

Abraham Terian. *The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy with Three Early Versions of the Protoevangelium of James*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 224 pp. Hardcover, \$130.00.

Aristotle is often credited as the influence behind the phrase “nature abhors a vacuum.” While this can be debated in physics, it is the case that ancient authors disliked lacunae in narratives that they retold. In the case of the canonical Gospels, the authors of Matthew and Luke found the beginning and ending of Mark less than attractive and provided infancy narratives and resurrection appearances to complete the story of Jesus. The former became the subject of a number of gospels beginning in the second century C.E. The most famous of these are the *Protoevangelium of James* (second century) and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (second century). These are, however, by no means the only examples. Later generations used earlier texts and other traditions to form new infancy gospels: *The History of Joseph the Carpenter*, Pseudo-Matthew, *The Gospel of the Birth of Mary*, *The Arabic Infancy Narrative*, a number of Gnostic texts, as well as translations of some of these works into a number of different languages. One of the fullest of the Infancy Gospels is the Armenian Infancy Gospel: it drew from the *Protoevangelium of James*, the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, and Pseudo-Matthew. We are now fortunate to have it in an English translation. Abraham Terian provides an introduction to the text (xi-xxxiii), the first English translation of the long version with some notes (1-149), and fresh translations of the three recensions of the Armenian versions of the *Protoevangelium of James* (150-170).

At the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Conybeare published the first six chapters of the short version of the Armenian Infancy Gospel as the *Protoevangelium of James*, an understandable mistake since the Armenian Infancy Gospel uses the *Protoevangelium* as a major source. A year later, Esayi Tayets'i clarified the relationship between the two texts when he published two “copies” of the Armenian Infancy Gospel (Copy A and Copy B) and the three Armenian translations of the *Protoevangelium of James*. Tayets'i's edition of the Infancy Gospel, Copy A in particular, became the standard text. Unfortunately, Tayets'i selected very poor manuscripts for Copy A and Copy B. Paul Peeters published a French translation of Tayets'i's short version (Copy A) that has served as the major venue of access to the text for Western scholars. Terian has worked through the manuscript evidence and identified four recensions of the text. The following chart summarizes the recensions and the scholarly publications (see also Terian, xxvii).

| Recension | Manuscript | Version | Publication |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| A | M7574 (earliest) | Long | Terian translation |
| B | J3164 (seventeenth century) | Short | Tayets'i Copy A |

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|---|------------------------------------|------|-----------------|
| C | J1432 (seventeenth century?) | Long | |
| D | M5599 | Long | Tayets'i Copy B |

The chart is slightly misleading since Tayets'i used manuscripts of the recensions—one known and one unknown, but not necessarily the exemplars that Terian noted.

Terian translated M7574, the sole exemplar of Recension A. He did, however, more than translate the manuscript. He worked through the other recensions and edited M7574 in light of the evidence that they provide: he completed 41 lacunae and corrected 34 corruptions. He also helps the reader understand variants by providing translations of them in the footnotes when they had a substantial effect on the translation of M7574. It is useful to think of Terian's translation as analogous to a corrected English translation of Codex Vaticanus for the NT and to think of the footnotes as analogous to the notes in the United Bible Society edition of the Greek NT where the goal is to highlight variants that make a substantial difference for translators. Terian made one other substantial contribution to the manuscript: he provided chapter headings. He noted the headings provided in the manuscripts of Recension B in Appendix II (171-176), but elected not to follow these because they are often wordy and do not reflect the actual contents of the chapters. Instead he elected to provide headings that reflect the contents of the chapters. The work thus goes well beyond the standard conventions of a translation, even if it is by no means a translation of a full critical edition.

The Armenian Infancy Gospel was translated from a Syriac original sometime in the sixth century C.E. According to one Armenian source, missionaries brought select apocryphal writings to Armenia in 590 C.E., including *The Infancy of the Lord*. The report aligns nicely with the fact that the earliest attested use of the Armenian Infancy Gospel was by the seventh-century savant Anania of Shirak (see xix). The Armenian appears to rest on a Semitic base, at least the syntax suggests this in several ways. The most likely original language was Syriac.

The thirty-seven chapters of the text cover the birth of Mary through the thirtieth year of Jesus. With only a handful of exceptions, the translation reads well. I have not had access to the Matenadaran manuscript in Yerevan (M7574) that Terian used as a textual base and therefore have not checked the translation for accuracy. Terian attempts to be consistent in his translation and signals extra English words by including them in parentheses. The 709 notes provide not only information about textual variants, but indicate major sources, and provide limited explanations. While no one will confuse the work with a commentary, the notes do help the reader. It would have been useful to have an additional appendix that listed the basic biblical and nonbiblical sources in tabular form. Other scholars have tabulated some of these

traditions, but it would have been helpful to have a full analysis of the sources of this text, especially since the text is an excellent example of the tendency to combine earlier sources and to create a fuller account. Just as Matthew and Luke expanded Mark, so the author of the Infancy Gospel expanded earlier infancy narratives by combining them.

We are in Terian's debt for working through the basic manuscript tradition and providing us with an English translation of one of the fullest examples of an infancy gospel from the early centuries of Christianity. Just as a Western visitor is often surprised to discover that one of the four quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem is Armenian, so students will be surprised to discover the rich literary tradition of early Armenian Christians.

University of Notre Dame

GREGORY E. STERLING

Tickle, Phyllis. *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 172 pp. Hardcover, \$17.99.

For readers interested in the current and future configuration of Western Christianity, Phyllis Tickle, founding editor of the Religion Department of *Publishers Weekly* and a lay eucharistic minister in the Episcopal Church, offers a fascinating portrait of the emergent Christian movement. Tickle seeks to answer three important questions: "The Great Emergence: What Is It?" (Part 1); "The Great Emergence: How Did It Come to Be?" (Part 2); and "The Great Emergence: Where Is It Going?" (Part 3).

Tickle begins Part 1 by asserting that "about every five hundred years the empowered structures of institutionalized Christianity . . . become an intolerable carapace that must be shattered in order that renewal and new growth may occur" (16). These times of upheaval are rummage sales in which the church cleans out its attic. Once these hinge points in history occur, three results follow: first, a new and vibrant expression of Christianity emerges; second, the dominant institutionalized expression of Christianity is reconfigured into a purer form; and third, the Christian faith is spread into new territories and demographic areas.

The first rummage sale occurred under Pope Gregory the Great in the sixth century. Pope Gregory led a turbulent continent into an "ecclesio-political coherence," guiding Christianity into monasticism, protecting and preserving the faith for the next five centuries. The Great Schism between Greek Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, the second rummage sale of the eleventh century, concerned the nature of the Holy Spirit, the appropriate language for worship, and whether or not yeast ought to be used in the Eucharistic bread. During each of these hinge points of history, a process of "re-traditioning" occurs—a dynamic progression from upheaval to renewed stability.

Rummage sales involve an interaction between religion, culture, and society. Religion, as a "generic phenomenon" interacting with culture and