

(Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, ed.) Fragments of Unknown **Gospels** (fr *NT Apocrypha*, rev. ed. v.1, 1991, pp 94-102)

[94] **1. Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 840**

Joachim Jeremias † and *Wilhelm Schneemelcher*

In December 1905 **Grenfell** and **Hunt** found in Oxyrhynchus (now Behnesa in the Middle Egypt) a leaf of a parchment book of the smallest size (8.5 x 7 cm.) written on both sides in microscopically small letters, which had probably served as an amulet (4th or 5th century). The first seven lines contain the conclusion of a discourse of Jesus delivered in Jerusalem, in which he warns his disciples against a deceptive confidence. There follows a visit to the Temple court where a sharp discussion takes place between Jesus and a Pharisaic chief priest named Levi, who takes Jesus and his disciples to task for neglecting the purification rules laid down for the treading of the court of the Israelites (called 'the place of purification'). This neglect of theirs answers to what is recorded in **Mk.** 7:1ff. and **Mt.** 15:1ff. regarding Jesus' attitude to rabbinical precept; and the severity and vigour with which in his rejoinder Jesus castigates the Pharisaic hypocrisy which sought through scrupulously careful observance of the ritual of cleanliness to delude men as to the abominable nature of what was within them, has in substance an exact parallel in **Mt.** 23:27f.

The text in form and content represents without doubt a variant of synoptic narratives. We may therefore speak of 'an unknown gospel of **Synoptic** type'. It must however be added that we cannot make any statements about the content and structure of the whole work. The age of this gospel also cannot be precisely determined.

Text: **B.P. Grenfell** and **A.S. Hunt**, OP V, London 1908, no. 840; id. *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel from Oxyrhynchus*, Oxford 1908; **H.B. Swete**, *Zwei neue Evangelien-fragmente*, (KIT 31), Bonn-Berlin¹1908 = ²1924, pp. 3-9; **Aland**, *Synopsis* p. 584 (index).

Literature:

A. Büchler in *The Jewish Quart. Review* 20, 1907-8, 330-346;

E.J. Goodspeed in *Biblical World* NS 31, 1908, 142-146;

A. Hamackin *Preuss.Jb.* 131, 1908, 201-210 = *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben* II, Giessen 1911, 237-250;

E. Preuschen in *ZNW* 9, 1908, 1-11;

E. Schürer in *ThLZ* 33, 1908, cols. 170-172;

A. Sulzbach in *ZNW* 9, 1908, 175f.;

L. Blau, *ib.* pp. 204-215;

A. Marmorstein, *ib.* 15, 1914, 336-338;

E. Riggenbach, *ib.* 25, 1926, 140-144;

J. Jeremias in *Coni. Neotest.* XI in honorem **A. Fridrichsen**, 1947, pp. 97-108; id. *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, ²1964, pp. 47ff.;

de Santos⁶, pp. 74-78;

Vielhauer, *Lit. gesch.* pp. 639-641.

First before he does wrong (?) he thinks out everything that is crafty. But be ye on your guard that the same thing may not happen to you as does to them.¹ For not only among the living do evil doers among men receive retribution, but they must also suffer punishment and great torment.

And he took them [the disciples] with him into the place of purification itself and walked about in the Temple court.² And a Pharisaic chief priest, Levi (?) by name, fell in with them and said to the Saviour: Who gave thee leave to tread this place of purification and to look upon these holy utensils without having bathed thyself and even without thy disciples having washed their feet?³ On the contrary, being defiled, [95] thou hast trodden the Temple court, this clean place, although no one who has not first bathed himself or changed his clothes may tread it and venture to view these holy utensils! Forthwith the Saviour stood still with his disciples and answered: How stands it (then) with thee, thou art forsooth (also) here in the Temple court. Art thou then clean? He said to him: I am clean. For I have bathed myself in the pool of David and have gone down by the one stair and come up by

the other and have put on white and clean clothes, and (only) then have I come hither and have viewed these holy utensils. Then said the Saviour to him: Woe unto you blind that see not!⁴ Thou hast bathed thyself in water that is poured out, in which dogs and swine⁵ lie night and day and thou hast washed thyself and hast chafed thine outer skin, which prostitutes also and flute-girls⁶ anoint, bathe, chafe and rouge, in order to arouse desire in men, but within they are full of scorpions and of <bad>ness <of every kind>.⁷ But I and <my disciples>, of whom thou sayest that we have not im<mersed> ourselves, have been im>mersed in the liv<ing ... > water⁸ which comes down from < ... B>ut woe unto them that....

Notes

II. Fragments of Unknown Gospels

1. Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 840

1. Cf. **Lk.** 13:5.
2. Cf. **Mk.** 11:27.
3. Cf. **Jn.** 13:10.
4. Cf. **Mt.** 15:14: 23:16f., 19, 24, 26.
5. Cf. **Mt.** 7:6: **Rev.** 22:15.
6. Cf. **Gospel of the Nazarenes** No. 18 (p. 162 below).
7. Cf. **Mt.** 23:27f.
8. Cf. **Jn.** 4:14.

[96] **2. Papyrus Egerton 2**

Joachim Jeremias † and *Wilhelm Schneemelcher*

P. Egerton 2 (= **P. London Christ.** 1) was first published by **H.I. Bell** and **T.C. Skeat** in 1935. It consists of two leaves and the remains of a third, which in the first edition and also in later studies were dated to the period around or before A.D. 150 (so also **van Haelst**, *Catalogue* No. 586 and **Aland**, *Repertorium* No. Ap 14). This dating is called in question by the discovery of a fragment identified by its editor **M. Gronewald** as part of **P. Egerton 2**, which supplements it by some five lines: **P.Köln no. 255**.¹ In **Gronewald**'s opinion the writing of the papyrus shows characteristics which allow us to assume a date close to **P. Bodmer II** (P⁶⁶ of John). This however according to **E.G. Turner**² is to be placed about 200 rather than about 150. Even when we take into account the difficulties of an exact dating, we must with regard to **P. Egerton 2** be much more cautious with an early date than hitherto. In particular many hypotheses bound up with this text become very questionable. The new discovery is taken into consideration in the translation below.

‘The text consists of the fragments of four pericopes, of which the first (*ll.* 1- 31) bears **Johannine** marks, the second (*ll.* 32-41) and third (*ll.* 43-59) exhibit parallels to **Synoptic** stories, whilst the fourth (*ll.* 60-75), the text of which has been handed down in a particularly fragmentary condition, describes an apocryphal miracle wrought by Jesus on the bank of the Jordan. The ‘**Johannine**’ fragment presents first the conclusion of a trial (*ll.* 1-5), the occasion of which was a transgression of the law on the part of Jesus; since two sayings follow from **Jn.** 5, the matter dealt with may be a violation by Jesus of the Sabbath. There follows a controversial discourse, made up of **Johannine** logia, with the rulers of the people (*ll.* 5-20), which reaches its climax in an agraphon of violent threatening. If, as is likely, the narrative continued in *ll.* 22-31, a self-assertion of Jesus will have followed which was felt to be blasphemous and so provoked an attempt to stone him, blasphemy being one of the offences for which the punishment was stoning (cf. **Jn.** 8:59; 10:31). Only very loosely connected to this, there follows the healing of the leper.

The two **Synoptic** pericopes, the healing of a leper and a discourse about tribute-money (*ll.* 32-59), are distinguished by the fact that they show contacts with all the three **Synoptics**; the material is simultaneously reduced and enlarged. In five places (see **Jeremias** in *Theol. Blätter* 15, 1936, cols. 40-42) there are transitions to other **Gospel** passages occasioned by verbal reminiscences, and this leads to the conclusion that both stories have been reproduced from memory. The scene at the Jordan (*ll.* 60-75) begins with a question (by Jesus) which clearly has as its subject the mystery of the resurrection typified in a grain of seed: Jesus himself answers the question by a miracle on the bank of the Jordan, causing, as it seems, the sowing and the ripening of the grain to follow immediately upon one another, as an index doubtless to the omnipotence of God which brings forth life out of death.

[97] The value which we assign to the text is determined by our judgment as to its relation to the canonical **Gospels**, especially to the Fourth. There are contacts with all four **Gospels**. The juxtaposition of **Johannine** (I) and **Synoptic** material (II and III) and the fact that the **Johannine** material is shot through with **Synoptic** phrases and the **Synoptic** with **Johannine** usage, permits the conjecture that the author knew all and every one of the canonical **Gospels**. Only he had no one of them before him as a written text. On the contrary the above-mentioned digressions in II and III, which were occasioned by verbal reminiscences and which also occur in I, show that the material has been reproduced from memory. Consequently we may have before us an instance of the overlapping of written and oral tradition: although the tradition was already fixed in writing, it was still widely reproduced from memory and in this way, enriched with extra-canonical material (IV), found new expression in writing. The text shows no historical knowledge that carries us beyond the canonical **Gospels**. The reproduction of the story of the healing of the leper shows in its beginning (wandering with lepers) and at its end (‘the priests’, in the plural) that Palestinian circumstances were not well known to the author; also the question about tribute-money is robbed of its typically Jewish tone through being worded in general terms’ (**Jeremias**).

This assessment of **P. Egerton 2** by **Jeremias** was largely taken over by **Vielhauer** (*Lit. gesch.* pp. 636ff.). In addition he drew attention to the fact that the two ‘synoptic’ sections show an advanced stage in terms of tradition history. This, if the early dating has to be corrected, is only to be expected. Furthermore **Vielhauer** emphasises that **P. Egerton 2** is evidence for the way in which ‘the tradition already fixed in writing, but reproduced from memory, was altered in its oral reproduction’ (*op. cit.* p. 638). The papyrus shows ‘how little the putting into writing of the Life of Jesus material by **Mark**, his successors and John brought the oral Jesus tradition to a standstill’ (*ibid.*).

H. Koester has presented a different interpretation of the text.³ Starting from an extremely early dating (beginning of 2nd century A.D.) he thinks it is a case of a text which is older than the **Fourth Gospel**. 'With its language that contains **Johannine** elements but reveals a greater affinity to the **Synoptic** tradition, it belongs to a stage of a tradition that preceded the canonical **Gospels**' (*History* 2, 182). Here he takes up the thesis of **Mayeda**, who affirmed the independence of **PEgerton** from the **Gospels**. But he goes even further when he evaluates this gospel fragment for his view of the history of the debate between the early community and Judaism. For **Koester** this text is a witness for the 'formation of the controversial material later taken up in the **Johannine** discourses'.

Apart from the probably untenable early dating, we cannot follow **Koester** in other respects either. **Neiryneck** has convincingly shown for the section in which the healing of the leper is reported that the text is 'post-synoptic', and that the author probably knew the three **Synoptics**, but especially **Luke**.⁴ The generalisation of the question of the tribute-money, mentioned by **Jeremias**, also speaks against the thesis that this papyrus documents an early stage in the history of the tradition.

[98] **Text: H.I. Bell and T.C. Skeat**, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel*, London 1935; id., *The New Gospel Fragments*, London 1935 (with corrections). **Aland**, *Synopsis* p. 584 (index).

Literature (with suggestions for restoration of the text): **M.J. Lagrange**, *Critique textuelle* II, Paris 1935, 633-649 (= *Rev. Bibl.* 4 4, 1935, 47ff.); **M. Dibelius** in *Dt. Lit. Ztg.* 57, 1936, cols. 3-11; **C.H. Dodd**, *A New Gospel*, Manchester 1936 (= *BJRL* 20, 1936 56ff.; reprinted in *New Testament Studies*, Manchester 1953, pp. 12ff.); **K.F.W. Schmidt - J. Jeremias** in *Theol. Blatter* 15, 1936, cols. 34-45 (cf. **H. I Bell**, cols. 72-74); further older literature in **G. Mayeda**, *Das Leben-Jesu-Fragment Papyrus Egerton 2*, Bern 1946 (cf. **H.I. Bell** in *HTR* 42, 1949, 53-63); **J. Jeremias**, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, 1964 (index); **Ugo Gallizia**, 'Il P. Egerton 2', in *Aegyptus. Riv. ital. di egittologia e dipapirologia* 3 6, 1956, 29-72 and 178-234; **Vielhauer**, *Gesch. d. urchr. Lit.* pp. 636-639; **H. Koester** and **F. Neiryneck**, see notes 3 and 4.

f.1^v (ll. 1-20)

(I) . . . <to> the lawyer<s>: 'Punish e>very one who act<s> contrary to the l>aw, but not me! . . . (5) . . . what he does, as he does it.' <And> having turn<ed> to <the> rulers of the people he <sp>oke the following saying; '(Ye) search the scriptures in which ye think that ye have life; these are they (10) which bear witness of me.⁵ Do not think that I came to accuse <you> to my Father! There is one<that ac>cuses <you>, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope.'⁶ And when they sa(15)<id>: 'We know that God <hath> spok<en> to Moses, but as for thee, we know not <whence thou art>'⁷ Jesus answered and said unto them: 'Now (already) accusation is raised⁸ against <you!> (20) unbelief in regard to the things testified by him. For if <you> had <believed Moses>, you would have believed <me>; for <concerning> me he <wrote> to your fathers'.⁹

f.1^r (ll. 22-41)

. . . <to gather> stones together to stone him.¹⁰ And the <rul>ers laid (25) their hands on him that they might arrest him and <deliver> him to the multitude. But they w<ere not able> to arrest him because the hour of his betrayal <was> not yet c<ome>¹¹ (30) But he himself, the Lord, escaped out of their han>ds¹² and turned away from them.

(II) And behold a leper drew near <to him> and said: 'Master Jesus, wandering with lepers and eating with them (35) in the inn, I also <became> a <leper>. If <thou> therefore <wilt>, I am made clean.' Immediately the Lord <said to him>: 'I will, be thou made clean.' <And thereupon> the leprosy departed from him. But Jesus (40) <said> to him; 'Go and show thyself to <the priests> and offer <for thy > purification as <Moses commanded>;', and sin no more . . .¹³

f.2^r (ll. 43-59)

(III)... <ca>me to him to put him to the pro<of> and to tempt him, whilst <they said>: (45) 'Master Jesus, we know that thou art come <from

God>,¹⁴ for what thou doest bears a test<imony>¹⁵ (to thee) (which) [99] (goes) beyond (that) of al(l) the prophets. <Wherefore tell> us: is it admissible <to p>ay to the kings the (charges) appertaining to their rule? <Should we> pay <th-> (50) em or not? But Jesus saw through their <in>ention,¹⁶ became <angry>¹⁷ and said to them: 'Why call ye me with yo<ur mou>th Master and yet <do> not what I say?'¹⁸ Well has Is<aiah> prophesied <concerning y>(55)ou saying: This <people honours> me with the <ir li>ps but their heart is far from me; <their worship is> vain. <They teach> precepts <of men>.¹⁹

f.2^v (lines 60-75)²⁰

(IV) <The grain of wheat>. . . (60) . . . in the place shut in . . . it was laid beneath and invisible . . . its wealth imponderable?²¹ And as they were in perplexity at his strange question, (65) Jesus as he walked stood <on the> bank of the <riv>er J ordan, stretched out <hi>s right hand, <fill>ed it with . . . and sowed. . . on the (70) . . . And then . . . water. . . And. . . before <their eyes>, brought fruit. . . much . . . to the jo(75)<y?> . . .

Notes

2. Papyrus Egerton 2

1. Text and commentary have appeared in *Kölner Papyri (PKöln)* vol. VI = Abh. RWA, Sonderreihe Papyrologica Coloniensia 7, 1987. I thank Herr **R. Merkelbach** and Herr **M. Gronewald**, who made it possible for me to use the manuscript of the relevant section (the translator would also thank Prof. **D. Luhrmann** for facilitating access to the published text).

2. *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, Oxford 1971, pp. 13.

3. **Helmut Koester**, *History and Literature of Early Christianity*, 1982, II, 181f.; id. 'Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels', in HTR 73, 1980, 105-130, esp. pp. 119ff.

4. p. **Neiryneck**, 'Papyrus Egerton2 and the Healing of the Leper', ETL 61, 1985, 153-160.

5. **Jn.** 5:39.

6. **Jn.** 5:45.

7. **Jn.** 9:29.

8. Cf. **Jn.** 12:31.

9. **Jn.** 5:46.

10. **Jn.** 10:31.

11. **Jn.** 7:30.

12. **Jn.** 10:39.

13. **Mk.** 1:40-44; **Mt.** 8:2-4; **Lk.** 5:12-14.

14. **Jn.** 3:2.

15. **Jn.** 10:25.

16. **Mk.** 12:13-15; **Mt.** 22:15-18; **Lk.** 22:20-23; **Jn.** 5:14

17. Cf. **Mk.** 1:43.

18. **Lk.** 6:46.

19. **Isa.** 29:13 LXX; **Mk.** 7.6f.; **Mt.** 15:7f.

20. No completely satisfying reconstruction of the text has yet been found for fol.2^v.

21. Cf. **Jn.** 12:24?.

[100] **3. Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1224**
Wilhelm Schneemelcher

The remains of a papyrus book, the writing of which points to the beginning of the 4th century, were also published by **Grenfell** and **Hunt** (**POx 1224** = OP X, 1914, 1 -10). The pages were numbered (there can still be recognised the numbers 139, 174 and 176; with these there belong 138 or 140, 173 and 175). The condition of the pages permits only a partially trustworthy reading of them. In the present state of our knowledge the identification of the fragments with a gospel is not possible.

Text: **Wessely**, PO XVIII, 266ff.; **Klostermann**, *op. cit.*, p. 26; **Bonaccorsi**, *op. cit.*, p. 40 (where, however, only one fragment is given); **Aland**, *Synopsis*, p. 584 (index).

p. 175

And the scribes and <Pharisees
and priests, when they sa<w
him, were angry <that with sin-
ners in the midst he <reclined
at table. But Jesus heard <it and said:
The he<althy need not the physician.

p. 176

And pray for
your enemies. For he who is not
against you> is for you.
He who today> is far off - tomorrow will be
near to you>.....

The remaining fragments are not translated here, since they are handed down in too poor a state. With p. 175 cf. **Mk.** 2:16-17 and par. With p. 176 cf. **Mt.** 5:44 (**Lk.** 6:27f.) and **Mk.** 9:40 (**Lk.** 9:50). Cf. also **Jeremias**, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, ²1964, p. 130 (index).

[101] 4. Papyrus Cairensis 10 735

Wilhelm Schneemelcher

Grenfell and **Hunt** also claimed as a survival from a non-canonical gospel the content of a page of papyrus of the 6th or 7th century (*Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire*, X, Oxford 1903, No. 10 735). But **A. Deissmann** brought forward objections to this assumption and was of opinion that here it is a matter rather of a text from a commentary or from a homily (**A. Deissmann**, 'Das angebliche Evangelienfragment von Kairo' in AR 7, 1904, 387-392; reprinted in *Licht vom Osten*⁴, 1923, pp. 368-371, (ET 1927, pp. 430-434). The objections expressed by **Deissmann** still stand, although his completions and explanations are not accepted. But an identification of the text has not so far been possible. Only this is settled, that it has to do with the proclamation of the birth of Jesus and the flight to Egypt, i.e. that here material from a gospel is presented - but whether as excerpt or homily remains open.

Text: In addition to **Deissmann**, *op. cit.*, also in **Klostermann** *op. cit.*, p. 24; **Bonaccorsi**, *op. cit.* pp. 32ff. **Aland**, *Synopsis*, p. 584 (index).

Recto

The angel of the Lord spake: Jo<seph, arise,
take Mary, thy w<ife and
flee to Egypt <

.....

.....

every gift and if <
his friends ... <....
of the king ..<....

.....

Verso

(According to **Deissmann**'s reconstruction)

... > should interpret to thee. The
archistrategus however> said to the virgin: Behold,
Elisabeth, thy relat>ive has also con-
ceived, and it is the s>ixth month for her who
was called barren. In> the sixth, that is <in the month Thoth,
did his mother> conceive John.
But it behoved> the archistra-
tegius to an>ounce <beforehand John, the> servant who go-
es before his Lord's> coming ...

With the recto cf. **Mt.** 2:13; with the verso **Lk.** 1:36.

[102] **5. The so-called Fayyum Fragment**
Wilhelm Schneemelcher

In the papyrus collection of the Archduke Rainer in Vienna **G. Bickell** found in 1885 a fragment of the 3rd century (**PVindob. G 2325**) which caused considerable sensation, the opinion being that it provided a first step to the formation of the **Synoptic Gospels** (cf. **Mk.** 14:27, 29f.). The publication of the papyrus (*Mittheilungen aus der Sammlung der Papyrus Erz. Rainer* 1, 1887, 54-61) was followed by a wealth of hypotheses (cf. literature in NTApO Hdb, p. 21 and NTApO², p. 38). But here also a secondary, indeed an abridged, rendering of the synoptic material has to be assumed, and the text must be considered an excerpt or fragment of a gospel hitherto unknown to us. The brevity of the fragment forbids sure statements of any kind: the completions also remain questionable. **Text:** It is also in **Wessely**, PO IV2.79ff.; **Klostermann**, *op. cit.* p. 23; **Bonaccorsi**, *op. cit.* pp. 30ff.; **Aland**, *Synopsis*, p. 444; **de Santos**⁶, pp. 80f. (Lit.).

After> the meal according to custom (?) (he said:) <All ye
in this> night will be offend-
ed, as> it is written: I will smite the <shepherd,
and the> sheep will be scattered.
When> Peter <said>: Even if all, <not I,
Jesus said:> Before the cock crows twice, <thrice
wilt thou> de<ny me today.

[No notes]