
The Age of the Virgin Mary

Introduction

Miscellany MSS like Tiberius A. iii are often a rich source of encyclopaedic material. Encyclopaedic in this context refers to various sorts of lore, but much of it had some sort of religious focus, as MSS were written in religious institutions. Thus the ages of the world, the ages reached by patriarchs, the geography of the Holy Land, and the signs of the end-times may all be grouped under this header. This brief specimen, situated between others like it in a MS that also contains a glossed Benedictine Rule, OE homilies, and a series of Latin prognostics detailing the predictive power of dreams, thunderstorms, and the like, fills in some details on Mary and Jesus, not all of which are apparent from the gospels.

Manuscript

London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii, fol. 44r

Text

Be sancta Maria ylde and be hyre forðsiðe

(1) Sancta Maria wæs [xvi]¹ winter þa heo crist acænde; (2) and syððan heo wæs mid him xxxiii wintra on middanearde; (3) and heo leofode xiiii gear æfter him her on worulde. (4) Heo wæs lxiii wintra þa heo forðferde. (5) Se hælend wæs þrittig þa hine mann fullude.

¹Corrected from xiiii by a contemporaneous hand.