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From Matthew to the Mishnah: A Study of the Sources of The Protevangelium of James

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From Matthew to the Mishnah: A Study of the Sources of *The Protevangelium of James*

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1.0 Introduction

The *Protevangelium of James* (PJ) is what scholars refer to as a non-canonical Christian text, which means that PJ is a text written by a Christian author (around 150 CE), but that the text was not accepted into the body of literature that was eventually canonized.[1] PJ's exclusion from the canon most likely resulted from its unique and unfamiliar stories. The text includes stories of Mary's[2] birth, her sanctuary-like bedroom, her dedication and childhood in the Temple, her betrothal to a widower named Joseph, the miraculous birth of Jesus in a cave, her continued status as a virgin after Jesus's birth, and her actions that saved Jesus from Herod's men, who had been sent to kill all the male children under two years old, by wrapping him in swaddling cloths and hiding him in an oxen manger. But despite the fact that these stories deviate from what we now know as canonical tradition, PJ's absence from the list of ecumenically approved texts does not mean that it can be dismissed as inconsequential to early Christian communities, and it does not justify scholars' failure to engage PJ as an important text for the study of early Christianity.

The importance of studying PJ within the history of early Christianity lies within the fact that it is the first Christian text to record elaboration on what would become the canonical gospels.[3] PJ provides the first evidence of how Christians began to rework and retell the stories of the canonical gospels. This text's role in Christian history is indicated by the title given to it. 'Protevangelium' literally means "before the good news" or "before the gospel." This name is appropriate because the text in true form is not a 'gospel' in the same way that canonical

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[1] Canonized texts are those that were considered authoritative by leading church authorities around the fourth century CE that were then compiled into the Canon, or what Christians call the Bible.

[2] The Mary being referred to in the *Protevangelium of James* is the Virgin Mary, also known as Mary the Mother of Jesus.

[3] 'Canonical gospels' refers to the four gospels found in the New Testament which include gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

'gospels' are characterized.[4] Instead, PJ presents narrative material that chronologically precedes the events of the canonical gospels. The stories seem to function to augment canonical infancy narratives.

Although many scholars have recognized that there is some interconnection between PJ and canonical gospel material, they have only made preliminary attempts to develop a comprehensive understanding of PJ's relationship to both the oral and textual sources and have limited the sources to only canonical material. Scholar Ronald Hock's work on PJ exemplifies the problem of present scholarship. Hock indicates PJ's relationships to other texts by making a footnote in the translation following the verse of PJ he wishes to address. For example, Hock asserts in a footnote of his translation of PJ that the phrase '*without spot or blemish*' in verse 4:5 "recalls the sacrificial stipulations recorded in Exodus 29:38 and Leviticus 12:6." While both the verses in Exodus and Leviticus address sacrificial laws, neither of them address the condition of the animal offered for sacrifice. It is unclear what Hock meant in saying that PJ 4:5 recalls verses in Exodus and Leviticus.[5] Hock also makes the comment that PJ 5:4 is "an unmistakable echo of Luke 18:14," but there is neither a relationship to the situation, to the characters, or to the themes in PJ 5:4 or Luke 18:14 making it unclear what is "unmistakable" about this parallel. Other scholars have put forth similar work, making Hock's work representative of the current state of scholarship. In many cases it is unclear why scholars are drawing certain relationships between texts and it is even more unclear what kind of relationship exists. Additionally, efforts towards understanding PJ's use of sources have lacked thorough justification for the inclusion of each source.

The shortcomings of current scholarship thus stem from the inadequate methodological

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[4] The canonical gospels have stories of Jesus's life, ministry, and death. They include his teachings, miracles, and parables. PJ, however, focuses chiefly on the life of Mary and includes only the birth of Jesus and how he survived Herod's directive.

[5] Ronald Hock, *Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1995), 39.

approaches used in examining PJ's sources. Therefore a solid methodological approach to determining the sources used by PJ must be developed and implemented, not only for the sake of understanding sources, but also so that we can arrive at a new understanding of how the community has preserved, modified, or reworked the cultural ideas and beliefs given to them. Because scholars have not prioritized producing a well-defined list of criteria used to delineate the sources utilized in writing PJ, we must move towards a clearer understanding of the 'sources' available to the author of PJ. To accomplish this, we first must narrow down the possibilities of sources that were used by PJ by considering contextual and compositional factors that divide texts into textual families, meaning groups of texts with common characteristics. By considering the textual families connected to PJ, we can begin our search for potential sources from within these associated families to find literature that will be most likely correlated with PJ. Narrowing down the scope of our search is vital because it gives us a starting point to look for sources.[6] After gaining an awareness of a narrower scope for sources, we will be able to begin considering what specific sources may have been available for PJ's author and to classify these sources into two descriptive categories: textual sources, those that draw upon a written source, and tradition sources, those that draw upon a tradition. Making this distinction is vital to giving a specific meaning to a 'source' so as to correct the hazy understanding assigned to how we currently use the term 'source' by providing an easily recognizable description of what ways that source was used. With a new methodology, we can evaluate the role of canonical texts like the gospels and the Septuagint in PJ, and then move beyond the confines of a canonical bias to evaluating the role of non-canonical texts as sources. After working through this, we will offer some tentative conclusions concerning the complex picture of sources, as they are used by the author of PJ.

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[6] However, we are not necessarily restricted to only sources with these textual family relations.

1.1 Understanding the Manuscript Evidence

In order to focus in on what texts are possible sources for PJ, we must understand certain key aspects of the text that will in turn influence what sources may have been used by its author. It is valuable to limit the sources for PJ to only those that appear to be in similar textual families. Scholars employing modern methods of textual criticism have grouped texts into what they have termed 'families.'[7] Each family represents a group of texts with one or more commonalities. Families may be based on authorship, place of origin, date of composition, area of circulation etc. Using the idea of textual families, we can narrow the list of possible sources to those identified as having a common familial relationship. Specifically, we might look for possible sources in families that are believed to have been circulating throughout the region in which PJ was believed to be written. In order to understand where this might be, we must consider the language used for the original manuscript, which will then provide clues to the general geographical region associated with PJ. Recognizing PJ's original language is achievable through an examination of PJ's manuscript tradition.

Manuscripts of PJ have been preserved in over 30 Greek manuscripts with other manuscripts in Syriac, Ethiopic, Georgian, Sahidic, Slavonic, Armenian and Latin, making the manuscript tradition of PJ complex.[8] Many of these manuscripts date later than the tenth century CE, but a few of them date to around the fifth or sixth century CE. An even smaller number of

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[7] Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 156-185.

[8] John Painter, "Who was James? Footprints as a Means of Identification," in *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission* (eds. Bruce Chilton Bruce and Jacob Neusner; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 14. Although it is suspected that there were Latin manuscripts, no actual Latin manuscript has survived. This is explicable for two key reasons. First, because *The Protevangelium of James* was prohibited by Jerome in the West for its teaching about children from Joseph's first marriage, some communities believed that it was not a text that needed to be preserved, and they ceased to prioritize its preservation (J.K Elliot, ed., *Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 11). Second, PJ was incorporated into Pseudo-Matthew, which was written in Latin (Elliot, *Apocryphal*, 48. Hock, *Infancy*, 29. Thus, as PJ was being rejected in the West, people failed to see a need to preserve it independently (in Latin), for it had been already expanded on and incorporated into the growing and widely spread tradition of Pseudo-Matthew.

them date as early as the third century CE.[9] The differences in the composition dates have

caused the texts to differ radically from each other, making it difficult to determine the original

language as well as the original manuscript.[10] There is also evidence of secondary development

within the text. In some passages, the variants among the manuscripts suggest that the authors

had reinterpreted an earlier tradition. This makes it difficult, but not impossible, to distinguish

what appears to have been the original text.

The critical examination of the manuscript tradition began with Postel, who reintroduced

PJ in Latin translation in 1552.[11] His publication was followed by M. Neader who brought forth

a Greek edition in 1564,[12] and it was not until 1703 that J. Fabricius divided PJ into twenty five

chapters.[13] The nineteenth century saw a push in scholarship toward a comprehensive search for

manuscript material. During this search, A. Birch published the first text-critical edition of PJ in

1804 using two manuscripts discovered at the Vatican along with the text of J. Fabricus.[14]

Shortly after, J. Thilo came across earlier texts and based his new edition on nine new

manuscripts from Paris and Venice, and some from the Vatican manuscripts. He published his

work in 1832.[15] Although his edition was a contribution, his advances were soon surpassed by

C. von Tischendorf, who took it upon himself in 1849 to visit many European libraries in search

of manuscripts. Tischendorf discovered six more manuscripts that contained PJ, then took his

work and built upon Thilo's earlier work. Publishing in 1876, he utilized seventeen manuscripts,

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[9] Offering us only a little bit more dependable text, a fragment from the 5th to 6th century published in 1896 by P. Grenfell is a better text than its later counterparts (Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1963), 370.

[10] Because there are several different manuscript variants that change the texts considerably, it is necessary to make it clear that when this paper refers to PJ, it is relying on and referring to Tishendorf's rendering of PJ. Consequently, the conclusions made here about the sources of PJ are limited to being conclusions about Tishendorf's version of PJ. This does mean that the conclusions here will not be applicable to other manuscripts, but the conclusions cannot be extended to these texts without qualifications.

[11] B. Daniels, "The Greek Manuscript Tradition of the Protoevangelium Jacobi" (2 vols. Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1956), 1.19-29.

[12] M. Neader, ed., *Catechesis Martini Lutheri parva graeco-latina* (Basel: Ioannis Oporinum, 1564), 356-92.

[13] J. Fabricus, ed., *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti.* (2 vols. Hamburg: Schiller, 1703), 1.66-125.

[14] A. Birch, *Auctuaricum Codicis Apocryphi Novi Testmenti Fabriciani* (Copenhagen: no pub., 1804).

[15] J. Thilo, ed., *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1832), 159-273.

and designated verse numbers to match Fabricius's chapter numbers. [16]

The archeological finds at Nag Hammadi, Egypt further shaped the manuscript tradition of PJ. Fragments of PJ were unearthed in Nag Hammadi, and though at first these fragments were thought to be of little interest or influence, M. Testuz studied and pieced together a complete papyrus text of PJ. [17] This manuscript has become known as Bodmer Papyrus V, and it is currently the oldest surviving manuscript of PJ. Papyrologists have determined that it dates to the third century CE. In 1961, de Strycker made available to the public a new critical text of PJ centered on the Bodmer Papyrus manuscript and on another papyrus dating from the fifth century that contained fragments of chapters 13-23. E. de Strycker has continued his work and has raised the number of manuscripts to 140. [18] His work has been paralleled by American B. Daniels, who has examined 81 Greek manuscripts and has fashioned what scholars have hailed as one of the most inclusive studies of textual variants. [19]

This discovery and subsequent analysis of the text led scholars to deduce that PJ was likely originally written in Greek. [20] This phase in the manuscript tradition is influential for our driving question, since whatever influences may be suggested as sources for PJ, must also have been accessible and available to a Greek speaking community. [21]

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[16] C. Tischendorf, ed., *Evangelia Apocrypha* (2nd ed. Leipzig: Avenarius and Mendelssohn, 1876), 1-50.

[17] M. Testuz, ed., *Papyrus Bodmer V: Nativitè de Marie.* (Cologne-Geneva: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1958).

[18] E. de Strycker, "Die griechischen Handschriften des Protevangiums Iacobi" in *Griechische Kodikologie und Textüberlieferung* (ed. D. Harlfinger; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), 579-80.

[19] Ron Cameron, ed., *The Other Gospels* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 190. Daniels, "Manuscript."

[20] Hennecke, *New* Testament, 70. Ronald Hock, *Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1995), 29. H. Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi: A Commentary* (trans. G.E. van Baaren-Pape; Assen: van Gorcum, 1965), 4.

[21] The manuscript tradition is also important for us as a methodological point. With so many manuscripts, it becomes apparent that scholars are must be compiling multiple manuscripts and somehow working these texts down to one cohesive text that we can use and understand as representative of the original text. Historically, they have used one of two methods. Thilo, having only a few texts, took a single manuscript, then amended that text with the variants that were multiply attested in other manuscripts. Tischendorf similarly used this method, as did Daniels (Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 5). de Strycker, however, thought that it was feasible to combine the earliest text, Papyrus Bodmer V, with the entirety of the manuscript tradition known to us. In doing this, all available manuscripts are considered in the text's reconstruction. He argues that to leave any manuscript out is to fail to

1.2 Date of PJ's Composition

Having an idea of when PJ was written is also crucial to determining its sources, since this piece of information will focus the breadth of the search for sources to only those that were circulating before or were concurrent with PJ. Before the discovery of Papyrus Bodmer V, scholars had dated PJ anywhere from the second to the fifth century.[22] Differing from many scholars today, P.A. van Stempvoort places the composition of PJ between 178 CE and 204 CE.[23] The earlier date he proposes corresponds to the year that Celsus wrote his true doctrine in which he attacked the figure of Mary, the mother of Jesus, on several fronts including her social status, her purity, and her adultery.[24] In setting this date, van Stempvoort is advocating that PJ was a response to the letter of Celsus. The latter date is the year that Hippolytus composed his homily on Susanna. Van Stempvoort's reason for dating the latter extreme here is that Susanna was popular and that he saw parallels between Susanna and the portrayals of Anna, Elizabeth, and Mary in PJ. He thought that PJ must have used Susanna as a source or at least that Susanna strongly influenced the writing of PJ.[25]

Positions like van Stempvoort are now in the minority as most scholars date PJ in the mid-second century CE.[26] Scholars arrive at this date by ruling out both earlier dates and later dates within a range until they come to a smaller window for possible authorship. We know that

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consider all the particular variants (Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 6).
Noting these different methodologies for compiling a manuscript, this paper will concentrate on Tischendorf's compilation of the PJ manuscripts. Tischendorf's work has been reviewed and employed by several scholars working on PJ, which helps ensure that his work has integrity (Bart Ehrman, *The Lost Scriptures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Hennecke, *New Testament*, 371. Hock, *Infancy*, 30.).

[22] Hock, *Infancy* 11.

[23] P. van Stempvoort, "The Protevangelium Jacobi, the Sources of its Theme and Style and their Bearing on its Date" in *Studia Evangelica* III (ed. F. Cross; TU 88; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), 413-23.

[24] For the attacks made by Celsus, see R. Hoffman, trans., *Celsus, On the True Doctrine: A Discourse against the Christians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 57.

[25] Hock, *Infancy*, 12. This is how Hock explains the dating, but if van Stempvoort dated *The Protevangelium of James* based on the assumption that *The Protevangelium of James* used Susanna, the date would have to have been years after Susanna's debut. There is something that appears to be incorrect about this dating.

[26] Painter, "Who was James?" 16. Erhman, *Lost*, 63. Hennecke, *New Testament*, 372. Hock, *Infancy*, 17. James Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 199.

the earliest tradition concerning Jesus sprouted up in the middle of the first century CE with Paul

and the writer of Mark, neither of whom suggests anything of PJ. Paul only knows that Jesus

was "born of a woman under the law" (Gal 4:4). He knows nothing extraordinary about Jesus's

birth. This suggests that he had no knowledge of the birth narratives or the story in PJ. The

earliest accounts of Mary's virgin birth do not surface until the composition of Luke and

Matthew's gospels, which scholars frequently think were written around 80 and 90 CE,

respectively.[27] Because PJ appears to have knowledge of these two narratives (and as this paper

will argue, PJ is dependent upon both Matthew and Luke), if the dates of Matthew and Luke's

authorship are correct, then PJ can be dated post 90 CE.[28]

In continuing to determine the date of PJ, it is necessary to consider what the latest date

for authorship might be. Origen and Clement, two influential church fathers of the late second

and third centuries CE, knew PJ.[29] Clear evidence of the influence of PJ appears in Origen's

Commentary on Matthew Book X.17.[30] Origen, who died in 253 CE, refers to the brothers of

Jesus as sons of Joseph by a previous marriage.[31] Thus, it is argued that PJ, which influenced

Origen, must have been written before his death in 253 CE. Scholars believe Clement of

Alexandria knew PJ also since he is aware of the midwife who checked and took care of Mary.[32]

Because Clement's death was in 212 CE, PJ must be dated prior to his death. Focusing in more

closely on the date of authorship, scholars have suggested that because Justin Martyr's *Dialogue

with Trypho,* which is written about 155 CE, refers to Jesus's birth in a cave, PJ was written

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[27] This assumes that modern scholarship's dating is correct. However, even if scholarship has incorrectly dated them, *The Protevangelium of James* will still be argued to be post Matthew and Luke, but the post 90 CE designation will be altered.

[28] Hennecke, *New Testament,* 372.

[29] Hennecke, *New Testament,* 372.

[30] Painter, *Just James,* 198.

[31] Hock, *Infancy,* 11.

[32] Hock, *Infancy,* 11.

slightly prior that.[33]

Although a precise composition date is impossible to obtain, most scholars estimate that PJ was written during the mid-second century by concluding that it must be subsequent to Luke and Matthew's gospels, but prior to the writings of Origen, Clement, and possibly Justin Martyr. The sources, then, that are hypothesized to have been used by PJ's author, must be limited to those that are circulating prior to or during the mid-second century CE.

1.3 Authorship and Unity of the Gospel

Although a language and a date for PJ have been proposed as factors that can limit the scope of our inquiry for possible sources, it could be argued that we need to be considering multiple places for authorship or various dates because there were a variety of authors. It is therefore important to consider the probability of this being an accurate representation of PJ's authorship, and to then consider its ramifications on how we moderate our search for potential sources.

PJ seems to have various peculiarities of style, structure, and details, which have led some to question whether or not the gospel is a unified narrative or a conglomeration of different stories from different authors. In examining the text, it becomes apparent that there is a shift from third to first person during Joseph's vision in 18:3 that continues through his conversation with the midwife in 19:9. This shift, it is suggested, occurs because there are multiple sources being fused together.[34] This idea is also supported by the odd shift in focus from Mary and Joseph to the parents of John.[35] There are other details that suggest disunity in the document. At age twelve Mary leaves the Temple to be with Joseph. Joseph then leaves for several months,

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[33] Hock, *Infancy*, 12.
[34] Painter, *Just James*, 198. Ehrman, *Lost*, 63. Hock, *Infancy*, 13.
[35] Hennecke, *New Testament*, 372.

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and returns to a wife who is going to give birth at age sixteen. Thus, it is suggested by some

scholars that the peculiarities point to several stories by different authors that have been

condensed into one story.

The response in the nineteenth century to the problem of these peculiarities attempted to

say that there were multiple sources for PJ. In 1897, A. von Harnack offered a comprehensive

source theory. Arguing that there were three separate documents that were combined in the

fourth century, he said that there was one about Mary (1-17), one about Joseph (18-20) and one

about Zacharius (22-24).[36] His theory is no longer held, largely because it is believed that there

is a complete document, as of the third century, which predates his hypothesized compilation

date. However, scholars have suggested that there is a substantiated case for literary unity of the

text.

E. de Strycker's major case study on PJ argues that there is homogeneity of the

document based on literary, linguistic, and paleographical grounds.[37] The argument asserts that

the shift between first and third person is a rhetorical function. Also significant, the overall

consistencies in vocabulary and syntax argue in favor of literary unity and only one author.[38] De

Strycker's argument is convincing for two reasons. First, the shift between first and third person

should not necessarily indicate multiple authors. This rhetorical function allows the audience to

see an objective author as well as the personal thought and feelings of the characters, allowing

the audience to identify and understand that character more deeply. The gospel, trying to convey

a story of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, among many others, seeks to explain some of the questions

that people had by allowing the audience to have a glimpse into their experience. Second, the

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[36] A. van Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* (2 vols; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1897-1904), 600-3.
[37] J.K Elliot, ed., *Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 50. Hock, *Infancy*, 13.
[38] Hock, *Infancy*, 14.

syntactical elements of the sentences remain consistent, which suggests one author.

It is important to note that in the composition of his work, the author probably made use

of earlier written material. However, this does not argue for disunity, rather it argues, as seen

above, that *the* author, rooted in the traditions of specific community, simply used multiple

sources in writing PJ. Thus, restricting the field of sources relative to a Greek-speaking

community in the mid-second century CE is warranted.

1.4 The Author and the Community

While the scope of potential sources for PJ remains broad, if we consider who the author

may have been as well as the writing techniques that were employed, we may be able to identity

specific cultural styles or writing forms that may assist in refining the geographical location and

social milieu for the text. The author identified at the conclusion of PJ is a man named James.

PJ's ending line reads "Now I, James, wrote this history in Jerusalem when tumult arose on the

death of Herod..." (25:1). While it may seem simple, then, to arrive at the answer now as to who

wrote PJ, it only appears to be this easy. First, there is the problem that there are multiple people

named James to which the gospel could refer.[39] Second, pseudonymous authorship was common

during this period. It is necessary to ask which James the authorship refers to and whether or not

the author is really that James.

There is little scholarly debate as to whom this James refers. One of the first

identifications of the author comes from the Decree of Gelasius which identifies the author as

James the Less, as referenced in Mark 15:40.[40] Jerome refers to the figure James the Less as

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[39] Canonically it could refer to James the son of Zebedee (cf. Matt 4:21, Mark 1:19, Luke 5:10), James the son of Alphaeus (cf. Matt. 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13), James, the brother of the Lord (Matt. 13:55, Mark 6:3, Gal. 1:19), and James the father of Judas (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13). Undoubtedly, there are also many other figures named James beyond the canonical characters.
[40] Painter, "Who was James?" 14.

James the Just, the brother of Jesus. However, the author could not have been James the Just, meaning that 'James' was mostly likely a pseudonym for another author.

In looking at the text, there are many reasons to believe that the author was not truly James, the brother of the Lord.[41] The most convincing piece of evidence for the pseudonymous author of PJ is that James, the brother of Jesus, died in 62 CE, which is around ninety years earlier than PJ is thought to have been written.[42] James also died before the gospels were written, meaning that the sources of PJ (as will be argued) would not have been available to him. But even if we set aside the issue of dating, the character of James the brother of Jesus does not fit with the peculiarities of the gospel.

Historically James the Just was a leader of the Jerusalem church, and therefore would have been well versed with both Jewish culture and geography. PJ's author refers to Jews using the word 'Israelites,' rather than 'Judeans.' 'Israelites' is notably a term favored by writers outside Palestine.[43] The author also writes that they went from Bethlehem to Judea. However, a problem arises here because Bethlehem is in Judea. The geographical mistake suggests that the writer was not a Jew within Palestine, meaning James the Just could not be the author.[44] Given the prevalent tradition of pseudonymous authorship in Judeo-Christian texts, James is likely a pseudonym for another author. [45]

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[41] Painter, "Who was James?" 14.

[42] The account of James' death comes from Josephus's account in Antiquities 20.9. Ananus has taken advantage of the time between two procurators (Festus had recently died and Albinus had not yet reached Jerusalem), and has condemned James and certain others to death. James' death during this short period between the two procurators allows this incident to be dated to the summer of 62 CE. Josephus, *The New Complete Works of Josephus* (trans. William Whiston. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 20.9. Painter. *Just James*, 136.

[43] Hock, *Infancy*, 13.

[44] Hock, *Infancy*, 13. Painter, "Who Was James?" 14. Elliot, *Apocryphal*, 49.

[45] With it being acknowledged that James is a pseudonymous author, there is ample reason to question why James would have been chosen as the pseudonym. In the apostolic tradition, an eye-witness account of an event concerning Jesus was given great authority (Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 13). Thus, it only follows that a writer would be enticed to write as if it he were an eye witness. Using the name of an important authority figure like James, the brother of Jesus, would be a way to legitimate the text. It might be suggested that the author was actually a man named James. While we cannot entirely dismiss the possibility that the name James, given its commonality, refers to an individual, given the wide dispersion of the text, it is more likely that the author was perceived as an

In ruling out James the brother of Jesus as an author, we are forced to look elsewhere for an author of PJ. Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify the individual in particular, but some conclusions have been made about who the author might have been. Scholars have determined that the author could not have been from a city of Greek influence because the Greek he used was too impoverished and simple. Scholars attest that this means that the pseudonymous author might have been from either Syria or Egypt, but they claim that he must have been from a Jewish background, as he had demonstrated a vast knowledge of the Septuagint.[46]

Hock has put forth this argument, as have other scholars, but the reasoning is not sound. The author's command over the Greek language cannot be entirely suggestive of his location. Simpler styles may reflect his target audience or his own education, rather than his region. It is additionally a problem that PJ's author is assumed to have a vast knowledge of the Septuagint. As this study will seek to show, PJ cannot be determined to have had knowledge of the Septuagint, but rather only traditions grounded in parts of the Septuagint. These arguments for the characteristics of the author inform our use of sources by compelling us to also consider Jewish sources that would have been circulating outside of Palestine.

1.5 Purpose and Style

Finally, it is essential that we understand the author's purpose for writing, or what main ideas may be driving the writing, so that we are aware of what sources would have likely been important and appropriate for that community to utilize. While there is no debate that the author's main purpose for writing was to venerate Mary in order to then defend the person of Jesus, there are two hypotheses on why the author was motivated to write PJ, based on the style

authoritative figure by many communities. This makes it more probable that James was a pseudonym rather than an actual author.

[46] Hock, *Infancy*, 10-13.

he uses. The first hypothesizes that the author is writing an apologetic piece, the second that it is ecomiastic.

Many scholars hold that PJ is apologetic.[47] Van Stempvoort maintains that PJ meets the attacks made by Celsus's *Logos Alethes*, citing that there are several points of contact between the two.[48] He argues that the apologetic style was a defense of Christianity and was particularly meant to defend Mary. In Celsus's writing, Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, was accused of poor character, attacked for her poverty and low social status, and criticized for her lack of purity.[49] The argument is made that in response to these accusations, PJ was meant to vindicate and glorify Mary by retelling her life in a manner that would counter the image of Mary conveyed by Celsus. Thus, PJ details the wealth of Mary's parents and clarifies her job spinning as holy work to offset the accusations of poverty, and it describes in detail her purity and virginity as a response to the claim that she was promiscuous or an adulterer.[50] Because there are many points where the writing of Celsus is seemingly being refuted, PJ is arguably an apologetic writing aimed to right the wrongs of Celsus's attacks.

It has also been suggested that PJ is an apologetic writing because it argues in defense of general questions asked of Christianity. It is notable that in many ways the infancy gospel is reworking and providing answers to questions invited by the gospels.[51] Questions that were likely raised included: how did John the Baptist escape the wrath of Herod's soldiers? why was Mary chosen to be mother of Jesus and what qualified her for this role? who were Jesus's brothers that were spoken of and were they really brothers? If PJ is an apologetic writing as has been suggested, the author's writing would have defended Christianity from criticism and

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[47] To write an apologetic letter means to write either a formal defense or apology. In this case *The Protevangelium of James* is argued to be a defense of Mary's integrity and purity from the accusations put forth by Celus.

[48] van Stempvoort, "Protevangelium," 413-23. Also see Hock, *Infancy*, 11. Elliot, *Apocryphal*, 49-50. Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 15.

[49] Hock, *Infancy*, 16.

[50] Elliot, *Apocryphal*, 50.

[51] Hock, *Infancy*, 9.

14

perhaps answered some of the intrusive questions of both insiders and outsiders. In defense of Christianity, the author of PJ seems to be writing this text in order to fill in the holes left by the canonical gospels and to defend the gospels from questioners' inquiries.

While some scholars argue that PJ is apologetic, other scholars contend that PJ is ecomiastic. Coming from the Greek word ἐγκώμιον, meaning 'to praise,' ecomiastic refers to a style of writing that evolved from ἱστορία, meaning 'to gain knowledge of,' which was a style of writing outlined in the *progymnasmata*. Around the time that PJ was being written, there were common styles of writing being taught. Students learning to write used books called *progymnasmata*, which contained 14 compositional exercises, each with a very particular style. One of these, ἱστορία, is what the author of PJ claims to be writing (25:1). Although the structure of ἱστορία is fitting since the text is a narrative of the past, an author who was a contemporary of PJ, the satirist Lucian of Samosata, in a concise description of how to compose history, completely reworked how an inquiry about a person was to be written. As a consequence, the historians of the day picked up on this style, writing with an encomiastic intent.[52] In this way, ἱστορία was becoming the style ἐγκώμιον, so although 'James' labeled his writing ἱστορία, it is arguable that it truly was written in the style ἐγκώμιον.

The ecomiastic layout included an introduction, information on a person's family background, childhood and adult life, a list of actions exemplifying their virtues, a comparison with someone of equal or greater virtue, and a conclusion commonly in the form of a prayer. Some scholars argue that PJ follows this form.[53]

The ecomiastic writing style requires that an account be given of a person's family background including their race, nationality, region, ancestors, and parents. Hock argues that the

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[52] Hock, *Infancy*, 17.

[53] Hock, Ronald, *The Life of Mary and the Birth of Jesus: Ancient Infancy Gospel of James*, (Berkley, CA: Ulysses Press, 1997), 23.

allusion to the Twelve Tribes of Israel fits this pattern of both Mary's race and nationality, and it also includes allusions to the region she is from. PJ's long narrative concerning her parents also fits the pattern of this style. As for Mary's ancestors, she has distinguished ancestors like Abraham (1:8) and Sarah (2:9).[54]

The arrangement of ecomiastic writings also requires stories of a character's upbringing, and it becomes apparent that the author has included these details in the gospel. Her childhood in both her parent's house and in the Temple receive ample attention (6-8). Significant events in her adult life are also included in the gospel: her betrothal to Joseph and her work in the Temple to make a new veil (9-12).[55]

The format of ecomiastic writing dictates that the subject's virtues and deeds are included in the account as well. Mary's virtues of self control and purity were demonstrated in the face of the accusations made against her when she was six months pregnant. She did not grow angry but levelheadedly stood before the priest in order to learn how she could prove herself. Additionally, the test proved that she retained the virtue of purity (15-16). Mary also exhibited courage. In the face of Herod's soldiers she bravely and cleverly protected Jesus (22:3-4). It is notable here that Joseph was not the protector, Mary was.[56]

The ecomiastic style of writing further calls for a comparison of the main character with someone of equal or greater virtue. When the story shifts to Elizabeth and her husband Zacharius, the high priest, it is recorded that they have to protect John. Zacharius, in protecting John by refusing to give the location of his child to Herod's men, serves as a positive comparison for Mary, who has likewise protected her own child from Herod, and serves more generally to

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[54] Hock, *Infancy*, 18.
[55] Hock, *Infancy*, 18.
[56] Hock, *Infancy*, 19.

demonstrate her similarly virtuous character (23).[57]

Authors composing texts under the ecomiastic style also structurally conclude their work with a prayer. Mirroring this style, a prayer comprises the final words of PJ. The gospel ends with a doxology, "Grace will be with all those who fear the Lord. Amen" (25:4).[58]

In examining PJ with reference to the ecomiastic style, it seems quite probable that Hock's thesis has revealed something significant concerning the particular style used to write this gospel. Hock's theory, he believes, ties the gospel together and gives better explanation as to why certain events are incorporated into the gospel that could have otherwise been left out in an apologetic writing. But like the ecomiastic style, the apologetic style was intended to defend Mary and to revere her above the allegations made. While scholars are divided as to whether PJ was apologetic or ecomiastic or neither, the possibility that the author was influenced by both of these literary styles remains to be investigated sufficiently by current scholars. Yet, it seems important to consider that both of these styles are being used. The writings of Celsus may have motivated the author to compose the text, but the author could address the questions that motivated him to write while structuring the text in line with the ecomiastic style. The text's driving force and styles are not mutually exclusive and both elements should be seen as components of the author's purpose, structure, and style of writing. If both of the styles are being used, this suggests that the community has been influenced by Hellenistic culture and the author has used these influences to sculpt the structure of his writing.

But we should also remain attentive to the central concern the gospel writer is addressing by writing PJ. That is, his concern for the veneration of Mary. Noting this motivation in writing, we should also seek out sources that exhibit either a similar veneration of Mary or concern with the birth narratives of Jesus, as well as those sources that discuss stories of those characters that

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[57] Hock, *Infancy*, 19-20.
[58] Hock, *Infancy*, 20.

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become entwined with the character of Mary in either the apologetic or ecomastic writing styles.

1.6 Source Dependency

Led by the overarching question of what sources PJ may have been using, we have discovered that the author responsible for PJ was heavily influenced by Hellenism, but they were also aware of Jewish culture and tradition as well as Christian tradition. The author, writing in the mid-second century, most likely lived outside of Israel and composed the text in Greek. With this understanding of the author and the community, the sources hypothesized as sources for PJ's author should be those that would have been available to second century, Greek-speaking Christians in a community outside of Israel.

Scholars' hypotheses for the sources used by PJ's author in large part follow the same conclusions that we have made, but scholars have generally provided an unsatisfying picture of PJ's source dependency. Most often they list Matthew, Luke, and the Septuagint as sources without employing a clear methodology to determine them as sources and without conducting an assessment of what within the texts reveals the source relationship. They also argue that PJ used Matthew, Luke, and the Septuagint as 'sources,' but they do not evaluate what that means. These scholars have not made it clear in what capacity certain influences were used by the author of PJ as sources. It is even unclear what the word 'source' means for these scholars. Some scholars have 'source' to mean 'the text is being directly quoted' and others have used it to suggest 'the text is a vague allusion to a tradition that may have come from a story in Genesis.'[59] The lack of specificity of what scholars mean by 'source' must be corrected if any clear picture of source dependency is to be established. It is to this that we shift our attention.

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[59] For an example, see Hock, *Infancy*, 49.

2.0 Towards a New Conception of PJ's Source Dependency

2.1 A New Methodology

Rather than dwelling on the past scholarship which has proved to be inadequate, we can

seek to establish a more comprehensive and better defended list of source material by

establishing a new methodology that first takes into account the fact that authors use sources in

different ways, and then develops different designations for different types of sources and

provides clear criteria for judging a text to be a source. The author of PJ has used two different

types of sources: textual sources and tradition sources. Textual sources are those actual, physical

texts that the author had in front of him[60] when he was composing. Determining that PJ used

another piece of writing as a textual source requires that two criteria be met. It must be

determined with certainty, first, that an intentional relationship between the two documents exists

and, second, that the relationship between them demonstrates that PJ's author has used that

source, rather than the reverse.[61] Intentional relationships can only be established by those

passages with significant literal word commonalities. It is not sufficient that only a few words

match. Linguistic commonalities must exhibit length and complexity in order to contribute to

the evidence of an intentional, textual relationship. If such a relationship can be determined to

exist, the relationship of dependence can be determined by examining the remaining

commonalities between PJ and the text for patterns of elaboration and clarification.

Tradition sources, on the other hand, signify that PJ's author was aware of and

incorporated a tradition into his text. It cannot be determined from tradition sources that PJ had

any specific text that recorded that tradition in front of him, but it can be suggested that PJ was

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[60] Because the author of PJ is identified as a masculine figure named James, I will refer to the author as if the author is a male. This presumption, however, does not intend to suggest that a female author is impossible.

[61] It should be made clear at this point what is meant by an 'intentional relationship.' An 'intentional relationship' does not refer in any way to the author's intentionality. Rather it refers to the probability that an author intentionally and deliberately chose words from another existent, physically present source. Proving an 'intentional relationship' requires strong evidence of replication.

aware of a particular tradition grounded in a text. Establishing a text as a tradition source requires that PJ and the text contain similar beliefs and customs, reflect paraphrasing, or exhibit direct allusion. Here, each significant commonality will be considered individually in order that the specific criteria can be applied to the individual pieces appropriately. Arguments concerning its inclusion or exclusion as source material will then be put forth as the evidence indicates.

As it is true that many scholars have done similar work on PJ, it should also be mentioned that aside from their somewhat arbitrary methods for determining source material and deficient categorization of that source material, they have conducted their work with a canonical bias. That is, they have assumed that the only sources for PJ were the canonical gospels. While we will consider canonical sources, this examination will also expand the scope of inquiry to include extracanonical sources. It is important to remember that there was no formal canon during the second century CE. If we limit the scope of our search for PJ's sources to only those texts that were eventually canonized, we have disregarded texts that might have been authoritative for the author's community and therefore influential to PJ's author. In order to form a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between PJ and its sources, it is vital that both canonical and non-canonical texts are considered.

2.2 Considering Matthew as a Textual Source

Establishing that the Gospel of Matthew is a textual source used by the author of PJ requires the two critical steps already considered: first, that an intentional relationship between the two documents exists and second, that the relationship indicates that PJ's author used that source, rather than the inverse. Because the second criterion will only be a decisive factor if the first criterion is met, the first shall be the initial focus.

Duplication of exact wording in sentences and unique phrases suggests the existence of an intentional relationship between texts, since it is nearly impossible that one writer would record the exact same wording in sentences and phrases (phrases not likely to be a part of oral tradition) as another author without having that source. Language is too expansive and varied for the occurrence of complex, identical sentences and phrases to simply be coincidences. The occurrences of complex sentences and phrases that are virtually indistinguishable from one another suggest a textual relationship between Matthew and PJ.[62]

2.2a PJ 14:6 and Matthew 1:21

PJ and Matthew exhibit similarities between their texts. Each gospel, respectively, records the words of the Angel of the Lord as spoken to Joseph in a dream: she will bear a son and you will call him the name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins (τέξεται δὲ υἱόν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν). The length and complexity of this shared sentence diminishes any suggestion of coincidence or collective oral tradition. It might be suggested that Matthew and PJ are each using a third

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[62] The question will certainly arise as to how many words a sentence must have to make it 'long' enough to be an intentional sentence, but there is not one clear answer. Each sentence must be judged individually on how easily it can be reproduced. If we consider the elements in two sentences of the same length, we can see that the criterion for intentional relationships cannot be simply a number of words. Let us consider these two eight-word sentences: 'She had one child, John, who was nice' and 'Mary Andrews raised John, who was captivatingly fetching.' While both have the same number of words, the first could be easily duplicated without the author necessarily having the other text in front of him. 'She' may refer to any mother who had a son named John, and 'John' could refer to anyone who was described as nice and who had a mother that raised him. The verbs are too simple to suggest anything beyond the author's creation. Contrastingly, the second sentence points to a specific character by name and names her son, then utilizes words that are less frequently used, let alone used together in speech. If this sentence is found in another source, we might conclude that one text has made use of the other because of its complex and precise structural elements. It would be difficult, as well as improbable, to reproduce the exact same sentence without an awareness of the text (or perhaps even a common third source). Thus, the methodology cannot dictate that a certain amount of words makes a source a textual source.

There is another methodological problem that might arise. Someone may argue that what is present here is not a written commonality, but rather an oral commonality. While the the birth narratives were likely circulating as a part of oral traditions, the commonalities between these statements are not adequately explained by a common oral tradition. Oral tradition, in general, does not preserve the specific wording of the story's elements, as has been preserved in PJ and the Gospel of Matthew. Orality typically retains the more general parts to a story (character, setting, plot) but it does not preserve the exact verbal tenses, the precise prepositional phrases, etc. Completely accurate reduplication only happens when there is a written source present to be copied.

source, but this hypothesis is not supported because only Matthew and PJ have this exact

wording. This wording is absent from Mark, Luke, John, and Q and cannot be found in other

apocryphal gospels nor the texts in the Nag Hammadi library.[63]

2.2b PJ 11:8 and Matthew 1:21

PJ 11:8 and Matthew 1:21 both contain the following verse, "She will bear a son and you

will call him the name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (τέξεται δὲ υἱόν καὶ

καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν).[64]

While on the surface this may suggest another instance of parallelism between PJ and Matthew,

it would be a mistake to deduce from this commonality that there is a new, additional reason,

independent of the one stated above, to believe there is a relationship between PJ and Matthew.

Multiple uses of a phrase, that already indicates a relationship, do not strengthen the likelihood

of that relationship. The relationship between texts remains the same whether the author has

used shared phrases one time or several times.

2.2c PJ 21:2 and Matthew 2:2

Matthew and PJ's stories of the wise men's visit to Judea are not only recorded in very

similar details, but the stories also employ direct linguistic parallels (PJ 21:1-11, Matt 2:1-16).

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[63] However, we should realize that this conclusion rests upon the scope of modern scholarship. This conclusion would certainly need to be revisited if new texts were to be uncovered. Still, the questions surrounding the exclusiveness of this commonality cannot mask the fact that in these verses the words of Angel of the Lord are exactly equivalent.
The Nag Hammadi Library does contain allusions similar to Matthew 1:21, but none of them reflect exactly paralleled language. cf. *Tripartite Tractate* 115.3-6, *The Gospel of Philip* 52.35-53.3, and *The Testimony of Truth* 45.16-17.
[64] It should be noted that while *The Protevangelium of James* 11:8 records the same verse, there is a contextual difference between it and Matthew 1:21. In *The Protevangelium of James*, the Messenger of Lord speaks to Mary, while in Matthew the angel of the Lord speaks to Joseph. While this contextual difference is present, it should be pointed out that this does not necessarily prevent us from making the conclusion that this verse indicates a relationship between Matthew and *The Protevangelium of James*. As seen above, the length and complexity of the sentence must indicate a strong likelihood of a relationship between the texts.

In both Matthew 2:2 and PJ 21:2, the wise men come inquiring, "Where is he who is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and we have come to worship him" (ποῦ ἐστιν ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; εἴδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἤλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ). The wise men's question cannot be found in any of the other canonical gospels, nor can it be found amongst the Nag Hammadi texts or the apocryphal gospels. Bound by the span of current scholarship, this set of verses reflects exclusive, complex language parallels.

2.2d PJ 21:9 and Matthew 2:8

In PJ 21:9 and Matthew 2:8, Herod responds to the wise men's query of where Jesus has been born by commanding them, "When you have found [him], tell me so that I may come and worship him" (εὕρητε ἀπαγγείλατέ μοι ὅπως κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ). This sentence reflects precisely paralleled language limited to PJ and Matthew.[65] The order's absence from other canonical texts, the texts of the Nag Hammadi library, and the apocryphal gospels indicates that direct parallel between PJ and Matthew.

The passages that have been considered display literal wording parallels with excellent precision. They have retained verbal tenses, declensions, and general sentence structure. After ruling out that the commonalities have come from an oral tradition or a third source, there is little to no doubt that there is a textual source commonality between Matthew and PJ.

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[65] It should be specified that this statement reflects the current state of scholarship and is therefore limited by it.

2.3 Substantiating the Deduction of a Textual Commonality with Small Phrases Unique to Matthew and PJ

There are also instances where the wording of smaller phrases in Matthew and PJ correspond with each other. These fragmented clauses cannot establish a textual commonality between Matthew and PJ, but with a commonality established by the first criterion, they serve as supporting evidence. Below some examples are considered.

2.3a The Child with Mary and the Gifts of the Wise Men

Both PJ 21:10-11 and Matthew 2:9-11 record two phrases. The newborn Jesus is found "with Mary his mother" (μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς) and "[gave] him gold and frankincense and myrrh" (αὐτῷ δῶρα χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν). While neither of these phrases alone would present strong evidence of a tie between PJ and Matthew, with a relationship established, they can be understood to both buttress the argument for a relationship between Matthew and PJ and, because of their linguistic commonality, substantiate the claim that there is a literary relationship between them.

2.3b Herod's Command to the Wise Men, PJ 22:2 and Matthew 2:16

Both Matthew and PJ have a commonality in phrasing in their accounts of the wise men. The wise men, in traveling home another way, angered Herod. Both authors write, "Then Herod, seeing that he had been tricked by the Magi, grew angry" (τότε Ἡρῴδης ἰδὼν ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη ὑπὸ τῶν μάγων followed by ἐθυμώθη λίαν in Matt. and ὀργισθεὶς in PJ). In the passages that follow both authors transmit similar stories, but this is the extent of their direct linguistic parallels. Still, this commonality strengthens the argument that there is a textual relationship between Matthew and PJ by demonstrating the gospels converge in their language.

If it were not already determined that there is a textual commonality between PJ and Matthew, it would be undoubtedly hard to assert that these passages display proof of a relationship, though some scholars make the attempt. However, because there is a textual commonality between Matthew and PJ, these smaller parallel passages reflect more cases of literarily dependent text.

2.4 The Use of Small Phrases in Determining a Textual Relationship

Hock has suggested that there are small phrases common to PJ and Matthew and that these small phrases also indicate a relationship between them. But it must be made clear that suggesting that these small phrases are an indication of a literary relationship between Matthew and PJ may be untenable. In the cases that he suggests, not one of them is any more than four words long, and all of them have common parallels elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. This means that the Hebrew Bible may have been the source or it may have come to one text via oral tradition rather than from a literal dependence on the other. Still, because these instances have been suggested as evidence for a literary relationship between Matthew and PJ, it is of significance to evaluate whether or not these common phrases lend themselves to supporting the textual relationship.

2.4a Forty Days and Forty Nights, PJ 1:10 and Matthew 4:2

As it has been noted and suggested by Hock,[66] PJ 1:10 and Matthew 4:2 both record the phrase, "forty days and nights" (ἡμέρας τεσσεράκοντα καὶ νύκτας) which suggests some sort of relationship between them. However, this phrase is not exclusive to these two texts, as it occurs

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[66] Hock, *Infancy*, 35.

10 times outside of Matthew's gospel.[67] Thus it seems that the phrase "forty days and nights" could have come from a number of sources. It may have been a commonly occurring phrase of lengthy duration, or it may have been part of an oral tradition that both Matthew and PJ are aware of. The pervasiveness of this tradition in Jewish culture makes it impossible to conclude that because of this commonality, a literary relationship between Matthew and PJ can be more fully established.

2.4b Throughout the Whole World, PJ 4:1 and Matthew 24:14

Hock also claims PJ 4:1 and Matthew 24:14 also exhibit a commonality in phraseology, but the phrase is overly simplistic. Both of them, respectively, contain the phrase "throughout the whole world" (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ). This four-word parallel is exceedingly basic and it could be easily recreated without any other source or it could simply be a reoccurring phrase in common speech. These possibilities make distinguishing a textual relationship from oral dependency or simply creative license nearly impossible.

2.4c Handing Over Innocent Blood, PJ 14:3 and Matthew 27:4

PJ 14:3 records Joseph's concern that by announcing Mary to the people of Israel, he will be sentencing Mary to death. Joseph worries, "...and I will be found to have handed over innocent blood to death" (καὶ εὑρεθήσομαι παραδιδοὺς ἀθῷον αἷμα εἰς κρίμα θανάτου). Matthew 27:4, according to Hock, relays a similar, likely related phrase, "...saying I have sinned by handing over innocent blood" (λέγων ἥμαρτον παραδοὺς αἷμα ἀθῷον). Here, we have similar wording, though it undoubtedly is not a literal relationship between texts. In considering it as a case of paraphrasing, it still remains too basic of a phrase to suggest any

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[67] Gen. 7:4, 12. Ex. 24:18, 34:28. Deut. 9:9, 11, 18, 25, 10:10. 1 Kings 19:8.

textual relationship. It seems more likely that it was a common oral phrase or taken from similarly known phrases. This suggestion is substantiated by acknowledging Deuteronomy 27:25, where it is written, "Cursed be he who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person..." None of these verses contain a clear parallel with either of the others, and the simplistic construction makes it likely that the commonalities were coincidentally similar, coming from existing oral tradition or patterns.

Although scholars like Hock have suggested that there are smaller phrases shared by Matthew and PJ that prove literary commonality, this suggestion seems unfounded. It is further unfounded to say that they represent cases that substantiate an already proven relationship because they are not indicative of a textual relationship. In all of the cases it was more likely that they reflected known oral tradition or a shared Hebrew Bible tradition rather than a literary tie.

2.5 Determining the Relationship of Dependence Through the Lens of Elaboration

Having determined that there is an intentional, textual relationship between Matthew and PJ, the precise nature of this relationship must be sought: is Matthew dependent on PJ or is PJ is dependent on Matthew? Scholars have commonly assumed that PJ is dependent on Matthew, as evidenced by the way that PJ is commonly dated. However, assuming a date inevitably assumes a direction of dependency. The literary evidence within the text itself must be considered to determine dependency. PJ follows the structure and pattern of many other apocryphal gospels. By considering their composition, a methodology for considering the relationship of dependence between PJ and Matthew can be determined.

Many of the apocryphal writings were written with the intention to satisfy the curiosity of those who found that the texts, now a part of the canonical literature, insufficiently answered all

of their questions about the Jesus story. *The Acts of Pilate* reflects this pattern.[68] The canonical

texts do not explain what Jesus experienced during the time from his death on Good Friday until

his resurrection on Easter. It seems that early Christians wondered about what had happened to

Jesus during this period, that they questioned and speculated what had transpired throughout this

time, and that authors were then motivated to record the tales of what had happened to Jesus

during this time. In this way the *Acts of Pilate* demonstrates how the authors of the apocryphal

gospels sometimes used today's canonical texts as a framework for a textual elaboration that

provided answers to the key questions being asked by the faith community.

The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* also represents a gospel that has elaborated on the

canonical narratives in order to address a question that is not addressed by the authoritative texts.

The community responsible for the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* recognized that the canonical

gospels record only a little information about Jesus's early life. Luke is the primary source for

information on Jesus's childhood recording the events of his birth (Luke 2:1-21; Matthew 2:1-

11), his circumcision (Luke 2:21), the purification (Luke 2:22), and his visit to the Temple at age

twelve (Luke 2:42-51). But the time in between his circumcision at 8 days old and his

appearance at the temple at age twelve leaves a lot of room for questions and speculation

concerning Jesus's childhood. The text of *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* fills in this missing

period of Jesus's life under a canonical framework, by casting their Christological understanding

of Jesus during his ministry as an adult backwards to the figure of Jesus as a child, who is both

human and divine. In this way the community utilized the canonical literature and elaborated

upon it to fill in the gaps of the canonical stories of Jesus's life.

The dependency of these gospels on the canonical material is established based on the

texts' elaboration on a basic framework found in the canonical gospel material. If PJ can be

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[68] Elliott, *Apocryphal*, 169-204.

determined to contain a basic framework grounded in Matthew's gospel while also showing that the framework has been used for further elaboration and clarification of the details in Matthew, PJ can be shown to be dependent on Matthew.

2.5a Joseph's Children, PJ 9:8, 17:2 and Matthew 13:55, 13:56

Matthew's gospel straightforwardly records that Jesus had brothers and sisters: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us?" (Matthew 13:55-56). Clearly Matthew understood Jesus to have had siblings, but it is not made explicit whether or not these siblings are younger or older, are step-siblings or biological siblings, are children of Mary, or Joseph, or both etc. While PJ exhibits an agreement with Matthew on the detail that there are brothers, the author issues a more elaborate explanation of who these brothers are by specifying both that Joseph is much older than Mary and that he already has sons prior to his betrothal to her (PJ 9:8, 17:2).

In the examination of these texts, it is apparent that Matthew's account is rudimentary when compared to PJ's. Matthew simply declares that there are brothers and sisters while the author of PJ declares that there are brothers and joins to it a much more elaborate explanation of who these brothers are. It is no stretch of the imagination to see that Matthew, noted to be rather terse in form, is serving as the basis for PJ, which exhibits both this underlying structure as well as further elaboration. Arguably, PJ has taken the element in Matthew and amended it, perhaps in order to satisfy the questions surrounding the presence of siblings in the gospel but most notably in order to provide a satisfactory explanation of how it is possible for Jesus to have brothers while Mary still remained a virgin after Jesus's birth. Thus, the author of PJ used the

framework of Matthew's gospel, modified it to answer questions that had arisen since the authorship of Matthew, and made the account of the brothers fit within his own motifs in PJ.

2.5b Disposing of Mary Quietly, PJ 14:4 and Matthew 1:19

Matthew's gospel reflects a concise, strictly third person account of Joseph's encounter with the Angel of the Lord in a single sentence. Here, Matthew writes that "Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly" (1:19). While PJ maintains exactly the same theme, even with similarities in wording (resolving to divorce her quietly), PJ's text is much more involved. Instead of the brief third person statements of narration as found in Matthew, PJ records the first person thoughts of Joseph, who is deliberating both on what to do with Mary and how the baby's conception is possible (14:1-4). The long consideration of what to do reveals PJ's expansion of detail found in the original framework of Matthew.

2.5c The Death of Zechariah, PJ 23:1-7 and Matthew 23:35

The death of Zecharaiah recorded by Matthew 23:35 says that Zecharaiah was the son of Barachiah and that he was murdered despite his innocence. While Matthew's information about Zechariah occupies only one sentence, PJ's author commits two chapters to Zechariah's death (cf. PJ 23-24, Matt 23:35). PJ accounts the death of Zechariah, the father of John, as being a shedding of innocent blood (a phrase used by Matthew), and recounts that he was killed in Temple (mirroring the details in Matthew that Zechariah was killed in the space between the sanctuary and the alter). It is questionable whether PJ correctly or incorrectly assumed that these two Zechariahs were one person, but it is nonetheless apparent that PJ's story reflects not only a commonality with the story of Matthew 23:25, but also a likely attempt to give a detailed

explanation of the death of Zechariah within the framework of Matthew. PJ's author has used Matthew as his outline in the development of a more elaborate story.

Like other apocryphal gospels being written during the time that PJ was written, the author of PJ has taken a canonical gospel, in this case Matthew's gospel, as a basis for many of his stories and has expanded on their basic framework in order to satisfy the questions left by the unexplained sections of the canonical gospels. These cases of more complex text being found in PJ, as opposed to a more basic form in Matthew, indicate that PJ's author has relied on the text of Matthew as part of the framework for the composition of PJ's text.

The two critical steps in determining source dependency have been satisfied. An intentional, textual relationship between the two documents has been demonstrated, and the direction of relationship has been determined to reflect that PJ's author used Matthew's framework to create his gospel. Thus we can say with a high degree of confidence that Matthew was a textual source for PJ.

3.0 Considering Luke as a Textual Source

Given Matthew's status as a textual source for PJ, it can be deduced that the author was at least willing to use other gospels as a foundation for his own writing. Thus, we should ask if Luke, like Matthew, could have been a source used by PJ since it too contains an infancy narrative. As before, in order to establish that Luke is a textual source used by PJ's author, the satisfaction of the two critical criteria are required: first, an intentional, textual relation must be shown, and second, it must be determined that the relationship is best described as PJ being dependent on Luke.

3.1 Determining an Intentional Relationship

3.1a Simeon, PJ 24:13-14 and Luke 2:25-26

Both PJ 24:13-14 and Luke 2:25-26 record the story of Simeon, who was told by God

that he would not die until he had seen the Anointed One, the Lord's Christ, and they do so with

related wording, "It was revealed to [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until

he saw the Christ." (καὶ ἦν αὐτῷ κεχρηματισμένον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον

πρὶν ἄν τὸν Χριστόν, in Luke; οὗτος γὰρ ἦν ὁ χρηματισθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μὴ ἰδεῖν

θάνατον πρὶν ἄν τὸν Χριστόν, in PJ). While the first words of the accounts differ slightly in

their grammatical construction, they both retain the same vocabulary.[69] The second parts of the

verses are virtually indistinguishable, making it unlikely that this simply reflects an oral source.

The story of Simeon is also not found in any other of the canonical sources, the Nag Hammadi

texts, nor the apocryphal gospels. Without any unearthing of material to the contrary, this

parallel illustrates the case of exclusive texts with shared language.

3.2 Angelic Speeches

Overall, there appears to be a relationship between the language used in the angelic

speeches found in PJ and Luke. Each specific case is suggestive of a relationship between the

texts, but their common theme indicates that there was a specific desire to preserve the precise

words of the angelic speeches.

3.2a Angelic Speech: He will be Called Son of God, PJ 11:7 and Luke 1:35

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[69] Although there is a difference between our earliest known Biblical texts and the earliest known text of PJ, the difference might not actually signal less dependent wording. It could be the case that at one point PJ and Luke corresponded word for word, but that the translations have been modified in their transcription, leaving them with slight variants.

The angelic message delivered in Luke 1:35 is announced, "...and the power of the Most High will overpower you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, son of God." PJ 11:7 resembles this verse in Luke but there is a small difference. In PJ it is announced, "...and the power of God will overpower you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, son of the Most High" (...καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου (θεοῦ in PJ) ἐπισκιάσει σοι· διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ (ὑψίστου in PJ)). Yet, even with this minor divergence, the verses retain identical expressions of names for God amidst angelic statements that are otherwise linguistically parallel.

3.2b Angelic Speech: Greetings, Favored One

The angelic declaration found in PJ 11:2 appears to correspond linguistically to portions of two different verses in Luke: 1:28 and 1:42. PJ's author writes, "And suddenly a voice speaking to her said, 'Greetings favored one, the Lord is graciously with you. Blessed are you among women'" (καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ λέγουσα αὐτῇ· Χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη ὁ κύριους μετὰ σοῦ εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν). Luke's words are composed similarly. The first phrase of 11:2 is mirrored by the angelic announcement in Luke 1:28, "Greetings favored one, the Lord is graciously with you" (Χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη ὁ κύριους μετὰ σου)," while the latter part of 11:2 records an angelic declaration identical to one found in Luke 1:42, "Blessed are you among women" (εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν). The pronouncement in PJ 11:2 parallels Luke 1:28 and 1:42. This wording displays a solid example of a combination of verses that reflect the complexity and length of a significant wording parallel.

3.2c Angelic Speech: All Over the World, PJ 4:1 and Luke 2:9, 1:31

Hock suggests that PJ 4:1 similarly parallels fragments of two different verses found in Luke, specifically 2:9 and 1:31.[70] His hypothesis originates in his reading of PJ 4:1, "Suddenly a messenger of the Lord came to her and said: 'Anna, Anna, the Lord God has heard your prayer. You will conceive and give birth, and your child will be talked about all over the world.'" Hock's suggestion of the linguistically equivalent fraction of 4:1 found in Luke 2:9 is a small and questionably common phrase, "And the angel of the lord came..." (καὶ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐπέστη). In translation, Luke 1:31 reports "...you will conceive in your womb and bear a son..." which does appear to mirror the translation of PJ 4:1, but when the Greek is considered, only the verb, συλλήψει, is common to both texts. Hock suggests the language between PJ 4:1 and Luke 2:9 and 1:31 indicates a parallel between them,[71] but this conclusion seems overstated. The phrases common to both sentences are simple and straightforward with no distinguishing phrases, leaving them susceptible to the criticism that they are only coincidentally related or that the phrases are simply common in oral tradition. Taken alone, the commonalities between PJ 4:1 and Luke 2:9 and 1:31, as suggested by Hock, are too weak to indicate any possible relationship between the texts.

3.2d Angelic Speech: Do Not Fear Mary PJ 11:5 and Luke 1:30-31

Luke and PJ also record similar accounts of angelic discourse in PJ 11:5 and Luke 1:30-31. In Luke, the angel declares, "Do not fear, Mary. You have found favor grace from God (μὴ φοβοῦ Μαριάμ εὗρες γὰρ χάριν παρὰ τῷ θεῷ). PJ possesses similar phrasing, "Do not fear Mary, you have found grace before the Lord of all (μὴ φοβοῦ Μαριάμ εὗρες γὰρ χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ πάντων δεσπότου). Although the latter portions of the verses are worded slightly differently,

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[70] Hock, *Infancy*, 37.
[71] Hock, *Infancy*, 37.

they still retain the same idea: a name of reverence for God. There are literal similarities in wording as well as the thematic similarities in the naming of God.

Because the angelic declarations present in PJ and Luke share clear instances of paralleled language (that surpass suspicion of oral commonality), there is evidence to conclude that not only do the passages reflect individual parallels in language, but that Luke and PJ share a literary commonality in their treatment of angelic discourse.

The presence of the story of Simeon, as well as the paralleled language of the angelic speeches, suggests a definite textual relationship between PJ and Luke. The exclusivity of the story of Simeon as well as the presence of a directly parallel statement is highly suggestive of a relationship. The complexity of the corresponding angelic statements supports the hypothesis of a direct textual relationship between Luke and PJ.

3.3 Determining the Relationship of Dependence Through the Lens of Elaboration and Clarification

With the intentional, textual relationship between PJ and Luke established, the direction of dependency must be considered. If the literary evidence, as was seen with the relationship of the apocryphal gospels, reflects cases of elaboration and clarification of another text, it can be determined that the more basic text is being used by the more developed text.

3.3a Caesar's Decree, PJ 17:1 and Luke 2:1

Of the canonical gospels, only Luke records the decree from Caesar Augustus. Luke's story reports, "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled" (2:1). This exaggeration of the decree's scope was likely just as recognizable to ancient readers as it is today. Caesar Augustus had no means to census the entire world. PJ's

author has clarified this exaggeration by recording that the decree announced that "everyone in Bethlehem of Judea [should] be enrolled in the census." PJ's text legitimizes, presumably from skeptics, and modifies the story to be realistic. This correction suggests that the author of PJ has used and altered one of his sources: Luke.

3.3b Swaddling Cloths, PJ 22:4 and Luke 2:7

Among the canonical gospels, only Luke records the narrative of Mary wrapping Jesus in swaddling cloths, and laying him in a manger after his birth. PJ shares a similar account of Jesus being wrapped and placed in a cattle feeding trough, details unquestionably parallel to Luke's gospel, but the author also comments that Mary has done this to save Jesus from Herod's men, who have been ordered to kill the infants less than two years of age (PJ 21:12). Matthew accounts for Jesus's safety by reporting that Jesus and his family traveled to Egypt. However, Luke includes no explanation of how Jesus was kept safe during Herod's killing rampage. PJ has provided clarification of how this was possible, while still staying within the context of the traditional story provided by Luke. PJ remedies this gap in Luke's account, indicating Luke is a utilized source.

3.3c He Will Save the People From Their Sins PJ, 11:8 and Luke 1:31

In Luke, the Angel of the Lord tells Mary that she will conceive and bear a son and that she is to name him Jesus (Luke 1:31). In slightly different words, PJ's author writes that the angel tells Mary to name him Jesus and that "the name means—he will save his people from their sins" (11:8). The meaning of Jesus' name appears to be a later addition to the text as a clarification. Because one text clarifies the other, the more basic text can be understood to be the

earlier text, while the one that is more detailed can be understood to be dependent upon the first. From this piece of evidence, PJ looks to be dependent on Luke.

3.3d I Have no Husband, PJ 13:8, 15:13 and Luke 1:34

Mary expresses doubt about how her pregnancy is possible in PJ 13:8, 15:13 and Luke 1:34. Luke records her doubt, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" But this question does not necessarily indicate that she is a virgin. Sex outside of marriage, while not socially acceptable, is still obviously possible. PJ faced a similar dilemma in presenting Mary as a virgin. PJ's author chose to articulate Mary's status through her own words, "I have not had sex with any man." PJ's words clarify Mary as a virgin, regardless of her marital status. In this way, PJ has used the outline of Luke's account and then clarified the ambiguity left in its scripture.

As was found with Matthew, the gaps and weaknesses in Luke's gospel have been filled and strengthened in PJ. This elaboration and clarification of one text by another indicates that PJ is dependent on Luke.

A hypothesis of textual source dependency can only be satisfied by establishing a textual relationship, as seen between the gospels' account of Simeon and use of angelic language. The direction of the relationship was determined by examining the pattern of clarification and elaboration. Paralleled wording and textual clarification make it evident that PJ's author used Luke's text as a textual source.

4.0 Other Sources

4.1 Mark as a Source, Either Textual or Traditional

Establishing a textual source relationship or a relationship of dependency between Mark

and PJ is virtually impossible because there are no literal wording parallels, and the tradition

parallels that do occur are also found in Matthew.[72]

There is an indication that PJ and Mark allude to the same tradition of Jesus having

siblings. Mark 6:3 records the names of the brothers of Jesus, similar to PJ's allusion to them in

9:8 and 17:2. However, there is no reason to think that PJ is alluding to or aware of this tradition

from Mark. Matthew contains the same text as Mark 6:3 in Matthew 13:55. As has been seen

already, Matthew is a textual source for PJ, meaning that the author of PJ probably used a source

he already had, Matthew, rather than drawing directly from Mark's gospel. The isolated incident

of similarity between PJ and Mark does not reflect any relationship between the texts. The

similarity drawn upon came from Matthew's gospel rather than Mark's.[73]

4.2 John as a Source, Either Textual or Traditional

It has been suggested, that PJ 16:7 is related to words found in John 8:11, and there is,

indeed, a small textual similarity. In John, the speaker is recorded as saying, "Neither do I pass

judgment on you (singular)" (οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω). In PJ, the speaker is recorded as saying,

"Neither do I judge you (plural)" (οὐδὲ ἐγὼ κρίνω ὑμᾶς). But this simplistic phrase cannot

establish a textual parallel, and it surely cannot establish a textual relationship between PJ and

John. As for a relationship between the traditions represented, there is no paraphrasing or

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[72] Scholars have come to understand that Matthew used Mark as a source. Fredrick J. Murphy. *Early Judaism: The Exile to the Time of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002), 333.

[73] It could be argued that *The Protevangelium of James* may be using Mark as a traditional source. But *The Protevangelium of James* does not have a commonality with any other passage in Mark, leading to the conclusion that there is no evidence to suggest that *The Protevangelium of James* was using Mark as a traditional source.

allusion to common characters or situational context. It cannot be deduced that there is a common tradition between them.

4.3 Septuagint as a Source, Either Textual or Traditional

Some scholars assert that the Septuagint (LXX) was a source used by the author of PJ.[74] However, these assertions are misleading. LXX comprises all of the Hebrew Scriptures now found in the canon as well as the texts of *The First Book of Esdras*, The *Second Book of Esdras*, *Tobit, Judith, The Additions to the Book of Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus* (*The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach*), *Baruch, The Letter of Jeremiah, The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men*, and *Susanna*, or what is today termed the Apocrypha. However, historically, the term Septuagint only properly refers to the translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch, which appears to have been first translated into Greek in the third century BCE to meet the needs of the Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria. There are also indications that the various parts of the Prophets and Writings were translated at differing times in separate places and that these writings emerged within various manuscripts.[75] If this is the case, then the oldest full manuscripts of LXX, which date to the fourth century CE, may represent a mosaic of translations and revisions of texts with a variety of backgrounds. Adding to this complexity, some of the Septuagint codices that have been found demonstrate that the Hebrew Bible was not itself a fixed canon in the first century CE,[76] which makes it difficult to even understand what they mean by the word Septuagint and what texts that it is supposed to include.

Even if we agree that the Septuagint refers to the Greek Jewish Scriptures (Jewish Scriptures as they have been canonized), it is still not clear what these scholars mean when they

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[74] Hock, *Infancy*, 21. Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 9-12.

[75] George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 192-3.

[76] Nicklesburg, *Jewish Literature*, 193.

say that the Septuagint is a source for PJ. Hock argues that there are 'explicit citations' that show that the author of PJ has borrowed information from the Septuagint. But his 'explicit citations' do not fulfill any of the criteria of a textual source. He argues that phrases like 'as the Lord God lives,'[77] 'without spot or blemish,'[78] and 'fruit of his righteousness'[79] which are frequently used in the Septuagint suggest that the author has borrowed LXX traditions. However, these phrases are simplistic and their usage is too widespread (meaning they would have likely also been in common language) to suggest a distinctive relationship. Because in many cases these are the only commonalities that PJ has with that text, there is no reason to think that the texts containing these phrases were necessarily textual sources used by PJ.

Since the LXX is not a textual source, perhaps scholars meant that it was a tradition source. This hypothesis seems to be supported with the fact that PJ makes use of several of the elements in the LXX, but the elements that the author of PJ uses are not from the LXX as a whole, rather they are limited to writings of the Pentateuch. Let us look at some examples.

4.3a The Serpent, PJ 13:4-6 and Genesis 3:1-20

Genesis contains only one three word phrase of paralleled language with PJ. In Genesis 3:13, Adam is questioning Eve, and in PJ 13:6, Joseph questions Mary, "What is this that you have done?" (τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας) This small phrase is too simple and too short to suggest any definitive instance of parallel language.

While PJ is not textually dependent on Genesis, PJ does allude to traditions found in Genesis. PJ records Joseph's lament, "…Who has lured this virgin away from me and violated her? The story of Adam has been repeated in my case, hasn't it? For just as Adam was praying

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[77] Hock *Infancy*, 21. Cf PJ 4:2, 6:3, 13:10, 15:13-15, and 19:19 with Jud 8:19, Ruth 3:13, 1 Sam 14:39, etc.
[78] Hock, *Infancy*, 21. Cf PJ 4:5 and Ex 29:38.
[79] Hock, *Infancy*, 21. Cf PJ 6:12 and Prov 11:30, 13:2, Amos 6:12.

when the serpent came and found Eve alone, deceived her, and corrupted her, so the same thing has happened to me." PJ's author clearly indicates that the text is drawing on the imagery of Eve and the serpent in Genesis 3. PJ has motioned towards the characters of Genesis specifically by name. This indicates that PJ is well aware of the tradition grounded in Genesis 3.[80]

4.3b Abraham and Sarah, PJ 2:9 and Genesis 18:9-15, 21:1-7

The author of PJ knows and alludes to the Genesis narrative of Abraham and Sarah. In PJ, Anna prays, "O God of my ancestors, bless me and hear my prayer, just as you blessed our mother Sarah, and gave her a son, Isaac" (PJ 2:9). PJ's reference to Sarah alludes to the text of Genesis (specifically 18:9-15, 21:1-7). PJ's author understands Joachim and Anna, being barren like Sarah and Abraham, to be modeled in the footsteps of Sarah and Abraham. PJ's author is aware of the tradition of Sarah and Abraham originating in Genesis and has unmistakably alluded to it while preserving character, sentiment, and setting.

4.3c Bearing False Witness PJ 15:16 and Exodus 20:16

Before the priest, Joseph proclaims his innocence where Mary is concerned (PJ 15:14-15). The priest, in response, orders him not "to perjure himself, but to tell the truth" (PJ 15:16). In the present day, this comment in some form is issued frequently. But it is significant in the text of PJ because it is a command issued by a priest. The priest's comments, imposed upon him by the author of PJ, allude to the tradition of the ten commandments, where it was charged that "no one bear false witness against his neighbor" (Exodus 20:16). Knowledge of the

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[80] It can appropriately be asked whether the awareness of the Genesis story comes specifically from Genesis 3 or another story modeled off of Genesis 3. It is clear that society has circulated this story considerably. It is referenced in 2 Cor 11:3, as well as extensively throughout the Nag Hammadi literature. The story's widespread use makes it hard to determine whether PJ would have known this story specifically from Genesis, from oral culture, or from another source. But in any case, it can still be suggested that PJ is using the tradition found in Genesis as a source.

commandment is found throughout early Christian texts (cf. Matt 19:18, Mark 10:19, Luke 18:20, and *Gospel of Thomas* (6)).[81] With the prominent words of the commandment known, PJ may have pulled these words from any one of many traditions, but it still remains that PJ is well aware of the tradition grounded in Exodus 20:16.

4.3d The Temple Veil, PJ 10 and Exodus 26:3, 36:35

Because PJ uses Matthew and Luke as sources, PJ is dated after Matthew and Luke, both of which are presumed to be written after the fall of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE. If these assumptions are correct, PJ would have been written at a time when the Temple and its traditions were becoming only memories. Yet, PJ records that Mary played a role in the creation of the Temple Veil. The author writes that threads of gold, white, linen, silk, violet, scarlet, and true purple were used. PJ's author could not be recording knowledge of the veil first hand, meaning that he had to have a source. The traditions of the veil making are found in Exodus.

Both Exodus 26:23 and 36:5 detail Moses's construction of the Temple veil. Moses made the veil using "blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen." The account given in PJ adds to this white, silk, and violet thread, leading to the question of how this came to be added to tradition. Still, however this addition may be explained, the author of PJ is somehow aware of the tradition of the veil grounded in Exodus.

4.3e The Blood of a Woman, PJ 8:3-4 and Leviticus 15:19-33

PJ records that the priests, upon her twelfth birthday, became concerned with Mary's presence in the Temple and that she might pollute the sanctuary (PJ 8:3-4). PJ's author is

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[81] This saying is found in kernel Thomas, suggesting that it is a part of an early draft of the sayings material found in Thomas. This attests to the commandments pervasiveness in Jewish and Jewish-Christian society. April D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

ambiguous as to the priests' concern, but a logical deduction understands that at roughly age twelve a girl begins puberty, which ultimately brings about the process of menstruation. PJ's note of the priests' concern seems to be loaded with this connotation. But this is not simply PJ's creation; Levitical law dictates that the menstruation of a woman made her unclean, that everywhere she dwells will become unclean, and that anyone who touches these things will likewise become unclean (Lev 15:19-33). Mary's presence in the Temple during this time, then, would have desecrated it.

Levitical purity laws were pervasive in Jewish culture, as seen by the widespread adherence to Leviticus 11 as the basis for kosher laws. With prevalent Levitical laws, the author's utilization of Levitical tradition is appropriate. The author would have had ample understanding of Levitical law, as would his audience, and could have easily used its traditions. It cannot be said that PJ used the law in Leviticus specifically, though, since there are no parallels in wording (which would have indicated a textual relationship). Instead, PJ may have been written with a consciousness of tradition based on Levitical law, rather than on the text of Leviticus itself. This leads to the conclusion that PJ's author used a Levitical tradition in forming the gospel.

4.3f Cleansing After a Birth, PJ 5:9 and Leviticus 12:1-8

PJ records that following Mary's birth, Anna waited the "prescribed days" and then "cleansed herself of the flow of blood." PJ is alluding to a significantly well known tradition that requires no elaboration on the subject. The tradition that is being drawn upon seems to be from Leviticus 12:1-8, where it is written that upon giving birth to a female child, the woman shall be impure for a period of two weeks, at which time she may cleanse herself. Observance of this purity law would presumably have been a recognized practice in society. While it cannot be

deduced that PJ used this Levitical law specifically (due to the absence of any parallel wording), it can be reasoned that PJ used a tradition based on this law.

4.3g Dathan, Abiram, and Korah, PJ 9:9 and Numbers 16

While Numbers cannot be described as a textual source for PJ, Numbers and PJ do preserve a common tradition. In PJ the priest who assigns Joseph to take Mary as his wife also commands Joseph, who is hesitant and almost unwilling to do so, to take her. The priest tells Joseph to fear the Lord and to remember God's punishment upon Dathan, Abiram, and Korah for their rebellion against God's will (9:9). The priest's statement alludes to the story of men of the same names that is recorded in Numbers. Numbers chronicles the story of these men who rose up against Moses and who disrespected God. These men were swallowed up whole by the earth and thrown down to Sheol alive (Num 16). The statement of the priest in PJ seems to indicate the author's awareness of this tradition, and it also indicates that this story was popular enough to resonate with the story's audience.

4.3h Bring Your Rods, PJ 8:7 and Numbers 17:1-9

The author of PJ writes that when Mary was to be entrusted to a husband, Zechariah was instructed by an angel to assemble the widowers and to have them bring a staff when they met him. When the men arrived, the staffs were gathered and prayed over and redistributed. Joseph's rod produced a sign and from it came a dove, which perched on his head signaling that God had chosen Joseph to take Mary as his wife.

This custom of using rods is seated in Numbers, where it is recorded that rods are used as instruments of divine will. Numbers 17:1-9 says that each man was ordered to bring a rod according to his father's house, and then the rods were collected and prayed over. In the

morning the rod of Aaron had sprouted and put forth buds. PJ's author's words are clearly

modeled after a framework like that in Numbers, and he maintains comparable customs and a

related situation for employing the use of rods. PJ's author is using the tradition found in

Numbers as a source for his gospel.[82]

4.3i The Drink Test, PJ 16:3 and Numbers 5:11-31

PJ contains a rather obscure reference to a drinking test that Mary and Joseph are

required to undergo to prove their purity. In the gospel, Mary and Joseph are given the "water of

the conviction of the Lord" which will make their sins apparent for all to see. Separately, Joseph

and Mary partake of the bitter water and are then sent to the wilderness. Both of them, however,

return unharmed and are not condemned of the sins they were accused (16). The details of this

test do not match any known material classified in the apocryphal gospels or the Nag Hammadi

material. However, Numbers records a very similar test for women thought to have committed

adultery. In great detail, Numbers 5:11-31 records the test involving the water of jealousy.

Numbers reports that the priest shall have the water of bitterness administered to a woman

suspected of going astray. If she has defiled herself, the water will bring an explicit curse. The

author of PJ envisions Mary and Joseph to have been falsely accused of going astray, and he

understands that they can be acquitted through this test. PJ utilizes the tradition of the drinking

test found in Numbers as a source.[83]

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[82]An objector may claim that there are additional pieces of evidence for the use of rods outside of Numbers. Canonically, Hosanna 4:12 records similarly, "My people inquire of a thing of wood, and their staff gives them oracles." But the tradition of Hosanna is reliant on the text of the Torah, including Numbers (cf. Hosanna 9:10 and Num 25:1-18). Noting this, it can still be concluded that PJ is drawing upon the tradition that stems from Numbers.
[83] While the test is being applied similarly to determine if a woman has gone astray, there are key differences. The author of PJ seems to be unaware or to have ignored the fact that the water of jealousy was only given to women. Numbers 5:29-30 declares, "This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a wife, though under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself, or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man and he is jealous of his wife; then he shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law." Yet in PJ, it is clear that

If we use 'Septuagint' precisely to mean the translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek, then it is appropriate to conclude that the Septuagint is a tradition source that has influenced the writer of PJ. It seems problematic, though, to extend the meaning of Septuagint to mean all the Hebrew texts plus the Apocrypha since the similarities as shown are all from within the Pentateuch.

However, there is a greater difficulty with saying that the Septuagint is a 'tradition source' since it may be the case, for instance, that the author knew of the custom of the bitter water not from the Septuagint necessarily, but from a third source that had likewise known the tradition. Thus we have to be aware that 'tradition source' is not a necessarily exclusive title. For example, a text may look like it has borrowed pieces from a Numbers tradition, but we also have to realize that the text could be aware of some part of the traditions that align themselves with the Numbers tradition, without actually knowing Numbers itself. Thus, to say that the Septuagint is itself the tradition being drawn on would greatly underestimate the complexity of sources available in the early centuries CE. While the Septuagint can be classified as a tradition source, a full consideration of tradition sources must not be limited to Septuagint texts, but must be opened up to any text that carries a common tradition with PJ.

4.4 Considering a Non-Canonical Source: The Mishnah as a Tradition Source

In considering what sources may have influenced the author of PJ, it is important to remember that the scope of our search should not be limited to texts that are canonical, but rather that our search remains open to any influence holding commonalities with the textual families associated with PJ. One of the textual families that PJ is categorized into includes those texts from the first centuries CE that draw from the Law and traditions of the Hebrew Bible and LXX.

Joseph stands accused too. The difference between PJ's presentation of the test and Numbers presentation of the test may indicate how traditions are changing over time.

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Amidst the texts in this family is a text known as the Mishnah. The Mishnah itself is a

philosophical code of law that scholars hypothesize came to a closure during the latter part of the

second century CE.[84] Scholar Jacob Neusner writes that the Mishnah would have flourished

during the second century CE in the land of Israel as authors took the traditions they had

received from the preceding century and revised and reshaped them.[85] If Neusner and other

scholars are correct in how they have dated and explained the construction of the Mishnah, parts

of the Mishnah would have been circulating (prior to their aggregation in the Mishnah) around

the time that PJ was composed. While it would be misleading to say that the Mishnah itself is

then a potential textual or tradition source for PJ, it is appropriate to say that the tradition that

came to form the Mishnah is a possible source.

However, we cannot simply look for parallels in the two texts because of an added

dynamic between the texts. The Mishnaic tradition and PJ are both are dependent upon a third

body of texts: the Hebrew Bible and LXX. Thus, for example, if we saw that both PJ and the

Mishnah drew upon similar ideas of avoiding committing perjury we might be tempted to say

that they share a commonality, but we would have to also realize that the Hebrew Bible and LXX

talk about this subject in comparable ways. In order to see if the Mishnaic texts and PJ have a

unique relationship, one that cannot be described in terms of a third source, we need to look at

traditions in PJ that align themselves more closely with the Mishnaic traditions than they do with

the Hebrew Bible or LXX. There are many instances where PJ's author seems to be aligning his

ideas with Mishnaic beliefs rather than with the traditional readings of the Hebrew Bible or

LXX. We now turn to look at several examples.

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[84] Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck, eds, *The Blackwell Companion to Judaism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing LTD, 2003), 95. The Mishnah is dated to the latter half of the second century CE because of its awareness of both the destruction of Temple during the war with Rome and the events during 132-135 CE when Jerusalem was closed to the Jews (Neusner and Peck, *Companion*, x).
[85] Neusner and Peck, *Companion*, x

4.4a Barrenness

In the opening chapter of PJ, Joachim is confronted by a man who tells him that he cannot make an offering because he has not produced a child. In response to the incident Joachim becomes distressed and banishes himself to the wilderness (1:4-9). The inability to produce a child was often understood to be an act of God,[86] but what is significant here is that Joachim bares the blame for his childlessness. This counters the biblical view that attaches the responsibility of barrenness to the woman.[87] Yet, Joachim's guilt and shame may be related to the Mishnaic idea that the woman was not solely responsible for infertility. In the Mishnah, rabbis express that no man may abstain from his wife, even if they have been together for ten years and she has not become pregnant. It is written, "The duty to be fruitful and multiply falls on the man but not on the woman" (Yeb. 6:6). Here, the tradition in PJ may be moving away from the canonical perspective on barrenness and assignment of blame to the female, to a tradition of male responsibility, which explains Joachim's sense of responsibility for his childlessness. If PJ is understood to have been influenced by the traditions of the Mishnah, the actions of Joachim can be understood in a way that cannot come from simply understanding PJ as influenced by the Hebrew Bible or LXX. The added dimension of a possible Mishnaic tradition influencing PJ gives rise to an otherwise lost understanding of the text.

4.4b Turning Two and Three

The seventh chapter of PJ gives a seemingly peculiar account of Joachim's desire to dedicate Mary to the Temple at age two. Anna, however, asks that Mary not be taken until she is three (7:1-4). The importance of this story is not made obvious by the text itself, but reading it

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[86] 1 Sam 1:5. Gen 16:2, 20:18. Hos 9:14.
[87] In many stories women desperately prayed to God to "open their wombs." The males were not at fault for an inability to reproduce (Psalm 113:9; Gen 30:1; 1 Sam 1:10, etc.).

against the Mishnaic tradition may offer a way to give meaning to the text. The Mishnah records the belief that when a girl was three years and one day old, she was considered to be an adult and she could be betrothed (Nidd 5:4). It was also believed if any child under three were to be sexually violated, her hymen would be spontaneously regenerated.[88] With these traditions, it is possible to see how vital these traditions may have been for a story of Mary's purity. If Mary had been dedicated to the Temple before turning three years old and a day, her purity may have been suspect. But since she was withheld until the proper time, the image of her as pure is preserved. Reading this portion of PJ with an awareness of Mishnaic tradition suggests why the author sought to include these details in the story by highlighting how her dedication at age three and one day would have preserved her purity and protected her purity from scrutiny. The Hebrew Bible and LXX cannot explain why this story would have had important functions in PJ because neither discusses the significance of females turning age three. It can be suggested that PJ made use of the Mishnaic traditions, since reading PJ through the lens of the Mishnaic texts gives meaning to portions of the stories that otherwise go unnoticed, unappreciated, or misunderstood.

4.4c Age Twelve, PJ 8:3-4

PJ records that when Mary turns twelve, the priests in the Temple became very concerned with Mary continuing to live in the Temple (8:3-4). The allusion seems to be directed towards the Levitical Law that women are unclean during menstruation, but with an understanding of Mishnaic text, the priests concern precisely on her twelfth birthday is fitting. At age twelve, a girl becomes a woman, and menstruation becomes a concern (Nidd 5:7). At age twelve, then, Mary officially threatened the sanctity of the Temple, which retains its holiness in part because it

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[88] Babylonian Talmud, Niddah 45a.

has not been defiled by menstrual blood (Kel 1:8). Whereas the Hebrew Bible and LXX do not

specify age twelve as especially significant, the age twelve also holds specific significance

among marriage traditions in the Mishnah. Niddah records that at the age of twelve a girl is able

to make vows (5:6). In PJ, Mary is twelve when she is betrothed to Joseph, indicating yet again

that the significance of age twelve in PJ is reinforced by the Mishnaic tradition. Once more, PJ

and the Mishnah resemble each other with traditions and views that are absent from the LXX or

the Hebrew Bible, leading to the suggestion that the Mishnaic tradition influenced PJ and that

some passages of PJ must be understood in terms of Mishnaic tradition in order to give them

meaning.

4.4d The Drink Test, PJ 16:3

While the test of the bitter water in PJ resembles the test of the bitter water in Numbers,

there are several differences (PJ 16:3-8, Num 5:11-31). In Numbers the man is only able to

make his wife drink the bitter water, whereas in PJ the Priest imposes this penalty even though

Mary is not yet married to Joseph. In Numbers only the woman is given the test, whereas in PJ

both Mary and Joseph are given the water. In Numbers the test appears to be an abortive process

that will reveal the deceit of an affair, whereas in PJ Mary is six months pregnant. In Numbers

the procedure followed for the test is different: the woman's hair is unbounded and a formulaic

curse and oath are utilized. PJ does not contain these elements. With these considerations, PJ's

similarities with Numbers are perhaps diminished, but we should bear in mind that PJ and

Mishnaic description of the test of the bitter water contain similarities.

Unlike Numbers, the Mishnah does not limit the affect of the bitter water to only women.

Sotah 5:1 asserts, "As the water puts her to the proof so does it put the paramour to the proof..."

Sotah brings forth the idea that the woman's action of drinking the water also has consequences

for the lover. PJ has made this idea even more explicit by showing that Joseph, presumably the paramour, is tested also by the drink so that his role and possible guilt may be exposed. It also seems that PJ's depiction of Mary and Joseph's participation in the drink test is more reflective of the Mishnaic tradition which is meant to expose the sin, rather than the abortive consequence displayed in Numbers.

Given these examples, there appears to be some kind of relationship between PJ and the Mishnah. Someone may argue that the relationship between them is based on the fact that they both are based in the traditions of the Hebrew Bible or the Septuagint, but we should remember that the Mishnah and PJ present parallels that are closer to each other than to the Hebrew Bible or the Septuagint. It is important to also remember that they are chronologically grounded in the same time period and that they represent contemporary concerns in Judaism and Christianity. While a full consideration of the relationship between the Mishnah and PJ would be outside the scope of this paper, it may be suggested that the overlap in textual families is evidence that the relation of the Mishnah to PJ may be able to be described as a tradition source.[89]

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The Author's Use of Sources

Although scholars have been making progress in their work on PJ, in large part their work on PJ's sources has been inhibited from making great strides by an over generalized idea of a 'source' and a lack of a clear methodology to narrow down and evaluate potential 'sources.' Here, an alternative methodological approach has been offered. The list of potential sources can

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[89] Because the traditions in PJ and the Mishnah are being developed concurrently, it could be suggested that the texts (and possibly communities) are influencing the development of one another, and while it would be unlikely, it could hypothesized that PJ influenced the Mishnah. However, it seems that the Mishnah, a text concerned with preserving interpretations of the correct practices of Jewish Law, would not have been influenced by PJ, an infancy narrative composed by Hellenistic community removed from Jewish society. However, this remains an issue to be fully addressed in further studies on the relationship between PJ and the Mishnah.

be narrowed down to those sources that fall into textual families associated with PJ. From a more focused list, the sources can be individually considered for parallels, and these parallels can be used to determine if the text is a source for PJ and if so what type of source it is. As we described above, textual sources, written sources that were physically present when the author was writing, can be deduced from instances of directly paralleled sentences and phrases that reflect a significant amount of complexity such that an intentional relationship between them is recognizable. Tradition sources, those sources which reflect knowledge of a tradition rooted in a text, can be determined from parallels contained in the text and PJ. Parallels in beliefs and customs, the presence of paraphrasing or demonstration of direct allusion may indicate paralleled traditions. Using the language of textual and tradition sources is important when concluding that a text is a 'source' because it clarifies how we think the source was being used.

Implementing a new methodology for evaluating the sources used by the author of PJ has led to the suggestion that Matthew and Luke were textual sources, meaning that they were physically accessible and intentionally copied by the author of PJ. It also led to the suggestions that the Septuagint and the Mishnah (oral Torah) were tradition sources, meaning that they represent traditions that were utilized by the author of PJ throughout the text. This survey of probable sources for PJ only scratches the surface of the possibilities. Texts in any of the textual families associated with PJ remain viable outlets for further inquiry into the use of sources in PJ. Further study could include continuation of the investigation of the relationship between PJ and LXX, and could extend its query to a thorough look at the The Apocrypha, texts that fall into the family of the Septuagint. Texts written prior to the mid-century CE with traditions of Mary would also be valuable to explore since texts like these may show PJ as dependent on other communities' development of Mariology. In working towards a more comprehensive understanding of PJ's use of sources, it is also important that even traditions outside of the

Judeo-Christian traditions be considered. Considering pagan traditions and texts as possible sources may produce new parallels on topics such as temple life, virginity, virgin birth, etc. While this paper by no means exhausts the study of possible sources used by PJ, it begins to help us understand the elements of the *Protevangelium of James* by clarifying and advancing the discussion of its sources.

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