INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose

This study is essentially a commentary on the Protevangelium Jacobi. The fact that the last commentary – a very concise one, moreover – was written in 1910 by E. Amann, while the editors of the text naturally had to restrict themselves to a few exegetical notes, shows that there was ample justification to write a new commentary on P.J.

With regard to the text, the present author relies on the work of other scholars. It seemed preferable not to give the text as established in the last critical edition of P.J., i.e. the edition by E. de Strycker. In order to enable the reader to discover the crucial passages

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1 The title Protevangelium Jacobi was first used by G. Postel (1510-1581), and has become customary since then. Origen cited it as biblos Iakobou (see § 5 and note 62). In Papyrus Bodmer V there is a double title: genesis Marias, apokalupsis Iakoub (see also p.168). The Greek MSS mostly give a very extensive title, e.g. diegesis kai historia lakoobou, poon egenethi he huperagia theotokos eis hinoou sooterian (manuscript 1454 of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), or: ton hagion lakoobou ton adelphou theou logos histrikos eis to genesion tis huperagias theotokos (manuscript 1476 of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris). Also in the versions the title is extensive (see O. Cullmann, in Neutestamentlichen Apokryphen, herausgegeben von W. Schneemelcher, Tübingen, 1959, p.278). Perhaps on account of the Decretum Gelasianum, which condemns P.J., manuscript 1454 is cited in the index of the MSS as "anonymi narratio". In several other indices, also, the Protevangelium Jacobi is referred to as "anonymi narratio". Henceforth Protevangelium Jacobi is cited as P.J.

2 E. Amann, Le Protevangle de Jacques et ses remaniements latins, Paris, 1910; henceforth to be cited as A.

3 cf. p.192; sub B. Commentaries.

4 E. de Strycker, La Forme la plus ancienne du Protevangle de Jacques, Bruxelles, 1961, p.34-35; henceforth to be cited as S.
of the text immediately\textsuperscript{5}, it was decided to print two manuscripts side by side. The choice of these two was not hard to make. Naturally the oldest manuscript, which was published in 1958\textsuperscript{6}, was to be included, while it seemed also quite logical to choose the manuscript which C. Tischendorf regarded as the best one\textsuperscript{7}. In order to write this word by word commentary the original Greek words referred to have been transcribed\textsuperscript{8}. When a brief summary is given at the beginning of a chapter, the commentary proper is given after each individual word. Generally, each comment consists of the following parts:

1. In order to show P.J.'s indebtedness to the Old Testament in vocabulary and subjectmatter, we have given as many references to the Septuagint\textsuperscript{9} as seemed to be necessary.
2. To a lesser extent, the same applies to parallels adduced from the New Testament. One could call these two parts the experimental part of the commentary\textsuperscript{10}.
3. Next, the readings of the other manuscripts are given. The manuscripts known before 1876 are referred to according to Tischendorf's designations\textsuperscript{11}, while for those published after that date we use the designations proposed by E. de Strécker\textsuperscript{12}.
4. The commentaries of earlier commentators\textsuperscript{13} are referred to.
5. Parallels from other religions also are offered where possible and desirable.
6. Later Apocryphal writings\textsuperscript{14} treating the same material are adduced to illustrate the further development of the story.
7. In conclusion, the author's own opinion is given.

\textsuperscript{5} cf. § 2.
\textsuperscript{7} C. Tischendorf, Evangelia Apocrypha, Leipzig, 1876, p.xviii, in reference to MS. Paris, Reg., nunc Nation., num. 1454; henceforth to be cited as c.
\textsuperscript{8} The following transcription has been used: α a; β b; γ g; δ d; ε e; ζ dz; ζ η; θ th; ι i; ι k; λ l; μ m; ν n; ξ x; ο o; π p; ρ r; σ s; τ t; u u; ϕ ph; χ ch; ψ ps; ω o; ς s.
\textsuperscript{9} Henceforth to be cited as LXX; d. § 4.
\textsuperscript{10} More about this problem is to be found in § 3 of the introduction.
\textsuperscript{11} C. Tischendorf, o.c., p.xvii-xx.
\textsuperscript{12} cf. p.191-192.
\textsuperscript{13} e.g. De nativitate Marieae and Pseudo-Matthaeus, ed. E. Amann, o.c.

2. Survey of the editions of the Greek text

The first Greek text of P.J. was published in Basle; it was preceded by the Latin version by Th. Bibliander in 1552. The manuscript-based, can no longer be determined.

A new edition of the Greek text Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti text of M. Neander, printed beside during a century and a half, no information, though the theory of G. P. Bauer on the beginning of St. Mark's Gospel, was published. The Greek text of J.A. Fabricius is the last edition to be satisfied, while it is at the same time the first readings from other manuscripts. In his edition of 1804\textsuperscript{17} A. Birch uses a basis, while supplying variants from the Vatican. A. Birch is the first to provide a text-critical edition was followed fairly soon by no longer bases his work on the text he did, but takes one MS. from the Romanus, which he provides with a text-critical apparatus in Codex Catal.454, the same as used by Neander dates from the tenth century and is available: "Huic antiquissimi eligitur integrum nos loco vulgati propos.

\textsuperscript{17} cf. J.C. Thilo, Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti, Copenhagen, 1804.
\textsuperscript{18} cf. J.C. Thilo, Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti, Copenhagen, 1804.
\textsuperscript{19} cf. J.C. Thilo, o.c., p.53.
2. Survey of the editions of the Greek text of P.J.

The first Greek text of P.J. was published in 1563 by M. Neander in Basle; it was preceded by the Latin version of G. Postel, published by Th. Bibliander in 1552. The manuscript on which this edition was based, can no longer be determined. A new edition of the Greek text did not appear till 1703. In his *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* J. A. Fabricius gave the Greek text of M. Neander, printed beside the Latin translation of G. Postel. During a century and a half, no interest was taken in the form of the text, though the theory of G. Postel that P.J. was the missing beginning of St. Mark’s Gospel, was much discussed at that time. The Greek text of J. A. Fabricius is at once an end and a beginning. It is the last edition to be satisfied with only the text of M. Neander, while it is at the same time the first to be provided with alternative readings from other manuscripts.

In his edition of 1804 A. Birch uses the text of J. A. Fabricius as basis, while supplying variants from two manuscripts from the Vatican. A. Birch is the first to give a text-critical edition. This edition was followed fairly soon by that of J. C. Thilo. The latter no longer bases his work on the text of J. A. Fabricius, as A. Birch did, but takes one ms. from the Royal Library of Paris as his text, which he provides with a text-critical apparatus. The manuscript (Cod.Catal.1454, the same as used in the present commentary: c) dates from the tenth century and is, in his opinion, the best ms. available: “Huius antiquissimi et praestantissimi codicis textum integrum nos loco vulgati proposuimus”. Seven Parisian manuscripts and the two from the Vatican, already consulted by Birch, form the critical apparatus.

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12 W. J. Bouwsma, in his biography of Postel (cf. *Concordia Mundi: The Career and thought of Guillaume Postel (1510-1581)*, Cambridge Mass., 1957, p.35) doesn’t discuss this problem either.
14 cf. A., o.c., p.166-167.
17 cf. J. C. Thilo, o.c., p.53.
In his edition of 1853 C. Tischendorf composed a new text from the MSS he could consult. The result may be called a "composite text". In this respect he differs completely from all his predecessors. In the prolegomena of his Evangelia Apocrypha (p. 9) Tischendorf says of the P.J.: "In his maximum curam impendimus Pseudo-Jacobi libello. Praeter codices enim Thilonis quattuor, Birchi duos, item Fabricianum, et Postelli textum, ut Pseudo-Eustathium aliosque præterea adhibuimus octo codicis a Thilone nondum adhibitos. Neque vero satis visum est ex his codicibus unum praecipue ut textum conformaremus ad optimorum codicum consensum".

The number of available MSS had not increased for Tischendorf's edition altera in 1876. Since the end of the last century however some ancient fragments have been published, which are of particular interest in discussing the unity of P.J.

These fragments are given in:

2. E. Pistelli, Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca dei Papi e latini in Egitto, Papiri Greci e Latini I, Firenze 1912

In 1958 M. Testuz published an important MS. of P.J. which belongs to the well-known Papyri Bodmer 20. This publication derives its importance from the fact that Papyrus Bodmer V is the oldest MS. of P.J. we know. It was, most likely, written in the 3rd century A.D., while the earliest-known MSS so far dated from the 9th century at the earliest, the only exception just mentioned being the few fragments 21 which go back to an earlier date also. So we have chosen this Papyrus Bodmer V as one of the two texts for this commentary, this oldest MS. naturally being very important for our knowledge of the earliest form of the text. In 1961 E. de Strycker, S.J., published La Forme la plus ancienne du Protevangelium de Jacques. 23 In this work the author confronts Pap. Bodmer V with the material gathered by Tischendorf augmented with the fragments published by Testuz. He does not use the about one hundred many different libraries dispersed over the world. Those were studied by B.L. Daniell, who were available to him and who this respect he followed and completed. Unfortunately this work only exists in a rare edition which was not available, so that it must be considered as lost.

The above survey shows, that in the present author made a choice 24 in editing the text of P.J. Thilo could not do this because several MSS were available to him and therefore determined by the small number of MSS. yet he seems to have chosen on principle to provide it with variants from the other MSS.

The choice of Tischendorf also shows the principle. The method he was to use already here. At present the choice of method is determined by the great number of manuscripts available. The method of Tischendorf and goeth as a good method, only in this case if the MSS are not available to everyone.

De Strycker, in his edition, considered the earliest text on the basis of a complete whole of the traditional text known. Tischendorf augmented with the

20 Bibliography, p.152.
21 cf. note 6.
22 Henceforth to be cited as z.
24 Dissertation of Duke University, Duke was a student of Professor K.W. Clark.
with the material gathered by Tischendorf in his editio altera,
augmented with the fragments published since then. The author
does not use the about one hundred ms which are to be found in
many different libraries dispersed over many different countries.
Those were studied by B.L. Daniels, who collected all the ms
which were available to him and composed a text from them. In
this respect he followed and completed the method of Tischendorf.
Unfortunately this work only exists in a few stencilled copies, and
was not available, so that it must be left out of consideration.
The above survey shows, that in the course of time two methods
were used in examining the text of P.J.; Thilo represents one
method, Tischendorf the other. In the following paragraph the
advantages and disadvantages of these methods will be examined.

3. The editing of the text

As this study does not intend to give a critical edition of the text,
the present author made a choice from the two methods used so far
in editing the text of P.J. Thilo could have made a composite text,
because several ms were available to him. His choice was perhaps
determined by the small number of manuscripts available to him,
yet he seems to have chosen on principle to take a single ms. and
provide it with variants from the others.
The choice of Tischendorf also seems to have been a matter of
principle. The method he was to follow for the text of the N.T., he
used already here.
At present the choice of method is determined in the first place by
the great number of manuscripts that has emerged. Daniels follows
the method of Tischendorf and goes to work in the same way. It is
a good method, only in this case it is to be regretted that the results
are not available to everyone.
De Strycker, in his edition, considers it possible to put together the
earliest text on the basis of a comparison of Pap. Bodmer ν with the
whole of the traditional text known to us (i.e. the editio altera of
Tischendorf augmented with the fragments published since then).

23 cf. S. o.c., p.10.
24 Dissertation of Duke University, Durham, N.C., U.S.A., where the author
was a student of Professor K.W. Clark.
This means that S. did not look into the rest of the material. That is the great objection to his procedure. In order to reconstruct the earliest text it is necessary to examine all the extant manuscripts and impermissible to leave some eighty manuscripts out of account. The results S. has achieved may be termed very good, but it is not "la forme la plus ancienne" of the text, at least the method he uses arouses some doubt about this.

As it was not possible to compare all the manuscripts for the present commentary, and the text of Daniels was not available, the other possibility was chosen. Adapting Thilo's way of editing consisting of giving one MS. accompanied by the variants of the other MSS, we give here two MSS by way of practical compromise. These two texts have been set side by side. The earliest text known is confronted with the manuscript which both Thilo and Tischendorf consider a very good copy. These texts will be referred to as and . Variants of Tischendorf's edition of the text accompanied by those from MSS which were published after 1876 are given in the commentary.

Apart from the practical arguments, already mentioned, there is also a fundamental consideration, which makes it necessary to follow this procedure. In copying the text of the apocrypha a very great liberty seems to have prevailed. They were not "sacred scripture". This greater liberty results in a great many "embellishments". Without a particular ulterior motive, prompted rather by the playfulness of their fancy, the various copyists have added to the tale or shortened it, while harmonizing various versions according to their own personal predilection. The pious copyists v details which agreed with their piety, it is very hard to reconstruct this category of stories being the most important than correct tradition, therefore, to compare various series ending in the autographon to the tale than to look for an original text. It is not possible to afford proof that the text of c is not to be preferred to c, nor vice-versa, but one. The simplest form is by no means the last chapters the text of is done with the form we find in c S. has the case the text of z is not to be preferred to c, nor vice-versa, but one. The original form of the text is also all the apocrypha, p.j., has a homily transmitted very freely. In the homilies of the fathers of the church used in monasteries.

Finally attention may be drawn to

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26 About one hundred, cf. S., o.c., p.19. It was impossible to examine all of them for this commentary. Moreover it is superfluous to repeat the work of B.L. Daniels.
29 This freedom even applied to the first phase of the development of the text of Acts, as J.H. Ropes remarks (o.c., p.204): "In this phase, the text was subject to free variation, both accidental and deliberate, and to elaborate rewriting.”
33 As A.F.J. Klijn remarks correctly in Thomae, o.c., p.377-380.
36 cf. F. Kattenbusch, Die Geburtsgeschichte des Herrn, Theologische Studien und Kritik,
The pious copyists would provide an old text with details which agreed with their monastic piety. Because of all this, it is very hard to reconstruct the original text. P.J. might be best described as a "historia psychocheles," the main characteristic of this category of stories being the fact that edification is more important than correct tradition. It is much more important, therefore, to compare various stages of the development of the tale than to look for an original text.

It is not possible to afford proof that the text of Z is to be preferred to that of C. It is also practically impossible to construct a descending series ending in the autographon. This becomes evident if one compares two texts and registers all the differences. Z is not to be preferred to C, nor vice-versa, but it is better to print them side by side. The simplest form is by no means always the earliest one. In the last chapters the text of Z is decidedly an abridgment compared with the form we find in C. S. has convincingly shown, that in this case the text of Z is not to be preferred. One might also call the later apocryphal writing De Nativitate Mariae an abridgment of P.J., in which the translator has taken all kinds of liberties.

The original form of the text is also hard to determine because, like all the apocrypha, P.J. has a homiletic character. The text has been transmitted very freely. In the MSS P.J. is often found among homilies of the fathers of the church. P.J. also is found in lectionaries used in monasteries.

Finally attention may be drawn to the haggadic Character of P.J.