PROTEVANGELIUM JACOBI.

TRANSLATION.

In the hope of the Holy Trinity, one in essence, we begin to write the book of the History of the Mother of God, Mary, from the day of her birth until the day of her exit from this world. May her prayer be with us! Amen, amen.

Book the First about her parents, and also about her Annunciation by the Angel.

There was a certain man whose name was Yōnakîr who was very rich in the fear of God. And he presented his offerings to the Lord in double measure, saying to himself, "Let this superabundance which I offer be on behalf of all the people. And that portion which I owe by the law I offer it to the Lord that it may be to me for expiation." And when the great day of the Lord drew near, in which the children of Israel offered their gifts, Rûbîl arose before Yōnakîr and said unto him, "It is not lawful for thee to make an offering before me; because thou hast not produced seed unto Israel." And Yōnakîr was grieved exceedingly; and he went to his house in sadness. And he said to the twelve tribes of Israel, "Have I alone not produced seed in Israel?" And he looked, and sought, and investigated. And he found that in the generations that are past, all righteous men have established seed in Israel. And he remembered the patriarchs Abraham and Sara his wife, that in their latest days they had a son, Isaac. And Yōnakîr was grieved exceedingly. And he was neither seen by his wife, nor did he go to his house; but he betook himself to a desert place and pitched his tent there. And he fasted there for forty days and forty nights. And he said to himself, "I will neither eat nor drink until the Lord God visit me. But prayer shall be to me in the place of food and drink." But Hanna his wife sat mourning. And she lamented with two lamentations saying, "I lament first because of my widowhood; and secondly, because I am debarred from bearing." When the day of the Lord drew near Yōnâthîl her handmaiden said to her, "How long wilt thou humble thy soul? Behold, the great day of the Lord draweth nigh when it is not lawful to mourn. But take to thyself this head-band, which my mistress gave me as my wages, and bind thou it on. It is not lawful for me to bind it on, because I am a maid-servant, and the sign of the kingdom is

Cf. Tisch. 1

p. 2

p. 3

Tisch. 11

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upon it." She said unto her, "Get thee hence, whilst I have not committed these sins; behold, the Lord hath humbled me greatly. And mayhap this hath been given to thee with guile, and thou hast brought it to me that thou mightest make me share in thy sins."

Yonathim said to her, "What shall I say? would that it were good! Behold, God hath withheld His mercy from thee, that thou mayest not yield fruit in Israel." And when Hanna heard these things, she was grieved exceedingly. And she took off her garments of mourning, and washed her head, and put on royal raiment. And at the ninth hour she went down to walk in the garden. And she sat beneath the shade of a laurel tree. And she prayed, and besought, and blessed the Lord, saying, "O God of our fathers, bless me! and hear my prayer and my entreaty, as Thou didst bless my mother Sara, and didst give her a son, Isaac."

And while she said these things, she raised her eyes towards heaven, and she saw a sparrow's nest in the laurel tree. And she sighed to herself and said, "Why am I not unborn? Or how and why was the womb prepared for me? for behold I alone am a curse to the children of Israel. They deride and mock me; and they thrust me forth from the house of the Lord God. Or why am I not at least like the dumb beasts, for even they bear [children] before Thee, O Lord! Or why am I not like this earth, for it also yieldeth the fruits in their seasons, and it blesseth Thee, the Lord." And when Hanna had said these things, the angel of the Lord stood before her and said unto her, "Hanna, the Lord hath heard thy supplication. Thou shalt conceive, and shalt give birth, and thy seed shall be spoken of in all the world." And Hanna said, "As the Lord my God liveth, if there be a child, whether it be a male or a female, I will give it to the Lord God. And it shall serve before Him all the days of its life." And immediately two messengers came saying to her, "Behold Yonakr cometh with his flock, because the angel of the Lord hath said unto him, 'Yonakr, the Lord hath heard thy supplication, get thee down hence. For behold! Hanna thy wife is with child.'" And Yonakr went down, and called all his shepherds, and said unto them, "Bring me hither ten ewe-lambs of the flock in which is no blemish; and let these ten fat lambs be for the Lord God. And bring me ten fat bull-calfes without blemish, and let them be for the priests and for the elders of the people; and a hundred kids of the goats, and let them be for all the people."

And when Yonakr came with his flock, Hanna was standing by the wayside. And she saw Yonakr; and she hung on his neck saying to him, "Now I know that the Lord my God hath blessed me exceedingly. For behold! I was a widow, henceforth I am not a widow; I was barren, and I had no children, behold I am with child." And when Yonakr had rested the first day in his house, he made offerings for himself, saying, "If the Lord my God is reconciled to me, it will be known in the insignia that is betwixt the eyes of the priest; until he goeth up to the altar of the Lord, and He seeth no sins in him." And Yonakr said, "Now I know that the Lord my God is reconciled
to me, and He hath forgiven me all my sins.” And Yōnakir went down from
the house of the Lord justified; and went to his house.

And when Hanna’s days were fulfilled, in the ninth month she brought
forth. And Hanna said: “My soul doth magnify the Lord on this day,” and
she lay down on the bed. And when the days were fulfilled, Hanna washed
herself as for a purification and gave the breast to her daughter. And day
after day the girl grew strong; and when she was six months old her mother
set her on the ground to see if she could stand. And she lifted her foot
seven times and came to her mother. And then her mother caught her up,
saying, “As the Lord my God liveth, thou shalt not walk on this until I
shall carry thee to the house of the Lord.” And her parents made her chamber
a sanctuary. And they did not allow anything dirty or impure to come near
it. And her mother said, “Let no one approach it who is not clean, but
rather let those virgins, daughters of the Hebrews come, who are undefiled.
And let them be with her.” And they came and rejoiced with her.

Now when the maiden was a year old, Yōnakir made a great reception, and
he bade the priests, and the chief priests, and the elders and scribes of the
people. And they blessed her and said, “The God of our fathers bless this
maiden and give her a name glorious in all generations and amongst all
peoples.” And all the people said “Amen.”

And when they presented her again to the high priests they blessed her,
saying, “The God of our fathers who is on high bless this maiden with a
new blessing, which shall not pass away and shall not fail.” And her mother
cought her, and took her up to the sanctuary which they had prepared for her
in her chamber. And she sung a holy hymn saying, “The Lord hath visited
me, and hath made the reproach of mine enemies to pass away from me. And
the Lord my God hath given me the fruit of righteousness. And who will
announce to the sons of Rūbil that Hanna is giving suck? Let the twelve
tribes of the sons of Israel hear that Hanna is giving suck.” And she left the
girl in her chamber and went out and served the guests. And when the feast
was ended, they went down rejoicing and praising God. And the maiden
grew in months.

And when she was two years old, Yōnakir said unto Hanna his wife, “Let
us carry this maiden to the temple of the Lord, according to what we have
promised, lest the Lord turn away His face from us, and accept not our gift.”

And Hanna said, “Let us wait till the third year lest she should long for her
father and her mother.” And Yōnakir said, “Thou hast well spoken.” And
when the maiden was three years old, he said, “Let us call virgins of the
daughters of the Hebrews, undefiled, and let them hold burning lamps before
her, that she may not turn back and her heart be made captive, away from
the house of the Lord.” And they did thus until they went up to the temple
of the Lord.

And when she arrived at His temple, the priests received her and kissed
her, and said to her, “May the Lord magnify thy name in all generations.
Because in thee the Lord revealeth redemption unto men." And the priest made the maiden sit on the third step of the temple, and the Lord shed grace upon her; and she danced with her feet, and all the children of Israel loved her. And they called her name Mary. And her parents went down thence, praising the Lord, that she did not turn towards them.

She was in the temple of the Lord like a dove that is fed; and she took her nourishment from the hand of an angel. And when she had grown up, the priests took counsel saying, "Behold, Mary has become twelve years old in the temple of the Lord. What shall we do with her, that she may not defile the temple of the Lord God?" And the priests said unto the high-priest, "Go thou into the sanctuary, and pray for her, and whatsoever God may show thee we will do."

And [he went] into the Holy of Holies, having upon him the twelve bells. And he prayed concerning her, and besought God. And the angel of the Lord replied saying unto him, "Zacharia, Zacharia, assemble all the widowers of the nation and let each of them bring thee a staff. And by which of the staves the Lord shall show thee a sign, let its owner have Mary to wife." Then heralds went forth through all the land of Judaea, and they blew the trumpet of the Lord, and immediately [the people] assembled and came to the chief priests, and they gave them their staves; and when the priest had received them he went into the temple and prayed. And when he had finished his prayer, he took the staves and went out. And he gave them their staves, and no sign was visible. But there was the last staff belonging to Joseph. He took it, and a dove went out of the staff and remained on Joseph's head. And the priests said unto him, "Joseph, the virgin has come to thee from the Lord, by thy lot, that thou shouldst take her and keep her." Joseph answered and said, "I have children and they are men; and this is a girl. Perhaps some event may happen, and I may become a scorn in Israel." And the priests said to him, "Joseph, fear God; and remember what He did to the sons of Korah and Dathan and Abiram; how the earth was opened, and swallowed them because they rose in strife. And now be afraid, and take her into thy keeping." And Joseph fearing, said to Mary, "Behold! I have taken thee from the temple of the Lord, and now behold! I leave thee in my house, and I will go and build my houses, and then I will come beside thee. Henceforth the Lord will be thy keeper."

And it came to pass that there was a council of the priests, and they said, "Let us make a curtain for the temple of the Lord." And the Priest said: "Summon to me eight virgins of the tribe of King David who are chaste and holy." And the officers went seeking and found seven. And the Priest remembered the girl Mary, that she also was of the tribe of David's house; and that she was
pure unto God. And the officers went and brought her to the temple. And the Priest said: “Let them cast lots as to which of these it shall fall to weave the gold, and to which the white and to which the linen and to which the silk and to which the violet and to which the scarlet and to which the purple.” And the purple and scarlet came to Mary, and she took [them] and went to her house. Now at that time Zacharia was dumb, and Samuel was priest instead of him until Zacharia should speak.

Now Mary took the scarlet and wove it; and she took a pitcher and went to fill it with water, and lo! a voice was heard which said to her: “Hail to thee O favored one! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.” And Mary looked to the right and to the left that she might see whence that voice had been heard by her. And being terrified she went into her house and put down her pitcher. And she had taken the purple and had sat down, and separated it. And behold! the angel of the Lord stood before her and said to her: “Fear not, Mary, for lo! thou hast found favour before the Lord of all; and thou shalt conceive by His word.” And when she heard [it] she considered in herself, saying, “Shall I conceive and bring forth from the Lord, as all women bring forth?” And behold, the angel of the Lord was sent; and he said unto her: “Not thus, Mary; but the power of the Lord shall overshadow thee; because He Who shall be born of thee is holy, and He shall be called the Son of the Highest. And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from sins.” And Mary said, “Behold I am the handmaiden of God, be it unto me from His presence according as thou hast said.”

And Mary made the purple and carried it to the priest. And the priest blessed her, saying, “Mary, the Lord God hath magnified thy name, and thou shalt be blessed in all generations of the earth.” And Mary was filled with joy; and went to Elizabeth her cousin. And she knocked at the door. And when Elizabeth heard [it] she threw down the sieve which she was holding, and came to the door and opened [it] to her. And Elizabeth blessed her, saying, “Who hath done this unto me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For lo! when thou didst speak, he who is within me leapt and blessed thee.”

¹ Cod. the purple.
But Mary forgot the words which Gabriel had spoken to her and looked up to heaven, saying, "Lord, who am I that all generations should call me blessed?" And she was with Elizabeth for three months, and day by day her womb grew large. And Mary was afraid and came to her house. And she hid herself from the children of Israel, being then sixteen years old, when these mysteries took place.

And when it was the sixth month with her, Joseph came from the buildings which he was rearing. And he went in and found Mary great with child. And he beat his face with his hands and threw himself on the ground and wept bitterly and said, "With what face shall I look to the Lord God? What shall I pray for about this girl? because while she was a virgin I took her from the temple of the Lord God, and I have not guarded her. Who has practised deceit? or who has done this wickedness in my house? who has captured this adorable virgin from me, and has defiled her? Perhaps it has happened to me anew as to Adam; for at the moment when Adam was praising God, (the serpent) found Eve alone and deceived her and defiled her. Thus has it happened also to me." And Joseph arose from the sackcloth and he called Mary and said unto her, "O woman on whom was the care of God! what is this that thou hast done? thou hast forgotten the Lord God; why hast thou done thus, and hast forgotten the Lord? Why hast thou altogether humbled thyself, thou who wast reared in the Holy of Holies?" But she wept bitterly, saying, "As the Lord my God liveth, I am chaste, and no man hath known me." Joseph said unto her, "Whence then is this that is in thy womb?" Mary said: "As the God of Israel liveth I know not whence this is that is within me."

And Joseph feared greatly, and it grieved him concerning her; and he asked about her, what he should do unto her. And he said to himself, "If I hide this sin concerning her, I shall be found fighting against the law of the Lord; and if I reveal it concerning her to the children of Israel, I fear lest the spirit of an angel be within her, and I shall be found having delivered up innocent blood to the doom of death. What therefore shall I do to her? I shall dismiss her secretly." Then night overtook him, and behold! the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, and said unto him, "Joseph, fear
not for the girl; for that which is within her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bear to thee a son, and thou shalt call\(^1\) his name Jesus, for he shall deliver his people from their sins.” And Joseph arose from his sleep, and praised the God of Israel, Who had given His grace, and had protected her.

And Hanna\(^2\) the scribe came to him, saying to him, “Joseph, why didst thou not appear in the synagogue?” And Joseph said unto him: “Because I was tired from the road, and I rested the first day.” And Hanna turned and saw Mary, her womb being great. And he went to the high priest, and said unto him, “Joseph, about whom thou didst bear witness, has done a great iniquity.” And the high priest said: “What is this?” And Hanna the scribe said: “Joseph has defiled the virgin whom he took from the temple of the Lord, and has secretly anticipated his marriage, and has not made it known to the children of Israel.” And Hanna the scribe said unto him, “Send officers and thou shalt find the virgin who is great with child.”

And the officers went and found it even as Hanna had said. And they brought them to the temple, and set them before the judges. And the priest said unto Mary: “Mary, what is this that thou hast done, and why hast thou humbled thyself and hast forgotten the Lord thy God, thou who wast reared in the Holy of Holies, and hast received food from the hand of an angel and hast heard their hymns twice and hast danced before them, why didst thou do all this?” And she wept bitterly and said: “As the Lord my God liveth, I am pure before Him, and no man hath known me.” And the priest said unto Joseph: “What is this that thou hast done?” Joseph said: “As the Lord my God liveth, I am pure from her.” And the priest said unto him: “Do not bear false witness, but say truly: Hast thou secretly anticipated thy marriage? and hast not made it known to the children of Israel? and hast not bowed thy head beneath the mighty hands of the Lord, that so thy seed might be blessed?” But Joseph held his peace. And the priest said unto him: “Return the virgin whom thou didst take from the temple of the Lord.” And Joseph was standing and weeping. And the priest continued, saying to him: “I will make you drink the (spiced) waters of trial of the Lord and they will reveal your sins before your eyes.” And the priest

\(^1\) or “she shall call.”  
\(^2\) or “Ananias.”
took Joseph and made him drink, and sent him to the mountain. And he climbed up, and came down quite well. Then he made the girl drink also, and sent her to the mountain, and she also came down quite well. And all the people were astonished that sin was not found in them. And the priest said unto them: "If the Lord God has not revealed your sin, neither will I judge you." And he let them go away, and Joseph took Mary off and led her to his house rejoicing and praising the God of Israel.

And it came to pass that there was a decree of the king that the people who were in Bethlehem of Judaea should be inscribed. And Joseph said: "I shall inscribe my sons; but as for this girl, what shall I do to her? I am ashamed to inscribe her as my wife. And to inscribe her as my daughter I would be false, and behold, also all the children of Israel know that she is not my daughter. But nevertheless the day of the Lord will do as it pleases."

And he saddled his ass, and made her sit (upon it), and his son led (it). Joseph came and his sons; and when they had reached the third mile, Joseph saw that she was sad; and Joseph said: "Perhaps that which is in her grieves and pains her." Then again Joseph turned and saw her laughing; and he said to her: "Mary! what is this? that at one time I see thy face laughing, and at another time sad?"

And she said to Joseph, "I see two nations with my eyes, the one nation weeping and mourning, and the other nation rejoicing and exulting." And when they had got half-way, Mary says to Joseph: "Take me down from the ass, for that which is within me is hastening to come forth." And Joseph took her down, and said to her: "Whither shall I carry thee? or where shall I hide thy modesty? for behold! we are in a desert place."

And he found a cave there, and made her go in thither, and made his sons stand by her side, and went out to look for a Hebrew midwife in the district of Bethlehem. But I Joseph was walking about, and I saw the zenith of heaven standing; and I saw the air, and I saw it astonished, and the birds quiet. And I looked at the earth, and I saw a tub standing and the labourers resting, and their hands were in the tub; and they were eating but not eating, and drinking but not drinking; and they were putting their hands to their mouths and not bringing them near; but their faces were all looking
upwards; and I saw they were calling to their sheep, and their sheep were standing, and a shepherd raised his hand to strike them, and his hand stopped and remained up; and I saw the goats standing on the bank of a river, and I saw them\(^1\) putting their mouths to the water to drink, and they did not drink. And suddenly everything was loosened and ran into its place\(^2\).

Then I saw a woman coming down from the mountain, and she says to me: “Man, whither art thou going?” And I said to her: “I am seeking a Hebrew midwife.” And she said to me: “Art thou of Israel?” and I said to her: “Yea.” And she said to me: “Who is this, who is in labour in this cave?” And I said to her: “She is my betrothed.” And she said to me: “Is she not thy wife?” And I said to her: “It is Mary, who was brought up in the temple of the Lord, and it fell to her by lot to be my wife, and she has not become my wife, but is with child by the Holy Spirit.” And the midwife said: “Is this true?” Joseph said to the midwife: “Come, and thou shalt see.” And she went with him, and stood in that place which was in the cave. And a cloud of light was overshadowing the cave. And the woman said, “My soul thanks the Lord this day, for mine eyes have seen wonderful things this day, great and glorious. For a Redeemer is born to Israel.” The cloud rose up immediately from the cave, and a great light such as eyes could not bear, was seen in the cave. And little by little the light withdrew until the baby appeared, and he came and took the breast of Mary his mother. And the midwife cried out and said: “This day is a great day for me, for I have seen this great sight to-day.” And when the midwife had gone forth from the cave, Salome met her, and she says to her: “Salome! God be with thee! I have a new sight to relate to thee. A virgin has brought forth—a thing of which this nature is not capable.” And Salome said: “As the Lord my God liveth, unless I see with my eyes, I will not believe that a virgin has indeed brought forth.”

And the midwife went into the cave and says to Mary, “Mary! Tisch.xx Mary! show thyself; for the dispute about thee is not small; but show thyself, whether thou art a virgin.” And Salome entered and drew near and saw that she was a virgin; and Salome

\(^1\) Cod. “the goats.”  
\(^2\) literally, “order.”

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wailed and said: "Woe unto my wickedness and my unbelief! for I have tempted the living God, and lo! my hand is burning and dropping from me." And Salome knelt before the Lord saying, "O Lord God of my fathers! remember me, because I am the seed of Abraham, and Isaac and of Jacob, and do not expose me before the children of Israel. But send to those who gave me birth. O Lord! thou knowest that in Thy name I practised healing, and from Thee I took the reward." And lo! an angel answered, saying to Salome: "Salome, the Lord hath heard thine entreaty. Go, bring thy hands near to the boy, and lift him up, and thou shalt have healing and deliverance." And Salome was filled with joy, and she drew near to the boy, and approached him saying, "I draw nigh, because I have sinned in my heart, that I may worship the boy." And she said, "This one is born a king unto Israel." And Salome was healed and went forth from the cave justified. And behold, a voice was heard by her, saying to her: "Hail! do not reveal these great miracles which thou hast seen, until the boy enters Jerusalem."

And lo! Joseph prepared to go forth into Judaea. And there was a tumult in Bethlehem of Judaea, for the Magi came saying: "Where is the king of Judaea who is born? For we have seen his star in the East, and we are come to worship him." And when Herod heard (this) he was greatly troubled, and sent apparitors after the Magi, and sent also to call the chief priests, and asked them in the Pretorium, saying to them: "Where is it written for you that the Messiah shall be born? and what has been heard by you concerning him?" They say to him: "He will be born in Bethlehem of Judaea; for thus it is written." And he asked the Magi, saying to them: "What sign have ye seen in heaven concerning this king who is born?" The Magi say unto him, "We have seen a star which is greater in its size shining amongst these stars, so much so that by its light they are not seen at all; and we know that a king is born to Israel, and we are come to worship him." And Herod the king said to them: "Go, search for him, and if ye have found him, come tell me, that I also may come and worship him." And the Magi went forth, and lo! the star which they had seen in the East appeared to them [and] went before them until they came to the cave, and it stood above the head of the boy. And when the Magi saw the
boy with Mary his mother, they fell down and worshipped him; and they answered and said: “Glory be to God in the highest, and peace upon earth, and good will to men.” And they opened their caskets, and presented offerings to him, gold, and frankincense and myrrh. And the angels appeared to them and said that they should not go into Judaea. And they came by another road. And when Herod knew that the Magi had mocked him, he was wroth, and he sent murderers, and ordered them to murder all the infants, from the child of two years old and downwards, according to the time which the Magi had told him. And when Mary heard that the infants were being slain, she was afraid, and she took the boy, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in the manger of the oxen. Elizabeth too, when she heard that John was sought for, took him and went up with him to the mountain, and was looking where she might hide him. Then Elizabeth sighed, and said to the mountain: “O Mountain of God! receive the mother with her son.” And Elizabeth was not able to climb up. And suddenly the mountain opened and received her. And a great light lightened them in the mountain; because the angel of the Lord was with them, and was guarding them.

But Herod was seeking John; and he sent apparitors to Zacharia to the temple, and said to him: “Where hast thou hidden thy son?” And Zacharia answered and said unto them: “I am a minister of God, and am constantly in the temple of the Lord; I do not know where my son is.” And the apparitors went and told him all these things. And Herod was wroth and said: “His son is going to reign over Israel.” And he sent the apparitors, and they said to him: “Tell us truly, where is thy son? Or dost thou not know that thy blood is under my hand?” And the apparitors went and told him all these things. And he said: “The Lord is witness that thou hast shed my blood; but my spirit the Lord will receive, because thou hast shed innocent blood without crime in front of the door of the temple of the Lord.” Nor did any one know how Zacharia was slain, and the children of Israel did not know how he was slain; but at the time of salutation the priests went; and the blessing of Zacharia did not meet them according to custom; and the priests were standing and awaiting Zacharia that they might greet him in prayer and might praise the
Most High. And when he tarried, they were all afraid, and one of them dared to enter the sanctuary, and he saw beside the altar of the Lord, the blood that had been shed and was congealed. And a voice was heard, saying, “Zacharia is slain, and his blood shall not be washed away until the avenger shall come.” And when he heard these words, he was afraid and he went out and made known to the priests what he had seen and heard. And they ventured to see what had happened beside the porch of the temple. And they all wailed and rent their garments from the top to the bottom. And they did not find his body but they found his blood congealed like a stone; and they were afraid. And they went out and made [it] known that Zacharia was slain. And when all the tribes of the people heard it, they mourned and wept for three days and three nights. And after three days and three nights, the priests deliberated whom they should appoint a priest in the place of Zacharia; and the lot of Simeon came up. This is he to whom it was revealed by the Holy Spirit, that he should not taste death until he saw the Lord the Messiah in a body.

And I, James wrote this book, when there was a tumult in Jerusalem, when Herod died a bitter death; and I withdrew to a desert place, until the tumult subsided from Jerusalem.

But I praise the Lord Who has given me wisdom to write this book.

[TRANSITUS MARIAE.]

[BOOK I.]

The peace of God, who sent His Son, and He came into the world; and the peace of the Son, who migrated from heaven and dwelt in Mary; and the peace of the Holy Spirit, the παραγγελίας who sings and the Paraclete who is praised; the peace of the Lord of created beings; the glory of whose Godhead created beings are not able to comprehend, who left the chariot that is adorned in the supernal heights, and came and dwelt in the bosom of Mary the virgin; be with us and with all our congregation to bless the