is holy. And His mercy is from generation to generation for those who fear Him. The Mighty One hath wrought with His arm, and He hath scattered those who resist Him in the thought of their hearts. He hath plucked the mighty ones from their thrones, and hath magnified those of low degree. He hath satisfied the hungry by His blessing, and hath sent the rich empty away. He hath received Israel His servant, and hath remembered His mercy, which He spake to our fathers, to (Fol. 81a, col. 2) Abraham, and to his seed for ever." And then MARY dwelt [there] for three months, and came to her own house.

XIV. And after this Joseph came back from his journey, and went into his house, and he saw that MARY was with child. And because of this he smote his face, and cast dust upon his head, and threw him-

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self on the ground, and wept a great weeping, saying, "Woe is me! Who hath seduced the daughter of David? Woe is me! Who hath worked a snare on her? Woe is me! [What] shall I do to this maiden, whom I took from the house of the sanctuary a virgin undefiled? Woe is me! Who hath captivated the virgin and seduced her? Woe is me! Behold, shame and disgrace will be my portion in Israel, woe is me, when this matter shall be revealed before the priests, and the Rabbis and the elders of the people! Woe is me! Behold, the Evil Serpent hath come to the virgin (Fol. 81a, col. 3) and seduced her, just as the Evil Beast seduced Eve and made her to eat of the tree whereof God commanded that they should not eat." And weeping and lamenting in this wise he rose up from the dust, and he called MARY and said unto her, "Woman, why hast thou done this thing, and filled thy soul with sorrow, and defiled thyself, and brought great shame and contempt upon me and upon thyself among the people? Hast thou forgotten the Lord thy God? How cometh it that thou didst not remember how thou didst formerly dwell in the Holy of Holies, and how the Angel of the Lord brought thy food down to thee every day? Didst thou forget how thou didst grow up with thy father in honour, and righteousness, and holiness?"

XV. And when MARY heard this word she wept a great weeping, and she uncovered her face, and she said, "On my part, there is no wickedness whatsoever in what I have done." And Joseph said unto her, (Fol. 81b, col. 1) "This which is in thy belly, what is it?" And Saint MARY answered and said, "The Lord my God knoweth that there is no evil whatsoever in that which I have done before God, and that I have not defiled my body." And when Joseph heard this word, he meditated and said, "What shall I do with this woman? If I keep this matter secret I shall become

## *Her Conception and Birth*

guilty in respect of the Law ; and if I reveal this matter I am afraid of the children of Israel, lest it may happen that what is in her belly is of the Spirit, and I shall have delivered innocent blood [to death].” And then he said, “ Shall I put her away secretly, or shall I let her live with me ? ” Then he rose up and went to the house of the sanctuary, and he prayed, and lifted up his eyes and said, “ Thou, O Lord God, art the Maker of everything, and the Creator of everything, and knowest all things. There is nothing hidden from Thee ; what is secret is (Fol. 81b, col. 2) manifest to Thee. Thou, O Lord my God, knowest that I took her as a pure and holy virgin, and that I have done no evil to her, and now I do not know what hath happened to her ; do Thou make me to know how I must deal with this woman.” And Joseph made long his prayer, and he looked up to heaven, and made supplication to God with weeping and lamentation. And having finished his prayer he returned to his house, and went to sleep.

XVI. And that night the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph, and said unto him in a dream, “ Fear not, O Joseph, to take to wife MARY thy betrothed, for that which is in her belly is of the Holy Spirit. And the Name of Him that shall be born of her shall be Jesus, and He shall save His people from their sins.” And when Joseph woke up from his sleep, he rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and he praised and gave thanks to the Lord God of Israel. And after this a certain chief of the priests, (Fol. 81b, col. 3) whose name was John, came to Joseph, and embraced him, and said unto him, “ O Joseph, why dost thou delay in coming to us in the house of the sanctuary ? ” And he answered and said unto him, “ Because I was away on a journey. Yesterday I came [back], and I was tired with travelling on the road, and therefore I wished to rest in my house for a couple of days.” And whilst

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Joseph was speaking thus, John turned to MARY, and saw that she was with child. And he went to Zacharias and said unto him, "Behold, this Joseph, concerning whom thou hast said that he is a good and trustworthy man, behold, I say, he hath committed a great sin." And Zacharias the priest said unto him, "What hath he done?" And John answered and said unto him, "Behold, he hath committed fornication with MARY whom he took from the house of the sanctuary of God—now thou didst make him guardian over her—and hath made her to be with child." And Zacharias the priest said unto him, "Hath Joseph done this thing?" And John said unto him, (Fol. 82a, col. 1) "Send to her, and let her come to thee that thou mayest see her and believe."

XVII. Then Zacharias the priest sent a message to the virgin, and she came to him and he saw her, and that she was with child. And Zacharias the priest answered and said unto MARY, "What is this thing that thou hast done? Thou hast saddened thyself among the children of Israel. Didst thou forget the Lord thy God [and] how He sent thee thy food by an angel every day? Art not thou she who dwelt in the Holy of Holies, hearing the sound of the hymns and praises and singing by day and by night?" And then Zacharias sent a message to Joseph, and he came to him, and Zacharias said unto Joseph, "What is this that thou hast done? Hast thou consummated thy marriage and made to be with child the virgin whom thou hast taken from the house of the sanctuary, without waiting for the priest to lay his hand upon thy head (Fol. 82a, col. 2) and bless thee?" And Joseph held his peace and had nothing to say. And the priest spake again to Joseph, saying, "Bring back to us this maiden as thou didst take her"; and he wept with a great weeping. And Zacharias said unto him, "Know, O Joseph, behold, I will make thee to drink the water of correction

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whereby every one who hath committed fornication is to be tested. And when thou hast drunk thy doings shall be revealed before all men." And then Zacharias the priest took him by his hand and made him drink the water of correction.

XVIII. And Zacharias called MARY also, and made her drink of that water, and all the people gathered together that they might see what would happen to them. And when Zacharias the priest and all the people saw that nothing harmful or injurious came upon them, they all marvelled and said, "Verily they are innocent"; and the priest sent them away, and they came [to their house] in peace. And after this Herod the king commanded [his officers] to make to come to him in Bethlehem every one who lived (Fol. 82a, col. 3) in the borders thereof. And when Joseph heard this word, he said within himself, "What shall I do in respect of this woman? Shall I write down her name as if she were my wife? Certainly she is not my sister, and all the children of Israel know that she is neither my wife nor my sister." And then he meditated and said, "This is the day which God hath made, let Him do whatsoever it pleaseth Him therein." Then he rose up and brought an ass, and he set MARY upon it, and they went to Bethlehem. And there followed him on the road a priest whose name was Samuel, and he went with them. And when they had come a distance of about three stadia, Joseph turned and looked at MARY and saw that she was smiling and laughing, and she said unto him, "Behold, birth-pangs have seized upon me, for I have drawn nigh to my time of bringing forth." And Joseph said unto her, "Where shall I put thee in this place?" And then Joseph lifted up his eyes and saw a cave, and he brought MARY into that cave, (Fol. 82b, col. 1) and went forth to seek for a midwife for her. And as he was going along the road, behold, he saw the earth trembling. And again, he saw oxen feeding, and they

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lifted up their eyes to heaven. And again, he saw a great river (or, valley) wherein were many sheep, and they wished to drink, but only lifted up their eyes to heaven. And then Joseph [lifted up] his eyes towards the mountains of Bethlehem, and he saw a woman coming, and he came to her and saluted her. And that woman said unto him, "Whither goest thou, and what dost thou want?" And Joseph said unto her, "I want a midwife." And that woman said unto him, "Who is this woman who is about to bring forth in the cave?" And Joseph said unto her, "It is MARY, who is with child by the Holy Spirit." And that woman said, "Dost thou believe what thou sayest?" And Joseph said, (Fol. 82b, col. 2) "Come to her"; and the two of them went together into the cave. And they saw a cloud of light which crowned MARY, and also there went forth from the inside of the cave a great light, and it shone in all that land; and they saw a child lying in a manger. And at that moment the woman cried out with a loud voice and said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord this day, because I have seen a new light and great glory. That Child Who hath been born this day is the God of Israel, and He shall deliver His people from their sins." And the woman went out from the cave, and she met another woman whom God had sent unto MARY, that is to say Sûlâmê (Salome). And the woman said unto Salome, "Come and see a thing hard [to understand], the like of which hath never been since the world was created, and will (Fol. 82b, col. 3) never again [be seen], for MARY, a virgin, hath given birth to a child, and having brought forth continueth in her virginity." And Salome answered and said unto her, "As the Lord liveth, I will not believe this word until I see with mine own eyes." And then they two went together and came into the cave. And Salome drew nigh to our Lady MARY and stretched out her hands to examine her, and fire went forth from the body of our

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Lady MARY, and consumed the two hands of Salome. Then did she shriek with a loud cry, saying, "Woe is me! My hands are burned up because of my exceedingly great sin and my little belief." And she bowed down to the ground and said, "O Thou Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, make me not a laughing-stock and a derision among the children of Israel, but look upon my low estate and heal my hands, for every one (Fol. 83a, col. 1) who calleth upon Thy Name shall rejoice and be healed." Then forthwith an angel came to Salome and said unto her, "Behold, God hath heard thy prayer, and thy petition hath been received; take the Child and show Him thy hands which have been burned with fire." And she did so, and she was healed straightway, and she said, "Verily this is the King of Israel"; and she went forth from that cave with great joy. And there came unto her a voice from heaven, saying, "O Salome, take heed that thou tellest no one of the miracle which thou hast seen until the Child shall enter Jerusalem." And there came Wise Men from the Country of the East unto Jerusalem. And their names were these: Tânisûrâm, and Malikô, and Zêsësâ, and they said, "Where is He Who is born the King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and we have come to worship Him." And when Herod heard this he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him. And (Fol. 83a, col. 2) Herod the king gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, and he asked them, saying, "Where is Christ born?" And they said unto him, "In Bethlehem of Judah. For thus is it written by the prophet: 'Bethlehem of the land of Judah, thou shalt in no way lag behind the kings of Judah, for from thee shall go forth a King Who shall rule My people Israel.'"

XVIII. Then Herod called the Wise Men by themselves (i.e. privately), and enquired of them the day whereon the star appeared to them, and he sent them

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to Bethlehem, saying unto them, "Go ye and enquire for that Child carefully, and wheresoever ye shall find Him, tell me, that I myself may come and worship Him." And having been commanded by the king they departed, and that star that had appeared unto them in the East guided them until it brought them and stood above the Child. And when they saw (Fol. 83a, col. 3) that star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and when they came into the house they found the Child and MARY, and they did homage to Him, and saluted Him, and they opened their treasure-bags. First of all they presented unto Him gold, because He was a King; secondly, they brought to Him incense because He was God; and thirdly, they brought to Him myrrh because of the human nature of His Body. And He accepted [them] from them. And the Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord rose upon them like the sun, and they feared with a great fear. And the Angel said unto them, "Fear ye not, for behold, I announce to you great tidings of the joy which shall be unto all people. For there is born unto you this day in the city of David a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord. And the sign of Him is thus: Ye shall find the Child swathed in His birth clothes and lying in a manger." And in a moment there came with that angel multitudes (Fol. 83b, col. 1) of the hosts of heaven praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the heavens, and peace on earth to the children of men [of] His good will." And the Wise Men went forth from where the Child was, wishing to go to Herod; and they slept on the road. And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto them in a dream, and said unto them, "Go ye not into Jerusalem, but depart to your own country, and return by another road"; and when the day dawned they returned to their own country, as the Angel had told them. And they went into the presence of their king, who asked them, saying, "What did ye see?"



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*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 52b.*

An angel delivering the Abbess of Mount Carmel of a child under the direction of the Virgin



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And they told him everything that they had seen, and how [the Child] had accepted gifts from them. And again he asked them and said unto them, "What did He give you?" And they said, "He gave us a little blessing of bread, and we hid it in the earth." And the king said unto them, "Go ye and bring [it] to me." (Fol. 83b, col. 2) And having gone forth they went into that country where they had hidden [it], and they dug in that land, and fire came forth from that hole. And for this reason the Wise Men worship fire unto this day.

And when Herod saw the Wise Men had made a laughing-stock of him, he was exceedingly wroth, and he sent and killed all the children, all the children of Bethlehem and all the region round about, of two years old and less. And when Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias the priest, heard that they were seeking for her son John to kill him, she took her child and carried him into the mountain. And she began to turn about, to her right hand and to her left, and she said, "Where can I set down my child, and what shall I do with him?" And then she cried out with a loud voice and said, "O mountain of God, protect my child." And straightway that rock split asunder, and Elisabeth and (Fol. 83b, col. 3) her child went in, and the rock was sealed up over them. And God sent a great light into that cavern, and an angel brought their food unto them every day. And then the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream, and said unto him, "Rise up, [take] the Child and His mother, and flee to the land of Egypt, and dwell there until I tell thee [to leave it], for Herod is seeking for the Child that he may kill Him." And he rose up and took the Child and His mother, and went forth by night and departed to Egypt. And he dwelt there until Herod died, so that there might be fulfilled the word of God by the prophet who said, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

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XIX. Now when Herod the king went up to Beth-  
lehem to seek for the Child Who had been born, he  
sought for but did not find John, the son of Zacharias  
the priest, and then, when he found him not, he sent a  
message to his father Zacharias the priest, (Fol. 84a,  
col. 1) saying, "The king commandeth thee to bring  
thy son to him." And Zacharias answered and said unto  
the soldiers of the king who had come unto him, "I  
know not where my son is, for I am ministering in the  
house of the sanctuary of God by day and by night."  
And the soldiers of the king went and told the king  
what Zacharias the priest had said unto them. Then  
Herod sent them to Zacharias a second time, saying,  
"Make me to know where thy son is. If thou refuseth  
us then know that thy blood is in my hand." And the  
soldiers went to Zacharias the priest, and told him what  
the king had said unto them; and Zacharias the priest  
answered and told them what he had told them at first,  
and he took an oath that he did not know where his son  
was. And then Herod sent to him a third time, saying,  
"If thou dost not bring thy son [to me], then know and  
be very sure that I will come to thee and (Fol. 84a,  
col. 2) will slay thee." And when Zacharias the priest  
heard this, he said, "As God liveth, though ye shed my  
blood, I do not know where my son is"; and the sol-  
diers departed and told the king everything that Zacha-  
rias the priest had said unto them. And then Herod the  
king rose up by night, and went into the house of the  
sanctuary of God, to the place where Zacharias the  
priest was, and he slew him there, and none of the chil-  
dren of Israel knew anything about it whatsoever. And  
it came to pass that when the morning had come, the  
children of Israel went into the house of the sanctuary,  
according to their law and ordinance, and they found  
the door of the house of the sanctuary shut. And they  
stood outside the door, and waited for Zacharias the  
priest to open the door to them as he opened it every

## *Her Conception and Birth*

day, and there was none who went out from them, and no one opened unto them. And when they had stood there waiting [a long time] a certain man of their number went up in the roof which covered the house of the sanctuary, [and] (Fol. 84a, col. 3) he heard a voice, saying, "Verily, of a certainty, Herod hath slain Zacharias the priest"; and the voice ceased. And when the man heard this word, he opened the door of the house of the sanctuary, and told them everything which he had heard from that voice. And all the children of Israel went in to see, and they did not find the body of Zacharias the priest, but they found dried blood. And because of this they sorrowed with a great sorrow, and they wept and made lamentation for him for three days and three nights.

XX. And then the priests took counsel among themselves and decided to appoint another priest in his place, and they cast lots among themselves, and the lot went forth on Simeon the priest, for long ago the Holy Spirit had told Simeon the priest that he should not be separated from this world until he saw the Christ of God, the Redeemer of all the world. Now after a few days Herod the king died. (Fol. 84b, col. 1) And after the death of Herod, behold, the Angel of God appeared unto Joseph in a dream in the land of Egypt, and he said unto him, "Rise up, take the Child and His mother, and depart into the land of Israel, for all those who sought the Child's life [are dead]." And rising up Joseph took the Child and His mother, and came unto the land of Israel, and hearing that Archelaus, the son of Herod, was king in his father's stead, he was afraid to go there. And [the Angel of God] having appeared unto him in a dream, he turned aside into the border of Galilee, and having arrived he dwelt in a city the name of which was Nazareth; so that that which was said by the prophet, "My Son shall be called a Nazarene," was fulfilled. And Elisabeth and her son went

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

forth from that rock. And John lived in the desert of the Jordan and preached the way of repentance ; and he prepared the way before our Lord and Saviour Jesus (Fol. 64b, col. 2) Christ, to Whom be glory, and honour, and dominion, now, and for ever, and for ever and ever. Amen.

## A TRACT WHICH DESCRIBETH HOW THE HISTORY OF SAINT MARY WAS DISCOVERED

[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 50a.]

(Fol. 50a, col. 3) “PEACE” FROM GOD WHO SENT HIS ONLY SON, AND HE DWELT IN THE WOMB OF THE HOLY VIRGIN. AND “PEACE” FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE PARACLETE, TO WHOM BE PRAISE. AND “PEACE” FROM THE LORD OF ALL CREATION. NONE CAN ESTIMATE THE GLORY OF THE GODHEAD OF HIM WHO CAME DOWN FROM HIS THRONE AND DWELT IN THE WOMB OF A VIRGIN. MAY HIS BLESSING BE WITH OUR KING FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

I. **O** LORD, open Thou the gates of peace unto my prayer at this hour. And let the sweet odour of incense ascend from our assembly into heaven; and let the horns of our Archangel be blown in heaven, and let the hosts stand up in their companies; and let there be great glory in the heavens before Christ, and let all the angels of God (Fol. 50b, col. 1) praise Him with their voices, and let them stand, army before army, company before company, and the blessed before the blessed, and let them all together ascribe praise and offer incense and sweet perfumes before God. Praise and worship be to Jesus Christ, and joy and gladness to the Holy Spirit.

I will tell you, O my brethren, the story of the departure of our Lady MARY from this world, so that ye may glorify Him that was born of her of His own free will. Pray ye unto Him for mercy and compassion for ever and ever; [and for] righteousness for the priests who stand before Christ, Who hath chosen them for

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

the majesty of His honour and glory, and who seek from Him blessing and fair gladness ; [and for] the children of the Church who stand up and praise His Name. Let the rich sing psalms, and let the poor give thanks, and let the old men, and the women, the daughters (Fol. 50b, col. 2) of Eve, cry out. God accepteth the prayers of those who make supplication unto thee, [O Saint MARY]. For Thou hast chosen from among them this woman in whom Thou wast well pleased before the world [was], and Christ the God of praise was born of her of His own free will.

And at that time the celestial beings bearing incense and sweet perfumes, and the martyrs with their crowns, came, and the beings of earth stood looking at the beings of heaven, and the praises of the heavenly beings mingled with the praises of the earthly beings, and they spake thus : Blessed be God Who sent His Son and He dwelt in the womb of a virgin. And blessed be Christ Who, on the day of her death when she wished to go forth from this world, magnified the woman who gave Him birth, and to Him be glory and thanksgiving for ever. And may joy and gladness come from Him upon the Christian people for ever and ever.

II. Blessed be God Who came down and abased Himself of His own free will (Fol. 50b, col. 3). He descended from the Father to MARY, and He went forth from MARY in a manger, and from the manger He journeyed about on the earth. And after this He ascended the Cross for our salvation, He died, and was buried, and rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father. And at this point we cry out and say, “ O Thou Christ, stretch out Thy right hand from above, Thy dwelling-place, at this hour over those who are praising Thee and are glorifying Thy holy mother MARY on her going forth from this world for ever and ever.”

III. Hear, O all ye brethren, every one who wisheth



## *Discovery of Manuscripts*

to be saved from sin when God shall come and judge the world, hearken ye with your ears, and be vigilant in your minds, and hearken unto the story of Saint MARY, the Mother of God, and of how she went forth from this world. Now, behold, there were gathered together unto her all the denizens of heaven, and the hosts of the (Fol. 51a, col. 1) armies of God. And the Prophets came, and the Twelve Apostles came, and the Seventy-two noble disciples came, and the blessed Martyrs. The righteous came, and the believers came, and Enoch, and Moses, and Elias, and all the hosts of the angels, and the company of the Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and David. And there came also all people, both living and dead, to salute MARY, the Mother of the Lord. Whosoever wisheth to receive remission of sins from God must believe in the Holy Trinity, that there is One God, glorious, inseparable, to Whom be honour and thanksgiving for ever and ever, Whom the denizens of the heavens and the peoples of the earth worship, for it is He Who killeth and maketh alive; that He was born of the Virgin MARY, whom man had never known, Whose flesh had never mingled in carnal union; but that He dwelt in her of (Fol. 51a, col. 2) His own free will and was born of her,—Joy!—Who chose her for Himself before the world. He sent His Son, and He was born of her of His own free will without carnal union, even as Isaiah, the blessed among the Prophets, prophesied, saying, “He shall spring up like a branch in a thirsty land.” And again he saith, “Behold a virgin, and she shall conceive and bring forth a child, and one shall call his name ’Ēmânû’êl, which is, being interpreted, God with us.” And MARY was chosen and pure from the womb of her mother, and she was brought forth in holiness, and she gave herself [in] marriage in the House of God. And she knew that Christ would come and dwell upon her. And when the time arrived for the going forth of Adam from Sheol, and for his

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

salvation, the grace of God abounded in respect of the sheep that had gone astray from the Shepherd. Now he was the first transgressor of God's commandment, and his children were with him, and at length Satan became envious of him and took him captive. And because of this God sent (Fol. 51a, col. 3) His beloved Son to dwell in the womb of the Virgin, and to be born of her. A thing of joy it is that He chose to make the world that believed on Him to live.

IV. Behold now, it is meet that we should celebrate the commemoration, and offer up our sacrifice and offering to this woman, who is blessed among women, of whom was born the Saviour of the world. This was the blessed field whereon joy dwelt through His birth from her. And moreover, by His birth He tore out the thorns by their roots, and burned up the tares, and put to flight the foul spirits, and annulled death, and destroyed Satan, and made joy and peace for all the world. O my believing and Christ-loving fathers and brethren, I will tell you concerning this manuscript which was written about the holy and blessed woman MARY, and how her history was revealed in this world. Behold now, there were in Mount Sinai three men who ministered (Fol. 51b, col. 1) in the place where God appeared unto Moses in a bramble bush, and their names were these: 1, David the priest; 2, John the priest; 3, Elias the deacon. These were the men who ministered diligently before the Tabernacle which rested on the place of the bramble bush, where God appeared unto Moses on Mount Sinai; now these three holy men were the governors of three hundred and twenty monasteries, for all Mount Sinai was crowned in every part with the praising of God. And behold, these three blessed men wrote an epistle from Mount Sinai and sent it to the House of the Sanctuary, saying, "May this come to Kârëyâ, Bishop of Jerusalem, with much salutation and praise for his excellence and his purity.

## *Discovery of Manuscripts*

And it is to ask him to search out for them how the death of MARY took place, (Fol. 51b, col. 2) and concerning her departure from this world. For behold, we wish to know how Saint MARY was glorified and crowned. Inform thyself about her history, and send us [information] concerning it. Behold, we have heard that there was a book of her history in the possession of John the Less, whom his Lord loved more than any other of His disciples ; as he loved Christ even so did MARY love him." Now John was not dead, but was [alive] on the earth, and was bestowing mercy with his hand in the Church of Ephesus in such wise that the people were healed of their sicknesses.

V. I will tell you, O my brethren : In the three hundred and nineteenth year, in the month Tâkhshâsh, in which Christ was born, heavenly and earthly beings rejoiced, because on that day our Lady MARY appeared unto John in Ephesus, and said unto him, " Take (Fol. 51b, col. 3) the book that is with thee, wherein is written the story of my departure from the world, and give it unto these men who have come unto thee from Mount Sinai. For behold, the time hath arrived for the coming of thy Lord from heaven that He may be revealed [in] the sacrifices of the Offering unto those who celebrate the commemoration of me. Behold, I have told thee." And when the book which was sent to these three men arrived in the House of the Sanctuary, and was to be read before the people, they sought for that book at that time and did not find it. But they found another book wherein it was stated that Jacob (i.e. James), who was appointed the first bishop in the House of the Sanctuary (i.e. Jerusalem), had himself written the History of Saint MARY in the month of Khâzîrân, in the three hundred and forty-fifth year.

VI. And on the third day, at the time of noon, certain men who were from Judæa came to James the Bishop, and beat him sorely and killed him, for (Fol.

## *The History of the Virgin Mary*

52a, col. 1) they hated him exceedingly because he said, "I am the brother of our Lord." And afterwards they searched through that book and they found that there was written therein by the hand of James thus : In the three hundred and forty-fifth year, on the very day whereon Christ had been born, MARY departed from this world, on the twenty-ninth day of the month Tâkhshâsh. And I myself believe that the Apostles, and all created things, and the angels of heaven came all together to pay honour to Saint MARY and to magnify her, before she died. And there were written down concerning her all the signs and all the wonders, and the power which was with her from the beings of earth and the beings of heaven, [who] said, "Glory be unto God Who hath magnified His Mother." And the Cherubim and the Seraphim bowed down before Him, crying out to the sound of the trumpet and saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy [is] the (Fol. 52a, col. 2) God Who hath been pleased to go round about on the earth." I James have written this statement with my own hand, that the History of Saint MARY existed with John, the son of Zebedee, the beloved of Christ. And they all became witnesses, and wrote with their own hands concerning the blessed woman MARY, that they would celebrate her commemoration three times every year, even as commanded Peter, and Paul, and John the Less, whose Lord loved him.

And then the men of the House of the Sanctuary (i.e. Jerusalem) wrote to Mount Sinai, saying, "Behold, the History of the pure woman MARY is not found with us, but we have found a copy of the testimony of James [saying] that the History of the Virgin MARY was written down and that it is with John, the son of Zebedee. Behold, then, we tell you, O ye holy fathers who dwell at Mount Sinai, that ye must send a letter to Ephesus, to John, the son of Zebedee, (Fol. 52a, col. 3) and demand from him a copy of the History of MARY.



*Lady Meux MS. No. 3, fol. 40.*

Katir, who is too old and feeble to do her service, praying to the Virgin, who restores his strength



## *Discovery of Manuscripts*

And if it be that ye obtain it, send to us your copy of the History of MARY, so that we may put to shame the Jews who crucified Christ." And when the letter from Jerusalem reached the men of Mount Sinai, and they had read that letter and had understood what was [written] therein, straightway they sent letters of enquiry to the country of Rômê, and to Alexandria and the borders of Egypt, asking for the History of MARY, but nowhere in any of these countries did they find it.

VII. And then they sent messengers to Ephesus, and after a delay of very many days they arrived during the night-time in the city of Ephesus, and they found the church with its doors closed. And they stood up, and prayed, and cast incense into the censers, and said, "O Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst love and choose (Fol. 52b, col. 1) John from among all the disciples, make us to see John speedily, and let him tell us concerning the book wherein are written down the glorious things and miracles that Thou didst perform for Thy Mother when she was going forth from this world." And before he finished his prayer, behold, John came unto them. And he spake unto them and said, "Be ye not sad, O my blessed brethren, for our Lord Jesus Christ shall reward you with a good reward in return for your toil and weariness in travelling on [this] journey through countries. Rise up then, and take the Book of the History of the Mother of my Lord, and bring ye [it] to Mount Sinai, and give it unto our brethren, and say unto them, Behold, John hath sent this book unto you so that ye may perform the offering up of the Offering to the Mother of God three times each year. And tell them that I am alive up to this present, and that I have not tasted death, and that I am waiting for (Fol. 52b, col. 2) the coming of my Lord from heaven. For He said unto me, Thou shalt not die until I come a second time to judge the world." And having said this he

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disappeared from us ; and when we saw this miracle we were afraid with a great fear.

VIII. And then the keeper of the doors of the church came to us, and he opened the doors for us, and we went into a place by the cleft of the fountain blessed by John, and there we found the Book of the History of Saint MARY. And then we took that book and gave it to a certain man, a priest, who opened it and read it before the people. And having read it he found that there were written in it the testimonies (martyrdoms ?) of the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy-two Disciples. And there was written in Hebrew, and Latin (Rômâ-yěšět), and Greek a writing which said thus : In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was born of MARY the Virgin, and is the God of heaven (Fol. 52b, col. 3) and of earth. Whosoever believeth on Him shall find life for ever and ever. And whosoever believeth on MARY, the Mother of Christ, and also in the signs and wonders that He wrought for her when she was going forth from this world, shall not see corruption. Behold, the Disciples were witnesses that in the Book of the History of MARY were written down all the miracles that Christ wrought for her. And the Disciples took that Book, and James gave it to John, the son of Zebedee, for Christ our God loved him more than the other disciples. And when that book was read in Ephesus before the people, a dew with the most beautiful perfume came down from heaven, and it filled the whole country of Ephesus. Now there was no other man who could relate everything that God did before MARY when she departed from this world. No ear could [bear] the hearing thereof, and no eye the sight (Fol. 53a, col. 1) thereof, by reason of the multitude of the hosts of heavenly and earthly beings who accompanied MARY into the Garden (i.e. Paradise).

IX. And then those envoys took that Book of the History of MARY, and they departed from Ephesus, and





*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 29b.*

The Virgin restoring the sight of John of Bakansi by anointing his eyes with milk from her breast



## *Discovery of Manuscripts*

returned to Mount Sinai, and all the people welcomed those envoys with joy and gladness, and they gave thanks unto God and praised Him because He had revealed to them the History of the Virgin. And then they translated that book and sent the translation to the House of the Sanctuary (Jerusalem). Behold now, from this time forward let us pray and make supplication unto God because, in the abundance of His compassion, and mercy, and love, He sent His beloved Son to deliver the world from slavery. And let us supplicate Him, through the prayer of our Lady MARY, the Mother of God, with incense and with the Offering for those who shall come and shall make the Offering with gladness on (Fol. 53a, col. 2) the commemoration of the blessed woman. Let us beseech Him, and let us say, "O our Lord Jesus Christ, remove Thou sorrow from us and from Thy people, and send Thou Thy compassion, and mercy, and peace, upon the earth, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever."

THE HISTORY OF THE DEATH OF THE  
VIRGIN MARY AS TOLD BY SAINT JOHN

The 'ASTAR'ĔYÔ, which is to be read on the  
21st day of the month Ṭĕr.

[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, fol. 45a.]

(Fol. 45a, col. 1) IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, ONE GOD CHRIST, MY GOD AND MY HOPE ! AND MAY MY LADY MARY PRAY FOR ME. THIS IS THE HISTORY OF OUR HOLY AND PURE LADY MARY, THE MOTHER OF THE LIGHT, BY THE GRACE OF GOD MOTHER OF OUR LORD AND REDEEMER JESUS CHRIST, AND HOW HER DEPARTURE TOOK PLACE FROM THIS FLEETING WORLD TO THE EVERLASTING LIFE, WHICH PASSETH NOT AWAY AND IS NEVER DESTROYED. AND MAY HER PRAYER BE WITH OUR KING SO-AND-SO FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

**O**UR holy father John, who took [her] to him after the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven, who discoursed on theology, [who] was one of the disciples of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who preached the Gospel in all the world, told us that our holy and pure Lady never ceased to go to the grave (Fol. 45a, col. 2) of our Lord, and God, and Saviour, Jesus Christ, where she prayed and praised Christ. And then she went, according to her wont, and came here. And when Christ wished to remove her from this fleeting world, she stretched out her hands to her Son and God, and asked Him to take her soul from her. And Satan entered into some of the Jews who used to see her come continually to the grave, and make long prayers there, and because of this they went to the chief priests and told them everything which the holy



*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 56b.*

A variant of the scene on the preceding plate



## *Story of the Virgin Mary's Death*

woman, the Mother of our Lord, used to do, and thereupon the chief priests set watchmen over the grave, and they ordered them to prevent those who wished to go into the tomb to pray [from doing so]. And then the chief priests sent to the watchmen, and enquired of them concerning this thing. And these watchmen lied (Fol. 45a, col. 3) and swore that no one whatsoever had passed [them] and entered the tomb. Now our Lord Jesus Christ had blinded their eyes so that they could not see the holy and pure woman whilst she was praying, or when she came in or went out.

I. And in the three hundred and fifty-second year of Alexander (=A.D. 40), that is to say, two years after the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, on the 28th [day of the month . . .], on the fourth day of the week, in the morning, the holy and pure MARY took fire and incense, and set out for the tomb in order to pray, according to her wont, in the tomb in Golgotha. Now she was in fear of the Jews. And having arrived she made an offering of incense at the mouth of the holy tomb, and according to her wont she praised and gave thanks unto Christ, saying, "O my Lord, Good Master, send and take me from this world which is full of sorrow and trouble." And as she was praying straightway the heavens opened, and Gabriel (Fol. 45b, col. 1) the Archangel came down, and he did homage to her and gave her his message, saying, "Rejoice, O full of grace, behold, thy prayer hath ascended and hath reached our Lord Jesus Christ Who was born of thee. And behold, God hath heard thy prayer and thy petition wherein thou hast stated thy desire to go forth from this fleeting world into the life which is for ever." And when she had heard this word from the Angel she returned to Bethlehem. And straightway she gathered together the women and holy virgins who ministered unto her continually, and she said unto them, "Behold, since the Jews have set watchmen over the tomb, I am afraid lest

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my action be discovered by them, and lest they prevent me from coming there"—and then she said in peace—"Now I am going to Bethlehem, and if there be any among you who wisheth to come with me let her do so." And they answered and said unto her with one voice, "We will all go with thee wheresoever thou goest, (Fol. 45b, col. 2) and we will not separate ourselves from thee all the days of our life." And straightway she took them, and departed to Bethlehem, and dwelt there.

II. And on the eve of the Sabbath (Friday) she fell sick. And she answered and said unto those virgins who lived with her and ministered unto her, "Bring me a censer and incense, for I wish to pray"; and they brought a censer and incense unto her, even as she had commanded them. And she put incense into the censer, and she prayed, saying, "My Lord and my God, Jesus Christ, Who didst hold thine handmaiden worthy of Thine Incarnation from her, to sanctify men and to remove the sin of the world, hearken unto my prayer, and accept my petition in this hour. And bring unto me John Thy disciple, who preached Thy holy Gospel, so that I may rejoice in the sight of him. And likewise send Thou to me all Thy disciples—whereof some have fallen asleep,—so that I may see them (Fol. 45b, col. 3) and be blessed by them before I go out from this world. Thou art the God of the living and of the dead, and I believe that Thou wilt hearken unto my prayer and will grant me everything that I ask from Thee." And [Saint John said], "Behold, before her prayer was ended, a cloud of light snatched me away in the Holy Spirit from the country of Ephesus, and set me before MARY the holy and pure, and when I stood up before her I looked upon her, and I praised Christ our Lord and God. And I said unto her, Rejoice, O holy woman, Mother of Christ our Lord. And the Holy Spirit spake by my tongue, and I said unto her, Thou shalt go forth



## *Story of her Death by St. John*

from this world in great glory, and Christ shall make manifest by thee many signs and wonders, so that His Name may be praised and glorified. And straightway the holy woman remembered that Christ said unto her at the time of the Crucifixion, "Woman, behold thy son," and [that] He looked at him (Fol. 46a, col. 1) and said unto His disciple, "Behold thy mother."

III. And when the women her companions heard [these things] they wept with a great weeping and bowed low to her. And then the pure woman said unto me, "Take a censer and incense, pray and say, My Lord and my God Jesus Christ, Thou doer of wonders innumerable, do Thou now make manifest Thy wonders on behalf of Thy Mother, and make her to go forth from this fleeting world with great glory, even as Thou didst say unto her, that those who crucified Thee should fear and be dismayed, and believe in Thee." And I did even as the Mother of Light and Mercy commanded me. Then she took the censer from my hand, and cast incense [therein], and prayed, saying, "I praise Thee, O my Lord and God Jesus Christ; behold, Thou hast given unto me according as Thou didst say unto me. Behold now, receive me, and take me up into the heavens as soon as my spirit goeth forth from my body. For Thou didst say unto me, 'I will come (Fol. 46a, col. 2) unto thee with My angels to take [thy] soul.'" And then the Holy Spirit spake by my mouth and I said unto her, "Christ, our God and thy Son, will perform thy desire according to what thou sayest, and thou shalt see Him with thine eyes." And then she turned to me and said unto me, "O John, the Jews wish to burn my body in the fire after I am dead." And I said unto her in the Holy Spirit, "Rejoice and be glad, for thy body shall see no corruption whatsoever, and shall suffer no harm." And then she said unto me, "O John, cast incense into the censer, and pray in secret"; and I did even as she commanded me. And

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behold, a voice came from heaven, and I heard it saying, Amen. I John am a witness before Christ that I myself heard this voice from heaven. And the Holy Spirit said unto me, "O John, didst thou hear this voice from heaven when (Fol. 46a, col. 3) thou didst finish thy prayer?" And I said unto Him, "Yea." And this voice which I heard said unto me, "Let the disciples thy brethren be gathered together, and come hither in this hour, and all the angels shall come." And I prayed and made supplication for this, even as my Lady MARY, the Mother of the Light, commanded me.

IV. And then the Holy Spirit spake, saying, "Let all the disciples come from the ends of the earth, riding upon clouds, to Bethlehem, for the sake of the Mother of Christ—thou, O Peter, from Rome, and thou, O Paul, from 'Abrâķyâ (Phrygia?), and thou, O Thomas, from the interior of India, and James from Jerusalem, and Andrew, the brother of Peter, and Peter, and Luke." And those who were asleep (i.e. dead) woke up in the Holy Spirit from their graves. And ye must not imagine [that they thought] the time for the resurrection of the dead had arrived, nay, they only woke up from their graves for the sake of Saint (Fol. 46b, col. 1) MARY, the Mother of the Light, to salute her and to pay honour unto her. Since the time of her translation to heaven had arrived, he came from Alexandria, together with the rest of the Apostles.

V. And at that moment the Holy Spirit gathered together all the Apostles, and they mounted upon clouds, and He brought them into Bethlehem, and spake unto them, saying, "Behold, the Mother of your Lord wished to see you before her departure from this world." And in like manner all the disciples were brought upon clouds, and they came with Peter and stood up before the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they made obeisance to her, and said unto her, "Rejoice, O holy Virgin, for our Lord and God Who was born of thee

3



*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 79a.*

1. The angels waiting to take Mary from earth to heaven
2. Mary ascending into heaven
3. Mary seated on the right hand of Christ on His throne in heaven
4. David playing on his harp



## *Story of her Death by St. John*

shall translate thee from this world with great glory, even as He said unto thee.” And when (Fol. 46b, col. 2) the holy woman saw the disciples and heard their words she remained upon her couch, and said unto them, “Now know I that your Teacher, and my God and your God will come to me, and that I shall see Him, even as I see you, and that afterwards I shall be translated from this world. But I desire you to tell me how it was that ye learned concerning my departure from this world, and how it is that ye are gathered together to me ; my God would not hide this from me.” And Peter and all the disciples said unto her, “The Holy Spirit told us, and commanded us to come to thee.” And John said unto her, “Whilst I was in the house of the sanctuary in Ephesus and about to offer up the offering, the Holy Spirit said unto me, ‘Behold, the departure of the soul of the Mother of thy Lord from her body hath drawn nigh. Get thee quickly to Bethlehem that thou mayest bid her farewell.’ And a cloud of light snatched me away and brought me into (Fol. 46b, col. 3) this place.” And Peter said unto her, “Whilst I was in Rome, at dawn I heard the Holy Spirit saying unto me, Behold, the time of the departure of the Mother of thy Lord hath drawn nigh. Get thee quickly to Bethlehem that thou mayest bid her farewell. And a cloud snatched me away between heaven and earth, and brought me here. And I saw all the disciples coming upon clouds, and I heard a voice, saying, ‘Get ye, all of you, to Bethlehem.’” And Paul said, “Whilst I was very far away from Rômyâ (Rome) in a remote place in the country of ’Abrâķyâ, I heard the Holy Spirit saying unto me, ‘Behold, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ wisheth to go forth from this world and to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Get thee away that thou mayest bid her farewell.’ And a shining cloud carried me and brought me here.” And Mark said, “Whilst I was in Alexandria, after (Fol. 47a, col. 1) I

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had finished the prayer of the third hour, behold, the Holy Spirit snatched me away and made me to mount upon a cloud, and it brought me to you." James said, "Whilst I was in Jerusalem the Holy Spirit spake unto me in similar wise, and a cloud snatched me away and set me here." And Matthew said, "I say that whilst I was in a ship, in great fear by reason of the great waves and billows of a violent sea, a cloud snatched me from among the billows and set me here." And the disciples who had fallen asleep [and had left] this world described how they had heard [a voice], and how they had woke up from their graves, and how they had been snatched away by clouds, and how they had come to them (i.e. to their fellows). And Bartholomew said, "Whilst I was preaching and was in the city, the Holy Spirit said unto me, 'Behold, the Mother of thy Lord is about to depart from this world; get thee to Bethlehem.' And a cloud snatched me away and brought me into (Fol. 47a, col. 2) this place." And these things did these disciples say unto MARY, the holy and pure woman. At that time the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ lifted up her voice, and said, "I worship, and praise, and give thanks unto Thy holy Name, O my Lord and God, because Thou hast regarded the humility of Thine handmaiden, and hast revealed unto me Thy wonders. O thou Mighty and Powerful One, Who canst do all things, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

VI. And when she had finished her prayer she said unto all the disciples, "Bring ye censers and incense, and make supplication unto my Lord and God, Jesus Christ, and do ye as He shall command you." And as they were praying, they heard a terrifying sound from heaven like the noise of horsemen riding, together with hosts of angels, and archangels, and they also heard as it were the sounds of (Fol. 47a, col. 3) men. And the Seraphim surrounded the house wherein our

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Lady was with the disciples. And this miracle was seen by all those who were in Bethlehem, and those who were in the house of the sanctuary, and they described what they saw, and they heard the roar of the thunder and the noise of the chariots. And the sun and the moon appeared above that place, and many angels surrounded that place because of the majesty and glory of the holy and pure MARY. And they also saw very many signs and wonders, the blind received their sight, the lame walked, and the lepers were cleansed of their leprosy, and the devils went out of the demoniacs. And all those who were sick, or who were suffering from any kind of disease, drew nigh unto that house wherein was the holy and pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and were healed of their sicknesses. (Fol. 47b, col. 1) And all those sick folk who were suffering from every kind of disease, and who came to that house from Bethlehem, and the districts round about, and from the land of Judah, were two thousand eight hundred souls, and they cried out, saying, "O MARY, thou holy one of God, have compassion upon us."

VII. And they were healed of their sicknesses at that moment. And when the people who were sitting in the house of the sanctuary heard this word, men and women went out from among them to be blessed by the holy and pure MARY, and they saw the signs and wonders which Christ wrought in Bethlehem through our Lady MARY, the Bearer of God. And all those who were sick or diseased came to the holy woman, and made supplication unto her, and were healed of their sicknesses; and there was great joy and gladness because of those who were healed of their sicknesses. And all those who were there gave thanks unto our Lord Jesus Christ and blessed Him, (Fol. 47b, col. 2) and praised the holy Virgin. And all the people of the house of the sanctuary went forth uttering cries of joy, and singing and praising Christ in Bethlehem.

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VIII. And straightway the priests of the Jews were dismayed when they saw the great praise, and heard their cries of gladness, and their singing, and the rejoicings of the believers, and they were wroth because of this. And many men went out from Judah to Bethlehem that they might seize the disciples of Christ and His holy Mother. And it came to pass that, when they had marched for an hour, a mighty miracle appeared in respect of them on the road, for their eyes were darkened, and they were not able to see Bethlehem; and they turned back to their own city, and told the chief priests everything that had befallen them on the way, and how they were unable to march to Bethlehem. And when the chief priests heard this thing they were exceedingly wroth, and they went to the governor, (Fol. 47b, col. 3) and cried out, saying, "All the people of Judah are corrupted through MARY, and now we demand from thee that thou remove her from Bethlehem and from the house of the sanctuary." And the governor marvelled at this word and said unto them, "It is not for me to drive her out of Bethlehem." And all the Jews cried out and swore by Cæsar and said, "If thou dost not expel MARY and the disciples from Bethlehem, behold, we will tell this thing to Cæsar, and we will relate to him all thy behaviour." And straightway he was afraid of them, and he sent his officer, together with one thousand horsemen, and he commanded him to drive forth MARY and the disciples. And the Holy Spirit said unto the holy woman, the Mother of our Lord, and to the disciples, "Behold, an officer hath been sent unto you, together with one thousand men, to drive you out of Bethlehem according to what the Jews have demanded. And now, get ye out, and fear not, for (Fol. 48a, col. 1) I will snatch you away on a cloud, and will bring you into the house of the sanctuary." And straightway the disciples went forth, bearing the couch of the holy and pure MARY whereon she lay



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during her lifetime, and they were snatched away on a cloud, and it brought them to the house of the sanctuary as the Holy Spirit spake unto them.

IX. And they tarried there five days praying to Christ and glorifying Him. And the officer who had been sent came to Bethlehem, and he found neither the holy woman nor any one of the disciples. And then he took the men of Bethlehem, and said unto them, "Are ye not those who came to the governor and to the chief priests, and did ye not tell them that signs and wonders had appeared? And did ye not say that the disciples were gathered together from the ends of the earth to Bethlehem? Where are they now? Come ye now to the governor and to the chief priests, and tell them how [these things] took place." And the governor (Fol. 48a, col. 2) did not know of the coming of the disciples and the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ unto the house of the sanctuary. And the officer took the men of Bethlehem and brought them with him to the governor, and he told him how he had not found any one [of the disciples] there.

X. And after five days the governor and the chief priests knew that the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ was in her house, and that all the disciples were with her, and that many signs and wonders took place through her. And there were with her many men, and women, and virgins, and they cried out, saying, "O holy and pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, forget thou not the children of men." And because of this the great men among the Jews, and their governors, and their officers, together with all their people, were wroth. And then they rose up, and they took with them wood and fire, wishing (Fol. 48a, col. 3) to set on fire the house in which the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ was, together with the disciples, and the angels and all the believers; and the governor stood afar off in order that he might see what would happen. And when the

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chief priests had come and certain of the Jews to the door of the courtyard, a great fire went forth with the angels from that place, and burned up many of the Jews. And then a great fear came upon the men of the house of the sanctuary, and all those who dwelt in it among the Jews, together with their governors. And sorrow laid hold upon the adversaries of Christ, and they praised Christ our God, Who was born of the holy and pure Virgin MARY. And the governor cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Verily, O MARY, He Who is born of thee is the Son of God, and His Christ, before Whom we have quarrelled, and we have driven Him out and (Fol. 48b, col. 1) cast Him forth from among us, for no one except the Son of God, and Him only, could do these signs and wonders." And there was a great tumult among them, and very many of them believed on the Name of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ.

XI. And then after this miracle concerning our Lady and the disciples had appeared, the Holy Spirit spake, saying, "Now know ye that on the First Day of the week the Angel Gabriel announced to Saint MARY the glad tidings that Christ, the Word of God, should dwell upon her. And on the First Day of the week He was born in Bethlehem of Judah. And on the First Day of the week old men and young men and maidens went out to meet and welcome our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, saying, 'Hosanna in the heights! Blessed [is He] Who cometh in the Name of God.' And on the First Day of the week our Lord rose from the dead. And on (Fol. 48b, col. 2) the First Day of the week He shall come on a cloud of heaven to judge the living and the dead. And on the First Day of the week He shall come, because of its majesty and glory, at the going forth of the soul of Saint MARY from this world."

XII. And it came to pass that on the First Day of the week MARY said unto the disciples, "Throw incense

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into the censers, for my Lord Jesus Christ is coming to me with all His angels." And whilst she was holding converse with them after they had burnt incense, behold, our Lord Jesus Christ came, together with His angels, seated upon the throne of His glory. And there appeared before Him angels innumerable, and moreover, there appeared a great light, and the holy woman was crowned with very great glory at the coming of her Son and her God, and all the powers of heaven worshipped her. And a Voice came to the holy woman, saying, "O MARY." And she answered (Fol. 48b, col. 3) and said, "Here am I." And again, the Voice said, "Rejoice and be glad, and let thy soul be glad because thou hast found great grace with Me; see thou the glory and praise which My Father hath given unto Me." And straightway the Mother of our Lord saw a great light which man cannot describe, and then that Voice said unto her, "Henceforward thy body shall rest in the Garden (i.e. Paradise), and thy holy soul in the kingdom of the heavens, a habitation that is filled with grace, and where there are joy and gladness." And our Lady MARY said, "My Lord and my God, stretch out Thy hand over me and bless me."

XIII. And then our Lord Jesus Christ stretched out His strong hand and blessed her, and the holy woman took His hand, and kissed it, and said, "I give thanks unto this right hand, and I glorify it because it hath made strong the heavens, and ordered the earth firmly. I beseech Thee, O King, O Only Son, Who hath made His handmaiden worthy to become incarnate of her (Fol. 49a, col. 1) by His wise Nature for the salvation of men, to hearken unto my prayer, and of Thy great mercy show favour unto me, and unto all those who shall make supplication unto Thee in the name of me, Thine handmaiden, and be kind and gracious unto them. And do Thou hearken unto their prayer and to their petition in respect of everything that they shall

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ask of Thee, for Thou art able to do everything." And when the disciples heard this request of Saint MARY, they bowed themselves down to the ground on their faces at her feet, saying, "O Mother of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, leave thy holy blessing in this world wherefrom thou art going forth." Then straightway the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ prayed and said, "O God, Who in the abundance of His compassion and mercy was pleased to send His only Son into my body, and Who made me worthy that He should become incarnate of me, behold, from this time forth have compassion upon the work of Thy hands, and upon every (Fol. 49a, col. 2) soul that praiseth Thy Name." And again she said, "O Jesus Christ, the Son of God the most high, Who doeth whatsoever He pleaseth both in the heavens and in the earth, bless, O Lord, that place where a festival shall be celebrated in my name, and receive my prayer, and bless Thy people and Thy anointed ones who shall offer unto Thee sacrifices in my name." And our Lord Jesus Christ answered and said unto her, "Behold, I have done this for thee, now and henceforth. Rejoice thou, for all grace hath been and shall be given unto thee by Me, and by My Father, and by the Holy Spirit. And every one who shall observe thy commemoration and call upon thy name shall never perish in this world, but shall find grace with My Father Who is in heaven."

XIV. And then our Lord Jesus Christ turned to Peter, and said unto him, "Behold now, the time hath come, but first I will read and sing the psalm." And then Peter (Fol. 49a, col. 3) began to read and to sing with the angels. And at that moment a great light rose upon the face of the holy woman, and she lifted up her hands and blessed the disciples. And then our Lord Jesus Christ stretched out His holy hand and received her soul, and straightway her soul was separated from her body. And a great light filled that place, and there

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came forth a beautiful, sweet fragrance, the like of which existed not, and a voice came from heaven, saying, "Blessed art thou, O blessed Queen of women." And then Peter and the disciples bowed down at the feet of the holy woman, and embraced [them] and were blessed by her. And they laid her upon a bier and the disciples carried her holy body [to the tomb]. And as they were carrying her a certain strong and mighty Jew, whose name was Tarônyâ, rushed at them, and he laid hold upon the bier of the holy woman so that he might prevent them from carrying away her dead body. And (Fol. 49b, col. 1) straightway an angel came and smote him with a sword of fire, and cut off both his hands, and the bier was lifted up [again] with the two hands of the Jew suspended from it.

XV. And when the Jews saw this miracle which had taken place, they cried out and said, "Verily He was God Who was born of thee, O our Lady MARY." And Tarônyâ followed after the bier, and cried out and said, "O holy woman of God, MARY, woman undefiled, the Mother of Christ, turn thou to me and have mercy and compassion upon me." And then Peter turned to him and said unto him, "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our God, Who was born of her, let the two hands which were cut off from him return to their former place." And when Peter spake thus his two hands came down from the bier, and they returned [to their place] whilst all the people were looking on. And at that moment Tarônyâ and all the Jews who were (Fol. 49b, col. 2) there believed when they saw this miracle that had taken place. And then the disciples buried the body of Saint MARY in the village which is called "Gêtêsêmân" (Gethsemane), in a new sepulchre, and they glorified Christ, and they remained there three days.

XVI. And Thomas, one of the Twelve Disciples, whose name was "Dîdmôs" (Didymus), was not with

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the disciples when the soul of our Lady MARY went forth [from her body]. And he came from India riding upon a cloud, and he saw the body of Saint MARY and angels carrying it along on a cloud and taking it up to heaven. And then when Thomas arrived Peter and all the disciples said unto him, "The body of Saint MARY hath departed from this world; why didst thou tarry in coming to her burial?" And Thomas said, "The Mother of our Lord is not dead; unless I see her dead body I will not believe [it]." And the disciples said unto him, "Behold, before this thou (Fol. 49b, col. 3) didst say, 'I will not believe that Christ is risen unless I can thrust my hand into His side, and my fingers into the nail marks,' and in the abundance of the mercy of Christ He showed thee these things, and thou didst cry out and say, 'My Lord and my God.'" And Thomas answered and said unto them, "I will not believe unless I see where ye have buried the body of the holy woman." And straightway Peter rose up and all the disciples with him, and they showed [him] the grave, and they found nothing whatsoever in it. And Thomas answered and said unto them, "Whilst I was preaching in the Name of Christ, and was baptizing Fêlôdyôs, the son of the king's sister, the Holy Spirit said unto me suddenly, 'Rise up quickly, O Thomas, and salute the body of the holy woman, the Mother of thy Lord.' And a cloud snatched me away from that place and brought me hither, and whilst I was coming to you I saw in the clouds (Fol. 50a, col. 1) the body of the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the angels carrying it up into heaven." And when the disciples heard the words of Thomas they glorified our Lord Jesus Christ.

XVII. And then when the disciples were gathered together twelve clouds came unto them and carried them away unto the Garden, to the place wherein was the body of Saint MARY, and they saw her with their

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eyes. And they also saw Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Hannâ, the mother of the holy woman [Mary], and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the holy fathers. And David the Prophet also was singing praises with the chosen ones and the righteous ones, and they worshipped the majesty of the body of MARY in the Garden, and they gave thanks unto Christ, Who was born of her, and they ascribed holiness unto Him, the greatness of Whose mercy and compassion cannot be reckoned ; for there is no one who is able to describe the greatness of His glory and power. And then (Fol. 50a, col. 2) we the disciples glorified our Lord Jesus Christ, Who showed favour unto us and revealed unto us these miracles at the departure of the body of Saint MARY from this fleeting world to life everlasting, and to the gift of the grace which is imperishable. Behold now, we ask our Lord and God Jesus Christ, through the prayer of the holy woman, to protect us with His right hand, and to give us power and victory in this world, and in that other mercy and compassion. Let us then glorify every day and in every place the Only Son, Who was begotten of the Father before the world and was, moreover, born of Saint MARY in the later days, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now, and for ever, and for ever. Amen.

Christ, my God and my hope, and my Lady MARY, who saveth me, pray for me for ever and for ever.

THE HISTORY OF THE HOLY AND PURE  
MARY, THE MOTHER OF CHRIST OUR GOD,  
AND OF HER DEPARTURE FROM THIS  
FLEETING WORLD INTO LIFE

[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, Fol. 53a, col. 2.]

I. **A**ND then on the third day, at the time of noon, MARY went out from her house and departed to pray at the Tomb, for it was her custom daily to go forth to the Tomb of Golgotha and to pray [there]. And when the Jews heard that Christ was dead, they laid a great stone on the mouth of the (Fol. 53a, col. 3) Tomb, and sealed it with a seal, and they set watchmen, and commanded them not to allow anyone whatsoever to pray there; and that if anyone did come there to pray they were to stone him with stones and kill him. And behold, the Jews took the Cross of Christ, and the two crosses on which the thieves were crucified, and the spear wherewith they pierced His side, and the raiment wherein they had arrayed Him, and the crown of thorns which they had woven for Him, and the nails which they had driven into Him, and buried them together in the earth. For they were afraid that some king would come and ask them questions about everything that had happened to Christ, and therefore they buried them in the earth so that they could not tell anyone about them. And the Jews used to see MARY come every day to the Tomb to pray, and she used to bow down with her face to the ground, and then stand up there for a period of an hour, saying, "O my Lord and God, send to me that they may take me from this (Fol. 53b, col. 1) evil world, for I am greatly afraid of the Jews mine enemies. Formerly



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when they used to come to me I drove them away and made them depart by the word that went forth from my mouth. It shut their eyes and darkened their hearts by the might of my Lord Jesus Christ, Who was born of me of His own free will, for they were unable to do any harm to me or to make me to drink the water of correction.

II. "Now when they see me coming to the Tomb and praying, they revile me, and magnify themselves against me." And then the watchmen went to the priests, and said unto them, "No one cometh to pray at the Tomb of Golgotha except MARY, who cometh to pray daily evening and morning." And the priests answered and said unto the watchmen, "If she cometh again stone her with stones." And the watchmen said unto the priests, "We will not stone her, but (Fol. 53b, col. 2) when she cometh to the Tomb we will tell you, and ye must deal with her as ye wish." And the priests said unto the watchmen, "Ye must stone her heavily, for she deserveth punishment because she hath put to shame the children of Israel." And on the evening of Friday MARY went to the Tomb to pray according to her wont. And as she was praying she lifted up her eyes to heaven—with the sweet odour of incense—

III. and then the Angel Gabriel came to MARY the Virgin, and bowed down to her, and said unto her, "Peace be unto thee, O blessed among women, God is with thee, O Mother of God. Behold, thy prayer hath arrived, and our Lord Jesus Christ hath accepted thy petition. Henceforward thou shalt go forth from this world, and thou shalt depart to life and mercy for ever and ever. For this reason I have been sent unto thee. I tell thee and declare unto thee that at the very moment when thou prayest upon the earth thy prayer is heard in heaven. And every petition which thou makest to Christ, Who sitteth on the right hand of the Father,

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He will grant thee, and He will grant thy wish in heaven and upon earth. Blessed be thy name for ever and ever.”

IV. And again the watchmen came to the priests and told them that MARY had come and prayed at the Tomb, and had turned and gone back to her house. And behold, there was a great commotion in the house of the Sanctuary because of MARY. And the priests went unto the governor, and said unto him, “Send ye to MARY [telling her] that she must not go to the Tomb of Golgotha, and that she must not pray there.” And whilst they were troubled about this matter, a letter came from 'Ankôr, king of Rôhâ (Edessa), to Tîbâryôs (Tiberius) the Emperor, saying, “I tell thee (Fol. 54a, col. 1) that one of the two and seventy disciples hath built a church in the city of Rôhâ, and that he hath healed me of the disease which was upon me, and that he hath related unto me the miracles that Christ wrought. And when the love of Him had entered my heart, I wished to see Him and wanted Him to be with me in my city, but when I heard that the Jews had taken Him and crucified Him, I was exceedingly sorry. And then I rose up and I mounted my horse, and I came to the Euphrates to cross over to Jerusalem, in order to make war and to lay waste the country, and to kill all those who dwelt there, because they had killed Christ. And as I was marching along the road I meditated in my heart and said, If I cross this Euphrates which doth not belong to me, Tiberius will make the desire for vengeance to dwell in his heart, and enmity, and vengeance, and slaughter will be between us. Therefore I turned and went back to my city. Now therefore (Fol. 54a, col. 2) I wish thee to slay those Jews who crucified Christ without cause. Had I only known beforehand that they were going to crucify Christ I would have come to thee to prevent them crucifying Him.” Thus did 'Ankôr, the king of Edessa,

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write to Tiberius. And when this letter had been read to the Emperor Tiberius he trembled and was dismayed, and was afraid with a great fear, and he wished to kill the Jews.

V. And when the men of Jerusalem heard this thing fear seized them, and they went to the governor and said unto him, "All this hath happened through MARY, and through Him that was born of her will Jerusalem be laid waste. Now send and prevent MARY from going to the Tomb of Golgotha and praying there." And the governor answered and said unto them, "Go ye yourselves and tell her what ye wish." And then the priests went unto MARY, and said unto her, "Behold, from this time take heed to thyself that (Fol. 54a, col. 3) thou goest not to the Tomb of Golgotha to pray there ; O MARY, behold, we have warned thee. Remember thou the sin that thou hast committed before God. And if thou wishest to pray then pray with the people, and follow the commandments of Moses, so that God may forgive thee the sin which thou hast committed. And on the Sabbaths go thou to the synagogue with the [other] people, and let the priest lay upon thy head the [roll of the] Law that God may forgive thee thy sin. And if thou doest this we will not deal craftily with thee, and we will not cast thee out. And if thou art ill we will visit thee, and we will proclaim (?) with the sound of the trumpet, and in due season thou wilt be healed, and we will entreat God to have mercy upon thee, and to have compassion upon thee. And if thou wilt not observe our words, get thee out of Jerusalem, and go to Bethlehem, for we will not allow thee again to pray at the Tomb of Golgotha. What sayest thou ?" And MARY answered and said unto them, "I do not wish you to say these things to me ; I will not accept your (Fol. 54b, col. 1) words, and I will not obey your commands, and I will not walk in the perversity of your paths." Then the Jews went forth from MARY in rage

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and indignation, and they departed to their houses, for the sun was setting.

VI. And on the morrow they came to MARY and they said unto her, "O MARY, we have already spoken unto thee, and thou wilt neither accept our commands nor obey our words, and thou hast treated our words as contemptible things." And she held her peace, and made no answer unto them whatsoever. And after this MARY fell sick, and she called all the women of her quarter and said unto them, "Peace be unto you. Behold, I wish to go to Bethlehem and to dwell there in my house, for the Jews have prevented me from praying at the Tomb of Golgotha; and if there be any who wisheth to come with me, let her make haste and come. For I trust in the Lord (Fol. 54b, col. 2) my God, Who is in heaven, and He will give unto me whatsoever I ask and will do for me what I desire." Moreover, her heart rejoiced because of the word that the Angel Gabriel had said unto her when she was praying at the Tomb, "O blessed among women, behold, thou shalt go forth from this fleeting world into everlasting life whereof there is no end. Thy prayer hath been heard by the ear of the Lord of Hosts." And then there came to her three virgins who ministered unto her, and they said unto her, "Be not sad, O our Lady. Behold, we will come with thee, so that we may find compassion with the Lord Who was born of thee. For thy sake we have forsaken our families, and we have chosen thee in preference to everything that we have, and we have come to thee to die and to live with thee." Thus did the virgins speak, and they devoted themselves to serving her by day and by night. And they entreated her (Fol. 54b, col. 3) to tell them how it was that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, was born of her without carnal union. And MARY, the Mother of the Light, explained [this] clearly to these virgins, and she told them everything that they wished to be taught



*Lady Meux MS. No. 3, fol. 38a.*

The Virgin Mary delivering two souls from the clutches of the Devil



## *Her Persecution by the Priests and Death*

by her, and they accepted service [with] her, and they did her good pleasure. And they washed her feet, and they perfumed her apparel, for she was accounted by them a glorious woman, because they saw the signs and wonders which MARY wrought before them by day and by night. And the first miracle which they saw was that her odour, and sweetness, and perfume filled the house wherein our Lady was, like the waves of the sea. And all the sick and diseased used to come to her, and be blessed by her, and they worshipped her and were cured of their sicknesses, and those virgins marvelled when they saw (Fol. 55a, col. 1) that great glory rested upon her.

VII. And then multitudes of men and women came to MARY, and they bowed down before her, and said unto her, "Have mercy upon us and show us compassion, and reject us not, O our Lady." And the blessed woman stretched out her hands and blessed them, and said unto them, "God shall accept your prayer and your petition before our Lord Jesus Christ." And she also blessed those virgins who were with her and who ministered unto her [saying], "Out of all the people of Israel only they have followed me." And then Gabriel, the Angel of God, appeared unto the blessed woman MARY, and said unto her, "Be strong, and fear not, O Mother of God. Rise up, and go to Bethlehem, and remain there; thou shalt see coming to thee the hosts of the angels, and the Apostles, and all created beings, to salute thee and to proclaim thee blessed."

VIII. And when (Fol. 55a, col. 2) those virgins saw the Angel of God talking to MARY they were afraid with a great fear. And then the blessed MARY called to those virgins and said unto them, "Bring ye me incense and apparel, so that I may give an oblation to God." Now those virgins were the children of the elders of Jerusalem, and their names were these: the first was "Hannâ," the meaning of whose name is

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“The Church, the assembly of the nations, which is the heavenly Jerusalem.” The name of the second was “’Absâ,” and its meaning is, “Christ, the Son of God, Who sitteth on the right hand of the Father.” And the name of the third was “Şagâ,” and its meaning is, “It is the Holy Spirit Who giveth life to all those who believe in Christ, the First God.” And on the fifth day, at dawn, MARY went forth, together with those virgins, and she departed to Bethlehem, and she remained there (Fol. 55a, col. 3) that night. And on the morning of the sixth day MARY fell sick, and then she said unto the virgins, “Bring me a censer, for I wish to pray to my Lord Jesus Christ Who is in heaven.” And they brought the censer to her, and she placed incense therein, and she prayed, saying, “O my Lord, and God, and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Who dwellest in heaven, hearken Thou unto my prayer and petition, and send unto me John the Less, for I wish to see him and to rejoice with him, and also send unto me all the Apostles his brethren. I believe in Thy grace wherewith Thou hast been gracious unto me. I know that Thou wilt hear me, and wilt give me everything that I want from Thee.” And when she had finished her prayer the Holy Spirit spake unto John in Ephesus, and said unto him, “Behold, the Mother of thy Teacher wisheth to see thee. Get thee forth at dawn, (Fol. 55b, col. 1) and depart to Bethlehem. And I will go to thy brethren the Apostles, and will gather them together from all countries. And I will wake up those who are asleep from their graves, and I will bring all of them together that they may salute the holy and blessed MARY.” Thus did the Holy Spirit speak to John, and then he removed Himself from him.

IX. And on the following morning John rose up and began to command his disciples not to cease from their service in the Sanctuary, but to perform the offices of prayer in their due season. And the Holy Spirit told him what he should say to them concerning MARY.



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And then he departed from Ephesus, and he bowed low and prayed, and said, "O my Lord and God Jesus Christ, the Son of God, give unto me help, O Lord, and strength on this journey, wherein I am going to see Thy Mother before she dieth." And as he was praying, suddenly the Holy Spirit came, and (Fol. 55b, col. 2) caught him up in a cloud of light, and brought him to the door of MARY's house; and it seemed to him that he travelled to Bethlehem by way of the desert. And when they opened the door of MARY's house he went into her presence, and he found her lying upon her couch, and he drew nigh to her, and he bowed low at her feet and said unto her, "Peace be unto thee, O blessed among women, the Mother of God! Be not sorrowful, behold, thou shalt go forth from this world with joy, and gladness, and great glory." And then those virgins came to John and were blessed by him. And MARY said unto John, "Put incense into the censer"; and he did as she commanded him. And he prayed, saying thus, "O my Lord and God Jesus Christ, perform Thou signs and wonders for Thy Mother before she departeth from this world, so that all those (Fol. 55b, col. 3) who do not believe in Thee—now Thy Name is praised by those who love Thee, and believe that Thou art Christ, the Son of God—may be put to shame and suffer loss. And behold, the heavens and the earth are witnesses that Saint MARY is Thy Mother, and that Thou art the Son of the Living God. And all those who believe in Thee shall live for ever and ever."

X. And when John had finished his prayer Saint MARY said unto him, "Behold, thy Teacher said unto me, If thou wishest to go forth from this world I Myself will come unto thee with all the hosts of My angels." And John answered and said unto her, "Behold, He will come, and thou shalt see Him, even as He said unto thee." And the blessed woman answered and

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said unto him, "Behold, the Jews have planned that, after my death, they will burn my body with fire." And John answered and said unto her, "Fear thou not, God is with thee, for unto none hath power over thee been given." (Fol. 56a, col. 1) And the blessed woman answered and said unto him, "When I am dead where wilt thou bury me?" And John said unto her, "Where Christ shall command me"; and at that moment the blessed woman wept and shed tears. And when John saw her weeping he was exceedingly sorrowful, and he wept with the virgins. And he drew nigh unto her, and said unto her, "Is it then that thou, the Mother of God, art afraid of the departure from this world? How then do the righteous and the good fare when they go forth from this world? Fear thou not, for behold, the Holy Spirit said unto me in Ephesus, 'Rise up and go to the blessed woman MARY [and tarry there] until the Apostles come and bow down before thee.'" And MARY answered and said unto him, "Put incense [in the censer], and pray, and do as He commanded thee." And John prayed, saying, "O my Lord Jesus Christ, hear my prayer, and receive the petition of Thy Mother, and graciously grant unto her that she may see Thee whilst (Fol. 56a, col. 2) she is alive, as Thou didst promise with thy holy mouth, when Thou didst come to her of Thine own free will and by the good pleasure of Thy Father, Who is in heaven, even as Thou didst come down from heaven, and didst dwell with her. And now, visit Thou her with Thy hosts of angels, that Thy Name may be praised in heaven and upon the earth." And whilst John was praying in this wise, a voice came from heaven, saying, "Amen." And whilst John was marvelling at the voice which he had heard, the Holy Spirit came unto him and said unto him, "This voice which thou didst hear [signifieth] that it was to gather together the Apostles from everywhere, in order to salute Saint MARY."

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XI. And then the Holy Spirit went to the Apostles and said unto them, "Get ye to Bethlehem that ye may receive the blessing of MARY." And behold, Simon Peter wished to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Offering, and the Holy Spirit came to him, (Fol. 56a, col. 3) and said unto him, "When thou hast finished the Offering, get thee to Bethlehem, for the time hath come for the departure of MARY, the Mother of thy Lord, from this world." And He spake also unto Paul in the city the name of which is Têrêyôs, which is a distance of fifty marches from the city of Rômê, and He found the Jews quarrelling with him, and reviling him, saying, "We will not hear thy words, for thou art of the men of Têrsûs (Tarsus), because thou preachest Christ. And behold, we know that thou art a man of no account." And whilst they were quarrelling with him in this wise, the Holy Spirit said unto Paul, "Behold, the time hath come for the departure of the Mother of thy Teacher from this world; rise up and go to her." And the Holy Spirit also spake unto Thomas in the country of India, as he was sitting on the couch of the daughter of the king, and said unto him, "The time hath come for the departure from this world (Fol. 56b, col. 1) of MARY, the Mother of thy Teacher; get thee to her quickly." And then Thomas rose up and went into the church, and put incense into the censer, and prayed for her. And the Holy Spirit also spake unto Matthew, and said unto him, "The time hath come for the departure of MARY, the Mother of thy Lord; get thee to her quickly." And likewise the Holy Spirit spake unto James in Jerusalem. And to those who were sleeping (i.e. dead), Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, and Luke, and Simon Zelotes, came the Holy Spirit, and He spake unto them in their graves, saying, "Think not that the time for the resurrection of the dead and the end of days hath come, nevertheless rise up this day from your graves, and get

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ye to Bethlehem, that ye may receive the blessing of Saint MARY." Thus did the Holy Spirit speak (Fol. 56b, col. 2) unto all the Apostles. And they pondered, saying, "How is it possible for us to get to Bethlehem quickly?" And then the Holy Spirit came to them and caught them away into the clouds, and the winds blew upon them from every quarter, and the heavens and the earth were lighted up with multitudes of flashes of lightning, from the fourth hour of the morning until noon, at which time the Apostles arrived in Bethlehem. And very great fear was caused by the greatness of their awful majesty, for they arrived mounted upon a shining cloud, and their raiment was as white as snow, and crowns of glory sparkled on their heads, and the angels bore the chariots of light and cloud whereon the Apostles were mounted. And the Holy Spirit guided the clouds between heaven and earth. And behold, David, the son of Jesse, came with them, and he was singing [to the harp] and saying, "Glory be to the Father, glory be (Fol. 56b, col. 3) to the Son, glory be to the Holy Ghost." Thus did he sing before them.

XII. Then came the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, and they stood up before the Apostles and said unto them, "Peace be unto you, O ye disciples of the Great King Who chose you at His wish." And the Apostles said unto them, "Peace be unto you, O ye Angels of our Lord Jesus Christ, ye guardians of the holy mystery of His Word, the Holy Ghost." And the Holy Spirit said unto John, "Get thee out to welcome thy brethren the Apostles; behold, they have come to Bethlehem." And straightway John went forth to welcome them, and he bowed down to them, and Peter said unto him, "Is the glorious and blessed Mother of the Light dead, or not?" And John answered and said unto him, "She is not dead." And then John prayed and made supplication before them, and Bethlehem was filled with (Fol. 57a, col. 1) its odour and perfume.

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And then the Apostles and the Angels came together into the house of the holy and blessed woman, and they bowed low at her feet. And they said unto her, "Peace be unto thee, O thou who art full of grace, God is with thee, and joy; fear not, neither be dismayed, O thou blessed among women. For He Who was born of thee shall take thee out of this world with great glory, and shall carry thee into the treasury of light, for in thee is power over them and over all the righteous." And at that moment MARY rose up and sat upon her couch, and said unto the disciples, "Behold now, I believe in the coming of my Lord from heaven, and that I shall see Him without dying, even as ye see me. Tell me, who was it that told you that I was a sick woman? And from what country have ye come to me? And on what did ye ride and how did ye arrive [so] (Fol. 57a, col. 2) quickly here? Behold, I wish to praise God Who told you about me." And Peter answered and said unto John, and unto the disciples, "Tell her, each of you, how ye came here to her." And the disciples answered and said unto John, "Behold, thou didst come first, do thou tell her how thou camest." And John answered and said, "I was in Ephesus, and the Holy Spirit came and said unto me, 'O John, the time hath come for the departure from this world of the Mother of thy Lord, and she wisheth to see thee.' And the Holy Spirit also said unto me, 'Behold, I will go and pass through all the countries and announce this to the Apostles, [both] those who are alive and those who are dead, and I will tell them about MARY, and that they are to go to Bethlehem and salute her.' And behold, suddenly the Holy Spirit caught me away into a cloud of light, and brought me (Fol. 57a, col. 3) that very moment into the house of MARY." And Peter answered and said, "And I was in the city of Rômê, wishing to offer up the Offering of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins, [when]

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the Holy Spirit came and said unto me, 'The time hath come for the departure from this world of MARY, the Mother of thy Lord; get thee to her in Bethlehem.' And then a shining cloud caught me up and brought me here, and I saw all the Apostles mounted upon clouds coming to me." And Paul answered and said, "I was contending with the Jews when suddenly the Holy Spirit caught me up and brought me to you." And Thomas answered and said, "I was in the country of India, and the Holy Spirit came and caught me (Fol. 57b, col. 1) up and brought me to you." Mark said, "I was praying in Alexandria, and the Holy Spirit came to me and said, 'Behold, the departure of the Mother of thy Lord from this world is nigh, rise up and get thee to Bethlehem.' And the Holy Spirit caught me up and brought me here." James answered and said, "I was burning incense in the Tomb at Golgotha, and the Holy Spirit spake unto me, saying, 'The holy and blessed woman is going to depart from this world'; and [then] the Holy Spirit caught me up and brought me here." Matthew said, "I was in a ship preaching God and blessing Him, when the waves surrounded me from all sides. I wept and prayed, and as I prayed the Holy Spirit caught me up in a shining cloud, and brought me to you." Philip said, "I being dead heard the voice of a herald crying out, and saying, 'Philip, Philip, (Fol. 57b, col. 2) rise up, and come forth from the grave.' And straightway I rose up, and behold, the Holy Spirit caught me up and brought me to you." Simon Zelotes said, "After I was dead I rose up from the grave, and behold, the hand of a stretched-out arm came to me, and it raised me up from among the dead, and the Holy Spirit caught me up in a shining cloud, and brought me to you." Luke said, "When I was in the grave I heard the sound of the horn which the angels blow, and a light came and entered into the grave wherein I was. Now I thought that the resurrec-

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tion of the dead [was come], when behold, the Holy Spirit came and brought me to you." And Andrew answered and said, "I rose from the dead because I heard the voice of the Son of God saying, 'Andrew, Andrew, rise up, and get thee, (Fol. 57b, col. 3) together with the Apostles, to Bethlehem. Behold, I and all the armies of the angels will come with you. For the time of the crowning of Saint MARY with honour and glory hath arrived, and she is going forth from this world. And behold, I will bring her into the treasuries of the light of the Father, and she shall dwell there until I come to judge the living and the dead.'" And Bartholomew said, "Behold, I was preaching in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was trusting in the riches of His grace, and the Holy Spirit came and caught me up, and brought me to you." In this wise did the Apostles speak unto the holy woman MARY, and each one of them described to her how he had come thither.

XIII. And when the holy Virgin MARY heard the words of the Apostles, she praised the God of heaven and earth, and said, "I worship Thee, O my Lord and God. I believe in Thee, and I praise Thee, (Fol. 58a, col. 1) and I magnify Thee, and I sing unto Thee, and I bless Thee because Thou hast not made me a laughing-stock for the nations. Moreover, Thou hast put to shame the wicked Jews, who have meditated evil against me and would burn my body in the fire. And now, I praise Thy Name, and I magnify Thy power for ever and ever. And evermore will I sing praise before Thee because Thou hast sent Thy Apostles to me." And when MARY had ended her prayer, she said unto the Apostles, "Put ye incense in the censer and pray"; and they did as she commanded them, and they prayed and bowed low to the ground. And behold, there was the roar of thunder in the heavens, and there came a voice that was like unto the noise of a heavy wheel revolving swiftly, and a sweet and lovely odour from

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heaven. And then the angels and the armies of heaven, which are innumerable, came down, and they covered the house wherein was the holy, and blessed, and pure Virgin twofold, MARY, (Fol. 58a, col. 2) the Mother of God, and they crowned her with their wings, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy [is] the Lord our God Whom celestial and terrestrial beings worship." And then there was great fear in Bethlehem, and signs and wonders were revealed there, and the hosts of the armies of God ceased not to go up into heaven and to come down again into the house. And there went forth from their midst as it were the sound of the Son of Man Who was speaking in the chariot of the Cherubim, saying, "Get ye gone and go into the house of MARY." And then the watchmen of Bethlehem went into Jerusalem, and they told the elders and the priests of all the signs and wonders which they had seen take place through the holy woman MARY. And when the watchmen and the men of Bethlehem had come and related unto the people (Fol. 58a, col. 3) all the signs and wonders which they had seen wrought before the holy woman, they would not believe them until messengers had been sent to find out what had happened to her. And when these had come thither they saw the gates of heaven opened, and the angels of God descending and coming into the house of MARY, and also the lightnings and the thunders going forth from the house of the holy woman, and [the angels] going up to heaven. And with this they saw the disciples ministering to the holy woman. And they also saw the clouds coming from heaven and dropping dew and storm upon Bethlehem. And they also saw the stars coming down from heaven and bowing low before the holy woman MARY. And they also saw the sun and moon, which illumine all the world, come down from heaven, and bow low before MARY. And they also saw the holy woman (Fol. 58b, col. 1) lying upon her couch, and the Angel Gabriel standing



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at her pillow and Michael at her foot-cushion ; and there were lamps in their hands, and they were making the holy woman to rejoice.

XV (*sic*). And then they saw the Apostles standing by the couch in fear and trembling, and stretching out their hands to heaven, and Peter and John receiving the tears of the holy woman on their apparel. And they also saw the perfume and smoke of the incense rolling out from the foundations of that house like the waves of the sea, and the countless hosts of the angels standing in fear and trembling and ascribing glory to God, Who had dwelt in the womb of the Virgin MARY. And they spread out their wings and bowed down to the holy and blessed MARY, the Mother of Christ, and they were crying out and saying with a loud (Fol. 58b, col. 2) voice, "Peace be unto thee, O blessed among women ; and blessed be He Who was born of thee, our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ." And the hosts of heaven sang hymns, and the beings of the spirit rejoiced, and the mighty Powers ascribed blessing to the holy woman MARY. And they were not able to draw nigh unto her because of the intensity of the light that rose up on her. And they also saw on her right hand and on her left those who were broken [in spirit] and those who were in tribulation coming to the house of the blessed and holy woman, and crying out and saying, "O holy and blessed MARY, have mercy upon us, show compassion to us, and heal us by means of thy prayer and supplication" ; and [they saw also] that they were healed straightway of their sicknesses. And other sick folk were coming, and were taking the mud of her house and smearing it over their bodies, and they were healed of all their sicknesses. And thus MARY wrought signs and (Fol. 58b, col. 3) wonders innumerable. He Who was born of her came down from heaven, became incarnate, and made her the house of the Sanctuary of His glory. And then the men of Bethlehem ascribed

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praise to the holy Lady MARY. And moreover, women came unto her from every country, from Rômê and Alexandria, and the daughters of kings and governors, and they brought gifts and bowed low before MARY, and they confessed Christ Who was born of her. And they said unto her, "Tell us how Christ was born of thee without the seed of man"; and MARY told them everything that had happened to her. And when they were going to return to their own country she blessed them, and gave them beautiful smelling perfume, so that their kinsfolk might believe that the story of the holy woman MARY was well-founded. And there came unto her other women whose hands had been made useless by a devil, and they said unto her, "Have compassion upon us, O holy and (Fol. 59a, col. 1) pure woman, and heal us of our sickness." And the holy woman prayed over them, and blessed them, and straightway they were healed of their sickness. And again, there came unto her a woman from Egypt who had a violent fever, and she bowed low before MARY, and straightway she was healed of her fever. And again, there came unto MARY a woman whose right eye a devil had blinded, and she made supplication unto her, and said, "Have mercy upon me, O my Lady, and lay thine hand upon my eye"; and she was healed in that same hour. And again, there came unto her a woman whom a multitude of devils were dragging about, and she cried out with a loud cry to MARY, and said, "Heal me, my Lady." [And MARY] said, "I adjure you in the Name of my Lord Jesus Christ to go forth from this soul, and not to afflict her again." And from that moment (Fol. 59a, col. 2) the devils went out from that woman, and they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with thee, O MARY, the Mother of Christ? Behold, we have been scattered about in every' country through the Great Power of Him that was born of thee. For we are unable to stand up before Him, and He hath made us

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descend into the depths of the earth, and thou, like Him, hast driven us away from this soul by thy prayer." And thereupon MARY made them to descend into the depths of the sea. And Sâfrôn, king of Egypt, whose . . . <sup>1</sup> a lion, had seized (i.e. clawed), cried out and said, "Heal me, O my Lady, by thy prayer." And she stretched out her hands and laid them on his head, and he was healed of his sickness in that same hour.

XIV (*sic*). And then a great multitude of sick and diseased people gathered together in Jerusalem, and they enquired and said, (Fol. 59a, col. 3) "Where is the blessed woman MARY?" And they answered and said, "She is not here, she dwelleth in Bethlehem." And many sick folk, and innumerable people came to her, and they fell down on their faces at the door of MARY's house, and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "O holy MARY, Mother of God, have compassion upon us, and heal us, and do not suffer us to be put to shame." And when MARY heard their voices, she prayed over them and said, "O my Lord Jesus Christ, in Thy great majesty receive their prayer and hearken unto my petition, and heal Thou those sick and suffering souls who have come unto Thee"; and they were all healed straightway. Now the number of those people was two thousand and eight, besides women and children; and there was great praising in all the country of Bethlehem. And at that moment the magistrates of Jerusalem and the elders of (Fol. 59b, col. 1) Bethlehem came, and they called the men who had been healed by MARY, and asked them and said unto them, "Tell us what MARY did unto you." And they answered and said unto them, "When MARY prayed over us great power went forth from her, and we were healed."

XV (*sic*). And when the Jews heard these things from them, their eyes became dark, and their priests were afraid, and their magistrates were terrified; and

<sup>1</sup> *dēmâkh* means literally, wine measure, cup, bowl.

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they said with a loud voice, " Behold, great sorrow, and tribulation, and destruction have come upon us through MARY " ; and there were some who said, " From this moment cast forth MARY from Bethlehem. She shall not dwell among you." And when the evening of that day had come, the Jews arrived at the house of MARY in order to lay hold upon the disciples and MARY. But when they arrived at her house they could not enter therein, for at that moment the gates of heaven were opened, and a great light shot forth, (Fol. 59b, col. 2) and then they returned to the magistrates and priests, and told them what had happened. And they commanded the captain to go with thirty men, and to seize MARY and the disciples. And at that moment the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles, and He said unto them, " Behold, a captain with thirty soldiers hath come from Jerusalem to seize you. And now, rise up, get ye forth from this place, and fear not. Behold, I will make you to pass between heaven and earth, and no man shall be able to see you, for the might of the Son of God shall be with you." And then the Apostles went forth bearing MARY's couch, and the Holy Spirit came, and caught them up, and brought them to Jerusalem. And when the captain arrived and his soldiers and went into the house they found there no one whatsoever. And they were exceedingly angry, and they said unto (Fol. 59b, col. 3) the men of the house, " Did not ye come to the magistrates and priests, and inform them that the disciples of Jesus were with MARY, with great glory, and that the angels of God were ascending to heaven and descending to MARY's house ? And now, come ye to the magistrates and the priests, and tell them everything ye wish." And they departed with them, and they came into Jerusalem, and told the magistrates and the priests, saying, " We came to Bethlehem, and we found nobody there—neither MARY nor the disciples." And the priests said unto them, " Do ye

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not know that the disciples worked the bewitchment of your eyes so that ye might not see [them]? But now that ye have heard certain news of them, seize them and bring them unto us.”

XVI. And five days afterwards the men of Jerusalem saw the angels (Fol. 60a, col. 1) of God coming into and going out from the house of MARY. And behold, her neighbours gathered together, and they said, “O holy MARY, Mother of God, we put our hope in thee that thou wilt beseech Christ to send unto us salvation from Him.” And on the morrow the priests sent and called her neighbours, and said unto them, “What are these cries and noises which we hear from you?” And they answered and said unto them, “Behold, MARY, the Mother of God, hath returned to her house, and the angels of God are singing praises before her.” And then the priests went to the governor and said unto him, “Behold now, there is a great earthquake, and murder, and revolt in Jerusalem because of MARY.” And the governor answered and said unto them, “What then shall we do that the men of Jerusalem may be quieted (?)?” And they said unto him, “Let us take fire and wood and burn her house where she is.” And the governor answered and said unto them, “Do what ye wish.” And then (Fol. 60a, col. 2) the men of Jerusalem took fire and wood to burn down the house wherein MARY dwelt. And when they had come to the house wherein MARY lived, they began to burn the doors of her house, and straightway the angels of God came down, and beat upon the faces of the men with their wings, and they burned up all those who approached the doors of her house, and many people died there, and there was great fear in Jerusalem. And when the governor saw this miracle, he stretched out his hands to heaven, and said, “Glory be to God Who was born of the Virgin MARY. I will thank Him, and praise Him, and worship Him for ever.” And on the

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following day the governor sent and gathered together the priests and all the men of Jerusalem, and he said unto them, "O ye evil men who crucified Christ, Who came down from heaven for the salvation of all the world, I believe in Him, for I am not [one] of you, and I do not belong to the people (Fol. 60a, col. 3) of your country, for it was the Emperor Tiberius who made me governor over you because of the wickedness of your deeds. Behold, henceforth I command you that no man shall approach the house of MARY the twofold Virgin, the Mother of God."

XVII. And then there rose up a certain man who was a believer, and whose name was Câlêb—now he believed in Christ—and he spake unto the governor privily, and said unto him, "O governor, make them to swear by the Living God, Who brought the children of Israel out from the land of Egypt, and by the Holy Law of Moses, that they will not swear falsely; but let them speak what is the truth, and let them say truly whether Christ, Who was born of MARY the prophetess, is the Son of God, or a man who was born through carnal union. For behold, I know that they are wise men, and are able to understand the word of the Book." And then (Fol. 60b, col. 1) the governor rose up and seated himself upon a high throne, and he commanded [his men] to gather together all the people of Jerusalem. And he made them to swear the oath which Câlêb had uttered to him, and he said unto them, "O children of Israel, I adjure you by the Holy Law, that ye separate those in your midst who believe that Christ was born of MARY from those who do not believe."

XVIII. And when they heard this they separated themselves each from his fellow in great fear. And the governor answered and said unto them, "Do ye believe in Christ Who was born of MARY, or not?" And the elders said unto the governor, "We believe in Him, that He is the Son of God, the Maker of the heavens,

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and of the earth, and of everything that is in them.” And the others who did not believe said unto the governor, “Behold, we know that the coming of Christ is not near.” And those who loved Christ answered and said, “Did not (Fol. 6ob, col. 2) our father Adam command his son Seth before his death, and say unto him, Behold, sacrifices of [the] offering shall be set in the treasury of the Cave? The men of wisdom shall bring gold, and frankincense, and myrrh before the Son of God, Who is to be born in Bethlehem.” And those who denied Christ and did not believe said, “Is Christ greater with God than Abraham who opened the heavens and held converse with Him?” And those who loved Christ answered and said, “Assuredly ye are deniers who are without knowledge. But we believe and we know well that He Who was born of MARY, the Creator of all the world, was Creator before Abraham was in the womb; Christ existed before all creation.” And the deniers said, “Is this Christ in Whom ye believe more honourable than Isaac, who was a fair offering unto God?” (Fol. 6ob, col. 3) And the lovers of Christ said, “If Isaac had been offered up he might be called an offering, but he was only a symbol of the Son, whereas Christ, Who was crucified on the wood of the Cross, was an offering for the whole world, and in Him they make offering to God.” The deniers of Christ, who did not believe in Him, said, “Is Christ greater than Jacob who saw the Ladder of heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on that Ladder?” The lovers of Christ said, “The angels and the Ladder which Jacob saw between heaven and earth are a prophecy concerning Christ.” And the deniers, who did not believe, said, “Is Christ greater than Elijah who went up to heaven, and with all of whose works God was well pleased?” The lovers of Christ said, “Elijah [went up] into the cloud which is under heaven, to the place where the sun and moon appear,

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(Fol. 61a, col. 1) but there was no one who worshipped Elijah in the place where he went except Elisha his disciple. But after Christ went up above the heavens all created beings worshipped Him, both those who were in the heavens and those who were on the earth." And the deniers who did not believe said, "Is Christ greater than Moses who drowned Pharaoh and his host in the sea, and who made the water to stand up like a wall on this side and on that, and who delivered the children of Israel?" And the lovers of Christ said, "Did not Christ rebuke the devils and drown them in the sea? And again, He stretched out His hands, and saved Simon Peter from the water of the sea. For He had dominion over all created things, both those that were on dry land and those that were on the water." And when the governor heard this he believed on Christ, and he had the forty men who did not believe scourged with cords.

(Fol. 61a, col. 2) XIX. And when the evening of that day had come, and the cock crew, the governor went to MARY with his two sons; now one of the governor's sons was sick. And when he arrived, he knocked at the door of MARY's house, and one of the maidens who ministered unto MARY went out, and the governor said unto her, "Speak to the holy woman on my behalf." And when the holy woman heard she commanded her to open her door. And when the governor entered her presence, he wept and said unto her, "O Mother of God, peace be unto thee, and peace be unto Christ Who was born of thee, and peace be unto the heavens which carry the throne of His power. Behold, from this time forth, by heaven, I will worship thee, and I will believe on Christ Who was born of thee. Do thou stretch out thy right hand and bless me, O Mother of the Light, and pray for my son that he may be healed of his sickness. And pray thou for the men of Rômëyâ (Rômîyâ), and pray also for me, that I may go forth from this



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(Fol. 61a, col. 3) city in peace, and depart and see my kinsfolk safe and well." And then the holy woman stretched out her hand, and blessed him, and said unto him, "Sit down here." And when the governor saw the Apostles standing before MARY, he prostrated himself at their feet, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you, O ye holy ones of God, Who hath chosen you to preach in His Name in all the world." And then the Apostles blessed the governor, and straightway his son was healed, and he departed to Rômëyâ, and related unto many everything that he had seen with MARY. And there were there the disciples of Paul, and they wrote down all the signs and wonders that took place through those who called upon the name of the holy woman MARY.

XX. And when the morning had come, the Holy Spirit said unto the Apostles, "Take MARY, and carry her away out of Jerusalem, and bring her along the road that (Fol. 61b, col. 1) leadeth to the river to the place towards the east, where there are caves and caverns." And they took her and seated her upon that couch, and they sang hymns over her until the day broke; and when the day had come they took MARY out from Jerusalem. And then many Jews gathered together, and they said unto Tafônyâ, "We know that thou art a strong and mighty man, now go, and seize the couch of MARY, and hurl it on the ground, and we will burn her body in the fire, so that the disciples may not imagine that they have overcome the men of Jerusalem."

XXI. And then Tafônyâ rose up and stretched out his hand to break the couch of MARY, and at that moment the Angel of God came down and smote him with a sword of fire, and cut off his two hands and arms up to the shoulders, and they were hanging upon the couch. And then he wept and cried to the Apostles, and said unto (Fol. 61b, col. 2) them, "Have mercy upon me and show compassion unto me. And do Thou,

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O Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have compassion upon me, according to Thy great compassion." And the Apostles answered and said unto him, "Ask MARY, whose couch thou didst wish to break." Thereupon Tafônyâ said, "O MARY, Mother of God, have compassion upon me." And MARY answered and said unto Peter, "Let these limbs, which have been cut off and are lying upon the couch, be restored to him in their former state and place." Then Peter took up the two arms which had been cut off, and he said, "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Name of MARY, the holy woman, get ye back to your former places"; and they were healed straightway. Then Peter took up a rod and gave it to Tafônyâ, and he said unto him, "Go thou, and henceforward reveal the power of the Son of God before all the Jews, and relate unto them how the worker of miracles, (Fol. 61b, col. 3) MARY, wrought a miracle on thy behalf (now they hated MARY exceedingly), and ye say, This woman hath killed us during her life [time]; now we will burn the body of MARY in the fire." But the deniers of Christ did not know and did not understand that our Lord Jesus Christ would not leave the body of His Mother in this world. Behold now, I will tell [the truth to] you, O lovers of Christ, all who love MARY and celebrate her commemoration and believe in her Son, and are not friends of the Jews—for if they are they are far from the love of Christ. And whilst the Apostles were singing hymns over MARY in the cave, the Holy Spirit spake and said unto them, "On the sixth day of the month, on the first day of the week, the Angel Gabriel was sent to MARY, the Mother of God, and he announced unto her concerning Him that was to be born of her for the salvation of all the world. And on the first day of the week the Lord (Fol. 62a, col. 1) Christ was born of MARY the Virgin in Bethlehem. And also on the first day of the week old men and

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young men praised Him. And also on the first day of the week our Lord rose from the dead. And on the first day of the week He will come again to judge both the quick and the dead. And on the first day of the week He will come, together with all the hosts of heaven. And to those who are on earth that they may make MARY to depart from this world will He show His glory through her. And on the first day of the week came Eve, the mother of the race of men, and Hännâ the mother of the holy woman MARY, and Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. And they drew nigh to MARY, and they bowed low at her feet and they said, Glory be to God, Who chose thee to be for Him the habitation of His glory.”

XXII. And when Peter saw the disciples coming to MARY, he said unto the women, “Remove her from here.” (Fol. 62a, col. 2) And then came Adam and Seth his son, and Noah and Shem, and bowed low at the feet of the holy woman. And then came the other fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and David the Prophet, and they bowed low before MARY. And there came also the Prophets, having in their hands censers, and bowed down before the blessed woman. And the heavens opened, and there came forth therefrom the armies of the angels, which were without number, that they might see the departure of MARY from this world. And then came Enoch, Moses, and Elijah mounted upon chariots of fire, and they stood up between heaven and earth that they might see the descent of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ.

XXII (*sic*). And then came the Twelve Hosts of the Archangels, and their number was twelve times ten thousand. And after this appeared our Lord Jesus Christ, (Fol. 62a, col. 3) sitting upon the chariot of the Cherubim and Seraphim, and He came unto MARY. And all created beings thanked Him, and praised Him, and blessed Him. And He said unto the holy woman,

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“O MARY!” And she answered and said unto Him, “I am here, my Lord and my God, Jesus Christ.” And our Lord said unto her, “Behold thou the glory that hath been given unto Me by the Great Father.” And MARY looked upon the glory which none can describe. And our Lord said unto her, “Henceforth I shall take thy body into Paradise, where it shall dwell until the Resurrection of the dead, and I will command the angels to minister unto thee.” And then the Apostles came to MARY and said unto her, “O Mother of the Light, pray thou for the world wherefrom thou art going forth. And pray thou for all those who shall celebrate thy commemoration, and who shall offer up offerings in thy name. And pray for all those who believe in God, Who sent His beloved Son, and dwelt in thee.” (Fol. 62b, col. 1.)

XXV (*sic*). And thereupon MARY prayed and said, “O Lord God, Who dwellest in the heavens, Who of Thine own free will didst send Thy Son Jesus Christ and He dwelt in my womb, I beseech and entreat Thee for all the children of baptism who shall celebrate my commemoration, and make offerings to me. Hear, O Lord, their prayers and petitions, and remove from them captivity, and slaughter, and famine, and every kind of sorrow, and barrenness from barren women, when they make offerings to me. And deliver their crops from mice, and locusts, and the large wingless locust, and from hail, and frost, and the little wingless locust. And let those who are under the power of devils, and are grievously sick, be healed in my name. And save Thou those who go down into the sea in ships, when they call upon my name from the waves and billows (Fol. 62b, col. 2) of the sea and from the violence of the winds. And when those who journey into a far country call upon my name, do Thou bring them back into their city. And let the crops of those who bring forth fruit for offerings in my name be blessed.

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And let all those who celebrate my commemoration be blessed for ever and ever." Then our Lord answered and said unto her, "Everything for which thou hast asked Me shall be given unto thee. And I will have mercy upon every one who shall call upon thy name, and I will have compassion upon him, and will forgive his sins. And for every one who shall make alms and offerings in thy name, the odour and perfume thereof shall ascend to heaven before the throne of My Father, and before thy Son Jesus Christ, and before the Holy Spirit, for ever." And all created beings answered and said "Amen."

XXIV (*sic*). (Fol. 62b, col. 3) And then our Lord answered and said unto Peter, "Speak unto all the beings of heaven and command them to sing hymns and play instruments of music with joy and gladness"; and at that moment the soul of the holy woman MARY went forth, and He took it away into the treasuries of the Father. Then John stretched forth his hand, and straightened her, and closed her eyes; and Peter and Paul straightened her hands, and feet, but they did not remove the apparel that was upon her, for the Holy Spirit had arrayed her in great light which could not be comprehended. And the Twelve Apostles lifted her up, and twelve clouds of light bore the Apostles, and brought them into Paradise. And there went before her Eve our mother, and Hannâ, the mother of the holy Lady MARY, and Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. And after them came Adam and Seth, and Noah and Shem; and after them Abraham, Isaac, and (Fol. 63a, col. 1) Jacob, and David the Prophet; and after them other prophets, and Enoch, and Moses, and Elijah; and after these the chariots of our Lord Jesus Christ. And after this the Twelve Apostles went forth and brought the holy woman MARY into the Garden of Delight, and they laid her down there.

XL (*sic*). Then all the created beings turned and

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went back to their habitations ; and the Apostles went to Mount Sinai, being carried thither upon the clouds, and there was not one of them left behind. And they prayed, saying, “ We praise Thee, O our Lord Jesus Christ, because Thou hast gathered us together from the ends of the world, and hast held us worthy to receive the blessing of MARY Thy mother, before she departed from this world. And as Thou didst speak with Thy holy mouth and say unto us, ‘ Behold, I will give you power to tread upon vipers and scorpions ; and (Fol. 63a, col. 2) ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, and shall judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel, who would not believe in Thee and in MARY Thy mother.’ ” And when the Apostles had finished praying, they said, “ Let us write down everything that we have seen, and heard, and known, concerning the departure of the blessed MARY from this world. The departure of the pure and holy Lady MARY took place in the three hundred and forty-fifth year. And we ordain and command that men shall celebrate the commemoration of the holy and blessed MARY three times yearly, the first is the day of her commemoration, the [second is the] following day, and [the third is] Christmas Day. On the day whereon one shall celebrate her commemoration he shall be delivered from the locust that is hidden in the ground, and his crop shall be blessed. Moreover, by her prayer kings shall be delivered from murder (or, battle), and there shall be no enemy among them, and the blood of men shall not be poured out on the earth.” And the Apostles also commanded that men should celebrate her commemoration in the month of Îyâr, on the day of her death, for (Fol. 63a, col. 3) through her prayer the birds of the air shall not devour the fruit of the earth, nor the worms, nor the black worm, nor the locust, and there shall not be a famine among men.

XLI. And then the Holy Spirit said unto the Apostles, “ I will declare unto you the country whereto

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God wisheth to send the punishment of His wrath ; and He will bring the locust to that country as it were in the twinkling of the eye." And for this reason the Apostles commanded men in each month of Iyâr to perform her covenant, and to pray to God to be delivered from tribulation. And the Apostles also commanded men to celebrate the commemoration of MARY on the 16th (or 17th) day of Naḥassê, for the sake of the vineyard and the flowering vines and the fruit-bearing trees. And the Apostles also commanded those who are willing to give a gift, and to present in the evening pure flour of wheat. And a watch (or, custody) shall be kept over it in the church until the dawn, and the priests shall pray over it, (Fol. 63b, col. 1) saying, " O Mother of God Most High, hear thou the prayer of those who commemorate thy name, and accept this offering which they bring unto thee." And whilst they are praying in this wise, MARY, the Mother of the Light, shall come, and shall bless this offering, and those who have brought it to her, and those who are changed thereby for ever and ever. And when the Apostles had finished this matter a voice came unto them from heaven, saying, " Let each one of you take a copy of the commemoration of MARY, and return to his own country." And then chariots of clouds came and caught up each of them, and brought each of them into his own country ; and those who were dead returned to their graves.

XXVI (*sic*). And after our Lord Jesus Christ had come to MARY in the Garden, He (Fol. 63b, col. 2) said unto her, " Behold thou the good things which God hath prepared for those who love Him." And then she lifted up her holy eyes and saw the habitations of the saints and their exceedingly great beauties, and the saints dwelt therein in great happiness. And she also saw the habitations of the martyrs with their crowns on their heads ; and some of them exhaled a sweet perfume, and from some of the trees there went forth the

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scent of flowers. And then our Lord Jesus plucked some of the fruits of those trees, and gave them unto MARY, and said unto her, "Ascend that thou mayest see what is in the heavens." And the holy woman went up and saw the water which is above the third heaven, and above it was the heavenly Jerusalem. And the Lord commanded the sun to stand still in the door of heaven, and the light thereof came into the Garden; the foundations of which are in the earth, and its walls reach (Fol. 63b, col. 3) up to heaven. And from it there went forth four rivers, *Îfôsôn*, and *Gôyôn* (Nile), and Tigris, and Euphrates. Now when the Flood came upon the earth the might of God did not permit heaven to raise up the Garden greatly. And our Lord Jesus Christ sat upon the throne of a chariot of light above the sun, and MARY saw the storehouses of God, the storehouse of the snow and ice, the storehouse of the dew and the storm, the storehouse of the cold and the rain, and the storehouse of the lightning and the thunder. And she also saw the places where were all kinds of beautiful things, and the place where Elijah stood, and he was praying in the forefront of heaven. And she saw the second heaven also, and the angels with their wings spread out, and their eyes were turned upwards, and they ceased not from reciting words of praise, and they said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, God of (Fol. 64a, col. 1) Hosts." And she also saw in the third heaven twelve Mansions, and in them were the Twelve Apostles. And each Apostle stood in one gate, with hosts and armies of angels ascribing praise [to God]. And in the largest gate was the heavenly Jerusalem. And in that place she saw Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Prophet David standing, and worshipping the Great King Jesus Christ. And then she went in and saw the heavenly Jerusalem. And when she came to the first gate the angels worshipped her. And in the second gate *Sûrâfil* worshipped her. And in the third gate the Cherubim worshipped



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her. And in the fourth gate the hosts of the Powers worshipped her. And in the fifth gate the lightnings and the thunder worshipped her. And in the sixth gate the angels cried out before her, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, God (Fol. 64a, col. 2) of Hosts." And in the seventh gate the lights of fire worshipped her. And in the eighth gate the rains, and the dew, and the mists worshipped her. And in the ninth gate Michael and Gabriel worshipped her. And in the tenth gate all the splendours of the sun and the moon and the stars worshipped her. And in the eleventh gate all the Apostles praised her and worshipped her. And in the twelfth gate all the powers (or, hosts) of God worshipped her, and there she saw Him Who was born of her. In this wise did the entrance of MARY into the heavenly Jerusalem take place, and at that moment she bowed down before God the Father. And then the holy woman saw the Holy Father, and the Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, and the Father was being praised by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit by the Father and by the Son. And then Jesus Christ showed MARY the hidden (Fol. 64a, col. 3) mysteries, which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard of, [for] the heart of man hath not been able to conceive what God hath prepared for and will give unto those who love Him and believe in His Name. And at the Last Day He will make them to see the joy that is never-ending. And our Lord also showed her the place wherein Enoch prayeth.

XXXIII. And then MARY lifted up her eyes and saw the abode of [beings] innumerable, and they shone with exceedingly bright light, and there went forth therefrom the odour of sweetly perfumed incense, and the sweet sound of a beautiful trumpet was heard in those habitations; and multitudes of men and women were standing in them. And then MARY said unto Him, "Tell me, O my Lord and God, who are those who dwell in this habitation?" Our Lord answered and

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said unto her, "They are the righteous and the good. Behold, the light shineth upon them because of their greatness, (Fol. 64b, col. 1) and they await joy and gladness at the Last Day." And she also saw the country of darkness, whereout go smoke and a fœtid smell, and a mighty flame of fire blazed therein; and multitudes of men and women were standing facing that country of darkness, and they were weeping and wailing. And MARY answered and said unto Him, "Tell me, O my Lord, who are these that are standing facing the country of darkness?" And the Lord answered and said unto her, "This is the country of darkness. These who are standing in it are the sinners who are awaiting the punishment that is prepared for them. Moreover, there shall be cast into this fire all those who have refused to perform My commandment." And then our Lady MARY heard the voices of the righteous, saying, "Praise be unto Thee, O our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, Who in return for (Fol. 64b, col. 2) very little dost reward greatly those who call upon Thee and believe in Thee." And when MARY heard the voices of the righteous her mind was relieved and she rejoiced. And again she heard the cries and the wailings of the sinners who stood away in the country of darkness, saying, "Have mercy upon us, have compassion upon us, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, when Thou comest to judge the living and the dead." And when MARY, the mother of mercy, heard this she was exceedingly sorrowful, and she said, "O my Lord and God, have pity and compassion upon the sinners, and neglect not Thy handiwork when Thou comest to judge them, for I have heard their groaning and their weeping, and I am sorrowful on their account."

XXXI. And then our Lord took His mother MARY and brought her into the Garden of Joy with all the denizens of heaven. And our Lady MARY told John the Less (Fol. 64b, col. 2) everything that our Lord Jesus

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Christ had shown her. And she said unto him, "Take heed to this matter, which thy Teacher hath shown me, until His appointed time shall be revealed unto those who celebrate my commemoration, and call upon my name. For in the last days sorrow shall be multiplied for men, and there shall be slaughter, and fear, and famine through excess of sins and evil-doing. And in that day it shall increase upon the earth, and the powers of heaven shall be moved, and the days shall be changed, and He will make days of signs and wonders to appear, and calamity shall find men, and a great sickness shall come upon them. And in that day the Only Son Jesus Christ shall first come, and neither faith nor good deeds shall be found on the earth." This is what our Lord Jesus Christ revealed unto His Mother MARY, and His Mother MARY (Fol. 65a, col. 1) told it to John the Less. And then our Lord said unto His Mother MARY, "O blessed one, O blessing, everyone who calleth upon thee and celebrateth thy commemoration shall be delivered from tribulation." And His Mother MARY answered and said unto her beloved Son, our Lord, "Rightly sayest Thou, my Lord and my God, even as spake the mouth of Thy holy Father and Thine own life-giving voice. Every one who hopeth on me upon the earth shall be given unto me, and everyone who believeth in Thee shall live for ever, and shall inherit the kingdom of heaven which Thou hast prepared for those who love Thee. Moreover, those who believe in Thee and that Thou art the Christ Who was born of me of Thine own free will in the last days for the sake of Adam, Thy first creation, shall praise Thy vivifying Name now, henceforth, and for ever." May He deliver us from the nets of the Enemy Satan by the might of the prayer of our Lady MARY, (Fol. 65a, col. 2) the merciful intercessor of Christian folk for ever and ever.

THE STORY OF MARY'S FLIGHT TO MOUNT  
LEBANON, AND THE ACTS OF GÎGÂR,  
GOVERNOR OF SYRIA AND DOMITIANUS

[Brit. Mus. Orient. No. 604, Fol. 112a, col. 2 ff.]

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF  
THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD, WE BEGIN TO WRITE WITH  
GOD'S HELP THE STORY OF OUR LADY THE VIRGIN MARY—  
HOW SHE DISAPPEARED IN THE MOUNTAINS OF LEBANON,  
AND HOW HEROD SOUGHT HER TO KILL HER INFANT SON,  
OUR LORD AND REDEEMER JESUS CHRIST—AND THE STORY  
OF THE SAINTS GÎGÂR, GOVERNOR OF SYRIA, AND DOMI-  
TIANUS.

I. **W**HEN Herod heard that our Lady the Virgin  
MARY was with her Child in the desert of  
Barçâs of Edom, he rejoiced and was glad. And he said  
unto the nobles of his kingdom, " Rise up at dawn, and  
we will surround the desert of Barçâs " ; and they said  
unto him, " We consent." And at midnight the Angel  
of God appeared unto Joseph in a dream, (Fol. 112a,  
col. 3) and said unto him, " Rise up at dawn, and take  
the Child and His Mother, and depart into the moun-  
tains of Libânôs (Lebanon), for Herod is seeking for  
you " ; and Joseph did as the Angel of God com-  
manded him. And Herod surrounded all the moun-  
tains of Lebanon and Barçâs, and sought for them, and  
he could not find them among the rocks, or in the holes  
in the ground, or in the dense growth of the forest.  
And they talked the matter over together and they said,  
" What hath become of them ? Hath the earth swal-  
lowed them up ? " And Herod said unto him that told  
him [this], " Why dost thou mock me ? " And he who  
told him said unto him, " O king, live for ever, and may

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thy kingdom endure for ever! Three days ago we found MARY and Joseph on the day of their dwelling together, and they were rejoicing and making very merry, and they were like unto men who were drunk with wine. Now I used to know them in times gone by before a son had been born to them." And Herod said unto him, (Fol. 112b, col. 1) "How camest thou to know them? Are they kinsfolk of thine?" And the man said unto him, "O king, they are not kinsfolk of mine, for they are sorcerers. And I know nothing about the practice of magic, and I am wholly unable to make incantations and to work enchantments as they do." And Herod said unto him, "What kind of magic do they work?" And the man said unto him, "They raise the dead, and they cleanse those who are lepers, and they drive out devils. They know Asrâbis (Sarapis), and Baal, and Apollo, whom they serve and love greatly, according to all the things which I have seen with mine own eyes."

And when Herod heard these words he marvelled, and he commanded a herald to go round the city and to proclaim thus: "If there be any man who shall find these [people] and bring them [to me], I will reward him even to the half of my kingdom." And he swore this great oath. And the soldiers scattered themselves among the mountains, and hills and valleys, seeking for them, but they did not find them, for they had disappeared. (Fol. 112b, col. 2) And Herod returned to the city, and the Angel of God stood in [his] road, and smote the horse's nose with [a piece of] the wood of the Cross, and the horse in his fright leaped up twelve cubits in the air, and threw Herod on the ground, and made him like a motionless corpse. And the soldiers carried him on his bed and brought him into his house; but his soul did not go forth from his body. For he must needs become the slayer of the children—now many priests and prophets became martyrs through

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him—and therefore [God] left him bound hand and foot.

II. And after six months the sickness departed from him a little, and he went out from his house, and sat in judgment. And he commanded a herald to go round about the city and proclaim thus: “If there be any man who doth not come to me within three days, he shall surely die, and they shall slay him with the sword and stoning with stones.” And within the three days there came unto him (Fol. 112b, col. 3) a multitude of people from the cities and villages in the country. And he commanded his servants and all the men in his house, who were clad in iron armour, and they mounted [their] horses, so that they might be ready for the killing. And he said unto the people, “Why have ye worked magic upon me?” And the people said unto him, “O our lord the king, the God of Israel knoweth that we have not committed any evil against thee.” And Herod said unto them, “If ye have not worked magic against me, let each one of you expel the sorcerers.” And the people said unto him, “Give us time to work out a plan.” And Herod said unto them, “Make your plan now, for I will not let you depart to your houses.” And they made a plan, and they drove out the sojourners among them who did not belong to their country, and their kinsfolk, and they set them before Herod. Now the number of the sojourners was four hundred thousand. And the people said unto the king, “These are the sorcerers who cast thee from the horse.” And Herod said unto them, (Fol. 113a, col. 1) “What evil have I done unto you that ye would cause me such a death as this, and plot evil against me?” And the people said unto him with one voice, “O our lord the king, we have done nothing evil whatsoever against thee. The God of Israel knoweth that we never saw thy face except this day.” And Herod said unto them, “By my faith, there is no [reason] in these words why ye

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should escape me." And he said unto his servants, "Smite them with swords, and do not let one of them remain [alive]"; and the number of those who died was four hundred thousand. And angels came down with crowns and laid [them] upon their heads, saying, "Hallelujah to the martyrs. Honour befitteth them. Hallelujah. The oppressed have committed themselves to the kingdom of heaven, and those who have been slain for the sake of the Child shall rejoice with Him in the heavens." And darkness covered the whole earth, and the whole appearance of the heavens was changed, and it became like blood; and the whole country was shaken as far as (Fol. 113a, col. 2) Meser (Cairo) and Egypt, and as far as Persia, and as Zâblôn and Naftalêm, and the sound of the voices of those four hundred thousand was heard.

III. And then all the people spake, each man to his neighbour in his city and country, saying, "This man doth not deserve to reign over us, for he is the slayer of the soul of a man. Have ye not heard what took place in the days of Elijah the Prophet when he commanded the king, saying, 'Thou shalt worship no other god but the One God, besides Whom there is no other god, the God Who alone made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them?' And when the king refused to hear his voice Elijah bridled the heavens for three years and six months. And men perished, and it was not men only that perished but cattle, and all the birds of the heavens perished. Similarly, that (Fol. 113a, col. 3) we may not perish, let us kill one man in order that all the people may not be destroyed." And when Herod heard these words and [knew] that they were plotting he sent a message unto them, saying, "These people did not belong to your nation, but were aliens (or, sojourners). And now, my brethren, my kingdom belongeth to you, and my glory belongeth to you; do not in any way revolt from your obedience. And every-

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thing which ye are thinking I will perform for you. And now, forgive ye me my folly, and I will give you gold and silver which shall be sufficient to feed you until the day of your death." And when the people heard these words of astuteness they did not believe what Herod said, and they said, "Doth he not say this in order that he may kill us even as he killed the four hundred thousand?" And they said unto him, "Nay, but we all will depart with our swords drawn, and holding our bows." And then they spake to each other, saying, "As far as ye are able let every man arm himself with some kind of weapon, and carry ye them to fight against him"; (Fol. 113b, col. 1) and when they had finished this work nine hundred thousand and eighty-two went against him.

And when Herod heard of this he went forth from his house, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you." And he sat upon the ground, and spake unto them in a friendly manner with words of astuteness. And he commanded his servants to kill oxen, and bulls, and sheep without number, and they brought a large vessel of wine, and he gave the elders and the counsellors to eat and to drink. And he said unto them, "Come, follow me with the nobles, for there is good meat and drink here." And they followed him, for they thought that he would give them gold, and silver, and fine apparel, besides meat and drink. And when they had come in Herod commanded his slaves, saying, "Bolt the doors"; and they did so, and he took them into the middle of his garden. And Herod said unto the people of his house and unto his slaves, "Smite them with swords (Fol. 113b, col. 2) and cut them in pieces, and leave not one of them [alive]." Now their soldiers thought that they were eating and drinking, and that Herod was giving them many possessions. And Herod commanded the men of his house, and his slaves, and his kinsfolk, to mount their horses, and to put on their iron armour,



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and to surround those soldiers ; and they did so, and they stabbed them with their daggers, and drove their spears into them, and hacked them to pieces with swords, and only left a very few [alive]. And the number of those who died was one hundred times ten thousand and twenty-three. May their holy blessing be with us for ever.

IV. And then Herod appointed his slaves, and the men of his house, and his young men, to be magistrates, and governors, and rulers over the cities, and he said unto them, " Slay ye every criminal, and evil-doer, and rebel with the sword, and make their service harder." And those who died received (Fol. 113b, col. 3) crowns in the kingdom of the heavens, for they had died a violent death for God's sake, and especially because of the search for the Child and His Mother. And our Lady MARY and Joseph heard the report of the slaughter which Herod made, and they dwelt in the mountains of Lebanon. And the men of that country heard the sound of their words, and they went to them, and brought them wine, and bread, and honey, and oil, and apparel wherewith to dress themselves. And our Lady MARY pronounced blessings over them, and straightway the demoniacs were healed, and the lepers were cleansed, and devils went forth from the men they possessed. And very many miracles were wrought for them, and their people and their beasts suffered from no sickness. And Joseph said unto the people, and unto the peoples, " Take good heed that ye do not say that we have arrived in your country, through fear of Herod the infidel." And Domitianus said unto Joseph and MARY, " The (Fol. 114a, col. 1) God of Israel knoweth that if ye die we will die with you, and if ye live we shall live." And our Lady MARY said unto the people, " Ye are the people of honourable race whom God hath called from misery to glory, and from poverty to riches, and from sorrow to joy."

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V. And after six months had passed Herod heard the report of the Child, for he saw the passers on the road who dwelt in Naphtâlêm. And he said unto the nobles of his kingdom, "I hear a certain rumour, and behold, the Child is in the mountains of Lebanon." And when the nobles of his kingdom heard this, their hearts were sad, and they said among themselves, "If we say, 'It is not so,' we are afraid he will kill us; and if we say unto him, 'Yea, it is so,' it will not be a good thing." And Herod said unto them, "To-morrow harness horses, and [prepare] chariots, so that we may march against them"; and they said unto him, "Yea, we will do so." And Herod bound his informer with iron, and he said unto him, "If (Fol. 114a, col. 2) thou dost not bring me to the place where they are, assuredly thou shalt die; and if thou dost bring me thither, then choose riches even to the end of my kingdom." And that man said unto him, "Do what thou wilt, O my lord the king." And Saint Gîgâr, the Governor of Syria, said unto one of his slaves, "Mount a horse and go quickly, and say unto the chiefs who dwell in the mountains of Lebanon, 'To-morrow the king will come unto thee with his soldiers, and will find out if there are with you any sojourners (or aliens).'" And when the Governor of Kuětâ heard this he was exceedingly wroth, and he commanded a herald to go round about the country as far as Kîrâz, and Tômnhê, and Upper Persia. And he said unto them, "What we have not seen we have seen, and what we have not heard we have heard: Herod hath risen up [to war]. Men of Judah and Jerusalem, let your bows be ready bent, and let your spears be drawn from their rests, and let your (Fol. 114a, col. 3) javelins be strong, and let the warriors and the men trained in battle be prepared to fight against him, and to-morrow come ye hither to me." And the whole city and the whole country were moved. And there rose up to war from Persia three hundred

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times ten thousand men, and their chariots were sixty thousand; and from Ḥamênyû three hundred times ten thousand and sixty men; and from Kârâs fifty times ten thousand men; and from the mountains of Lebanon seventy times ten thousand and ninety hundreds of men, and they came to the Governor of Kuêtâ. And besides these there were other troops which were uncountable, and they were like the stars of heaven for number.

And the Governor of Kuêtâ said unto those who mustered and to the other troops, "Remember ye the words which we speak, for there is a matter to us in respect of MARY and in respect of her Son, who have healed your demoniacs, and even raised your dead, and cleansed your lepers, and cast out devils." And all the people answered him with one voice, [and] the chief said, "Our death shall be with your death, and our life shall be with your life, (Fol. 114b, col. 1) and we will not make our word to be a lie. The God of Israel knoweth that it is not Herod alone whom we will kill, but all Judah, even to Jerusalem, and Zebulon, and Naph-tâlêm, and Cairo and Egypt. And we will make the whole city to be a ruined place, and a city of pepper (*sic*) and the mouse, and a city of the panther and the lizard, and the jungle shall inherit their land, which cannot be penetrated with the bow and arrow, and the story of it shall [endure] for generations."

VI. Then Domitianus rose up and all his soldiers with him, and the horn was blown before him, and as he was journeying on the road he heard a voice going round about him which said in the Hebrew language, "Domitianus, do no evil to Herod so that the God of Israel may not be wroth with thee, for by his own hand shall become martyrs men and women, and old folk and (Fol. 114b, col. 2) children. And do thou rejoice and be glad, for thy name is written in the Book of Life and also the names of those who are with thee; for not

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one of them shall be destroyed, nor a hair of their heads." And when Domitianus heard [this] he was sad and exceedingly sorrowful in respect of Herod, for wrath filled his heart, and he said, "The God of Israel knoweth that I would have made him like the dust of the earth before the face of the wind, and like wax in the fire." And having said this he went up into the mountain which is called Akôrôbÿôn, so that he might spy out the border of his country and observe the land of Judah and Jerusalem, and Egypt and Cairo, and Zebulon and Naftâlêm. And he wept and said, "O Lord, why dost Thou not permit me to lay waste this country?" And straightway and suddenly the Angel of God appeared unto him, and said unto him, "O righteous one, what is it that maketh thee sorrowful? Have not thy toil (Fol. 114b, col. 3) and sorrow gone up before God to be a memorial of thee? And now, be not sorrowful, for the righteous shall not revile their revilers, but shall do good unto them, and reward them with good in the place of evil. And as for thee, thou shalt not do evil to Herod." And having said this unto him the Angel went up into the heavens.

VII. And when Herod had come to the camp of Domitianus, he was afraid and trembled, and he said unto his captain, "This is an evil day: thou hast brought us here that we may die a bitter death." And his soldiers held their peace, and no man spake unto his fellow; and Saint Gîgâr laughed within his soul and rejoiced. And a eunuch saw Herod wondering (?). And Herod came to Domitianus with his loins girded up, and he went down on his feet, without sandals, for he was exceedingly terrified. And when Domitianus saw Herod, he rose up from his seat and welcomed him. (Fol. 115a, col. 1) And Herod said unto him, "Why dost thou rise up to thy slave? Is not thy word sufficient for me?" And Domitianus said unto him, "Sit down, my brother; . . . within it bow down to thee."

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And Herod said unto him, "What meaneth this word 'bow down'? Men without number bow down to thee—thy soldiers. For behold, as I was coming to thee I saw men on the right and on the left, and in advance and behind, and I could not count thy soldiers." And Domitianus said unto him, "For what purpose hast thou come hither?" And Herod said unto him, "There are magicians—a man and a woman with a little Child and three servants—living in this city. For I have heard people saying that they are in the mountains of Lebanon. For this purpose have I come unto thee." And Domitianus said unto him, "The God of Israel knoweth that Satan hath veiled thy heart in a veil that cannot be opened. And behold, I have heard with mine ear, (Fol. 115a, col. 2) and seen with mine eyes, two witnesses speaking, and envoys from God saying, 'Do no harm to Herod'; and because of this word I let thee go. Had it not been thus I would have made thee like nothing, and all Judah and Jerusalem would have been laid waste. O Herod, I marvel at thee. How canst thou call 'magicians' those whom the God of Israel hath chosen? Can the magicians who are in thy country raise the dead, and heal the demoniacs, and cleanse the lepers, and cast out devils? And at this thing thy heart hath not been turned! Who is there among the magicians and thy gods who are able to do likewise?"

And when Herod heard these words he said unto Domitianus, "Behold, for thy sake I will give up the search for them, for thou art my dear friend. If any man had killed my wife and my children and he came to thee, I would let him go for thy sake." And when Domitianus heard him (Fol. 115a, col. 3) that was not gentle [talking] gently he marvelled; for death and hell were in his (Herod's) heart. And Herod brought to Domitianus six horses, and said unto him, "Take [them as] a gift to thee." And Domitianus said unto him, "There are in my own country horses that are as swift as birds.

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And as for gold and silver, they are accounted as brass in my house ; I do not want thy gift." And Herod said unto him, " I will repeat unto thee a little secret matter which I have heard from many, who say, He shall reign over the house of Jacob. My brother, take good heed to thyself that they take not thy kingdom away. Give me them so that I may place them in Bethlehem that they may dwell there in safety and peace." And Domitianus marvelled in his heart, and said, " This is not a man but Satan, and I will kill him with [my] dagger. If the God of Israel willeth let Him punish me, and if He willeth let Him keep me alive." And immediately (Fol. 115b, col. 1) the Angel Uriel appeared before his eyes with a red-hot spear of fire in his hand, and he said unto him, " Domitianus, why thinkest thou thus in thy heart ? Doth not God hate him that transgresseth the Law ? Turn thy heart to mercy lest God bring His wrath upon thee. And why art thou sitting with this man ? Doth not the Book of the Law of Moses say unto thee, Touch not that which is unclean, for every one who toucheth what is unclean is defiled ? O Domitianus, is there anything more unclean than Herod ? For his father was male and female, and his mother was male and female, and therefore Satan hath made him a house. And he departeth not from him neither by day nor by night ; and Herod feareth not God, and in his heart he esteemeth Him not. And now, dismiss him quickly to his own country, and hold not converse with him of any kind, whether it be [for] good or evil." And when the Angel (Fol. 115b, col. 2) had said this unto him he went up into heaven ; and Herod only heard his voice, and did not see his face.

And Domitianus rose up and made a sign with his hand that he would depart to his own country, and they blew the horn before him, and sounded the drums, and the pipes and all the kinds of musical instruments that are sounded on occasions of ceremony. And Domitia-

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nus returned to his own country, being astonished at the operation of God and the awesomeness of the angels. And Herod also came to his country. And as he was going along he said unto his soldiers, "Hearken ye, O my brethren, Domitianus strengtheneth his army with devils, and whilst I was there with him I heard the voice [of one of them], but I did not see his face." And his soldiers said unto him, "Thou speakest the truth, for because of this thing he was able to terrify us. And then he came to his city, where he hath been living for three days."

VIII. And then the eunuch said unto Herod, "We are in (Fol. 115b, col. 3) the land of Domitianus, and since we came [here] thou hast been exceedingly sorrowful, O my lord the king. It is known that thy kingdom shall endure for ever, then cannot we rejoice with one another? Now Gîgâr, the Governor of Syria, rejoiceth, and is glad, and laugheth." And Herod said unto him, "Wherefore doth he laugh?" And the eunuch said unto him, "I have another matter to tell thee." And Herod said unto him, "What is this matter?" And the eunuch said unto him, "That one sent me unto Domitianus, saying, 'Behold, the king is coming against thee that he may destroy the city.'" And when Herod heard this he was exceedingly wroth, and his heart was mad like that of a man drunk with wine. And he commanded his slaves to seize Saint Gîgâr, and to bind him in iron fetters, [and they did so]. And then they seized him and took him to Herod, and Herod said unto Saint Gîgâr, "How long wilt thou rejoice over me? Is it true that thou didst send a message to Domitianus?" (Fol. 116a, col. 1) And Saint Gîgâr said, "Yea, I sent a message unto him, saying, 'Behold, Herod will come unto thee that he may seek out MARY and her Child.'" And Herod said unto him, "Are they thy kinsfolk?" And Saint Gîgâr said unto him, "God created me, and for God's sake I will die, O king. Thou dost worship

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Apollo, and Artemis, and Sarapis, who did not create thee, and for their sake thou wilt die, and wilt inherit the hell of fire which is for ever. For I saw in my dream last night thee going down into Sheol, and the angels weaving a crown upon thy head." And the nobles of Herod's kingdom said unto Saint Gîgâr, "How dost thou dare to speak to the king in this wise?" And Saint Gîgâr said unto them, "To you he is indeed king, but, as for me, I have no king except the God of Israel." And Herod said unto the nobles of his kingdom, "I know well (Fol. 116a, col. 2) the opinion of this man, but I do not want to kill him with one word so that he may rest from punishment." And he said a second time unto Saint Gîgâr, "Art thou not wishing that I will kill thee with one word?" And Herod commanded that they should bring his wife, and his children, and his father, and his mother, and all his kinsfolk, some seventy-six souls, and they brought them before Herod. And he said unto them, "Go ye and tell Gîgâr to curse Domitianus, and I will release him from his fetters, and I will restore him to his office of magistrate. As for you, I will give you honour and riches, and ye shall be my friends"; and they said unto him, "We consent." And the eunuch took them to Saint Gîgâr in the prison house. And when Saint Gîgâr saw his father and his mother he smiled and said unto them, "The God of Israel hath summoned you into heaven with the Father, and into the marriage chamber"; and they told him everything that Herod had said unto them. And Saint Gîgâr said (Fol. 116a, col. 3) unto them, "Let those who curse our Lady MARY be accursed, and let those who bless her be blessed; as for me, let my portion be with Domitianus. How can I hate him whom God hath praised? Hear me, O my father and my brethren, yea, my mother and my kinsfolk, let not this accursed man lead you astray. If ye will not hearken unto my voice, through it ye shall die,



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and here ye shall die. In the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, there were found Three excellent Children, and he commanded them to deny God. And they refused to deny Him, and they cursed his kingdom, and his army, and his polluted gods. And he had lighted a fire the flame of which rose up to a height of forty-nine cubits, and they threw them into it. And the Three Children blessed the God of Israel, saying, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, Who is the object of my praise, and my high place for ever. Hallelujah! (Fol. 116b, col. 1) And blessed be the name of His holy glory. He is my praise and my high place in all the world. Hallelujah! Blessed art Thou in the holy citadel of Thy praise; Thou art my praise, Thou art my thanks, for ever. Hallelujah!' And with these and such-like praises did they glorify their Creator. And he cast Daniel the Prophet into a pit with the lions and sealed up the mouth of the pit, thinking that they would devour the Three Children. [But] the fire did not touch them, and the appearance of their faces was not changed, and they went forth from the fire with their loin-cloths. And as for Daniel the Prophet, the lions did not even lick his body with their tongues, and he went forth from the pit in safety. And now, O my father, and brethren, and kinsfolk, fear ye not death, for afterwards ye shall find life." And when his father, and mother, and kinsfolk had heard these things they spake unto each other, saying, "From the time of his birth he hath before this instructed us (Fol. 116b, col. 2) from out of himself. Who can have taught him who hath never learned from books these words of wisdom? This that he hath said unto us is true, for Herod commandeth us by force to curse the Name of God, and if we do so he will kill us, and we shall lose our lives in both worlds."

IX. And then the eunuch took him to Herod, and told him everything which Saint Gîgâr said, and how

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he had instructed his kinsfolk. And Herod commanded them to cast him into prison. And he said unto his slaves, "Bring a cord of silk and tie the hands and arms of Gîgâr behind [him] until he breaketh"; and towards evening his slaves went [and did] as he had commanded them. And Gîgâr passed the whole night crying out to God, saying, "O my Lord and God, and the God of my fathers, all this hath come upon me for Thy sake, for I have rejected gold, and silver, and raiment and linen apparel, (Fol. 117b, col. 3) and I have hated my office of governor. Moreover, I have committed my life in this world to Thee; deliver Thou me from this hour." And straightway and suddenly the Angel of God came unto him, and he lighted up the whole of the prison-house like the sun, and he said unto him, "The peace of God be with thee. O thou of glorious race, why art thou sad and sorrowful? Hath not God given unto thee an exalted throne, and set upon thy head three crowns, one because He sent thee to Domitianus, and one because of the shedding of thy blood, and one because thou hast rejected glory and thy kinsfolk? And behold, thy father and thy mother shall reign with thee in the kingdom of the heavens." And then the Angel took the silk cord from his hands, and he made it into a venomous serpent which was full of poison, and he said unto it, "Go and sting (or, bite) those who are in the house of Herod, and twine thyself round Herod's neck." And it went running and (Fol. 117a, col. 1) stung very many, and the number of those who died through the bite of the serpent was nine and forty; and the serpent twined itself round the neck of Herod. And with the Angel of God guiding him Gîgâr went to the prison-house, to the place where his kinsfolk were; and then the Angel went up into heaven. And when Gîgâr's father, and mother, and kinsfolk saw him, they rejoiced and said, "Blessed be the Lord God Who hath shown us thy face before we

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die." And Saint Gîgâr said unto them, "Ye shall not die, but live." And he told them everything that Herod had done, and how he had bound him with a cord, and how the Angel of God had come down to him, and how he had told him glad tidings, and how he had made the silk [cord] into a serpent, and had commanded it to go into the house of Herod, and sting those who were therein. "And the sign of the matter [shall be] in the morning when ye hear the report of the outcry from the house of Herod. Fear ye not death, and imagine not (Fol. 117a, col. 2) that ye shall die, but ye shall go from poverty to riches, and from weakness to strength, and from sorrow to joy." And having said this he embraced them, and said unto them, "Remember ye me in your prayers." And they said unto him, "Thou art better than we are, remember thou us in thy prayers." And Saint Gîgâr said unto them, "Verily I say unto you that ye shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before I shall"; and having said these words he kept silence in the prison-house. And his guards saw him walking about naked with his fetter cast down upon the ground, and they said unto him, "O our lord, we believe in Him Whom thou worshippest, and now, take back thy fetter into thy hands." And Saint Gîgâr took up his fetter and put it back on his hands, and it refused to approach his body, and became like water. And he said unto the slaves of Herod, "Do ye bind me as the king commanded you"; (Fol. 117a, col. 3) and they said unto him, "We have no king." And whilst they were conversing in this wise, an outcry broke out in the house of Herod, and his slaves went to learn what had happened. And they returned to Saint Gîgâr, and they said unto him, "O our master, there are no people left in the house of Herod, for a serpent hath destroyed them." And Saint Gîgâr said, "Praised be God in His praise, and thanked be He in His thanks, and exalted be He in His exaltation. For

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since the world hath been created it hath never been heard that a silk cord became a serpent and slew men. He is almighty, and nothing is too hard for Him." And whilst they were saying these things, some of the soldiers of Herod came and said unto Saint Gîgâr, "Come, for the king calleth for thee"; and he said, "I come." And he went and came to the king, and he saw a serpent on the neck of the king, and an ironsmith was dragging at it with a pair of pincers, but he could not free him from it. And the serpent sprang up and stung him, and the ironsmith fell down upon the ground and (Fol. 117b, col. 1) died straightway. And the serpent returned to Herod's neck, and he did this once, twice, and thrice. And whilst they were in pain Herod said unto Saint Gîgâr, "Rejoice and be glad at the sight of the serpent." And he said unto his warders, "Why have ye freed him from the fether?" And they said unto Herod, "The God of Israel knoweth that we did not release him, and we did not know that he was unfethered." And Herod said unto them, "Hath he bewitched you?" And they said unto him, "By no means, we do not understand sorcery. But we are witnesses that when we were in the prison-house, a light which was greater than the light of the sun came down upon this man, and we heard a voice that spake unto him, but we saw no person." And Herod said unto them, "What did they (*sic*) say?" And the warders said unto him, "How great is the joy and gladness!" And Herod said unto them, "Woe be (Fol. 117b, col. 2) unto you, O cursed ones, for by cunning ye are associated with him in sorcery." And they said unto him, "To thee woe, O son of Satan, evil of days." And when Herod heard this he was exceedingly wroth, and he commanded his slaves to cut off the heads of the servants of God. And when Saint Gîgâr heard this he said unto those slaves, "Ye bring good news, for their names are written in heaven." And they brought out

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those glorious ones from the house of Herod under a dry olive tree, and they cut off their heads with a sharp sword, and their blood flowed under the tree. Now their number was sixteen (or, seventeen).

X. And that olive tree put forth shoots and green leaves, and the branches thereof pushed upwards to a height of fifteen cubits, and it brought forth very fine fruit. And those (Fol. 117b, col. 3) who came to Herod from the country and from the cities used to look at the tree and praise God. And when the people told Herod this he ordered them to cut down the tree with an axe, and it fell upon the ground. And the Angel Sadâkyâl came down and smote the men with a sword of fire, and not one of them was left alive; now the number of those who died under the tree was nine and thirty. And they told this to Herod, and he was exceedingly angry and again he sent forty soldiers, and he said unto them, "Cut it up into little pieces, and burn it in the fire"; and the Angel of God waited for them standing under a tree. And he said unto them, "Let [the tree] alone, and turn ye to the right, and to the left, and forwards, and to the rear"; and they did not see him that was talking to them. And they began to cut up the tree, and the Angel smote them with a sword of fire, and not one of them was left [alive]. And they told this to Herod, and said unto him, "This that hath happened is the fault of Gîgâr." And again, he commanded sixty men to kindle a fire under it, and when they came they found the Angel of God standing (Fol. 118a, col. 1) as before by the command of God with the sword of fire. And when those people saw him, they spake among themselves, saying, "Why should we die through this accursed one? The whole earth belongeth to God." And when they had said this they departed to Dabra Libânôs, and they came to Domitianus, and told him everything that Herod had done, and how he had treated Saint Gîgâr governor of Syria. And then

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Domitianus stretched out his two hands, and he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, " Lord God of heaven, why dost Thou keep silent and dost not hear, seeing with Thine eyes and hearing with Thine ears, whilst Herod the wicked revileth Thy servants ? " And having heard this he shed tears, and said, " It is better for me to die than to hear this. "

XI. And at midnight he heard a voice (Fol. 118a, col. 2) calling him and saying, " O Domitianus, why art thou sad and sorrowful ? Thinkest thou that I forget My servants ? Behold, from being sorrowful I make them to rejoice, and I transport them from poverty to riches. " And Domitianus said, " Blessed be God Who doeth what He willeth. " And to the people who had come from Herod he gave cities and gardens, and he said unto them, " O my brethren, dwell ye here until we find the way to talk to him " ; and they dwelt there. And the wicked Herod commanded them to bring the kinsfolk of Saint Gîgâr from the prison-house. And they took them out to that tree which we have already spoken of, and they cut off their heads with the sharp sword, and their blood flowed like water, and they received the crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens.

XII. (Fol. 118a, col. 3) And that olive tree again put forth shoots from its roots to the top thereof, and on its leaves was written a legend which said, " It was watered with the blood of the martyrs. O Herod, take shame to thyself. " And all the people saw this, and they blessed themselves, and marvelled, and believed in God. And the people told Herod, and he marvelled, and he commanded the builders to build over it, and not to make any doors in the building, so that people might not see that olive tree. And by the command of God, the tree grew up to a height of nine and thirty cubits, and its branches reached the ground. And Herod was wroth, and said, " I believe that through

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Saint Gîgâr and his people this tree hath become bad ; what shall I say ? and what shall I do ? For many souls shall be destroyed through it." And he commanded them to bring Saint Gîgâr out of the prison-house, and when they had brought him, he said unto him, " What now is its face ? " For he was skilled in magic. And (Fol. 118b, col. 1) Saint Gîgâr said, " Not so, king. I know no magic—the God of Israel knoweth." And Herod said unto him, " I have never seen such a magician as thyself, for not only hast thou bewitched a man but also a tree. And thou hast written upon its leaves that it was watered with the blood of the martyrs, thus insulting myself." And Saint Gîgâr said unto him, " Since God hath insulted thee the insult is from Him." And Herod said unto him, " Art thou God ? " And Saint Gîgâr said unto him, " I am not God, but a servant of God." And when Herod heard this he gnashed his teeth, and rubbed his face, and [looked] at Saint Gîgâr, and said unto him, " Blaspheme MARY and Domitianus, so that thou mayest have rest from thy torture." And Saint Gîgâr said unto him, " Worship and glory are due to MARY, and to Domitianus joy and gladness, and to thee sorrow and lamentation. How many are the righteous men whom thou hast condemned to torture ! (Fol. 118b, col. 2) But as thou hast tortured even so shalt thou be tortured, so that thou mayest learn the power of God. And behold, I will show thee a certain matter." And having said this unto him, he called the serpent which was on the neck of Herod, and it came down to the ground. And Saint Gîgâr took it in his hand, and it became a cord of silk. And again he said unto it, " Go back as before " ; and it wound itself round the neck of Herod. And when he had shown him this wonder, Herod clapped his hands, and said, " Verily thou art the prince of magicians." And he commanded the chief of his guards to beat him with pliant branches of palms, and they laid

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him upon the ground, and they beat him in turns until his blood flowed like water upon the ground. And Herod commanded them to bring wine, and salt, and serpent's venom, and soot, and dirt, and to pour them on his flesh and rub them in. And they did to him as Herod commanded them, and the body of Saint Gîgâr burned like fire, (Fol. 118b, col. 3) and they rolled him about on the ground like a wheel. And Herod commanded them to tie a rope to his neck and to fasten it to a tree, and they did to him as Herod commanded them. And the blessed Gîgâr cried out with a loud voice, and said, "Lord, how many are those who afflict me, many have stood up against me, many say unto my soul, 'Thy God cannot save thee.' O Lord God of Israel, help me. My body burneth with fire. I have no other helper save Thee. Thou art my helper, and Thou art my father and my mother, and Thou art my God. Thou knowest that all these things have come upon me because of Saint MARY, and because of her glorious Son, and Domitianus. Blessed now are ye, O my father and mother and brethren, who finished your strife at one time." Now Herod was watching at a distance, and he said unto him, "O son of destruction, who wast born to misery, who is able to deliver thee out of my hand? (Fol. 119a, col. 1) And who is he that can help thee? Art not thou Gîgâr, the governor of Syria?" And the saint said unto him, "Thou art Herod, dog, and wicked one. Thou hast no understanding. As is thy name, even so is thy folly. And that thou mayest know well the meaning of the word [I tell thee] that Herod meaneth 'wild swine,' and 'wolf,' and 'senseless rag.' O son of Satan, dost thou imagine that I expect life in this world? Have I not rejected the things of earth and chosen the things of heaven which neither grow old nor perish? And if I knew that this world would not pass away I would not bow before thee, or lick the dust of thy feet, and I would not be in subjection unto thee.



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But this world will pass away." And Herod said unto him, "It would be better for thee to listen to my words. All this that hath come upon thee is because of MARY and her Son." And the holy man said unto him, "May thou and thy gods go down into Gehenna." And Herod said unto him, "Far be it from thee, O Gîgâr, and may it not be thus! It would be better for thee if thou wouldst (Fol. 119a, col. 2) listen to my words, and sacrifice to my gods, having denied MARY and her Son." And the saint said unto him, "Cursed art thou and cursed are thy gods!" And Herod said unto him, "Verily thou shalt not escape from my hand."

XIII. And after this Herod commanded his soldiers to cut off his foot, and to take him into the prison-house; and on the following day they brought him out again, and cut off his shoulder, and took him back into the prison-house; and on the following day they brought him out again, and cut off his right hand, and took him back into the prison-house; and on the following day they brought him out again, and cut off his ear. And straightway Saint Gîgâr looked up to heaven to God, and he said, "One half of my body is dead, and one half of my body is alive. And now I beseech Thee, O Lord and King of kings and lords, in Whose (Fol. 119a, col. 3) hand are the Powers and my death and my life, I desire to die; gold and silver are fleeting things, but I have chosen that which is not fleeting." And Herod commanded them to smite his face and his mouth with shoes, and the saint said, "There is One Who shall smite thee, the God of Israel, at the Last Day, at the resurrection of the dead." And Herod said unto him, "I marvel at thee, O Gîgâr"; and Saint Gîgâr said unto him, "Thou and thy gods shall be accursed and shall be destroyed." And Herod said unto Saint Gîgâr, "Art thou able to live after thy death?" And the saint said unto him, "Yea. God commandeth . . . over those who are dead. And at the time when

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they are to rise up, in the twinkling of an eye their bones shall rejoin, and the flesh of their bodies shall cover them, and their spirits shall come upon them ; (Fol. 119b, col. 1) the righteous shall be raised in glory and sinners in Sheol. Do not then imagine that he who is praised here shall be glorified there in the City of God. That [Day] shall be one of sorrow, and every man shall be rewarded according to his work. And to Him are meet praise, and dominion, and glory, and obedience, now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.”

XIV. And then Herod commanded them to carry Saint Gîgâr to the olive tree. And he found there the Angel of God under the olive tree, and in his hand was a sword of blazing fire. And he said unto him, “ Hail to thee ! Peace to thee, O 'Azâl, mighty one, warrior, strong victor ! Why dost thou marvel at the majesty of one who shall become like a dove ? Behold, there have come unto thee heaven, and earth, men, the beasts of the earth and of the abysses, what is visible and what is invisible.” And straightway, in a moment, He appeared unto him as One Who is visible and One Who is invisible. And forthwith there was [a flash of] lightning from the east to the (Fol. 119b, col. 2) west. And He said unto him, “ What sayest thou, O My second ? I am the Son of MARY, for Whose sake thou hast endured punishments, and trial, and suffering. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt be counted with the Prophets of olden time, and with the Apostles who shall come after thee, and thou shalt become an inheritor of the kingdom of the heavens. Now man is dust and dross. He loveth his friend and he hateth his enemy. And according to the degree that thou hast loved Me, O Gîgâr, blessed is the man who shall remember thee upon earth, and blessed is the man who shall call his son by thy name.” And He said unto him, “ Look on thy right hand and on thy left.” And he turned and saw

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his kinsmen and his father, with their faces shining seven times more brightly than the sun, and they were whiter than milk, and they were arrayed in robes of royalty, and on their heads were crowns of glory which were ornamented with pearls and sapphires. And they said unto him, "Peace! God be with thee, O (Fol. 119b, col. 3) blessed Gîgâr, who hast become a guide for us to the kingdom of heaven." And Saint Gîgâr said unto them, "Who are ye?" And they said unto him, "Dost thou not know us?" And the saint said unto them, "I can hear your voices, but I cannot see your faces because of the splendour that surroundeth you." And they said unto him, "Thy glad tidings! Thy face is more beautiful than our faces, and thine apparel is more beautiful than ours, and thy condition is more beautiful than ours. As the sun is more beautiful than the moon, even so is thy light greater than ours." And again, they said unto him, "We make petition unto thee, O blessed Gîgâr, for because of thee the holy prophets have known us. And the good (or, chosen) angels go round about thee every day, and they say unto thee, 'O 'Azâl, who hast conquered Satan, and hast made the world an alien thing! And now, be strong and mighty, and fear not. One half of thy body is dead, and the other half of it is alive.'" And the saint said unto them, "Remember ye me in your prayers." And they said unto him, "The God of Israel be with you"; (Fol. 120a, col. 1) and they disappeared from his sight.

XV. And again he turned towards the east, and he saw God sitting upon His chariot which blazed with fire, and there were ten thousand [angels] on His right hand, and ten thousand on His left hand, and ten thousand before Him, and ten thousand behind Him. And shining angels were encircling them like a wall, and they were singing praises with hymns that cannot be described and that were marvellous to hear. And God

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said unto him, "Have I not done this for thee before thy soul departeth from thy body? And I have brought unto thee thy father, and thy mother, and all thy kinsfolk, and also thy wife and thy children, so that thy soul might rejoice at the sight of them." And the saint said unto Him, "What do I take from them more than the life of my soul? But Thee do I love." And God said unto him, "Verily thou dost love Me; thou hast given thyself for Me. Behold, I decree that thy hands, and thy feet, and thy nose, (Fol. 120a, col. 2) and thine ears, shall become as they were before, uninjured." And his members became as they had been formerly, uninjured, and his body was renewed, and his face shone so brightly with the light of God that the servants of Herod were unable to look at him. And our Lord blessed him, and went up into heaven with great glory.

XVI. And then the guards of the prison-house of Herod went and told him, saying, "Long live thy kingdom which endureth for ever! Behold, the sun rose upon us at midnight, and we heard the saint talking to it, but the speech of the sun we did not understand. And behold, he was alive in the prison-house, and no injury whatsoever had come upon him. And as for us, we believe in his God." And Herod said unto them with wrath, rubbing himself, "Woe unto you, O ye accursed ones! Hath he bewitched you also?" And they said unto him, "God forbid that thou shouldst speak thus against that righteous man. We are his witnesses of what we have heard of the words of his mouth." And Herod was wroth, (Fol. 120a, col. 3) and he ordered six of his bodyguard to punish them and to beat them with silken (?) cords; and he commanded them to bring Saint Gîgâr out of the prison-house. And when Saint Gîgâr had come he saw the guards beating the people with silken (?) ropes, and he said unto them, "O ye people who have given yourselves to the Great King,

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bear ye patiently and fear not, for ye shall receive crowns and a habitation in the kingdom of heaven, which shall never, never pass away. Amen." And they all answered with one voice and said unto him, "Pray for us, O our father." And Saint Gîgâr passed on from there, and came to the place where Herod was, and Herod said unto him, "How greatly hast thou corrupted my soldiers by thy magic!" And the saint said unto him, "I am waiting for the God of Israel to help me." And Herod commanded that a herald should go round calling upon all the people to gather themselves together. And he said unto his servants, "Go ye and open out that hedge of olive trees, so that ye can cut off the heads of (Fol. 120b, col. 1) Saint Gîgâr and those eight and twenty guardians of the prison-house." And they did as he commanded them, and all the people followed them, so that they might see the conclusion of the matter. And when Saint Gîgâr came to the olive trees, he stretched out his hands, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Behold, the consummation of my testimony hath come. Command, O my Lord God, that the Angel of Death shall not terrify me, and that the Angel of Darkness shall not make me afraid. I have sought after Thy commandment, I have completed my chosen task, I have yoked myself to my equal, I have ploughed my fields, let not my furrow fall down. Guide me, O Lord, in the way wherein I am to walk, strengthen me by Thy Word, remove far from me the path of violence, O Lord, Thou Lord God of Israel, because I have forsaken father, and mother, and children, and likewise the world, and all that is therein. O Lord God of Israel, remember not the sin of myself Thy servant. Thou knowest the feebleness of men, and that (Fol. 120b, col. 2) they cannot live for a single hour without sin. And now, not in my righteousness, and not in my strength do I speak before Thee, for well do I know my sin. O Lord, place Thou my portion with

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those who have pleased thee in their lives ; unto Thee be the praise for ever and ever. Amen.”

And again he prayed so that the following men of the sword might not hear him, [viz.,] Bêdrâsâb'êl, 'Êdasab'êl, Deyâdeskë'êl, Tônôyâskëb'êl, Admâ'êl, Mâryôtâs, Melyônâs, 'Ameyôy 'Adônâya Şabâ'ôt, [saying,] “ I have believed on Thee, believe Thou me and deny me not before Thy holy angels. And it is not that I fear the death which is momentary, but I fear that I shall not return to Herod who hath wrought sin against me. Forgive me and Thy servants who were before me. Do as Thou wishest in contending against him, so that he may not hold back from them the justice which they have meditated in their hearts, and so that he may not bring upon me their punishment. For unto Thee belong the power, and great dominion, and praise (Fol. 120b, col. 3) for ever and ever.”

And he heard a voice which surrounded him saying in the Hebrew language, “ O blessed Gîgâr, heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away. Have I not said unto thee on another occasion ‘ I am He ’ ? Come, let us go up into heaven that thou mayest see what I have prepared for thee, a crown, and a habitation, and thrones, which cannot be gazed upon with polluted eyes.” And suddenly Elijah caught him up into his chariot to the heights of heaven, and he saw there everything that had been promised to him, the abode of the prophets, and the abode of the righteous, and the abode of the faithful, and the abode of the holy old men, and the abode of beautiful children, and the abode of the young men and virgins who were to come after him, and of those who had been before him, and the abode of the sinners who had been condemned to punishment, each according to his sin. And he saw Herod in Jahannam, in appearance as black as a raven, and the angels were smiting him with a sword of fire. And he also saw all (Fol. 121a, col. 1) his fathers and

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kinsfolk surrounded by those who had become martyrs before him, and they were saying, "O wicked Herod, where is thy glory? And what hath become of thy kingdom? And what hath become of thy soldiers in whom thou didst boast thyself? Look thou upon the light of us who, being fools, are shining with the light of God! Where are Apollo, and Artemis, and Sarapis in whom thou didst put thy trust? Cursed art thou, O son of Satan; thy glory cometh from us. Where art thou, O thou who didst exalt thyself?"

And when Saint Gîgâr had seen this the Angel brought him back to the wood of olive trees, and he said unto the soldiers, "Now is completed your desire (command?) wherewith ye have been commanded." And the soldiers said unto him, "Thy God, the Living One, knoweth that we will not lay [our hands] upon thee, for we have seen the angels with crowns in their hands praising thee. Behold, we revile Herod, and we love thy heavenly God." Now the number of those (Fol. 121a, col. 2) mighty men of war was nine and forty. And Saint Gîgâr said unto them, "Fulfil ye the command of your captain. If the God of Israel willeth ye shall be saved, and if He willeth it not ye shall be destroyed. Blessed be God Who hath willed to work." And the soldiers said unto him, "As the Lord thy God liveth, we will not lay our hands upon thee." And the saint said unto them, "Except ye complete my martyrdom ye shall have no part with me"; and when they heard these words they wept and groaned in great agony and pain. And Saint Gîgâr said unto them, "Your sins and transgressions are forgiven you." And then he bowed his neck and holy head, and they cut it off with the sharp-edged sword, and it fell upon the ground, and a stream of clear water sprang up from that wood of olive trees like a great river. And there dripped from his neck milk, and water, and blood, by means of which the sick folk were healed, and the lepers were cleansed,

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and devils went forth from those who were possessed of them. And when the soldiers saw these things they lifted up their voices, (Fol. 121a, col. 3) and said, "There is no god except the God of Saint Gîgâr." And there were three hundred and six other men who believed in God, and they went to their houses, and passed the night there. And certain believing men came and took the body of the saint, and wrapped it in linen, and buried it in a cave secretly. And when they came to his country they described to Herod the might of the faith of Saint Gîgâr, and how he had made the people to believe. And Herod commanded the soldiers to cut off their heads with the sword, and they cut them all off, and these men received the incorruptible crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens. May their prayer be with us for ever and ever ! Amen.

XVII. And on the following day Herod went forth from his place to see that stream of water and [to hear] the story of the righteous men. And when he came to the wood of olive trees Saint Gîgâr came to him riding upon a horse of white fire ; and in his hand (Fol. 121b, col. 1) was a spear of blazing fire, and there were with him the men who had been martyred before him and after him, and they were mounted upon horses even as was he. And they said unto him, "What seekest thou, O accursed one, thou son of Satan ? Dost thou imagine that thou wilt be able to slay us a second time ?" And Saint Gîgâr seized Herod by his right hand, and smote him three blows, and blood and pus flowed from his ears until the day of his death. And Saint Gîgâr said unto him, "Let judgement be judged between me and thee. If I did not fear the commandment of God I would turn thee into ashes and all thy soldiers with thee. And now forsake thou the way of error" ; and Herod turned to the right hand and to the left, and wished to depart and flee. And Saint Gîgâr said unto him, "Forsake the way of error, but thou shalt not be



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able to snatch thyself away from me. If thou goest into thy palace there shall I be, and if thou ascendest into heaven there thou shalt find me." And Herod descended from his horse, and bowed low upon the ground, and he said, (Fol. 121b, col. 2) "I cannot hear thy voice, and thy face is invisible." And the saint said unto him, "Didst thou not see me when I was in the prison-house, O Herod, thou blind man? How shalt thou, being a wicked man, be able to see me? Now if thou becomest a good man thou shalt see me when I come in glory with my Lord. The day of destruction shall come upon thee and upon those who are like thee." And Herod said unto him, "Who is thy Lord, and thy God, and thy King?" And the saint said unto him, "It is He Whom thou hatest, and Whom thou didst drive out from city to city; but there shall come to thee a day when thou shalt be driven out, though there be none who driveth thee. And now understand, O wicked one, that house of thine shall be removed"; and having said these things unto him the saint disappeared from him. And forty angel soldiers came down from heaven, and wrapped the bodies of the martyrs up in royal raiment, and the four and twenty priests of heaven censed them with censers [filled with] myrrh, aloes (or, almonds), and cassia, and buried them in a grave. (Fol. 121b, col. 3) And then the angels went up into heaven.

And then the Angel Gabriel went down from heaven into the city of Lebanon to the Virgin MARY. And he said unto her, "Peace be unto thee, O daughter of David! It is not seemly for thee to dwell here. But rise up and depart into Bethlehem, and thence thou shalt go down into Egypt, so that may come to pass and be fulfilled that which hath been said [by the Prophet], 'Out of Egypt have I called My Son.'" And our Lady MARY said unto the Angel, "Thou thyself knowest everything that hath happened unto me through

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Herod. And now, if I go there, he will kill me, and my Son, and those who are with me." And the Angel Gabriel said unto her, "Fear thou not, for God is with thee, and no untoward thing shall come upon thee, for the authority of Herod shall have no power whatsoever over thee." And when the Angel had said these things unto her he went up into heaven.

XVIII. And on the following day Joseph called Domitianus unto MARY the Virgin ; (Fol. 122a, col. 1) and Domitianus left his soldiers, and went up to the place where MARY the Virgin was, and he had with him three hundred and forty chariots. And he came to the place where our Lady was, and he fell down on his knees before her, and said unto her, "What hath happened unto thee? I am troubled by reason of my coming unto thee." And he brought out and presented unto her seventy *dînârs* of gold, and thirty pearls, and sixty gems, and one hundred sapphires, and one hundred and fifty *karkadên* gems, and other precious stones innumerable, and six hundred pieces of linen apparel of great price. And our Lady raised him up from the ground, and said unto him, "May the God of Israel bless thee, and make thee to hear of the destruction of Herod during thy lifetime." And Domitianus said, "Amen and Amen." And our Lady MARY said unto him, "Thou shalt not die before thou art an old man"; and Domitianus said, "Amen." And our Lady MARY also said unto him, "No man, except thy son, shall ever sit upon thy throne. No white cold (i.e. snow) shall descend (Fol. 122a, col. 2) upon the earth, nor any kind of locust, black or white, winged or unwinged; and there shall never be any famine in thy country. The vines shall bear fruit, the fig trees shall yield fruit and butter, and the sugar cane shall give sweetness. Thy cows shall yield milk, and shall bring forth young in pairs, a male and a female, and they shall only die through old age. And thy horses shall roam freely, and those who would

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put a bridle on them shall not catch them, and those who would send them out of the country shall not be able to seize them. I have committed thee, O my son, to Him Who is able to save, Dêgâdîgâdê, Gêdrâgêdêg, 'Amânyâs, 'Apar, Yâgâdîgad, Fêkrâstĕ'êl, Yôrsâb'êl, 'Êma'êl. My son, where shall I find any like unto thee? For thou hast delivered me from Herod, the wicked man and unbeliever, O my son, whom I have brought forth at my coming into the mountains of Lebanon, not in the flesh but in the spirit, and the children of the spirit are superior to the children of the flesh fourteen (Fol. 122a, col. 3) times." And as she was saying these things her tears streamed down on the cheeks of the Child. And she spake thus: "Salutation unto you, O ye mountains of Lebanon. I will go to the house of my father, and whether I shall die or live I know not." And Domitianus said unto her, "Why wilt thou go away and forsake thy country which thou hast made populous by thy prayer? Dwell thou upon my throne, I and my wife will minister unto thee, and all the people and multitudes will worship thee." And our Lady MARY said unto him, "God give thee a kingdom that shall never, never come to an end"; and she told him everything that the Angel had said unto her. And they passed the night there.

XIX. And at the time of midnight Domitianus stood up and stretched out his hands, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "O Lord God of Israel, hearken unto my prayer, and let my cry come before Thee. I call unto Thee at this moment of difficulty concerning the departure of (Fol. 122b, col. 1) Saint MARY. If I let her depart she will fall into the hand of Herod with her Child, and their blood will return upon me, and if I prevent her I am afraid lest she will be wroth with me. Reveal unto me, O Lord, a plan that shall be beneficial both for her and for me." And he prostrated himself upon the ground forty times, and

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tears streamed from his eyes. And forthwith the Angel Uriel came down to him, and said, "The peace of God be with thee! Behold, thy grief and thy tears have ascended before God as a memorial of thee. And now, desist from thy concern about the road of MARY, so that she may go into Bethlehem, and pass thence into Egypt, in order that there may be fulfilled the Word of God which was said by the Prophet, 'Out of Egypt have I called My Son.'" And the Angel also said unto Domitianus, "Behold, thou hast heard great and gracious things, and many blessings." And he shewed him the cross that was in his hand, and said unto him, "Do (Fol. 122b, col. 2) thus, so that thou mayest conquer thine enemy"; and having said these things unto him, he went up into heaven.

And when the dawn had come Domitianus rose up and went to Saint MARY, and did homage to her, and said unto her, "Go wheresoever thou wishest"; and he gave unto her that gift [of precious stones]. And our Lady MARY said unto him, "God give thee good things," and she refused [his gift], saying, "Go, get thee down into thy country, and give [it] to the poor and needy, so that thou mayest obtain interest." And Domitianus bowed low before her and said unto her, "Take it, O my Lady, so that it may be unto thee a provision for the way." And our Lady MARY said unto him, "Verily, I say unto thee, O Domitianus, I do not wish for this greatly in my heart, for I esteem my gold and silver as nought if only I can escape from the hand of Herod; if only this gift [could give me this!]." And when Domitianus heard this he was exceedingly sorrowful, and he left our Lady and mounted his chariot, and he went before her for a whole day's journey until he brought her into the hills of Tôná, where the land of Judah came in sight. And our Lady turned round [and looked] (Fol. 122b, col. 3) behind her, and she wept, saying, "Salutation to you, O ye mountains

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of Lebanon! For with you I was produced from my father and mother, and I shall see his light for ever. Salutation to you, O ye mountains of Lebanon, which shall blossom in beauty and shall bring forth flowers of sweet odour! Salutation to you, O ye daughters who dwell in the mountains of Lebanon! Come ye and weep over me, for I am going to die the death of perdition." And when Domitianus heard this he wept bitterly, and Joseph and Salome also wept. And Domitianus said unto MARY, "If I take thee back into my country I fear that God will be wroth with me, and if I let thee depart my heart will burn for love of thee. And I am also afraid because of Herod, for I know that that man raveneth more than the lion to kill life. What shall I say concerning thee? But I will tell thee one thing. If Herod should seek thee, send one of thy men to me, and I will come to thee. And (Fol. 123a, col. 1) if the God of Israel permit me I will lay waste all Judah and all Jerusalem, as far as Misr (Babylon of Egypt) and Egypt, as far as Zebulon and Naphthali and Heshbon. Not only will I slay man and woman, but I will cut down their trees, and I will not leave their crops standing; and I will make the country (Fol. 123a, col. 2) to become ashes, and I will lay waste their cities." And when she heard these words her heart was comforted in her sorrow; and he passed the night there, and on the following day they embraced each other. And Domitianus rose up and returned to his own country, being sad and sorrowful for the sake of Saint MARY. (Fol. 123a, col. 3) And MARY departed on her way, praising the Holy Trinity.

SALUTATIONS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE  
BODY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

[A. Fol. 101b, col. 1 ff.]

1. **M**AY GOD THE FATHER, THE GIVER OF LIGHT,  
WHO BEING ONE IS YET THREE IN PERSON,  
WHO SHOWETH FORTH MIGHT IN HIS DIVINITY AND  
POWER, illumine the eye of mine understanding with  
the lamp of wisdom and the beauty of His splendour,  
that it may see the face of the word of thy Covenant,  
O MARY, as is meet, thou Lady of all celestial and ter-  
restrial beings.

2. SALUTATION to the memorial of thy name, O thou  
who art like the star which is seen by the people even  
when dark clouds have overshadowed the light thereof.  
O MARY, thou Covenant of God, thou hope of salva-  
tion, did not the mind of the first father find consola-  
tion in thee when he was driven forth from his Paradise  
in bitter sorrow?

3. SALUTATION to the hair of thy head, which is  
without blemish, and is like unto a double thread of  
purple that is drenched with the dew of all good  
things. O MARY, thou who art thyself the Covenant of  
mercy which thou didst establish before the congrega-  
tion, entreat Him to bestow upon me the life of the  
soul as a gift of grace after the manner of Elijah, for  
doth not He make me to live in the body?

4. SALUTATION to thy head is meet from every cre-  
ated being, O MARY, because thou didst stablish a Cove-  
nant with Him Who is and Who shall be. Now we have  
made a Covenant with death, and we have sworn an  
oath unto those who say, "They have spoken in vain  
and have destroyed their own souls."



*Lady Meux MS. No. 3, fol. 49b.*

Certain thieves watch Zacharias placing a wreath of roses on the head of the Virgin, and flowers falling from his mouth as he addresses her. The thieves repent and become monks. Note that the Child rests on the right arm of Mary





## *Salutations to the Virgin Mary*

5. SALUTATION to thy face, O holy and glorious face, the splendour of which is greater than the splendour of the sun and moon. Thou wast the token of the Covenant, O MARY, and the shining bow in the cloud from God, the Merciful, when thou didst remove Noah from the destruction of the earth, [and didst promise him] that there should be no more a flood.

6. SALUTATION to thine eyelashes, which were set to guard [thine] eyes, and to take the place of veils and coverings. O MARY, say thou unto Him to Whom thou didst give birth without carnal union with man, "Where is Thy Word, O Lord, which saith : For thy sake I will have compassion upon sinners when they shall call upon thy name, which shall be proclaimed ? "

7. SALUTATION to thine eyes which are like two lamps that have been suspended by a cunning workman in the exalted palace of thy body. O MARY, thou art the fountain of lovingkindness and compassion ! Save me, then, by thy word, and deliver me from destruction, for without thy help no one is able to save himself.

8. SALUTATION to thine ears whereinto were poured the glad tidings by the mouth of the Creator, thy Son, that thy Pearl should be preserved. I adjure thee, O MARY, let me not see judgement without having performed [good] deeds, for without them I shall be unable to justify myself. Shall thy Covenant have been made for nought ?

9. SALUTATION to thy cheeks which are like roses and pomegranates ; the languor thereof is fire, and the tears thereof are mingled with flame. According to thy Covenant, O MARY, lift thou me up into the Field of Delight. Woe be unto us ! Woe be unto us if the spirits shall say in the Judgement, " One is Aholibah and the other Aholah " (see Ezekiel xxiii, 4).

10. SALUTATION to thy nostrils, the double opening of life, which God fashioned in cunning beauty with His wise and understanding fingers. O MARY, hedge

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thou me about against temptation with the power of thy Covenant, and when the Serpent yawneeth with his mouth to swallow me up, do thou bruise his head with the rods of pain and disease.

11. SALUTATION to thy lips which have asked from God, the Merciful One, the COVENANT of Mercy on behalf of sinners, and have taken a solemn oath on Golgotha, O MARY, where thou didst withdraw thyself from Galilee. The righteousness of thy Covenant is the cause of festal rejoicing unto each and every one. Lay thou a crown upon the head of the sinner, thy servant.

12. SALUTATION to thy mouth, the mouth blessed abundantly, the holy gate, the Book. I have taken refuge, O MARY, in thy Covenant which hath been accepted, therefore let me not be put to shame before thy Son, and before His thousands of angels, when the root of the tongue shall be cut through and the mouth be sealed.

13. SALUTATION to thy teeth which are like unto a flock of sheep that have been shorn, and have gone forth from the bath (Song of Solomon iv, 2) brilliantly white; take thou, O MARY, in the place of a gift from me a tithe of thy Covenant. And let the arms of thy prayer do evil unto my Egyptian adversary, which is his heart's lust, and [let them bury him even as] Moses buried him in the sand (Exodus ii, 12).

14. SALUTATION to thy tongue, O thou whom the priests of heaven, the Seraphim who stand before the Trinity, proclaim holy with perpetual songs of sanctification. Make thou me to remember, O MARY, the commemoration of thy Covenant at the time of destruction, even as Joshua made Israel when in the desert to remember the Covenant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the righteousness of Moses.

15. SALUTATION to thy voice which returned speech unto the word of the angel of mystery, Gabriel, whose

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apparel shone with splendour. O MARY, thou holy woman of God, thou seat of His power, Hail ! Hail ! For unto thee the Covenant of Mercy and His compassion were given that by means thereof sinners might be able to become righteous.

16. SALUTATION to thy breathings, the breathings of health, which heal the souls of sinners, and those who have become wounded by the poison of the Serpent. By thy Covenant, O MARY, do away my sins, for without thy Covenant and the Cross of Christ, the Heir, there is none who can deliver a man from Sheol.

17. SALUTATION to thy sweet and beautiful throat wherein are separated [words], the bitter from the sweet. What shall I do, O MARY ? For my strength is worn out, and on every side matters are hard for me, and the world putteth me in sore straits ; but comfort thou me, O mother, by means of thy Covenant.

18. SALUTATION to thy neck, the appearance of which is as the tower of David, and the foundation of which hath been laid in a lofty place (Song of Solomon iv, 4). O MARY, speak thou into the ear of my soul the words which will give her comfort. Wherefore then doth the soul of Martha (Luke x, 41) weary itself overmuch ? For it hath the power to find out only a little of what is a great [mass].

19. SALUTATION to thy noble shoulders which have received a blessing and not a curse, and it abideth. O MARY, bear thou me together with the righteousness of thy Covenant upon thy shoulders, and take a tithe [on my behalf] from the flock of thy Son Alpha, for thou art my faith and the hope of my heart.

20. SALUTATION to thy back which was, in days of old, the resting place of God, in His weariness, on the road to Kuëškuâm in the month wherein He was driven forth. O MARY, whosoever beareth thy name in addition to his own on the Day of the Last Judgement, if His Blood have not the mastery, receive thou him [with]

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a tithe of [thy mercy], O thou merciful one, His Mother.

21. SALUTATION to thy breast, and to thy bosom, and to the twin nipples thereof. I adjure thee, O MARY, by the Blood which fell drop by drop at Golgotha, that thou make my soul to be worthy, with thine own soul, of a portion thereof, and let the dust of my earthly body be protected thereby.

22. SALUTATION to thine arms, and to thy forearms, and to thy bosom wherewith thou hast embraced Christ, the Pearl of the Godhead, the Hidden One. O MARY, thou chosen one, our Mother of angels and men, if the sinner celebrateth the commemoration of thee in firm faith let him reign with thee in the kingdom of heaven.

23. SALUTATION to thy arms and to thy wrists and hands which wove woven work, and made it beautiful with gold and purple threads, for the sanctuary of the God Who endureth for ever. O MARY, fulfil thou the Covenant of Mercy in me, and slay thou the enemy of my soul, for he is accursed, even as Solomon in his wisdom slew Sâmi (Shimei) (see 1 Kings ii, 46).

24. SALUTATION to the palms of thy hands which received the bread and the water brought unto thee by the angels when thou, O MARY, wast living in the great Sanctuary of the Law. When I give a handful of cold water to a poor and thirsty man to drink may it be received by thee, through thy Covenant, as the sacrifice of a chosen evening.

25. SALUTATION to thy fingers, and to thy white nails, and to thy two breasts, which are the doors of the milk that is to be desired. O MARY, thou spring-flower of thy time, I, the feeble one, have taken refuge in thy bosom, and by the might of thy Covenant let me be delivered from the fire which is already prepared [for me].

26. SALUTATION to thy flanks, which are placed one

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on each side of thy body, whereon hath been set the brightness of gold which never passeth away. O MARY, embrace thou me, and graciously set me at the side of thy Covenant, whilst the sinners, who during their lifetime hated him that was a companion of the righteous, go down into the region of utter darkness.

27. SALUTATION to thy belly, thy belly which is like unto that of the angels, and which in accordance with its [exalted] station and degree, is ever fed upon the bread of heaven. O MARY, thou Zion of God, thou Ark of His Law, let the water of the lake of thy Covenant cleanse me from the love of gold ; for the love of riches is said to be the ancestor of Satan.

28. SALUTATION to thy heart, whereto are joined thy reins, and to thy power of feeling ; and SALUTATION to thy bowels, and also to every organ which is in thee. O MARY, thou pillar of cloud, bring me into the land of promise, and lead thou me on the way by the light of the fire of thy Covenant, and in thy love feed me upon manna.

29. SALUTATION to thy navel which is like unto a round goblet (Song of Solomon vii, 2) in the midst of thy body ; and SALUTATION to thy pure belly, and unto thy blessed loins. O MARY, thou holy woman, who didst give birth unto Christ-God, set thou a guard round about my soul until [it reacheth] the third heaven, when there standeth in the air a hostile angel who would become the adversary thereof.

30. SALUTATION to thy virginity, wherein are included the five senses of the body, and to thy two thighs, which are the pillars of the roof of the sanctuary. O MARY, thou Tabernacle (or, Ark) and Two Tables of stone of the New Covenant, anoint thou me with the balsam of fasting, from the head even unto the sole of the foot, for fasting healeth the pain of the soul.

31. SALUTATION to thy knees when they bow in

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making propitiation and intercession, and SALUTATION to thy feet which bend in adoration ceaselessly. O MARY, who hast become the companion of the Word of the Father, entreat thou Him graciously to bestow upon me the life of [my soul], when all sinners shall be cast into the fire.

32. SALUTATION to the soles of thy feet, and to the insteps thereof which walked to the Monastery of Kuëškuâm when the soldiers slew the children. O MARY, thou daughter of Ezra, say thou unto the God of heaven, "Wilt thou condemn in the Judgement the soul that loveth Thee in all its works because of thirty words?"

33. SALUTATION to the toes of thy two feet, and to the nail which belongeth to each of them. With the Covenant of Mercy, O MARY, hide thou that concerning me which should be hidden, and by the invitation of the tongue let another man who is mortal like unto myself drink my blood from a vessel.

34. SALUTATION to thy disposition which the air of the virtues nourished, and which bowed not itself before the storm of sin. O MARY, cover thou me over with the wing of thy Covenant when the Judgement shall take place, for if thy Covenant be not a means of salvation for the soul of him that devoured men, who shall be able to deliver him?

35. SALUTATION to thy person, more than to the persons of Hannâ and Elisabeth, for the beauty thereof is of divers kinds, and its tender freshness is a thing apart [from that of other women]. O MARY, thou holy woman, who wast virgin within and without, let thy Covenant be my redemption in the face of the Almighty Creator when He putteth an end to time, and when buying and selling shall cease in the market.

36. SALUTATION to the going forth of thy soul, whereof the fiery light terrified the Black Angel when he saw it, and he was unable to terrify thee by his black-

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ness. I adjure thee, O MARY, by the Divinity of God, to deliver me by thy Covenant from the threefold terror when death shall separate my soul from this my body.

37. SALUTATION to thy body of flesh which did not remain on the bier, for the Spirit of Life of the Father raised it up quickly. Since thou dost, O MARY, save sinners by thy wise Covenant, the saving of the righteous shall not be accounted a marvellous thing for thee to perform. To save the righteous is a marvellous thing, but the saving of sinners is indeed a hard task.

38. SALUTATION to the making ready for burial of thy body with linen swathings and myrrh by the hands of Peter, who uttered cries of joy. Be thou merciful unto me, O MARY, and say not unto me in the time of tribulation, "Wherefore dost thou give thanks for thy Covenant, and for my help which keepeth in safety, and is the anointing of sinners?" And I say, "Shall not I be anointed?"

39. SALUTATION to thy grave, whereunto are gathered together all the nations and peoples of the earth whose boast thou art. O MARY, come thou to me at the hour of death of that which is mortal in me; when any Christian soul departeth wilt not thou thyself come quickly to give it consolation?

40. SALUTATION to thy resurrection which was like unto the resurrection of Christ, for the gates of the tomb had been shut fast and they remained unopened. O MARY, thou art the head of the hope of Adam, and if thy Covenant and prayer be not with him he must fall into the depth of perdition, both soul and body.

41. SALUTATION to the departure of thy body unto the House of Life, and the renewal thereof, whereunto the Body of thy Son had already departed. O thou redeemer of the world, MARY, I entreat thee to redeem my soul by thy Covenant, and let my wound be anointed with the medicine that shall heal it.

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42. LET US GIVE THANKS unto God Who cried a cry unto us, and let us celebrate the commemoration of thy Covenant among the congregation of the afflicted ones.

[RUBRIC.] WHOSOEVER SHALL RECITE THIS COMPOSITION TWO AND FORTY TIMES ACCEPT THOU HIM, O MARY, AT THE RESURRECTION, AND LAY THOU UPON THE HEAD OF HIS SOUL THE SEVENFOLD CROWN OF THE KINGDOM.



THE VISION OF MARY : A HOMILY BY JOHN  
THE SON OF ZEBEDEE

[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 605, Fol. 94a]

[Fol. 94a] IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, ONE GOD. Christ, my God, help me ! And, O our Lady the Virgin MARY, do thou entreat Him to help me in His mercy.

A HOMILY WHICH THE HOLY AND BLESSED JOHN THE SON OF ZEBEDEE COMPOSED ON THE MAJESTY AND GLORY OF THE HOLY VIRGIN. MAY HER PRAYER AND BLESSING BE WITH HER SERVANT.

**S**AITH John the son of Zebedee whom our Lord loved greatly for his purity, and our Lady MARY loved him exceedingly even as he loved her Son :—

She answered and said unto John, Hearken and I will tell thee an astounding and hidden mystery, which cannot be known by the heart (or mind) and cannot be comprehended by the understanding, which my Lord and my Son, Jesus Christ my beloved one and my Redeemer, revealed unto me at Golgotha, at the time of the sixth hour, which is noon, on the day of the Eve of the Sabbath (i.e. Saturday). A shining cloud came and bore me along and took me up into the third heaven, and it set me down at the boundary of the earth, and my Son appeared unto me. And He said unto me, "Peace be unto thee, O MARY, My mother, thou dwelling-place of God. Peace be unto thee, O virgin, who gavest birth to Me. From thy womb hath gone forth the river of peace. I will reveal unto thee an astounding wonder."

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And I made answer to Him and said unto Him, "My Lord and my God! O my Son and my King, let it be as Thou wishest." And He answered and said unto me, "Look down on the earth below." And I looked and saw, and the whole world was like a thing of nothing, and the children of men were as naught, even as David the Prophet said, "Man is a thing of naught, his days are like unto the shadow that passeth away" (Psalm cxliv, 4), and again he saith, "The days of man are like unto grass. He flourisheth like a flower of the field. A breath goeth forth from him, and he existeth no longer, and his place can no more be known" (Psalm ciii, 15, 16). And I asked my beloved Son and said unto Him, "Doth not man boast himself in vain, seeing that he perisheth in this fashion?" And He answered and said unto me, "Hast thou not heard what David the Prophet saith, 'Why doth the mighty man boast himself in his iniquity, and work iniquity all the day long?' (Psalms xxxviii, 12; xciv, 4). And again he saith, 'They perish and are scattered like the smoke' (Psalm xxxvii, 20). Even so is the life of the children of men" [Fol. 94b]. And I answered and said unto Him, "I desire to see what happeneth to the souls of the righteous when they depart from their bodies"; and He said unto me, "Be patient for a space and I will show thee."

And then I saw fourteen shining angels with the wood of the Cross in their hands, and on their breasts was the sign of the Cross of the Son of God, and in their hands were golden censers. And they came down to meet the soul of a righteous man, and angels of light came and angels of darkness; when they did not find that which was their portion they left that soul. And they went out and surrounded it, and the angels crowned it with light, and they shook that soul thrice that they might carry it away from its body. And they said unto it, "Come, come forth, thou soul, in peace. Rejoice thou, O pure and bright soul, and be glad." And they made



*Lady Meux MS. No. 2, fol. 78b.*

1. Mary in Paradise. The angels worshipping her.
2. Mary looking on the flames of hell



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it to rejoice with fans (?), and they admonished that soul and said unto it, "Rejoice thou, O pure and bright soul, and be glad, for behold, we all rejoice in thee, and thy Creator rejoiceth in thee. Get thee on, let us go into our city. Hast thou not heard what David saith, 'I rejoiced, for they said unto me, Let us go into the House of God? Our feet stand in thy courts, Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built like a city' (Psalm cxxii, 1-3). And again he saith, 'One day in thy courts, O Jerusalem, is better than a thousand [elsewhere]' (Psalm lxxxiv, 2), O pure, bright soul, for thou hast conquered this fleeting world, and hast reduced to shame the Devil and all his evil hosts. And the angel also rejoiceth with it because thereof, saying, 'On the First Day thou hast given me rest.' Remember what David the Prophet saith, 'Tell me how few shall be my days. Drive me not away in the half of my year[s]. Thy years are from generation to generation' (Psalms xxxix, 4; cii, 24). And remember thou what Paul saith, 'The dwelling in this world is a fleeting thing. And those who eat shall be like those who eat not, and those who drink like those who drink not, and those who rejoice like those who rejoice not, and those who marry like those who marry not, and those who are worthy like those who are unworthy, for fleeting is the dwelling in this fleeting world' (compare 1 Corinthians vii, 29, 31). And all this do thou remember. Thou hast rejected and thou [Fol. 95a] hast hated this world, which groweth old and decayeth. And thou hast treated it like an old rag, and like dung, and like an enemy of thine, and thou hast loved Him Whose joy abideth for ever and ever. Come, let us go to thy Creator, and let thy soul rejoice within thee."

And the angels came forthwith to that soul, and they examined it, and they found not their portion therein, and they left it and departed. And the angels came down with shining crowns, and they were carrying necklaces of gold, and fillets (?) of silver and jacinth, and

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shining ornaments, and the light thereof was seven times brighter than that of the sun. And Christ and the Paraclete Holy Ghost descended to the fifth heaven, and I went to salute that soul, and the angels of light uttered cries of joy, and I uttered cries of joy with them. I likened the matter to what David the Prophet saith, "Clap your hands, all ye peoples, and sing unto God with a voice of gladness" (Psalm xlvii, 1). And again he saith, "Precious before God is the death of the righteous man" (Psalm cxvi, 15). And they brought that soul before God, and He said unto it, "Rejoice and be glad, O soul, for behold, this is God thy Creator; worship thou and adore." And that soul bowed down before God its Creator. And that angel who had protected it continually said unto God its Creator, "I have aforetime told Thee concerning the deeds of that soul; reward it according to Thy righteousness." And the righteous Judge answered and said unto that soul, "Peace be unto thee, O soul, pure, and bright, and happy as when I created thee aforetime. Now thou comest to Me like the flower of the rose, and thou perfumeest Me with the incense of the Garden (i.e. Paradise). As thou hast not provoked Me to wrath, I will not anger thee; as thou hast not put Me to shame, I will not shame thee; as thou hast not lied unto Me, I will not lie unto thee. Be not sad. As for thy body I will raise it up in the last days, and thou shalt return to it and be as thou wast, and thou shalt rejoice and shalt have pleasure with it in the country of joy." And the Father gave that soul a white garment, the whiteness whereof was whiter than milk, and it was neither netted nor woven. And He gave it three shining crowns which were seventy-eight times brighter than the sun and moon, and God called Michael the [Fol. 95b] Archangel and said unto him, "Take this soul and bring it into the Garden of Delight in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in the bosom of all the holy

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Fathers, and let it abide there and make itself happy until I come to judge all the world ; and in the last days it shall return to the body which it had formerly, and it shall receive its wages with the saints.” And when the thousands and the tens of thousands of angels heard [this], they said unto Him, “ Verily Thou hast judged [rightly] and righteous are all Thy judgements.” And all the hosts of heaven rejoiced, and I rejoiced with them, even as the Prophet saith, “ The judgement of God is right, and maketh the heart to rejoice ” (Psalm xix, 8, 9). And again he saith, “ He who hath toiled in the world shall live for ever, for he shall not see corruption ” (compare Psalm xlix, 8, 9).

And we accompanied that soul on its way and we brought it into the Garden (i.e. Paradise), and the righteous and the martyrs received it, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the hosts of saints ; Adam and Eve were with them, and David with his harp played music in their midst. And they said unto that soul, “ Peace be unto thee, O pure soul ! Come, enter into everlasting life, wherein is neither sickness nor suffering, even as the Prophet David saith, ‘ Return, O my soul, into thy rest, for God hath helped thee ’ ” (Psalm cxvi, 7). And that soul went with them, and we returned to our rest. And there were some of us who said, “ Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Holy, Holy, Holy God of Hosts. The heavens and the earth are filled full with the holiness of Thy praise.” And some of us said, “ Praise be to the Father. Praise be to the Son. Praise be to the Holy Ghost. Praise be to the Father Who hath given unto this soul the kingdom of the heavens. And worship be to the Son Who hath carried it away from Diabolos. And thanksgiving be to the Holy Spirit Who hath delivered it out of the hand of its enemy and brought it unto the Garden of Delight (In like manner do Thou save Jonathan, Thy servant) for ever and ever. Amen.” [Fol. 96a].

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And I answered and said unto my Son, "[Now] show me what happeneth to the soul of the sinner when it leaveth his body." And He said unto me, "Be patient, and I will show thee." And I looked down under the earth, and I saw angels of light and angels of darkness approach that soul at the same time. And an angel of light examined it, and he lacked his portion in respect of it, and he left that soul and departed. And an angel of darkness came and examined that soul, and he found his portion in it. And the Paraclete came forth from it. And Těmlěyâkôs came into the belly of that soul, and the heavens and the earth compressed it. And there stood up before its eyes all the sins that it had committed from its infancy to the end of its days; and the soul was not cut off speedily from its body, but it stayed with it for three or seven (six?) hours. And that wretched soul went about crying out, even as David saith, "The death of the sinner is crooked" (Psalm xxxvii, 38). And again he saith, "The wicked shall not be removed from the judgement" (compare Psalm i, 5). And that soul went forth from its body, and [the angel] carried it away, beating it with rods [like] lightnings, and he burned it with a flame of fire, saying, "Miserable soul, to whom wilt thou come? For behold, thou hast forgotten God thy Lord, and thou hast forgotten thy Saviour and hast not remembered Him." And whilst it was saying, "I did not know," he carried it away and goaded on that soul like a fine ox on the day of its slaughter, and made it to run before the king. And that soul said, "I did not know about all that would take place here. Had I but known it I would never have given sleep to mine eyes, and I would never have eaten food or drunk water until I had obtained a little rest from the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." And again it said, "For the sake of the name of MARY, the God-bearer, let me rest a little, for my knees are tired through journeying overmuch." And they answered



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and said unto it, "Thou hast wearied thyself by every kind of denial of MARY, the God-bearer; but she loveth not the unclean soul. She is the purest of the pure, and she is greater than heaven and earth." And when that soul had thus spoken I cried out and wept many bitter tears. And I said unto my Son, "Have mercy upon me, my Son, for there is no man without sin, and there is no wood which doth not smoke, and there is none pure [Fol. 96b] save Thyself in heaven and in earth." And my Son answered and said unto me, "Weep not, O My mother. Mercy doth not befit him who did not show mercy upon the earth." Now I was unable [to gainsay] this word. And I answered and said unto Him, "Be it according to Thy Will." And then that soul cried out the more, saying, "For the sake of MARY, the Mother of the Light, give me a little rest." And when I heard this word I cried out and wept, and when my Son heard my loud outcry He said, "Let this soul have a little rest for the sake of the name of MARY, My mother." And then the angel let that soul have rest for a space. And then he took it up and bore it along, and goaded it, and said unto it, "Woe be unto thee, O thou miserable soul. To whom wilt thou go? To whom wilt thou come? By whom wilt thou take thy stand? With whom wilt thou seek asylum? And where is the place to which thou canst return?" And the angel brought the soul to the angel of wickedness. And the spirit of fornication came before it, and the spirit of evil, and the spirit of pride, and the spirit of falsehood also came before that soul, and these spirits examined it and found their portions in it. And they said unto it, "O miserable soul, art thou wise enough to enter into heaven?" And the angels, and the hosts of angels came and set that soul up in their midst, and they cried out, saying, "Keep away from us this filthy soul, for if it cometh to us the foulness and the odour thereof will make us sick." And they all cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Woe

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be unto thee, O wretched soul! Woe be unto thee!”

And the angel took that soul up and said unto it, “This is the Lord thy God, Who created thee in His likeness, and fashioned thee with His hands; bow down and make obeisance [to Him].” And that soul bowed down. And the angel who had protected it continually (i.e. its guardian angel) said unto God the Father, “Lord, take Thou this soul which Thou didst commit to me to keep, and judge it according to the work of its hands.” And God the Father answered and said unto that soul, “O soul, why hast thou treated Me unjustly? Have I separated thee from the righteous? The moon and the stars of winter and of summer did I not ordain for thee? Did I not make the rain to descend for thee? I created for thee food to eat and water to drink; and I created for thee pleasant breezes and the fruits of the earth. And I have given unto thee days of happiness. Wherefore didst thou forget thy Saviour?” And that soul said, “I have sinned, Lord. I have sinned. I did not understand that this was to take place, and I knew nothing about the Judgement which taketh place here, and as for the Scriptures I knew nothing whatsoever about them.” [Fol. 97a].

And He answered and said unto that soul, “At the testimony of three witnesses a matter standeth. And the Scriptures and the priests have talked to thee. Why didst thou not hearken unto them, O soul? I would have prepared thy provision for thy departure. Thou hast loved darkness rather than light, and hast preferred the ‘gods’ to thy Creator. I will not teach him that will not learn, and I will not show mercy on him that did not show mercy. And now, cast this soul to Satan its father, and give it to *Ṭelmëyâkôs* in *Jahannam* so that he may make it to dwell there. And there let it abide until I come again to judge the living and the dead and all the world. And at the last day it shall

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return to its body and shall go down into great punishment." And when that soul heard this word it wept, saying, "Woe is me! Woe is me, the wretched one. Better for me would it have been had I never been born. Cursed be the day wherein I was born." And when it spake thus we all wept and cried out, and the angels of heaven put aside their crowns. Even as David the Prophet saith, "Hast Thou created the children of men for naught?" (Psalm lxxxix, 47). And also Mark the Evangelist saith, "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And what if a man hath not given a ransom for his soul?" (Mark viii, 36, 37).

And my Son answered and said unto me, "Come, let us walk about in the Garden (i.e. Paradise), and I will show thee the souls of the just and righteous where they live." And He lifted me up and brought me to a great abyss, the depth whereof is unknown, and I saw there shining houses, the splendour whereof was seven (or, six) and fifty times brighter than the light of the sun and moon. And there came to me an aged man, and he embraced (or, saluted) me, saying, "Blessed [art thou], MARY, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, and blessed are the eyes that see thee." And I asked Him (i.e. her Son) and said unto Him, "What is the name of him who hath saluted me?" And He said, "His name is Enoch." And then there came another man from that house and said unto me, "Blessed art thou, MARY, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, and blessed are the eyes that see thee." And I asked my Son, saying, "What is his name?" And He said unto me, "His name is Elias." And then I saw also in that [Fol. 97b] great abyss a lofty pillar of gold covered all over with inscriptions, and on it were written the names of the righteous. And the height of that pillar was equal to twelve cubits. And when I saw this I asked my Son, saying, "What is this that I see written upon this pillar,

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and what are the letters of the writing thereon ? ” And He said unto me, “ The names of the righteous and the martyrs are written upon this pillar.” And I asked Him, saying, “ Are there any effigies of them on it ? ” And He said unto me, “ There are no effigies of them, but [the names] of all of them are written down.” And I asked Him, saying, “ Were they written upon this pillar before they were born ? ” And He said unto me, “ Before their father and mother, Adam and Eve, were created they were written down.” And I also saw a column of fire, and there was writing upon it, and it was larger than the pillar of gold. And I answered and said unto my Son, “ Were the names upon this pillar written before or after [their owners] were born ? ” And He answered and said unto me, “ Hast thou not heard what the Book saith—these who are enrolled before this Judgement were enrolled before they were born.”

And then He carried me onward to that city. And I looked and saw a city which was shining seventeen (or, sixteen) times more brightly than the sun and moon. And I saw there a vine set in the ground and the fruit thereof was abundant, and the clusters of grapes on it were very many, and there were three upon every branch. And I also saw a fig tree, and a nut tree, and almond trees of three kinds, and five hundred thousand and sixty-seven plants. And the perfume and the taste of the fruits carried away captive the heart. And I answered and said unto my Son, “ Unto whom doth this palace belong ? ” And He answered and said unto me, “ To the man who hath lived with his wife, and the wife who hath lived with her husband, both dwelling together in purity, the man knowing no other woman, and the woman knowing no other man, but both dwelling in their purity. And when they (i.e. the angels) bring them here they give them their reward. Thus Matthew the Evangelist saith, ‘ Blessed are the pure in

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heart, for they shall see God ' ' (Matt. v, 8). And then I saw behind that city a river of wine. And our father Adam was there, and Abel, and Seth, and Mahalaleel, and Cainan, and Jared, and [Fol. 98a] Arphaxad, and all the holy Fathers. And there were there Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Terah and Reu, and when they saw me they bowed down and saluted me. And Adam came and said unto me, "Hail to thee, MARY! They have renewed the Lamb (?). Blessed are the eyes that see thee." And Abel, the firstfruits of the dead, came to me, and bowed down to me and saluted me, and said, "Hail, MARY! thou pure offering. [Blessed are the eyes] that see thee." And all the hosts of the saints came in their companies according to their majesty, and they saluted me and bowed down to me, saying, "Marvellous is thy coming hither! All hail! MARY, thou beautiful dove. Blessed are the eyes that see thee." And then He lifted me onwards to the river, and brought me unto the river of honey. And there were there Moses, and Aaron, and Amos, and Isaiah, and Nahum, and Jeremiah, and Zephaniah, and Haggai, and Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, and Gideon, and Samson, and John the Baptist, and Yôsa' (Joshua?), and Joel, and Midad, and Eldad, and Melchiaiah, and all the prophets and the sons of the prophets, and Jonah, and Ezra. And Hannâ the prophetess and Elisabeth were with them. And there were other women in their places with their mother Sârâ, and Rebekah, and Rachel, and all the women were in one place by themselves.

And Moses the Prophet came unto me, and he bowed down before me, saying, "Greeting unto thee, MARY, thou white dove. Blessed are the eyes that see thee." And all the prophets came to me according to their rank and habitation, and they bowed down before me and saluted me, and said unto me, "Blessed art thou, MARY, O pure palace! Blessed are the eyes that see thee."

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And Eve came to me, and she bowed down before me and saluted me, and said unto me, "Blessed art thou, MARY, pure and shining woman! Blessed are the eyes that see thee." And then all the [other] holy women came unto me, and bowed down before me and saluted me, and said, "Blessed art thou, MARY, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And blessed are the eyes that see thee." And then [my] Son took me on to the river of milk, to the place where were one hundred and forty-four times ten thousand babes [Fol. 98b] of Bethlehem whom Herod slew, who had not polluted their bodies and their garments with the pollution of this world. And when they saw me they came from the uttermost parts of the place, and bowed down before me and saluted me, saying, "Blessed art thou, MARY, thou object of the boast of virgins! Blessed are the eyes that see thee."

And I answered and said unto my Son, "Who are these who dwell by the river of wine?" And He said unto me, "These who dwell by the river of wine are they who have shown love to pilgrims during their lives, and have loved them as they loved their own souls. And they fed the hungry with their bread, and they gave the thirsty water to drink from their cups, and have given their own apparel to the naked for clothing. These are they whom, when they went forth from the world, the angels carried into the presence of God that they might bow before Him and salute Him. And when they had done this and finished their adoration, He had them brought to the river of wine, and He made them to dwell here and gave them their reward (or, wages). And He welcomed them whilst yet afar off, and embraced them, and kissed their mouths as if He had been acquainted with them from of old, and He showed them love, and set them down here according to their tribes and brethren. And He said unto them, 'Verily ye have overcome the fleeting world, and ye have van-



*Lady Meux MS. No 1. Picture No. 30.*

Saint Mabá' Sëyôn taken to the Virgin Mary's bosom with the  
Christ Child





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quished the Devil, and have put him to shame, together with his evil hosts. Ye have grown up in the work of goodness and righteousness, go ye forth into the city and be joyful with us.'” And again I answered and said unto Him, “And who are these who dwell by the river of honey?” And He answered and said unto me, “These are they who have stretched out their hands to the poor, and their hands to the needy, even as David, the blessed man, saith, ‘Blessed is the man who succoureth the poor and needy, God shall deliver him in the day of trouble, and shall protect him, and give him life, and do good to him upon the earth’ (Psalm xli, 1, 2). And Matthew the Evangelist also saith, [Fol. 99a] ‘Blessed are the merciful, for unto them shall men show mercy’ (Matt. v, 7). He who hath redeemed the oppressed, who hath been a father and a mother to the orphan, and a prop to the widow, and a helper to the afflicted and distressed, who hath made the miserable man to rejoice, and comforted the sad, and visited the sick, and held converse [Fol. 99a] with the prisoner, whether Jew or Gentile (‘Aramâwî), for they are all God’s creatures, he shall dwell by the river of honey. For the potter with one kind of clay doth not make of one half of it a vessel to honour and another to dishonour. Even as David saith, ‘Judge the poor and the orphans. Right the oppressed and the needy, and save the solitary and the miserable, and save them from the hand of sinners’ (Psalm lxxxii, 3, 4). And Matthew the Evangelist also saith, ‘The oppressed shall be saved for the kingdom of heaven’ (Matt. v, 10). And the wise man Solomon saith, ‘Those who have mercy on the poor shall God repay’ (?) (Proverbs xiv, 21). When they go forth from this world they (i.e. the angels) shall take them to God that they may bow before Him, and when they have saluted Him and finished their worship of Him, He will have them brought here to this river of honey. And the Prophets and all the righteous shall come to receive

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them, and shall say, 'Ye have conquered this fleeting world and overcome the Devil and all his hosts; come ye into our city and rejoice with us.'

And I answered and said unto my Son, "Who are these who dwell by the river of milk?" And He answered and said unto me, "Those who have purified themselves from fornication, and have kept themselves from begetting and from the impurity of women, and have never thought of this in their hearts and minds. For the Gospel saith, 'He who hath looked upon a woman and desired her hath already committed fornication with her in his heart' (Matt. v, 28). And when those women who have kept their virginity undefiled go forth from the world, the angels shall take them into the presence of God that they may bow before Him and salute Him. And when they have finished worshipping, the angels shall bring them hither, and the children shall go forth and welcome them from afar off, and shall say unto them, 'Verily ye have conquered the fleeting world, and have passed over the waves thereof, and ye are like unto us. Come into our city and rejoice ye with us.'"

And then my Son showed me a white land, which shone seven times more brightly than the sun, and moon, and stars; and the whole of it was decorated with gold and silver. And I answered and said unto my Son, "Unto whom belongeth this city?" And He said unto me, "To him that hath preserved [Fol. 99b] his tongue from calumny, and to him that is without boasting and pride, to him that is not a lover of wine, and is not envious, and is not proud, who doth not provoke his brother to wrath, who is not lascivious, who hath not vilified his neighbour and is not vindictive and malicious, in whose heart revenge doth not dwell, to him that is as gentle as a dove. Even as Luke the Evangelist saith: 'I say unto you, Whosoever blasphemeth against the Son of Man shall perish (*sic*), and he who blas-

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phemeth against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come.' Even so shall it be with these (i.e. the above-mentioned). And again Luke the Evangelist saith, 'He who magnifieth himself shall be abased, and he who showeth himself humble shall be honoured' (Luke xii, 10; xiv, 11; xviii, 14). And Matthew the Evangelist also saith, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth' (Matt. v, 5). And he also saith, 'Be ye wise as serpents and meek like doves' (Matt. x, 16). And David saith, 'He who calumniateth his neighbour in secret him have I chased away. He who is arrogant of eye and greedy of heart shall not hold familiar talk with me' (Psalm ci, 5). And He also saith in the Gospel, 'Whosoever provoketh his brother without cause shall be condemned in the judgement' (Matt. v, 22). And when the meek go forth from the world, the angels take them into the presence of God that they may bow before Him and salute Him. And when they have finished worshipping, they bring them hither, and make them dwell here, and He giveth unto them their everlasting wages. Even as David the Prophet saith, 'The meek shall inherit the earth and dwell therein for evermore' (Psalm xxxvii, 11.) And he also saith, 'Keep meekness and thou shalt see righteousness' (Psalm xxv, 9). And he also saith, 'Because of my meekness Thou wilt accept me, and wilt make me strong before Thee for ever'" (compare Psalm xxii, 26).

And my Son also showed me the fore-part of the place across the river, and I looked and saw [there] a mass of people. And there was [at] the gate of the Garden a great tree, and on seeing it a man would imagine that it was full of fruit, whereas in the inner parts thereof there was no fruit whatsoever; and that tree used to bend down towards those people so that they might think that there was much fruit upon it. When the people were hungry they searched for fruit, but

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they found none on that tree, and they lacked food to eat. And that tree used to bow its head, and when it did so those people bowed [Fol. 100a] their heads until they reached the ground; and then the tree would raise itself up until its branches reached to the Garden (i.e. Paradise), and they (i.e. the people) were raised up together with it. And when I saw this I wept bitterly, saying, "My Son, who are these people and what is this tree which seemeth to me to be full of fruit?" And when I looked at those people they were hungry and thirsty, and they wished to eat. And when the fruit of the tree was lacking, they fell down with it on the ground, and when that tree raised itself up they were raised up with it; and when I saw this I was sorry. And my Son answered and said unto me, "Weep not, My mother. I will tell thee the hidden matter concerning those men. In respect of fasting, and prayer, and abstinence they are perfect; and in keeping their bodies undefiled they are perfect. But they never fed the hungry with their bread, and they never gave drink to the thirsty, and they never clothed the naked, and they never gave the pilgrim lodging in their house. And they were arrogant and boastful." And I answered and said unto my beloved Son, "Shall these words judge them?" And He answered and said unto me, "There is nothing which can surpass these words, and of all great sin[s] boasting and arrogance are the greatest. Through boasting the Devil fell." And I answered and said unto [Fol. 100b] Him, "Did their arrogance, and boasting, and tying of their hands prevent their coming into the Garden of Delight?" And He said unto me, "Boasting and arrogance and the tying of the hand are the root of sin." And He answered and said unto me, "These people shall dwell in this gate until I come a second time, until I come in My glory with all the saints. And when the righteous are journeying along that road and they see them, they shall make entreaty for them, and I will re-

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member them, and will permit them to come into the kingdom of heaven." And when I heard these words from His glorious mouth I gave thanks unto my Son.

And then He carried me onwards to that river, and He made me cross the river in a ship of gold, and He brought me into a house, which was white and was shining with a light which was seven times brighter than the light of the sun, moon, and stars. And I saw [Fol. 100b] couches of gold spread over with splendid cloths of finely woven work. And I answered and said unto my Son, "For whom is this habitation intended?" And He said unto me, "For the men who have never known men, and have preserved their virginity undefiled. As David the Prophet saith, 'Blessed art thou, and well is it with thee. Thy wife is like a pleasing vine on the citadel of thy house' (Psalm cxxviii, 3). And the Evangelist Matthew also saith, 'Blessed are those who are pure in their bodies, for they shall see God' (Matt. v, 8). And again he saith, 'Those whom God hath joined together man shall not separate; they are not two, but one' (Matt. xix, 5, 6). And Mark the Evangelist also saith, 'Blessed are those who having wives are as if they had them not' (1 Corinthians vii, 9, 29). And when they go forth from their world, [the angels] take them to God that they may bow down before Him and salute Him. And as soon as they have finished worshipping they bring them hither, and take them into this habitation, and give them couches of gold spread with splendid cloths."

And then my Son took me beyond those couches, and I saw there a river of oil and unguent, and I saw there also a shining city whereof the brightness was seven times greater than that of the sun. And I also saw there very many crowns, and their number must have been thousands of thousands, and tens of thousands of thousands, and the . . . were one thousand and forty and four. And I answered and said unto my Son, "For

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whom are these crowns and this city?" And He answered and said unto me, "This abode and these crowns are for the martyrs who renounced and hated this fleeting world, who cut themselves off [from it], and gave themselves over to death, being driven from city to city, and suffering hunger and thirst for the sake of righteousness. They fulfilled what is said in the Gospel, 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness'sake, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are they who are persecuted (or, driven forth) for righteousness'sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v, 6, 10). And again he saith, 'Every one shall hate you. And not a single hair of your heads shall be destroyed; and in your forbearance ye shall possess your soul' (Luke xxi, 17, 19). And this city is not the reward of the righteous only, but the Apostles [Fol. 101a] shall seek the shadow thereof, and the righteous, and the Prophets, together with their disciples—for there shall be the martyrs, and the Apostles, and the seventy-two disciples and their five hundred companions, and the company of the firstborn, their governors and kings, Peter, the Rock of the Faith, and Paul, the Tongue of Unguent—even as it saith in the Gospel, 'He who teacheth and doeth shall be great in the kingdom of the heavens' " (Matt. v, 19). And whilst I was talking to my Son there came unto me all the saints [in] hosts, and the company of the firstborn, and the Martyrs, and they saluted me and said unto me, "Hail to thee, MARY, thou fortress of the holiness of God. Blessed are the eyes that see thee."

And then my Son carried me on before Him to that river, and I saw there two hundred times ten thousand houses of light, and they were large, each being twelve cubits with the cubit of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And I answered and said unto my Son, "For whom are this habitation and the houses?" And He answered and said unto me, "For the Pâpâsât (i.e.

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heads of the Church), and archbishops, and bishops, and priests, and deacons, and readers and singers of psalms." And I answered and said unto Him, "Will they all come into this abode?" And He answered and said unto me, "Not all of them shall enter, but a few shall come in. Hast thou not heard what it saith in the Gospel, 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but every one that doeth the Will of My Father Who is in heaven? And in that day many shall say, Lord, in Thy Name we prophesied, and in Thy Name we cast out devils, and in Thy Name we did mighty works. And then will I say unto them, I never knew you. Get ye gone from Me, O workers of iniquity' (Matt. vii, 21-23). And as for those who are set over the churches, not all of them shall enter into this abode." And I asked Him, saying, "Who shall enter into this abode?" [And He said unto me], "I will tell thee. Those who have kept themselves pure from fornication, and have not pursued another man's wife; those who have not been avaricious and envious, those who have not had avarice and malice in their hearts, those who have not been proud, and arrogant, and calumniators, and boasters, and oppressors [Fol. 101b]; those who have not worshipped idols; those who have hated themselves, those who have not worked against their neighbours, those who have not sworn falsely; those who have not loved dignities, and crowns upon earth, and praise before kings, and who did not neglect the church; and those who made themselves fathers and mothers to the church, and touched My Body in purity and My Blood in purity, and did not defile My mystery and My holy things. These are they who shall enter this Gate. And I will describe to thee those who shall not enter it. Those who pursue the wives of other men, he who killeth himself, he who sweareth falsely, he who setteth avarice in his heart, the arrogant, the boastful, the

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transgressor of the Law. The dancer (?), the fornicator, the impure man, he who goeth astray and worshippeth idols, and he who despiseth the House of God. This is he who shall not enter this house—even as Paul, the Tongue of Unguent, saith, ‘ No fornicator, or unclean man, or idolater shall inherit the kingdom of God, neither shall he enter the kingdom of heaven ’ (1 Corinthians vi, 9, 10). And it also saith in the Gospel, ‘ Enter in at the strait gate, for difficult and narrow is that which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it. But broad and spacious is that which leadeth to destruction, and many are those who find it and enter in [through] it ’ (Matt. vii, 13, 14). And again it saith, ‘ Many are called and few are chosen ’ ” (Matt. xx, 16).

And when He had said these things He took me and carried me up to the Heavenly Jerusalem. And I saw there a sanctuary of light, and a pavilion of light, and a tent covered over with fire. And I saw there a man, and he shone with a light seven times brighter than that of the sun. And in his hand he held an instrument of music with strings (harp ?) and a lyre, and he stood in the gates of Jerusalem and played his harp, and struck his lyre and made the foundations of the Garden to shake. And when I entered the courtyard of that house he came to me and embraced me and kissed me, saying, “ Blessed art thou, MARY, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. Blessed are the eyes [Fol. 102a] that see thee.” And I answered and said unto my Son, “ Who is this that saluted me ? ” And He answered and said unto me, “ The name of the man who embraced thee is David.” And I heard him saying, “ Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.” And when he spake thus all the saints cried out with the mouth, saying, “ David.” And I answered and said unto my Son, “ Will [this] cease with the voice of David ? ” And He answered and said unto me, “ Without the word of David the praise of heaven and earth would not be complete.” And I an-



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swered and said unto Him, "What doth it mean?" And He said unto me, "It meaneth 'song' (?)." And I answered and said unto Him, "If one crieth out Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, doth it become an advantage to him?" And He answered and said unto me, "If he crieth out with boasting it will be of no benefit to him. But if he crieth out with purity of intent, without any hesitation through inertness, his song shall be with that of the hosts of heaven." And I answered and said unto Him, "Supposing a man be sick or suffering, or sleepy, if he saith Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, will it be [reckoned] a sin to him?" And He answered and said unto me, "If he be sick, or suffering, or sleepy, and he say these words it will not be [reckoned] a sin to him, for he doth not do so boastingly." And the interpretation of the phrase is Hallelujah to the Father; Hallelujah to the Son; Hallelujah to the Holy Ghost. Now the ground-meaning of the phrase is Glory be to the Father; Glory be to the Son; Glory be to the Holy Ghost, Who is One in His Being for ever and ever. Amen.

And then He took me up and carried me on to the city, and brought me to the City of God. And He showed me a shining city which was built in [the form of] the flower of a rose, whereof the boundary and the end (i.e. extent) and the riches cannot be known. And its splendour was seven times more than that of the heavens. And in it were apparel of gold and silver, and necklaces (or, collars) of gold, and crowns of gold. And [Fol. 102b] I answered and said unto my Son, "For whom is this abode [prepared]?" And He answered and said unto me, "For those who have rejected and hated this fleeting world, for those of the monks who have forsaken riches and desire. None hath knowledge of this city and habitation, neither the angels nor the archangels. And the priests of heaven shall enter therein and shall . . . the gates thereof. And none shall enter therein except

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Myself, and My Father, and the Paraclete. And do thou enter into it and take shelter therein, and it shall be thy city, and three thousand angels shall minister unto thee." And I answered and said unto Him, "Will all the monks come into this Gate?" [And He answered and said unto me, "There shall enter] only those who have kept themselves pure from the filth of fornication, and those who have rejected and hated this fleeting world, and those who have not loved the riches of honour, and possessions, and any desirable thing of the world, and self, and pleasure, and the jests of the theatre, and the laughter of fools, and the chatter of idle folk; and the man who was not prone to anger, and the man who was not a drunkard, and the man who was not proud or boastful, and the man who did not make accusations and did not stir up strife, and the man who was not apathetic (or, sluggish), and the man who ceased not praying during the hours of the day and night. Hast thou never heard that the book saith, 'Nothing harmeth the monk more than abandoning prayer'? And also, 'The monk who hath nothing is better than the monk who is not a giver of alms?' And Paul saith also, 'To me the world is dead, and I am dead to it' (Galatians vi, 14). And he also saith, 'In heaven our city' (2 Corinthians v, 1; Hebrews xii, 22). And [the sum of] all this which I have said unto thee is the monk who is perfect shall come into this Gate." And I answered and said unto my Son, "And who are they who shall not come into this Gate?" And He answered and said unto me, "I will tell thee. Those who shall not come into this Gate are the proud, the irascible, the boasters, the men who feigned sickness, men who complained at all times, men who were crazy, vilifiers, evil men, men who cherished hatred, false men, deniers [of Christ], scoffers, men who acted like fools (or, madmen), fornicators, men who were unclean, men who swore falsely, shep-



*Lady Meux MS. No. 1, Picture No. 82.*

Theophilus, Patriarch of Constantinople, in his church hearing the trumpets proclaiming the arrival of the soul of Gabra Krestôs in heaven



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herds who hated their flocks because of their fornication, flocks who hated their shepherds because of their love for women, sorcerers who slew their brethren with the tongue of violence and fraud and were like unto the monks who became idolaters and worshipped false gods, men who rode horses (horse-soldiers?), men who sought vengeance, men who had abundance and demanded more [Fol. 103a], lovers of riches, lovers of dignities, lovers of self-gratification and pleasure, lovers of the world, those who committed fornication after they had adopted the garb of the monk, those who drowned themselves in wine, those who hated their neighbour, those who slew their neighbour through envy, the eaters of flesh who were without flesh (*sic*). without measure, those who drank blood without stint, those who knew not fasting, lovers of sleep, haters of fasting and prayer, those who made plans to eat and to drink, and those who said, 'a feast to-day.' These are they who shall not enter this Gate."

And He answered and said unto me, "Come, let us go towards the west also, and I will show thee where the souls of the sinners and the men of deceit live." And He took me up and carried me towards the west, and He brought me to the boundaries of earth and of heaven. And I saw a large court of light wherein was no darkness, and it was filled with a river of fire. And I answered and said unto Him, "What is the explanation of this river, and who are they who dwell in this river?" And He answered and said unto me, "These were not wholly cold (?), and they were not poor." And I looked there and I saw many people, men, women, young folks and children. And I looked again, and I saw some men who were immersed [in the fire] up to their breasts, and some were immersed up to their lips, and some up to their skulls. And when I saw these people I answered and said unto my Son, "Who are these? And who are these who are immersed up to their knees?" And He

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said unto me, " These are they who were sluggish at the time of prayer, and not [only] at midnight. [Hearken to what] I am going to say unto thee. At midnight all creation prayeth to God, and at dawn all creation giveth thanks unto Him because the night hath passed and the day hath come, and in the evening they thank Him also for the third, and sixth, and ninth hours of the day, and [pray for] sleep in the night hours. Because these people were sluggish and neglected prayer this is their doom for ever and ever. Those who are immersed up to their navels are the men who committed fornication with women in church, and those who are immersed up to their necks are the men who uttered cruel words in church, and those who are immersed up to their breasts [Fol. 103b] are the men who uttered words (i.e. conversed with friends) after they had received the Offering, without making them to be refreshed, either with bread or water. And those who are immersed up to their lips are those who vilified their neighbour in church. And those who are immersed up to their skulls are those who winked with their eyes and nodded derisively in church."

And then I saw a great yawning abyss, and if a soul fell down to a depth of fifty thousand cubits it did not reach the limit of that abyss. And I asked my Son, saying, " For whom is this doom [decreed]?" And He answered and said unto me, " For those who committed fornication with their father's wives ; and for those who committed fornication with their sisters, or with their daughters, or with their sons' daughters, or with [the wives of] their friends, or their daughters ; and for those who lay with men as with women ; and for those who committed fornication with the wives of their sons or with the wives of the sons of their sisters ; and for those who committed fornication with a pregnant woman or with an unclean woman ; and for those who committed fornication with a black woman, or with a

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Muhammadan woman, or with a Jewish woman ; and for those who committed fornication with beasts, or with horses, or with a mule, or an ass, or a camel, or with any animal whatsoever ; and for those who committed fornication within the precincts ; and for the wife of the priest who committed fornication with another man, and the priest who committed fornication with a woman. These are they who shall enter this abyss, and this shall be their punishment for ever."

And then I saw another punishment. I saw an old man, and fourteen cruel angels of darkness were carrying him along, and they brought him into the river of fire, and the river of fire engulfed him. And the angels set him upon a throne of fire, and the fire flared about him as far up as his breast, and they hurled red-hot darts into his sides, and they poured fire over him from out of a vessel. And when I saw this I wept bitterly, and I cried out with many cries, and I said unto my Son, "What is the name of this man?" And He answered and said unto me, "His name is 'Pâpâs'." And I answered and said unto Him, "What hath this priest done that this most awful punishment is decreed for him?" And He answered and said unto me, "In My Law and Commandment [Fol. 104a] he did not celebrate the Holy Mysteries ; he handled [them] not in purity ; and he did not lift up the Offering in purity. He brought his days to an end in fornication and uncleanness. He did not house the pilgrim, he loved not the poor and needy, he devoured the first-fruit offerings ; and he neither fed the hungry nor gave drink to the thirsty. This shall be his punishment for ever."

And I looked again to that abyss and I saw a man whom the angels of darkness smote until he fell down upon his face ; and the blood was pouring out of his mouth. And the angels cast him into that river [of fire] which rose up round about him to his breasts. And when he said, "Have mercy upon me, there is none to

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have mercy," I answered and said unto my Son, "What is the sin of this man? And what is his name?" And He answered and said unto me, "His name is 'Deacon,' and his sin I will declare unto thee. In My Commandment he hath not walked; he was not devoted to the Church; he did not hold My Blood in purity; and he did not walk purely in the Sanctuary. He did not feed the hungry with his food, he gave the thirsty no drink from his cup, he did not clothe the naked with his apparel, and he neither prepared for burial the pilgrims who died [on the road] nor buried them. This [river of fire] shall be his punishment for ever."

And I saw further on in that river a great and majestic man, and the angels of darkness seized him, and cast him into that river of fire which rose to his breast. And they were beating him with stones of fire (i.e. red-hot stones), and scourging him with rods of lightning. And when I saw this I cried out and wept bitterly, and I answered and said to my Son, "What is his name?" And He answered and said unto me, "'Archbishop'; I will tell thee what his sin was. He did not show forth the Faith of the Trinity; and everything I commanded him [to do] he did not; and he did not administer the Law of the Canon. And this shall be his punishment for ever."

And behind him I saw the river of fire, and I saw a man whom [the angels of darkness] were dragging along with ropes of fire, and they were making the river (or, sea) of fire to flow up about him, and they were buffeting him and saying unto him, "Since it fell to thee to break the Bread, why dost thou hunger? Since it fell to thee to pour out of the Cup, [Fol. 104b] why dost thou thirst now? And since it fell to thee to slaughter the Lamb, why art thou not filled with the flesh thereof?" And I answered and said unto Him, "What is the name of this man? And what is his sin?" And He answered and said unto me, "His name is 'Priest,' and



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his sin is great ; I will tell thee. Though he was a priest he did not walk in the work of his priesthood. And he did not keep himself pure from fornication, and he brought his days to an end with jesting and idle talk and sluggishness. And this shall be his punishment for ever."

And I also saw another man whom the angels were bringing along, and they were beating his face with rods [made] of lightning, and his face was blackened (or, scorched) by the fire, and they cast him into the river of fire which rose up about him to his breast. And they were cutting out his tongue with a razor of fire, and his nose with a sword of fire ; and when he said " Have mercy upon me," there was none to show mercy to him. And when I saw this I wept bitterly and I cried out with many cries. And I asked my Son, saying, " What is the name of this man ? " And He said unto me, " It is ' Deacon,' and I will declare his sin unto thee. He did not keep the Law of the Canon which I appointed, and he would not sing at My Offering, and he dwelt amid tumult and revelry and fornication, and he loved not the church, but was sluggish and arrogant and boastful. And this shall be his punishment for ever."

And I also saw many men scattered about like ashes in the fire, and they were suspended upon pillars of fire, and I asked my Son, saying, " Who are these men ? " And He said unto me, " These are the men who worshipped the gods, the sun, and the moon, and the stars. And this shall be their punishment for ever."

And I saw other men in the river of fire, and worms were gnawing them, and I asked my Son, saying, " Who are these men ? " And He said unto me, " These are they who were sated with food and gold, and who put their confidence in their riches, and who allowed the poor and needy to cry out [in vain]. And as Paul said, ' Those who wish to be rich shall fall into great sin ' (1 Timothy vi, 9). This shall be their punishment for ever."

And then I looked and I saw [many] virgins who were

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arrayed in darkness, and they had chains of fire tied about their necks [Fol. 105a] and [the angels of] darkness were dragging them into the river of fire. And I asked my Son, saying, "Who are these that are in such great tribulation?" And He said unto me, "These are they whose fathers could not make them to observe the law of men, and who lost their virginity either in the field or on the way-side. And this shall be their punishment for ever."

And then I saw other men hanging upon [pillars of fire], and their hands and necks were bound with chains of fire, and [the angels of darkness] were setting them in a place of darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. And I asked my Son, saying, "Who are these men?" And He said unto me, "These are the kings, and governors, and judges of the earth who devoured the possessions of others, and the possessions of the orphans and widows. They magnified themselves, and boasted themselves of this fleeting world, and gloried in that which could not in any way profit them; even as the Book of the Wise Man saith, 'Wholly vanity is the dwelling in this fleeting world' (Ecclesiastes ii, 14). And this shall be the punishment of the rich ones of the earth for ever."

And then I looked again and I saw other people hanging upon pillars of fire, and [the angels of darkness] were afflicting them; and panthers of fire were biting through their throats, and lions of fire were crushing their legs. And when I saw this I wept bitterly, and I asked my Son, saying, "Who are these men?" And He answered and said unto me, "These are the nuns and widows who went outside the Law of the Canon, and destroyed their virginity after they had adopted the holy garb, and falsified that which ought not to be falsified, and rejected that which ought not to be rejected. And when they conceived they killed their babes (i.e. procured abortion), and poured out their blood on the

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earth, and when they brought forth children they killed them with their own hands. And their fathers gave poison to their mothers. And these babes cry out before the throne to My Father, saying, 'Whether we were to do evil or good they did not let us grow up. One half of us they cast to the dogs, and the other half to the swine.' And when we heard these words, I and My Father and the Paraclete were angry, and We commanded Tělměyâkôs [Fol. 105b] to set them in a beautiful habitation. And this shall be the punishment of their fathers and mothers for ever." And I asked my Son, saying, "If they had repented wouldst Thou not have had mercy upon them?" And He said unto me, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, if they had repented with a ready heart their sins should have been remitted to them. But inasmuch as they did not repent they must be requited with their punishment. And as for their shepherds, if they did not rebuke them they shall find with Me blame and punishment, and their punishment shall be like unto that of Eli and Pôlâ. Eli did not admonish his sons, and Pôlâ sold his children for a little of the food that passeth quickly away. And moreover they resemble Esau who sold his right as firstborn for a mess of pottage (or, for one meal) and his posterity for an ox (Genesis xxv, 33). And these shepherds have sold [themselves], even as Paul saith, 'They serve their bellies and not Christ'" (Romans xvi, 13).

And then I saw [men] suspended on pillars of fire, and a flame of fire was driving them hither and thither; and there were in front of their eyes many kinds of fruit and some pure, sweet water. And when they wished to eat some of the fruits and to drink of that water, they could not reach them, and neither fruit nor water entered their mouths. And when I saw [this] I was exceedingly sad and sorrowful, and I asked my Son, saying, "Who are these men?" And He said unto me, "These are they who rejected fasting, and they reduced the

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fasts and made haste to do them away, whether it was the fast of the fourth day, or the fast of the eve of the Sabbath, or the Great Fast [of Lent]. And this shall be their punishment [for ever].” And He answered and said unto me, “If they had fasted two days they would have obtained remission of their sins.”

¶ And then I saw men with their hands cut off, and a flame of fire moving them hither and thither, and I asked my Son, saying, “Who are these men?” And He said unto me, “These are they who wrote papers (deeds or documents), and who cut off portions of them. This shall be their punishment [for ever].”

And then I saw men whom [the angels of darkness] were smiting with flames of fire, and whom they were bridling with bridles of fire. And I asked my Son, saying, “Who are these men?” And He said unto me, “These are they who cursed their neighbours and abandoned their brethren. When the angels cursed Adam they fell down from their exalted place [Fol. 106a]. This shall be their punishment for ever.”

And then I saw a pit, the inside of which was full of bitumen and sulphur; there was no light therein and it was full of darkness, and I saw there many men with their hands and feet cut off. And I asked my Son, saying, “Who are these men?” And He said unto me, “These are Muhammadans, men who do not believe that I was born of thee, and they do not believe in My baptism, or in My Resurrection and Ascension, or in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. This shall be their punishment for ever.”

And then I saw other men with sulphur and fire issuing from their mouths, and there was a scroll of fire hanging from their necks. And I asked my Son, saying, “Who are these men?” And He said unto me, “These are priests, the teachers of the Book of Psalms, who made the song of praise to cease in [their] churches. This shall be their punishment for ever.”

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And then I saw a man whom four angels were holding suspended with ropes of fire, and his feet were in the air and his head was below, that is to say, he was hanging head downwards, and they were suspending him on spears of fire which pierced his face. And when the angels loosed the ropes of fire from his feet he fell down into the fire. And I asked my Son, saying, "What is the name of this man, and what is his sin?" And He said unto me, "' Priest ' is his name, and his sin I will describe unto thee. He did not bring incense and offering on the day of the Sabbath of the Christians in purity, and he was sluggish and arrogant." And I answered and said unto my Son, "At what time dost Thou wish [men] to bring sacrifice and offering, O my Son?" And He answered and said unto me, "On the day of the [Christian] Sabbath I wish them to bring the Offering at daybreak; on the Jewish Sabbath at the third hour. Hast thou not heard that He said, 'I did not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfil them'? (Matt. v, 17). Now, I did not destroy (or, abolish) the first Sabbath without [setting] a day [in its place]; and as for the other Sabbaths let them hold them in honour like the First Day of the Week."

And I also saw a man whom [the angels of darkness] were bringing low with darts of fire. And I asked my Son, saying, "What is the name of this man, [and what is his sin?]" And He answered and said unto me, "His name is ' Deacon,' and his sin I will describe [Fol. 106b] unto thee. He did not bring in a pure sacrifice quickly on the First Day of the Week. This shall be his punishment for ever."

And again I looked at that river of fire and at the place where a pit of fire had been dug. And I saw there men and women, and they were immersed in it up to their necks, and there were serpents and vipers of fire in every part of their hearts, and four angels of darkness were piercing them with spears of fire. And I wept

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bitterly and cried out loudly, and I said unto my Son, "Who are these people?" And He said unto me, "They are monks and nuns who did not walk in My path, and did not follow in My footsteps, but made their days to pass in fornication. This shall be their punishment for ever."

And again I saw Jahannam sealed with seven seals. And my Son cried out, saying, "Open ye the doors of Jahannam that MARY, My Mother, may see." And when those doors had been thrown open and I had seen [Jahannam] I was afraid and terrified, and I said unto Him, "What is this river?" And He said unto me, "Its name is Jahannam." And I answered and said unto Him, "Who are they who dwell therein?" He said, "These are they who said that the Son of God was not; this shall be their punishment for ever." And when all those who were under torture saw me, they cried out, saying, "Blessed art thou, O MARY, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. Blessed are the eyes that see thee." And I answered and said unto my Son, "Have mercy upon them for my sake, O my Son; there is no man without sin." And my Son answered and said unto me, "From the eve of the Sabbath (i.e. Sunday) until the second day of the week dawneth, the sinners [in Jahannam] shall have respite from their torture." And our Lord said unto me, "Be not thou sorrowful, O My Mother! He who hath celebrated thy commemoration, or hath called upon thy name, or who hath built a shrine to thee, or hath written the history of thy words, on him will I show mercy to the twelfth generation for thy sake, O thou who didst give Me birth. This I swear unto thee by My Father, and by His Son, Myself, and by the flow of blood from My side, for the redemption of [the world], and by His Spirit, My Spirit." And when I heard His voice I gave thanks unto Him.

And now, O John, know thou and be certain of the

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truth of all these things that I have told thee. And thou shalt not lay this book in a place that is defiled. And no woman who is with child, or who is after the manner of women, shall approach the place where it is, and no woman who committeth fornication shall draw nigh unto it. [Fol. 107a] No man of evil disposition shall dwell where it is. What will it profit a woman who fornicateth when she cometh to church? And what will it profit the fornicator when he entereth a church? Hearken, O John. Command the people that they celebrate my commemoration on the 21st day of the month of Tër (January 16),<sup>1</sup> and on the 21st day of the month of Sanê (June 15), and on the 16th day of the month Naḥassê (August 9),<sup>2</sup> and on the 16th day of the month of Yakâtît (February 10). If they can, let them celebrate my commemoration each month, and if they cannot do so, let them celebrate it each year. I will stand by him who shall celebrate my commemoration on the day in the time of his tribulation. And to him that hath had this [book] written, and to him that wrote it I will show myself. And I will write in the Book of Life the names of him that readeth it, and him that translateth it, and him that hath hearkened readily to the words therein, for ever and ever. Amen.

### HERE ENDETH THE VISION OF MARY

May her prayer and her blessing, and the mercy of her beloved Son be with her servant the sinner . . . and with all her slaves and her handmaidens, for ever and ever. Amen. And may Christ write the names of the writer and the man who had this book written upon a pillar of red gold in the kingdom of heaven for ever and ever. Amen. O my Lady who consolest, who art, inasmuch as thy word is shown never to be false, the

<sup>1</sup> The day of MARY's death.

<sup>2</sup> The day of MARY's Ascension.

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Consoler of the sinner, thy servant Ḥayla Shēlâsê, for  
ever and ever ! Amen.

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Feed me, MARY, thy hireling minister, with  
The bread of a right understanding and the wine of  
wisdom,  
Even as thou didst give to the famished dog water to  
drink.  
If my sin increaseth overmuch among the people,  
Remember, O my Lady, thine own invincible loving  
mercy.

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# WEDDĀSĒ MĀRYĀM

## THE BOOK OF THE PRAISE OF MARY

### I. A HYMN OF PRAISE FOR THE SABBATH OF THE CHRISTIANS

1. **T**HOU wast named "Beloved Woman," O blessed among women. Thou art the second chamber, in that thou wast called "Holiest of Holies," and in it was the table of the Covenant and on it were the Ten Words which were written by the fingers of God. He (i.e. the Father) made known this to us first of all by "Yawṭâ" (i.e. Iota), which is the first [letter] of the Name of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, Who became incarnate of thee without change, and became the Mediator of the New Covenant, and by the shedding of His Holy Blood He purified the believers and the people who were pure. And because of this we all magnify thee, O our Lady, thou ever pure God-bearer. We beseech thee and lift our eyes to thee, so that we may find mercy and compassion with the Lover of Men.

2. [Thou art] the Tabôt (i.e. Tabernacle, or Ark) which was covered on all its sides with gold, and was made of the wood that never perisheth, and that foreshadowed for us the Word of God, Who became man without separation and change, the pure and undefiled Deity, the equal of the Father. To thee, as the pure woman, [Gabriel] announced [Him] without seed. And He became like unto us through the might of His wisdom : He Who was incarnate of thee and He Who was spotless mingled His Divinity [without nature]. And because of this—

3. [Thou] sanctuary which the Cherubim who are

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fashioned in the likeness of God surround—the Word, Who was incarnate of thee, O pure woman, without change hath become the Forgiver of our sins and the Destroyer of our transgressions. And because of this

4. Thou art the holy golden pot wherein the manna is hidden, the bread which came down from heaven, the giver of life unto all the world. And because of this

5. Thou art the golden candlestick and dost hold the brilliant Light at all times, the Light which is the Light of the world, the Light of Lights which had no beginning, verily God of God, Who became incarnate of thee without change. And by His coming He shed light upon us, upon those of us who were sitting in the shadow and darkness of death, and He set our feet upon the path of peace, through the mystery of His holy wisdom. And because of this

6. Thou art the censer of gold because thou didst carry the coals of the blessed fire which He took from the sanctuary—He Who forgiveth sin and destroyeth wickedness, He Who is the Word of God, Who became incarnate of thee, and Who offered up to His Father incense and precious offerings. And because of this

7. [Thou art] the garden of delight, the garden of joy, which is planted with the trees of Lebanon, and was prepared for the saints before the world was created. [On] a great chariot, which was guarded by Cherubim and Seraphim that were fashioned out of flame of fire, one of the Seraphim visited her from heaven, and said unto her in the sanctuary, “Blessed art thou among women. The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, for He Who dwelleth above the Cherubim shall become the Light for all the world.” Thou art the sweet-scented flower which hath sprung from the root of Jesse. And because of this

8. Thou art like unto the rod of Aaron, which, without being planted in the ground and without watering,

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burst into blossom. In like manner thou, O Bearer of Christ, didst bring forth Christ our God in truth, without seed. He came and delivered us. And because of this

9. It is meet for thee, O thou who art full of grace, more than for all the saints to pray on our behalf. Thou art greater than the high-priests, and thou art more honourable than the Prophets ; in thee there is majesty of appearance which is greater than the majesty of the Seraphim and Cherubim. Verily thou art the glory of our race, and thou art she who must beg for life for our souls. Pray thou then on our behalf to our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ that He may confirm us in the Right Faith, that is to say, faith in Him, and that He may graciously bestow upon us His mercy and compassion, and may in His abundant mercy forgive us our sins for ever and ever. Amen.

### II. A HYMN OF PRAISE FOR THE SECOND DAY OF THE WEEK (MONDAY)

1. God wished to set free Adam, who was sad at heart and sorrowful, and in the greatness of His compassion and mercy to bring him back to the state wherein he was formerly. He rose up in flesh of the Virgin without the seed of man. He came, He saved us.

2. God passed the decree of judgement upon Eve whom the serpent led astray, saying, " I will multiply greatly thy pain and thy suffering" (Gen.iii, 16). Nevertheless, His heart inclined to love for man, and He set him free. He hath appeared.

3. Jesus Christ, the Word Who became incarnate, and He dwelt with us, and we saw His glory like the glory of the Only-begotten of His Father (John i, 14), He hath been pleased to show compassion upon us. He hath appeared.

4. Isaiah the Prophet in the spirit of prophecy saw

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the mystery of Emmanuel, and therefore he cried out, saying, "A Child is born unto us, a Son is given unto us" (Isaiah ix, 6). He hath appeared.

5. Rejoice and be glad, O race of the children of men, for God hath loved the world, and given His only Son that all who believe in Him may have everlasting life (John iii, 16). The Most High hath sent unto us His arm. He hath appeared.

6. He Who was and shall be, He Who came and shall come again, is Jesus Christ, the Word Who became incarnate without any change. He was a perfect man, without division and without separation, in all His work the Only-begotten, but with one form, one being, and one divinity (or, Godhead)—God the Word. He hath appeared.

7. Rejoice, O Bethlehem, the town of the Prophets, for in thee was born Christ, the second Adam, so that He might bring the first Adam from the earth into the Garden (i.e. Paradise), and destroy the doom of death. O Adam, dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return. Where sin abounded there the grace of God abounded likewise (Romans v, 20). He hath appeared.

8. Let all souls of men rejoice and be glad with the angels, and let them praise Christ, the *King*, and cry out and say, "Glory to God in the heavens, and peace on the earth, [and] His good will to men" (Luke ii, 14). He hath abolished the things of old, and overthrown the plot of the Enemy, and torn in pieces the bill of indictment (Ephesians ii, 15) of Adam and Eve and set them free,—He Who was born for us in the city of David, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ hath done this. He hath appeared.

9. Thou Light, Who in truth illuminest all men who dwell in the world, because of Thy love for man Thou hast come into the world. All created things rejoiced at Thy coming, because Thou didst deliver Adam from his error, and didst set free Eve from the suffering of

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death, and hast given unto us the soul of prophecy. We bless Thee with Thine angels.

[Rubric]. On fast days thou shalt say thus : Christ hath risen up in the flesh of the Virgin : He fasted forty days and forty nights in order that He might deliver us.

### III. A HYMN OF PRAISE FOR THE THIRD DAY OF THE WEEK (TUESDAY)

1. The crown of our glory, and the origin of our deliverance (or salvation) and the foundation of our sanctification came into being in MARY the Virgin, who brought for us God the Word, Who became incarnate for our salvation. And after He became man of a certainty He was perfect God. And for this reason she gave birth to Him being a virgin. The power of her bringing forth is a marvellous thing that cannot be described. Of His own free will, and by the good pleasure of His Father and the Holy Spirit, He came forth and hath delivered us.

2. Great is the praise of thy virginity, O MARY, thou perfect (or absolute) virgin. Thou didst receive grace, God was with thee. Thou art the Ladder which Jacob saw reaching from earth to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it (Genesis xxviii, 12). So then

3. Thou art the Bush which Moses saw blazing with fire, and the wood thereof was not consumed (Exodus iii, 2). It was the Son of God Who dwelt in thy womb, and the fire of His divinity did not consume thy flesh. So then

4. Thou art that Field wherein no seed was sown, and yet there went forth from thee the Fruit of Life. Thou art that Treasure-house which Joseph bought, and he found therein a Pearl, a precious gem, that is to say, our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Thou didst carry it in thy womb and didst bring Him forth into the world. So then

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5. Rejoice thou, O God-bearer, thou joy of the angels. Rejoice thou, who wast the woman foretold by the Prophets. Rejoice thou, for thou didst find favour, God was with thee. Rejoice thou, for thou hast received the voice of the Angel [Gabriel], the joy of all the world. Rejoice thou, O Bearer of the Creator of all the world. So then

6. Rejoice thou because it is meet that thou shouldst be called, "Bearer of God." Rejoice thou, O thou woman who deliveredst Eve. Rejoice thou, for thou didst suckle Him Who suckleth all creation. Rejoice thou, O holy woman, the mother of all living beings. We lift our eyes to thee with entreaty that thou wilt pray on our behalf. So then,

7. O Virgin, O Saint, O Bearer of God, since thou didst bring forth the KING, a marvellous mystery dwelt upon thee for our salvation. We will hold our peace, for we are unable to search into the matter completely, as the greatness thereof requireth, and will describe that Doer of good things, through the exceedingly great wonder of the manifestation. So then

8. He was the Living Word of the Father Who came down on Mount Sinai, and gave the Law to Moses (Exodus xix, 16 ff.) whilst the top of the mountain was covered with mist, and with smoke, and with darkness, and with storm, and with the terrifying blasts of trumpets. He admonished those who were standing there in fear. So then

9. It was He Who came down to thee, O rational mountain, in the humility of the Lover of men. Without any change He became incarnate of thee, and took a perfect body, endowed with reason and like unto ourselves, through the spirit of wisdom. God took up His abode on her and became perfect man so that He might deliver Adam, and forgive him his sin, and make him to dwell in heaven, and bring him back to his former state in His abundant compassion and mercy. So then

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10. It is impossible for any to describe the greatness of the Virgin. For God chose her, and He came and dwelt upon her. He Who dwelt in the light, Whom none could approach, was carried in her womb nine months. He Who is invisible, He Who is incomprehensible did MARY bring forth, being a virgin. So then

11. This is the stone which Daniel the prophet saw, which was hewn from a high mountain, without hands (Daniel ii, 34, 35), that is to say, the Word Who went forth from the Father. He came and became incarnate of the Virgin without seed of men, and delivered us. So then

12. Thou art the pure twig and the right vessel of the True Faith of the saints our Fathers. O thou pure God-bearer, O thou sealed Virgin, thou didst bring forth for us the Word of the Father, Jesus Christ. He came and He hath delivered us. So then

13. Thou art the Mother of the Glorious Light, O God-bearer. Thou didst carry the Word Who is invisible, and after thou hadst brought Him forth thou didst continue to be a virgin. With praise and blessing shall men magnify thee. So then

14. What tongue is able to proclaim that which should be declared concerning thee, O thou pure Virgin, Mother of the Light, the Word of the Father? Thou wast the throne of the KING Whom the Cherubim carry. We ascribe blessings unto thee, O blessed woman, and we will remember thy name from generation to generation, O Beautiful Dove, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then

15. Rejoice thou, O MARY, Mother and Maid, for unto Him Who is in thy bosom the angels bring praises, and the Cherubim bow down and worship Him in fear, and the Seraphim spread out their wings, and say concerning Him ceaselessly, "This is the KING of Glory." He came to forgive the sins of the world in the greatness of His compassion.

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### IV. A HYMN OF PRAISE FOR THE FOURTH DAY OF THE WEEK (WEDNESDAY)

1. All the hosts of the heavens say, "Blessed art thou, O thou second heaven upon the earth, Door of the sunrise (or, the East), MARY the Virgin, thou pure Bride-chamber of the Holy Bridegroom. The Father looked down from heaven, and found none like unto thee ; He sent His only One, and He became incarnate of thee. All generations shall ascribe blessings unto thee, thou who alone art our Lady, the Bearer of God."

2. Great and wonderful things have [the Prophets] prophesied concerning thee, O City of God, for thou art the abode of all those who rejoice. All the kings of the earth walk in thy light and [all] the nations in thy splendour (Isaiah lx, 3). O MARY, all generations shall ascribe blessings unto thee, and shall worship Him Who was brought forth by thee, and shall magnify Him. All [of them].

3. Thou art in very truth the Cloud, and thou hast shown us the water of the rain, the sign of the Only-begotten. The Father established thee, the Holy Ghost took up His abode on thee, and the power of the Most High overshadowed thee, O MARY, and verily thou didst bring forth the Word, the Son of God, Who endureth for ever. He came and hath delivered us from sin.

4. Great was the honour that was bestowed upon thee, O Gabriel, the Angel of the Annunciation with the joyful face. Thou didst proclaim unto us the birth of the Lord, Who hath come to us, and thou didst announce Him to MARY, the spotless Virgin, and didst say unto her, "Rejoice thou, O thou who art full of grace, God is with thee" (Luke i, 28). All [of them].

5. Thou didst find grace, the Holy Spirit dwelt upon thee, and the power of the Most High overshadowed



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thee, O MARY. Verily thou didst bring forth the Holy Saviour for all the world. He came and He hath delivered us. All [of them].

6. Our tongue this day praiseth the work of the Virgin. We praise MARY, the God-bearer, because our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ was born of her in the city of David. Come, O all ye nations, and let us ascribe blessing unto MARY, for she is at once mother and virgin. Rejoice, O pure Virgin, in whom there is no blemish, to whom came the Word of the Father, Who was incarnate of her. Rejoice, O Vessel unblemished, perfect, and spotless Woman.

7. Rejoice thou, O Garden endowed with reason, thou Abode of Christ, Who became the Second Adam because of the First Adam, the man. Rejoice thou, O woman who borest the Only-begotten, Who, having gone forth from the bosom of His Father, suffered no change. Rejoice, O thou pure Bride-chamber, who art adorned with all the beauty of praise, He came and was incarnate of thee. Rejoice, O Thorn-bush, who wast not consumed by the fire of the Godhead. Rejoice thou, O Mother and Maid, Virgin, thou second heaven, who didst carry in thy body Him Who is borne aloft by the Cherubim and Seraphim.

8. And because of this we rejoice, and we sing with the holy angels with joy and gladness, and we say, "Glory to God in the heavens, and peace upon earth, His good will to men" (Luke ii, 14). For He unto Whom belong glory and praise for ever and ever is well-pleased with thee. Amen. All [of them].

9. The glory of MARY is greater than that of all the saints, for she was worthy to receive the Word of the Father. Him Who maketh the angels to be afraid, Him Whom the Watching Angels in heaven praise, did MARY the Virgin carry in her womb. She is greater than the Cherubim, and superior to the Seraphim, for she was the Ark (or Tabernacle) of One of the Holy Trinity.

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She is Jerusalem, the city of the Prophets, and she is the habitation of the joy of all the saints. On the people who sat in darkness and the shadow of death hath a great Light risen. God Who resteth in His holiness became incarnate of a virgin for our salvation. Come ye and look upon this marvellous thing, and sing ye His song because of the mystery that hath been revealed unto us. For He Who was became a man, the Word mingled [with our nature], He Who had no beginning [assumed] a beginning for Himself, and He Who had no days [reckoned] to Himself days, and He Who could not be known became revealed, and He Who was invisible showed Himself; the Son of the Living God became a man indeed, Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day, and for ever (Hebrews xiii, 8), One Nature, Him do we worship and praise. All [of them].

10. Ezekiel the Prophet testified concerning her and said, "I see a sealed door in the East, sealed with a great and wonderful seal, and no one save the God of the mighty ones hath gone in through it. He went in and He came out" (Ezekiel xliii, 4; xliv, 1, 2). All [of them].

11. This door is the Virgin who brought forth for us the Redeemer. And after she brought Him forth she remained in her virginity after she had brought Him forth. Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, O God-bearer, Who came and delivered us out of the hand of the Enemy who was merciless. Complete art thou and blessed; thou hast found grace with the KING of Glory, the God in truth.

12. Majesty and glory belong to thee more than to all those who dwell upon the earth. The Word of the Father came and was incarnate of thee, and walked about with men, for He is compassionate and a Lover of men. He delivered our souls by His holy coming.

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## V. A HYMN OF PRAISE FOR THE FIFTH DAY OF THE WEEK (THURSDAY)

1. The Bush which Moses saw in flaming fire in the desert, the wood of which was not consumed, is a similitude of MARY, the Virgin who was spotless. The Word of the Father became incarnate of her, and the fire of His Godhead did not consume the Virgin, and after she had brought Him forth her virginity was maintained, and His Godhead was unchanged. Our God, Who verily is God, became a man; He came and delivered us. We all magnify thee, O our Lady, the God-bearer, that thy compassion may be over us all.

2. The Virgin MARY, the God-Bearer, hath become the object of the boast of all of us, because through her was destroyed the curse of olden time, which rested upon our race, through the wickedness which the woman committed [when] she ate [of] the tree. Through Eve was the door of the Garden shut fast, and because of MARY the Virgin it hath been opened to us again. It is allotted to us to eat of the Tree of Life, that is to say, the Body of Christ and His precious Blood. Because of His love for us He came and delivered us.

3. What understanding, and what language, and what hearing is able to comprehend this mystery, which must be proclaimed to be wonderful, "God is the lover of men?" One is He Alone, the Word of the Father, Who existed before the world in His incorruptible Godhead, from One, the Father. The Only-begotten Son came and was incarnate of the holy woman His mother, and after she brought Him forth her virginity perished not, and because of this it became manifest that she was the Bearer of God.

4. O deep is the richness of the wisdom of God! The womb which He decreed should bring forth children in pain, and suffering, and sorrow of heart, hath

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become the fountain of life, and hath brought forth without the seed of man Him Who removed the curse from our race. And for this reason we will praise Him, saying, "Glory be unto Thee, O Thou Good Friend of man, the Redeemer of our souls." We will magnify thee [,O MARY].

5. O how wonderful and mighty in power was the womb of the Virgin, which brought forth God without seed! And of this the angel who appeared unto Joseph was a witness when he spake, saying, "That which shall be born of her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew i, 20). It was the Word of God Who became incarnate without change. MARY brought Him forth a second time. And Gabriel rejoiced and said unto her, "Thou shalt bring forth a Son and shalt call His Name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us. And moreover, He shall be called Jesus, Who shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew i, 20, 24). And may He save us also by His power, and forgive our sins, because we have known in truth that He is the God Who became man. Praise be unto Him for ever and ever.

6. O how wonderful is the birth of God by MARY, the Holy Virgin! She completed the Word of the Father; seed did not precede His Birth, and her virginity was not destroyed by His Birth. The Word went forth from the Father without weariness and was born of the Virgin without suffering (or pain). The wise men worshipped Him, and brought unto Him incense because He was God, and gold because He was the KING, and myrrh, which was given for His death which gave life [unto men]. And for our sakes He accepted [death] of His own free will. He alone is the Good Being and the Lover of men. We will magnify thee [,O MARY].

7. O how wonderful! He took a rib from the side of Adam, and fashioned from it a woman, and the whole creation of the children of men was given to God, the Word of the Father, Who was incarnate of the Holy

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Virgin, and is called Emmanuel. And because of this we beseech her at all times to strive on our behalf with her beloved Son for the forgiveness of our sins. She was beneficent towards all the saints and the high priests, for she brought to them that for which they waited, and she brought to the Prophets Him concerning Whom they had prophesied, and she brought forth to the Apostles Him in Whose Name they were to preach in all the ends of the world, and from her went forth for the martyrs and believers Him for Whom they were to fight, Jesus Christ. The richness of the grace of His wisdom cannot be fathomed. We will seek after the greatness of His compassion, for He came and delivered us. We will magnify thee [O MARY].

8. God swore unto David in righteousness, and He will not repent, "Of the fruit of thy belly I will seat upon thy throne" (2 Sam. vii, 12; Psalm cxxxii, 11). And when that righteous man received it from Him, that Christ should be born of him in the flesh, he wished to seek out and to prepare a dwelling-place for God, the Word of the Father. And he completed it with great effort and then he cried out in the Holy Spirit and said, "Behold, we have heard it in Efrâta and the dwelling-place of the God of Jacob, which is Bethlehem, in which Emmanuel hath chosen to be born in the flesh for our salvation" (compare Psalm cxxxii, 6).

9. And also another of the prophets hath said it: "And as for thee, O Bethlehem [of] the land of Efrâta, thou shalt not be the least of the kings of Judah, for from thee shall go forth a King Who shall rule My people Israel" (Micah v, 2). O how wonderful is the word of those who prophesied concerning Christ in one Spirit, to Whom be glory, together with His Good Father and the Holy Spirit, henceforth and for ever. We will magnify thee [O MARY].

10. When evil men revolted against David who reigned over Israel, he wished to drink water from the

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pool of Bethlehem, whereupon straightway the captains of his hosts rose up, and waged war in the camp of the rebels, and brought unto him that water which he wished to drink. And when that righteous man saw that they had willingly delivered themselves over to slaughter for his sake, he poured out that water [unto the Lord] and did not drink of it (2 Samuel xxiii, 13-17; 1 Chron. xi, 18, 19). And then righteousness was accounted unto him for ever. And verily in like manner have the martyrs rejected the desire of this world, and poured out their blood for God, and have endured bitter death[s] for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Have compassion upon us according to the greatness of Thy compassion. We will magnify thee [, O MARY].

11. One of the Holy Trinity saw our low estate, bowed the heaven of heavens, came and dwelt in the womb of the Virgin, and became a man like unto us, with the exception of sin alone. And He was born in Bethlehem, according to what the Prophets preached, He delivered us, and redeemed us, and made us His own people for ever and ever.

### VI. A HYMN OF PRAISE FOR SABBATH EVE (FRIDAY)

1. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, O MARY the Virgin, the spotless God-bearer. From thee hath risen upon us the Sun of righteousness, and He hath drawn us near [to Him] under His wings, for He hath created us. Thou thyself alone, O our Lady, the God-bearer, art the Mother of the Light. We will magnify thee with glorifyings and praisings.

2. Blessed art thou ! Thou art greater than heaven, and more glorious than earth, and exalted above the conception of every mind ; who is able to declare thy greatness ? There is none who can be compared with thee, O MARY the Virgin. The angels magnify thee,

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and the Seraphim praise thee, for He Who dwelleth upon the Cherubim and Seraphim came and took up His abode in thy womb. The Lover of men hath brought us nigh unto Himself, the death that belonged to us He hath removed, and hath given unto us the Life that was His. To Him belong glory, and praise. To thee.

3. Blessed art thou, MARY, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. O virgin God-Bearer, the glory of [all] virgins ; He Who existed before the world became incarnate of thee. The Ancient of days came forth from thy womb, He took our flesh, and gave us His Holy Spirit, and in His abundant goodness made us co-equals with Him. Thou art greater than many women who have received grace and honour, O MARY the God-Bearer, thou spiritual city wherein God the Most High took up His abode. Him Who sitteth above the Cherubim and Seraphim hast thou clasped with the hand. And He, Who of His abundant goodness feedeth every being of flesh, hath taken thy breast and sucked milk therefrom—He Who is our God and the Redeemer of all, He shall shepherd us for ever. Let us worship Him and praise Him, for He hath created us. To thee.

4. MARY the Virgin is the vessel of priceless ointment, the fountain-head (or spring) of the water of life. The Fruit of her womb hath saved all the world, and abolished the curse which lay upon us, and made peace [to be] among us. By His Cross and by His holy Resurrection hath He brought man back again into the Garden (i.e. Paradise). To thee.

5. MARY, the pure Virgin, the Bearer of God, prayeth continually with compassion for the children of men. Pray thou for us to thy Son Christ that He may forgive us and have compassion upon us. To thee.

6. MARY the Virgin cried out in the Sanctuary, saying, " God knoweth that I know no one and nothing more than the sound of the voice of the angel, who with honour brought unto me glad tidings, and said unto

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me, 'Peace be unto thee, O holy Virgin. Thou shalt carry Him Who cannot be carried, and shalt contain Him Who cannot be contained, and Whom nothing can contain.' " Thy praise shall be abundant, O thou who art full of grace and honour, for thou didst become the dwelling-place of the Word of the Father. Thou art the tent that is spread out (i.e. pitched) and that gathereth together believing Christian folk, and teacheth them to worship the life-giving Trinity.

7. Thou art she who bore the Pillar of fire, which Moses saw, that is to say, the Son of God, Who came and dwelt in thy womb. Thou wast the Ark of the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Thou didst carry Him in thy womb nine months. Thou hadst in trust Him Whom the heavens and the earth cannot contain. Thou wast the Ladder whereby man ascended into heaven. Thy light is greater than the light of the sun. Thou art the eastern horizon, whereout came the brilliant star which the saints looked upon with joy and gladness. The decree that God passed upon Eve was, "Thou shalt bring forth children with toil and suffering," but thou didst hear a voice, saying, "Rejoice, O full of grace, thou hast brought forth for us the Word of the Father, the KING, the God of all creation." He came and delivered us, for He is the Compassionate Lover of men. And because of this we praise thee, even as did the Angel Gabriel, saying, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb; rejoice, O thou who art full of grace, God is with thee!"

### VII. A SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE FIRST SABBATH (SATURDAY)

1. Pure and shining, holy and praiseworthy art thou in everything, O thou who hast clasped the Lord in her hand. All creation rejoiceth with her, and crieth out, saying, "Rejoice, O full of grace, rejoice thou, for thou hast found favour; rejoice thou, for God is with thee."



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2. We ascribe blessings to thy greatness, O awesome Virgin, and we send to thee joy with the angel Gabriel, for the Fruit of thy womb hath become the salvation of our race, and hath brought us nigh unto God His Father. Rejoice thou.

3. As at a marriage undefiled the Holy Ghost took up His abode on thee, and the power of the Most High overshadowed thee. O MARY, verily thou hast brought forth for us the Word, the Son of the Father, Who dwelleth (or existeth) for ever. He came and saved us from sin. Rejoice thou.

4. Thou art the young Shoot from the root of David. Thou hast brought forth for us in the flesh our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Word, Who was of the Father, Who was hidden before the world, and hiding Himself took from thee the form (or appearance) of a slave. Rejoice thou.

5. Thou art the Second Heaven over the earth, O spotless God-Bearer. From thee hath risen upon us the Sun of righteousness, and thou didst bring Him forth, according to the prophecy of the Prophets, without seed and without defilement. Rejoice thou.

6. Thou art that Tabernacle which was called "Holy of Holies," wherein was the Ark (*Tâbôt*) which was covered on all sides with plates of gold, and had therein the Table of the Covenant and the pot of gold of the hidden manna, that is to say, the Son of God. He came and dwelt with MARY, the Virgin without blemish. He was incarnate of her, and she brought forth in the world the KING of Glory. He came and delivered us. The Garden (i.e. Paradise) shall rejoice, for the Lamb that is endowed with reason, the Son of the Father, Who dwelleth for ever, hath come and delivered us from sin. Rejoice thou.

7. Thou art called the Mother of Christ, the KING. After thou didst bring Him forth, thou didst continue in thy spotless virginity through a marvellous mystery.

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Thou didst bring forth Emmanuel, and because of this thou didst preserve thyself undefiled. Rejoice thou.

8. Thou art the Ladder on which Jacob saw the Son of God, for thou hast carried in thy sealed womb Him Who could not be touched. Thou hast become for us an intercessor with our Lord Jesus Christ, Who became incarnate of thee for our salvation. Rejoice thou.

9. Behold, the Lord came forth from thee, O blessed Lady, thou undefiled Bride-chamber, to save the whole world which He had created in His abundant compassion and mercy. We glorify Him and we praise Him, for He is the Beneficent One, the Lover of men. Rejoice thou.

10. Rejoice thou, O full of grace, Virgin unblemished, Vessel undefiled, Glory of the world, Light which shall never be extinguished, Shrine that shall never be overthrown. Staff of the Faith, thou never-failing support of the saints, pray thou for us to thy Beneficent Son, our Redeemer, that He may have mercy upon us, and show us compassion, and forgive us our sins in His mercy for ever and ever. Amen.

## THE 'ARGÂNÔNA WĒDDÂSÊ, OR ORGAN OF THE PRAISE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 559, Fol. 125 ff.]

**I**N [Fol. 125a] the Name of God, Three without separation and One in consubstantial union, equal in Godhead, Who at once are worshipped by men and angels, we begin to write this Book, which is called " 'Argânôna Wĕddâsê," and " Harp," and " Flute," and " Psalm," and " Praise," whereby men make supplication to her virginity, and magnify her with words, and pay honour to her Name, and praise her holiness, and worship the sovereign majesty of the holy and pure and blessed MARY, which is in the Hebrew tongue MÂRÎHÂM, the Virgin, the God-bearer. She is the ship of gold that cannot be moved among the raging billows and waves, and her raft is [bound with] the ropes of the Trinity which cannot be separated. And she is also the pillar of pearl which cannot be moved by the might of the winds ; there is neither falling nor shaking for him that leaneth upon it. Lord, open Thou to me the gates of my heart so that the Dove of the Spirit, the Paraclete, may enter in, so that it may make me to understand the power of the word which concerneth the praise of her who by reason of her simplicity is likened unto a dove. Lord, open the windows of my ears so that they may hearken unto the investigation of the glory of the Virgin which resoundeth [Fol. 125b] from the mouth of the Holy Spirit. Lord, open Thou for me the dimness of my eyes so that I may see the mysteries of the daughter of light. And also open Thou my mouth for the praise of the virginity of the Mother of God,

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Who opened the mouth of Ezra for forty mornings (or, days). Now he did not return until he had completed the copying of the Words of the Law and the Prophets which Nebuchadnezzar had burnt. And do Thou help me in beginning the copying of the Praise of the Bride of the Father, even as Thou didst help him, and give me power also to complete the same. Make my lips like an organ, and let the Holy Spirit strike them so that like a tongue they may utter things that will please those who hear them. And make my mouth like a harp and a lyre, and let the Spirit strike the strings so that they may sound melodiously and may give out sweetness [of sound]; and let those who listen rejoice in what they hear. And let their minds turn to what is above, and not to what is below; let them meditate upon righteousness, and not sin; let them meditate upon purity, and not impurity; let them meditate upon simplicity, and not maliciousness; let them meditate upon lowliness, and not arrogance (or, pride); let them meditate upon love, and not envy; let them meditate upon prudence, and not folly; let them meditate upon glory, and not disgrace; let them meditate upon heaven, and not upon earth; (Fol. 126a) let them meditate upon what is not said, and not on what is said; and let them meditate upon the incorruptible, and not the corruptible. And let the mouth of every one who readeth this book be seasoned with the salt of divinity, and flavoured with wild honey in the comb and the juice of sugar. And let every one who prayeth this prayer be blessed with the blessing of Thy hand which toucheth the fire of life (or, living fire), and with the blessing of thy mouth [O MARY], whereto is united the sweetness of the Holy Spirit. And he shall also be blessed with the right hand of the Holy Trinity, the Sustainer of the universe. And his prayer shall not be in vain like the prayer of the Scribes and Pharisees, who imagine that because of their multiplying words God

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will hear them, but it shall be like the word of the beloved son which he whispereth into his father's ear. And as a father hearkeneth to the word of his son and receiveth it, even so will God hearken to the voice of the petition of him that prayeth the following prayer, for ever and ever.

When I pray unto thee, I the sinner and transgressor, do thou, O Virgin MARY (which is in the Hebrew tongue "Mârihâm"), incline thine ear to the voice of my petition, and hear it and be not impatient with me, but with a shining heart and a pure mind accept the word of my mouth. It is not gold and silver which I offer unto thee, nor the brilliant pearl, (Fol. 126b) but beautiful praise with the pure glorification which can be offered unto thee, and to thy majesty, O Queen. It is not robes of honour [made of] purple, and silk, and cloths decorated and adorned with divers colours, and brocade of silk, but I lay out my soul before thee in the place of glorious apparel decorated with gold, and to thee I declare my sin, O mother of the great High Priest. I have found thee a refuge from the corruption which is on the earth, and from the punishment which is for ever. I have found thee a refuge from the lions of the north, which roar mightily, and snatch away with violence, and hunt the young and show no mercy upon the old, and gape with their mouths to swallow up [their prey]. I have found thee a refuge from the evening wolves which do not pass the night [in sleep] till the dawn, and they seize and carry off and leave no sheep untouched, and they spare neither the young goat nor the lamb. I have found thee a refuge from the face of the bow and from the mouth (i.e. points) of spears and swords, and from every instrument of war. I have found thee a refuge from the hand[s] of all mine enemies, and from the hand[s] of all those who hate my soul. Who can strike terror into him that putteth his

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trust in thy name? And who can make afraid him that taketh shelter in thy name? The roaring of the lion one may liken to the yelp of the dog, and to him the strength of the panther is as the feebleness of the cat. (Fol. 127a) The onset of horses cannot reach him, and the flight of the arrow cannot come near him. The mouth (i.e. head) of the spear (or javelin) cannot wound him, and he can look upon the casting of the stone as a thing of naught. The flooding of the rivers cannot overwhelm him, and the violence of the winds cannot cast him down. The tongue of man hath no power to vilify him; and the lips of the man of oppression cannot do him harm, for he cannot conquer thy Son when he argueth the case with Him.

This is my knowledge. I have sought thee, my helper, and I rejoice in thy love and in the salvation of Christ, thy Son. The extent, width, length and height of thy love are in the fortress of my body, and it hath filled me like the overflow of a river, like the river Nile in the days of winter, and like the river Nile in the days of the flowers, and like the river Tigris in the days of harvest, and like the river Euphrates when the Tigris wheat is in the ear, and like the river 'Efêsôn at the time of the flowering of the vines. And thy love hath spread itself out in me like the mist on the face of the earth and like the descent of a cloud in air. And thou hast been my adornment in my happiness, and hast become to me a crown in my joy. I marvel at thee in my being, and I say, "How great is the grace which God hath given to the daughter of the children of men!"

God hath been born of the daughter of a man in three kinds of births (Fol. 127b) which are not connected. I know and I understand that I cannot comprehend it. Adam was born of the earth which is a part of his composition, and there was in it nothing that profited me. And Eve was produced from Adam's side, being of his composition, and there was in it nothing

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that profited me. And Cain was produced like all other men by carnal union, and there was in him nothing that profited me or himself. There was nothing in these three births that profited anyone. But Christ, being born of a virgin without carnal union, hath become profitable to all ; homage and worship are due to this birth ; exaltation and praise are due to this birth ; magnifying and song are due to this birth ; hymning and jubilation are due to this birth. O how marvellous and difficult was it that He was made ! O how marvellous and difficult was His Incarnation ! O how marvellous, and difficult, and astonishing was the might of thy virginity, O saviour of Eve ! O the hidden mystery which was wrought in thee, O destroyer of the curse of Adam ! O how exceedingly difficult was it to make fire and water to be at peace with each other in one being ! O how difficult was it for a white lamb to embrace a terrifying lion in its bosom ! O how difficult was the flowing of rational (natural ?) milk from the breasts of a virgin ! O how difficult was it for the soldiers of heaven to worship the daughter of lowly folk in the cave ! O how difficult was it to make the fullness of all the world to lie in a manger ! The (Fol. 128a) manger was higher than the height of the heaven and more extended than the boundaries of heaven. The manger was greater than the chariot which Ezekiel saw, and greater than the throne which Daniel saw. The manger was the temple of the reasonable burnt-offering, that is to say, the pure Lamb, the Son of the holy woman who gave suck. The manger contained Him Whom heaven and earth cannot contain. The manger is to be praised because the Lord of the mighty ones lay therein.

And the hosts of heaven did homage to the Virgin MARY, because of her was born the Maker of the angels, the Father of all the adornment of the world. And the manger is to be praised because He Who made strong the earth upon the waters rested upon it. And the

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Angel Watchers adored the Virgin, because He Who gave strength to the Cherubim was borne in her womb. The manger took the place of a throne, and the cave took the place of the palace of the heights of heaven. And the Virgin took the place of the Father, and He Who is truly the Only Son was in the manger. Joseph and Salômê were there, one on this side and the other on that side. And at the sides of the manger, which was four-square, were ranged beings on the earth after the manner of the four beings in animal forms which are ranged about the throne that is placed in the heavens. Bethlehem may be compared to the heavens, but instead of the sun which setteth there rose in it the Sun of righteousness which never setteth and which shineth everlastingly on the saints. And in the place of (Fol. 128b) the moon which varieth in its fullness, and the circle of its light diminisheth, appeared the holy Virgin MARY, who is full of the glory of her virginity which never waneth ; and in the place of the stars shining angels appeared. Would that had been assigned unto me to be with that company ! I would praise with the angels, I would marvel with the midwife, I would worship with the shepherds, and I would offer gifts with the Magi. Would that my lot had been to be with the lying down of the Life of the dead, and the Purifier of sinners, the Hope of those in despair and the Deliverer of those in trouble ! Would that my lot had been to kiss the earth at the spot where the foot of the daughter of salvation left the print thereof as she walked upon it ! Would that my lot had been for the shadows of the daughter of compassion to touch me ! Would that my lot had been to carry the sandals of the daughter of mercy ! Would that my lot had been to follow the daughter of light whithersoever she went ! But now I am no whit inferior to those who were with the holy and blessed Virgin MARY, for I have made my mind to feel as if it had been there. I was not [there]



## *The Virgin's Lyre*

in the flesh, I was in the spirit ; I was not there in reality, I was in intent. I was not there in person, I was in faith (or belief). Blessed am I being able to make myself [feel] that (Fol. 129a) I was there, even as our Lord saith in the Gospel, " Blessed are those who not having seen Me believe in Me " (John xx, 29.) Blessed am I because of my believing and not because of my righteousness and purity. Blessed am I because I have put my confidence in God and pray the prayer of His mother.

I beseech thee, O Virgin MARY, that thy prayer may be to me a shield of help, and that the power of the arms of thy Firstborn may come down to deliver me. Let the power that breaketh the mountains come to overthrow mine enemy. Let the power that rolleth up the heavens come to cast down him that would oppress me. Let the power that breaketh up the abyss and maketh the earth to quake come to fight against my enemy. Let the power that carried away the herd of swine by the devils of Legion carry away those who would attack my soul. Let the power that scattereth the mist like dust come to scatter those who would harm me. Let those who bless me be blessed by the mouth of thy Son, and let those who curse me be cursed by the mouth of thy Firstborn. Let their sword enter their own heart[s], and let their bows be broken in pieces (Psalm xxxvii, 15). Let their labour recoil upon themselves, and their violence descend upon their own blood, and [Fol. 129b] the toil of their lips bury them (Psalm vii, 16). Let coals of fire fall upon them to purify them upon the earth with tribulation, so that they shall not be able to stand (Psalm cxi, 9, 10). Make them like Midian and Sisera, and like 'Ïyâbês (Jabin) at the brook of Kison, and let them perish like them at Endor, and let them become like the dust of the earth. Make their envoys like Hêrêb (Oreb) and Zêb (Zeeb), and Zêbhêl (Zebah), and Selmânâ (Zalmunna) and all their mes-

## *Argânôna Weadâsê*

sengers. Who said, Let us inherit the offerings of God. O my God, make them like a wheel, and like the stubble before the face of the wind, and as a fire that burneth up a field (wood?), and a blazing fire that kindleth the mountains, even so drive them on before Thy whirlwind, and shake them with Thy punishment. Fill their faces with shame, and make them to know Thy Name, O God. Let them be put to shame and be disturbed for ever and ever, let them be disgraced and perish (Psalm lxxxiii, 9 ff.). Let their table become a net before them, and that which should benefit them a snare that trippeth [them] up. Let their eyes become darkened and let them not see, and let their backs bend in fear at all times. Pour out Thy wrath upon them, and let the stroke of Thine anger reach them. Let their city become waste, and let none dwell in their houses, and burn up their cities with fire. Add error to their error, [Fol. 130a] and let them not come to Thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out from the book of the living, and let them not be written among the righteous (Psalm lxix, 22 ff.). And be not merciful to the workers of iniquity. Let them return in the evening, and let them hunger like a dog and go round about the city (Psalm lix, 5, 6). O my God, make me to see my hatefulness. Slay them not, lest they forget Thy Law. Scatter them, O Lord, by Thy power. Cast them down, O Lord, and help me. Let them be snared in their pride and in their cursing, and from their lying let their end be known.

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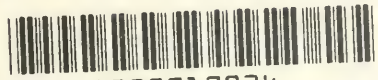
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