



Infancy Apocryphal Literature as Source of Quranic Mary & Jesus: A Chronological Investigation

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Abstract

Apocryphal materials are different from the biblical accounts. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Western scholars of Qur'an & Islam applied the historical-critical method to decide apocryphal elements in the Qur'ānic stories about Mary & Jesus, who are figures known from the Bible. The most common apocryphal sources that figures in the so-called copying are The Protevangelium of James, The Infancy Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, and Coptic Gospel. The earliest person who popularized the hypothesis of origin/original sources of the Qur'anic accounts from these apocryphal stories into the Qur'an was Abraham Geiger in his book Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen? and on the same methodology, Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall presented Christian apocryphal literature as sources of Qur'anic Jesus and Mary. Later on, apologists and missionaries, particularly orientalist claimed that the verses of the Qur'an are drawn from the apocryphal source material. The main object of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, it analyses how the Qur'an and apocryphal infancy literature presents Mary & Jesus's infancy stories, on the other hand, it examines historical interrelations between Quranic & apocryphal texts can be described as the approaches in which texts refer to, and construct on other text.

Key Words: Apocryphal Materials, Mary & Jesus, Abraham Geiger, Infancy Literature

Introduction

The modern study of the original sources of quranic accounts of biblical legends has basically developed from the times of crusades, crystallized in the written form of material in the 19th century by a Jewish scholar Abraham Geiger in his book *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?*. He used an approach about the passages of biblical legends, specifically prophets contained in the Qur'ān from Jewish Midrashic, Talmudic and rabbinical literature, and also presented similarities implies borrowing. After him, this methodology was used by Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall wrote a book on Geiger's patron called *The Original Sources Of The Qur'ān* in 1905, which was published by this society 'For The Promotion Of Christian Knowledge, London'. We can say this book was revised of Geiger's material with some other 'sources'. He claimed the Jesus & Mary's infancy passages contained in the Qur'ān from apocryphal literature. Geiger and Tisdall's claims have been repeated by more subsequent orientalist, missionaries, and western scholars of the Qur'an. The whole picture in Jewish and Christian sources to corroborate precisely what was borrowed is almost never mentioned by these writers, and they show much less acquaintance with additional text evidence and connected text. Related to dating. Here are two major areas to reevaluate the issue of their chronological investigation of apocryphal literature:

1. Apocryphal Parallels and Qur'an
2. Dating Apocryphal texts: A Chronological Investigation

Mary and Jesus's Apocryphal Parallels and Qur'an

According to Tindall's assumption of original sources of Qur'anic Jesus and Mary's infancy passages are contained from the following apocryphal nativity and infancy texts:

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1. Protoevangelium of James
2. Gospel of Thomas
3. Arabic Gospel of Infancy
4. Gospel of Ps.-Matthew

Protoevangelium of James

The Protevangelium of James, or "Infancy Gospel of James," is commonly referred to as such. (1) This infancy Gospel claims to have been written by James, the step-brother of Jesus by Joseph's first marriage, also known as James of Jerusalem. (2) As a foundation for future textual traditions concerning Mary and Jesus's childhood, this is a crucial source (early lives). Pre-Birth events, such as Mary's parents, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and her Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and his upbringing, are all detailed in the Gospels. More than 150 Greek copies of the Protevangelium, which is believed to have been written in the second century, have survived. Slavonic and Georgian were among the many other languages that were used in the process of translating it. Latin translations exist as well. (3)

Gospel of Thomas

This text is called Gospel of Thomas, but the commonly used title is inaccurate because most of the manuscripts themselves do not claim that Thomas wrote it, nor does this "Gospel" tell of Jesus' infancy. "The earliest form of Infancy Thomas seems to be the Syriac, but the tradition seems to go back to a Greek model: the Greek alphabet figures in one story. Tischendorf edited two Greek manuscripts. Greek A was in the edited fifteenth century: one in Bologna (Univ. 2702), the other in Dresden (i 187), and Greek B in fourteenth-fifteenth century manuscript after discovered on Mount Sinai."

Arabic Gospel of Infancy

An apocryphal gospel known as the Arabic Infancy Gospel or Arabic Life of Jesus is a compilation of two previous apocryphal gospels, the Protoevangelium of James and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. (4) The miracles that took place in Egypt while the Holy Family was there are the central theme of the Arabic Gospel and the crux of this infancy material.

Gospel of Ps.-Matthew

Protevangelium (chapters 1–17) and the Arabic Infancy Gospel (chapters 18–24) can be found in this Latin manuscript, which dates back to the sixth or seventh century.

Apocryphal Parallels and Quranic Verses

An analysis of these mentioned apocryphal texts reveals six specific Mary & Jesus parallels between apocryphal texts and the Qur'an. These include accounts of Mary's stay in the temple, conceiving by words of God, Delivery under the palm tree, Jesus' birth, when Jesus spoke as an infant and when Jesus brought clay birds to life.

Parallel Verses: The Mary's Stay at Temple

Similarities are found between the Quran and the Protevangelium of James (PJ). In Qur'an, as we read as follow about desput of people for Mary's guardianship and care at temple:

"You were not with them, when they cast lots with their pens as to which of them should be charged with the care of Maryam (Mary); nor were you with them when they disputed."

In another verse, Mary's care under the guardianship of Zachariya, we read:

"So her Lord (Allâh) accepted her with goodly acceptance. He made her grow in a good manner and put her under the care of Zakariyâ (Zachariya). Every time he entered Al-Mihrâb [3] to (visit) her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: "O Maryam (Mary)! From where have you got this?" She said, "This is from Allâh." Verily, Allâh provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit."

Parallel in apocryphal literature on account of presentations of Mary for the temple by her parents, we followes PJ:

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

"And having weaned her in her third year, Joachim, and Anna his wife, went together to the Temple of the Lord to offer sacrifices to God, and placed the infant, Mary by name, in the community of virgins, in which the virgins remained day and night praising God. And when she was put down before the doors of the Temple, she went up the fifteen steps so swiftly that she did not look back at all; nor did she, as children are wont to do, seek for her parents. Whereupon her parents and the priests of the Temple were astonished. Then Anna, filled with the Holy Spirit, said before them all, 'The Lord Almighty, the God of Hosts, being mindful of his word, has visited his people with a good and holy visitation, to bring down the hearts of the Gentiles who were rising against us, and turn them to himself. He has opened his ears to our prayers: he has kept away from us the exulting of all our enemies. The barren has become a mother and has brought forth exultation and gladness to Israel. Behold the gifts which I have brought to offer to my Lord, and my enemies have not been able to hinder me. For God has turned their hearts to me, and himself has given me everlasting joy."

Also, this story has parallel in " Coptic History of Virgin" Tisdall's quoted as following:

" When Hanna placed Mary in the Temple, she was fed by the Lord's angels, who were like doves, bringing her food from the heavens. They showed her respect and often gave her fruit from the Tree of Life to eat, which she did so cheerfully when she went to worship the Lord in the Temple. For the first twelve years of her life, Mary lived in the Temple as a pure and holy worshipper. Her first three years had been spent at home with her parents, and her last nine had been spent in the Temple. A good God-fearing man was sought after by the priests after they noticed that she was developing into a virtue-filled young lady. They agreed. So they called the tribe of Judah together and picked twelve men from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and Joseph was the lucky one. As soon as she became pregnant, Mary was brought before the High Priest, who asked her, "What have thou done, and defiled thy soul: thou, who in the Holy of holies fedest from an angel's hand and heard their hymns,...what have thou done??" "By the living God, I promise that I am pure in front of him and have known no one," she said, sobbing."

In Qur'an, we see that the Qur'anic perspective is very too the point Mary's guardianship dispute among the priest and finally Zacharia took her under his care. Above mentioned, all texts are familiar in just her staying in the temple but defamiliarizes other aspect specifically Zacharias' taking care.

Parallel Verses: Birth of Jesus under the Palm Tree

The parallels concerning the birth of Jesus are found in the Qur'an and the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. In Qur'an, we reads as follow:

"And mention Mariam [Mary] in the book when she drew aside from her family to an eastern place... 23. And the pains of childbirth compelled her to take herself to the trunk of a palm tree...24. Then the child called out to her from beneath her: Grieve not, surely your Lord has made a stream to flow beneath you. 25. And shake towards you the trunk of the palm tree, and it will drop on you fresh ripe dates."

A parallel is found in Ps. Mt, which mention Jesus' birth:

"And it came to pass on the third day of their journey, as they were walking, that the blessed Mary was fatigued...and seeing a palm tree she Said to Joseph: Let me rest a little under the shade of this[palm] tree. Joseph, therefore, made haste, and led her to the palm...Then the child Jesus...said to the palm: O tree, bend your

branches, and refresh my mother with your fruit... at these words the palm bent its top down to the very feet of the blessed Mary; and they gathered from it fruit... Then Jesus said: open from your roots a vein of water... and let the waters flow, so that we may be satisfied from you. And it rose up immediately, and at its root there began to come forth a spring of water."

The History of the "Nativity of Mary and the Saviour's Infancy" is another source of this parallel,

"Now on the third day after she had set out, Mary was wearied in the desert by the heat and asked Joseph to rest for a little under the shade of a palm tree. So he made haste and made her sit down beneath it. Then Mary looking up and seeing its branches laden with fruit, said, — I desire if it were possible to have some of that fruit. Joseph answered:— I wonder at what thou sayest, since thou must see how lofty the branches of the palm-tree are; and besides, I am anxious to get water, for all in my vessel is done, and there is none anywhere about to fill it with. Just then the child Jesus, looking up with a cheerful smile from his mother's bosom, said to the palm-tree:— Send down thy branches here below, that my Mother may eat fresh fruit of thee. Forthwith it bent itself at Mary's feet, and so they all ate of its fruit. When they had gathered all the fruit, it still remained bent, waiting for orders to arise. Then Jesus said:— O palm-tree, arise with cheerfulness, be one of my Father's trees in Paradise; but with thy roots open the fountain beneath thee; and bring me here for my refreshment some of the water flowing from that fount. At once the tree became erect, and began to pour from its roots water beautifully clear and sweet before them. So when they saw the water, they were all filled with delight, and drank of it with their cattle and servants, till they were satisfied and praised the Lord. Between this story, as told here and in the Qur'an, there is just this divergence, that with the latter the Palm-tree appears at the time of the Messiah's birth, whereas this ancient Christian tale belongs to a somewhat later period, namely, after the journey of Joseph and Mary into Egypt."

The palm tree's giving Dates is only one thing which is similar between both texts, but they differentiate towards command for using Dates by Jesus as the son of God or God sent a message to Mary directly for using dates to heal birth pain and tension to present newborn holy baby, and another difference in Qur'anic and apocryphal stories is about Jesus' speaking as he is being born or when his mother presented in the front of priests and people.

Parallel Verses: Speaking of Jesus an Infant

One more infancy story has similarities are found between the Qur'anic verses and the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy and which tells us towards Jesus speaking as an infant in Mary's hands, In Quran as we read:

The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy narrate a very parallel account:

"We had found it recorded in the book of Josephus the Chief Priest, who was in the time of Christ (and men say that he was Caiaphas), that this man said that Jesus spake when He was in the cradle and said to Mary His Mother, 'Verily I am Jesus, the Son of God, the Word which thou hast borne, according to as the angel Gabriel gave thee the good news; and My Father hath sent Me for the salvation of the world "

Parallel Verses: Clay Birds

Further parallels include a scene in which Jesus gave life to birds that he made out of clay. Quran Says:

On the first account, as we read:

I [Jesus] have come to you with a sign from your Lord that I design for you out of clay the form of a bird then I breathe into it, and it becomes a bird with God's permission."

Second narration as follows:

"When God will say: O Isa son of Mariam! Remember my favor on you...when you designed out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission."

The first account is "The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Savior" mentions this story twice. and second account is fabulous Christian writings called "The Gospel of Thomas the Israelite". This story is also found in Ps.Mt. According to the Gospel of Thomas:

"The child Jesus, when five years of age, was playing on the road by a dirty stream of running water; and having brought it all together into ditches, immediately made it pure and clean; and all this by a single word. Then having

moistened some earth, he made of it twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath day when he did these things. There were many other children playing with him. Now a Jew, seeing what Jesus did, that he was playing on the Sabbath day, forthwith went his way to his father Joseph; Behold, he said, thy son is at the stream of dirty water, and having taken up some mud, hath made of it twelve sparrows, and hath thus desecrated the Sabbath. On this Joseph went to the spot, and cried out:— Why dost thou do these things on the Sabbath day which it is not lawful to do? Whereupon Jesus, clapping his hands at the sparrows, cried aloud to them, — Go off! So they, clucking, flew away. The Jews seeing it, were astonished, and went and told their Rulers what they had seen Jesus do."

In the Qur'an, Jesus had done with God's permission to perform this sign, in dissimilarity to the Gospel of Thomas, has done this on his own divinity.

Dating of Infancy Apocryphal Texts: A Chronological Investigation

Writings claiming that the Protoevangelium of James, the Arabic Gospel of Infancy and Gospel of Thomas and Ps.-Matthew are indeed the sources of many Jesus and Mary's Qur'anic parallel stories, have implicitly assumed that these four important apocryphal pre-dates the rise of Islam in the Muslim world. We'll look at the dates on which these documents became available in the following way:

Dating of the Protoevangelium of James

In the second century, the text of the Protevangelium was written and was especially popular in the East. There are almost 150 Greek manuscripts that still exist. Because they date back several centuries, this shows that it has been around for a long time. Late tenth and eleventh-century Greek manuscripts of PJ are common" (18) According to a now-lost manuscript by M. Neander, the first Greek version was printed in the year 1564. Critically, we analyzed that there are two main manuscripts. One is Greek, probably to be dated to the 4th century. The second is Syriac translation, of which we have four fragmentary manuscripts, probably originated in the 5th century. since here we have a text older than the 6th century, even if the quality of the text is not good like discovered PBodmer 5."

Dating of the Gospel of Thomas

The "Gospel" does not mention Jesus's infancy, nor does it claim to have been written by Thomas, according to newly discovered manuscripts. The term "misnomer" is being utilised here. (21) The author(s) of this work are believed to have been Greek and it is believed that it dates from the second century. Syriac, Latin, Ethiopian, Slavonic, and Georgian translations were all completed. Infancy Thomas has a long history, with its earliest known version appearing in Syriac, but the tradition dates back to the Greek era, as the Greek letter appears in one tale. (22) The 2nd century version is currently not possible. Another critical edition is still pending. While such an edition may be able to provide the foundation for succeeding manuscripts and translations, it does not resolve the question of whether an original infancy Gospel can be rebuilt. The composition's date and whether or not it will be possible to make any declarations 23

Dating of the Pseudo-Matthew

Protevangelium of James is the primary source for the Gospel of Ps.-Matthew. While in Egypt, Mary encountered a date palm, which Ps.-Matthew describes as "extraordinary." It wasn't until the eighth or ninth century that this work was completed.

Dating of the Arabic Gospel of Infancy

Many of the stories in this Gospel are said to have been used by Mohammed in the composition of the Qur'anic book on legends. (24) The Protoevangelium of James and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, two earlier apocryphal works, reinterpreted narratives found in the Arabic Infancy Gospel. (25) The dissemination of Christian apocryphal Jesus literature is another facet of Islam's influence on Christianity.

Conclusion

For the most part, western scholarship assumes that the Qur'an was penned by Muhammad himself. This includes apologists for Judaism and Christianity as well as Christian missionaries and orientalist. It was in this vein that following scholars followed in the footsteps of Gieger and Tisdall's work, by distinguishing the stories in the Qur'anic narrative from their "original" forms in Jewish and Christian sources. Studies of the historicity of Christian apocryphal literature conducted in the modern age show that it dates no further back than the 9th century CE. Islamic influences on apocryphal texts are widely recognised by scholars. There is also evidence that Christian texts were not acknowledged in any literature prior to 9th century CE - long after Qur'an's arrival. This proof is based only on Christian sources that have been known since 1000 years ago.

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