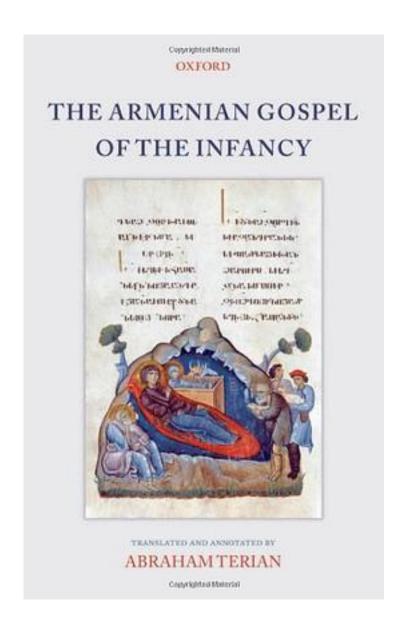
The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy



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The various versions of the Infancy Gospels illustrate how stories about the Virgin and Child lend themselves to be told and retold - much like the stories in the canonical Gospels. This first translation of the full text of the Armenian Gospel of the Infancy, itself derived from a sixth-century Syriac text that no longer exists, provides two variants of the famous narrative and several recensions or ancient editions. Stories about Jesus, many of them unique to this gospel, are included to show how he exercised his sovereign and divine will even as a child. This edition also contains three early Armenian versions of the Protevangelium of James, which with other ancient sources dependent on it (like the Infancy Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew) constitute the basic tradition in the formation of the later Infancy Gospels. These writings are our earliest sources about the parents of the Virgin Mary (Joachim and Anne) and her miraculous birth. They also form the basis for the dogma of her Immaculate Conception and perpetual virginity after the birth of Jesus, and lay the ground for certain of the Marian feasts celebrated since the fourth century. Terian's engaging introduction and annotation of the texts place this rare document clearly in its cultural and historical context and provide extensive references to the surrounding textual tradition. These extraordinary stories will appeal to all with an interest in the early church.

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