

The Gospel of the Savior:
An Analysis of P.Oxy. 840 and Its Place in the
Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION.....	vii
DECLARATION.....	viii
ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
INTRODUCTION TO P.OXY. 840.....	1
I. History of Interpretation	3
A. Initial Interest (1908-1914).....	3
B. Subsequent Neglect (1914-1986).....	9
C. Occasional Attention (1986-2003).....	11
D. Summary.....	13
II. Purpose of this Study.....	13
CHAPTER ONE: THE CODICOLOGY AND PALAEOGRAPHY OF P.OXY. 840.....	17
I. The Form of P.Oxy. 840: Codex	18
II. The Material of P.Oxy. 840: Parchment	20
III. The Size of P.Oxy. 840.....	22
A. Amulets.....	24
B. Miniature Codices.....	29
C. Blau and Preuschen.....	33
D. Summary.....	37
IV. The Hand of P.Oxy. 840.....	38
V. The Punctuation of P.Oxy. 840.....	42
A. Enlarged First Letter.....	43
B. Spaces Between Sentences.....	44
C. Coloring.....	44
D. Points.....	46
E. Accents/Breathing Marks.....	47
F. διπλη.....	48
G. Diaresis.....	49
H. Summary.....	50
VI. Scribal Habits of P.Oxy. 840.....	51
A. Corrections.....	51
B. Inconsistencies.....	53
VII. Abbreviations in P.Oxy. 840.....	54
A. Nomina Sacra	54
B. Omitted ν.....	57
VIII. Conclusions.....	58

CHAPTER TWO: TEXT AND TRANSLATION OF P.OXY. 840.....	60
I. The Text	62
A. Reconstructed Uncial Text.....	62
B. Reconstructed Minuscule Text.....	63
C. English Translation.....	65
II. Commentary.....	66
A. Line 1	66
B. Lines 2-3.....	69
C. Lines 3-7.....	71
D. Lines 7-12.....	76
E. Lines 12-16.....	78
F. Lines 16-21.....	80
G. Lines 21-24.....	81
H. Lines 24-30.....	82
I. Lines 30-34.....	83
J. Lines 34-41.....	86
K. Lines 41-45	88
CHAPTER THREE: THE HISTORICAL PROBLEMS OF P.OXY. 840.....	91
I. Pharisaic High Priest	93
A. Definition of <i>αρχιερεως</i>	93
B. The Combination of Pharisee and Chief Priest.....	95
II. Temple Layout and the "Holy Vessels"	97
A. <i>αγια σκευη</i>	98
B. <i>αγνευτηριον</i>	103
III. Ceremonial Washing and the "Pool of David"	111
A. The Pool of David as a <i>Miqveh</i>	112
B. Dogs and Pigs in the Pool of David.....	119
IV. Restrictions on Entering the Temple	122
A. Immersion Before Entering the Temple.....	123
B. Dressing in White Garments.....	129
C. The Essenes.....	131
D. Foot Washing.....	135
V. Conclusion.....	138
CHAPTER FOUR: THE RELATIONSHIP OF P.OXY. 840 TO THE CANONICAL GOSPELS	140
I. Pericope 1 (1.1-7)	144
A. Textual Relationships: Vocabulary, Phraseology, Grammar.....	144
B. Literary Form/Structure.....	146
C. Origins of the Tradition.....	148
II. Pericope 2 (1.7-45)	150
A. Textual Relationships: Vocabulary, Phraseology, Grammar.....	150
B. Five Canonical Passages.....	156
1. Luke 11:37-52	156
2. Matt 23:13-22.....	162

3. John 7:1-52	169
4. John 13:10.....	173
5. Mark 7:1-23.....	176
6. Summary	179
C. Literary Form/Structure	181
D. Origins of the Tradition	187
III. Conclusion.....	196
CHAPTER FIVE: TOWARDS PLACING P.OXY. 840 WITHIN EARLY CHRISTIANITY ...	199
I. The Community of P.Oxy. 840.....	200
A. Early Heretical Groups.....	200
B. Jewish-Christian.....	204
C. Which Jewish-Christian Community?	220
D. Who Were the Opponents of P.Oxy. 840?.....	229
E. Summary and Conclusions.....	234
II. Comparison of P.Oxy. 840 to Analogous Apocryphal Gospels.....	237
A. Gospel of Peter.....	238
B. P. Egerton 2.....	240
C. Jewish-Christian Gospels.....	241
D. The Long Ending of Mark.....	243
E. The Pericope of the Adulterous Woman.....	244
III. Summary and Conclusions.....	246
APPENDIX.....	249
FIGURE 1.....	250
FIGURE 2.....	251
IS P.OXY. 840 A REDACTION OF AN EARLIER APOCRYPHAL STORY?.....	252
"P.Oxy. 840: Amulet or Miniature Codex?".....	255
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	269

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Abstract of Dissertation

In December 1905 an archaeological dig at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt uncovered a small fragment of a non-canonical story of Jesus which recorded a conversation between Jesus and his disciples and a confrontation with a Pharisaic chief priest in the temple. The initial discovery of this fragment, designated P.Oxy. 840, sparked a debate concerning the date of the fragment, the origins of the story contained therein, and the historicity of its references to first-century Judaism. After nearly 100 years, the fragment has received no substantial scholarly investment, leaving many of these questions unresolved, and leaving many other important issues unexplored. Thus, this study will offer the first full-scale evaluation of this text—from palaeographical, historical, and exegetical perspectives—in hopes of discovering its rightful place in the scope of early gospel traditions.

Chapter one examines the codicology and palaeography of P.Oxy. 840, with special attention to its date, punctuation, scribal features, and possible function within early Christian communities. It is determined that P.Oxy. 840 is best understood as a miniature codex, not an amulet, and is plausibly dated 300-350 A.D.

Chapter two offers a new reconstruction of the Greek text, along with a new English translation. In addition, there is a running commentary on the Greek text explaining key reconstructive choices, exegetical decisions, and interpretive conclusions.

Chapter three provides a thorough re-examination of the historical problems that have plagued P.Oxy. 840 since its initial discovery. Such problems include the combination of Pharisee and chief priest, the viewing of the holy vessels in the tabernacle, bathing in a pool filled with dogs and pigs, and changing into white garments before entering the temple. Upon closer examination—particularly in light of new archaeological discoveries in the last century—it seems that P.Oxy. 840 has substantial and accurate knowledge of first-century temple practices.

Chapter four explores the relationship between P.Oxy. 840 and the canonical gospels. Prior scholarship has only scratched the surface of this issue, with various suggestions here and there amounting to no more than a few paragraphs. A detailed textual comparison shows the author of P.Oxy. 840 demonstrates awareness of (and is influenced by) five canonical passages: Luke 11:37-52; Matt 23:1-39; John 7:1-52; John 13:10; and Mark 7:1-23.

Chapter five attempts to reconstruct the probable community and religious milieu that would have given rise to P.Oxy. 840. The theological interests and polemical thrust of our fragment suggest that it arose from within Jewish-Christian circles engaged in dispute over ritual purity practices. One possibility is that P.Oxy. 840 arose from within the Jewish-Christian sect called the Nazarenes. Such a scenario would plausibly place the production of P.Oxy. 840 in Syria between 125 and 150 A.D.

Declaration

This statement is a declaration that this thesis is the result of my own composition and research and that its contents have not been presented to any other academic institution for a degree.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Kruger

Abbreviations

ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , ed. D.N. Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> , ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978-1987)
ASP	<i>American Studies in Papyrology</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BW	<i>Biblical World</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DLNTD	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments</i> , ed. R.P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1997)
DJG	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> , ed. Joel B. Green, et al. (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1992)
EncJud	<i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i> , ed. Cecil Roth, 16 vols. (Jerusalem: Keeter Publishing, 1971)
ERE	<i>Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics</i> , ed. James Hastings, 13 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1910)
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
ExpT	<i>Expository Times</i>
HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
ISBE	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> , ed. G.W. Bromiley, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988)
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
NKZ	<i>Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift</i>
NT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OEANE	<i>The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East</i> , ed. E.M. Meyers, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , ed. T. Kluser et al. (Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1950-)
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RelSRev	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> , ed. K. Gallig, 7 vols. (Tübingen, Mohr, 1957-1965)
RQ	<i>Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
RTL	<i>Revue théologique de Louvain</i>
SecCent	<i>Second Century</i>
SPap	<i>Studia papyrologica</i>

<i>SUNT</i>	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976)
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TTZ</i>	<i>Trierer theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>ZAC</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
<i>ZRGG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Religion- und Geistesgeschichte</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

All patristic abbreviations, footnotes, and other stylistic decisions have followed (as closely as possible) the guidelines in Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999).

INTRODUCTION TO P.OXY. 840

In December 1905, in a rubbish heap at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, a small fragment was discovered containing 45 well-preserved lines from an uncanonical gospel.¹ The manuscript—commonly dated third or fourth century²—consists of one vellum leaf from a miniature codex that contains the remains of a discourse between Jesus and his disciples and also a confrontation between Jesus and a Pharisee in the temple. Roderick Dunkerley referred to this fragment as “the longest, best-preserved, and most valuable of the Oxyrhynchus fragments.”³ Joachim Jeremias declared that the fragment “in substance ranks as high as the Synoptic accounts.”⁴ Henry Swete said the origin of this gospel “may with probability be assigned to the first half of the second century.”⁵ Assuming that these scholars are accurate in their assessments, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840 (hereafter P.Oxy. 840⁶) is one of the most valuable sources we have for evaluating extra-canonical gospel traditions in the second century, their relationship to the canonical gospels, and the role they played in early Christian communities.

However, despite these considerations, P.Oxy. 840 has been consistently overlooked when it comes to research on the apocryphal gospels. Indeed, it has been nearly a century since its original discovery in 1905 and there has only been a small number of articles written on the text (most very brief) and no full-length works have been attempted. This development is quite peculiar in light of the enormous advances during the last century in the study of apocryphal gospels. The discovery of Papyrus Egerton 2 in 1935 attracted generous attention and was dubbed

¹ Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908).

² J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 31. Some scholars date it to the fourth century (see Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 9).

³ Roderick Dunkerley, *The Unwritten Gospel* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1925), 8.

⁴ Joachim Jeremias, “An Unknown Gospel of Synoptic Type,” in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher (3rd ed.; London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), 57-58.

⁵ Henry Barclay Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1908), 3. Although Swete dates the origin of the gospel in the early second century, the extant manuscript we possess (P.Oxy. 840) is likely early 4th century.

⁶ Despite the fact that our fragment is actually vellum and not papyrus, its initial publication by Grenfell and Hunt in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. V (Oxford: Horace Hart, 1908), 1-10, has led to the designation P. Oxy. 840.

the “Unknown Gospel.”⁷ Despite the fact that P.Oxy. 840 was better preserved and only slightly shorter in length, Egerton 2 proved to be more popular because many scholars dated the extant fragments to the middle of the second century.⁸

Furthermore, the text seemed to have a clear textual relationship with all four gospels (especially John), which sparked much interest about its relationship to the canonical gospels.⁹ Then, the discovery of the Nag Hammadi material in 1945 continued to draw attention away from the value of P.Oxy. 840 in particular and the site of Oxyrhynchus as a whole.¹⁰ These documents attracted substantial academic (and popular) interest primarily due to the fact that their content was in many ways different from the canonical picture, thus spurring new theories and reconstructions of the historical Jesus. P.Oxy. 840, in contrast, does not offer any visible heterodox themes or dramatically new theology, but strikes a very familiar synoptic tone.

Unfortunately, much of the neglect of P.Oxy. 840 can be attributed to the doubts raised by some scholars about the historical accuracy of some of its descriptions of the temple and its associated rituals. Jeremias lamented the situation: “This pearl of gospel artistry has never received the attention it deserves. For unfortunately, when it was first published in 1907, the editors...dismissed it *in toto* as a fantastic invention.”¹¹ There are undoubtedly some thorny issues that have to be addressed, but it seems that this premature verdict against P.Oxy. 840 has

⁷ H.I. Bell and T.C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1935).

⁸ The second century date of Egerton 2 has been challenged recently by Michael Gronewald, “Unbekanntes Evangelium oder Evangelienharmonie (Fragment aus dem 'Evangelium Egerton'),” in *Kölner Papyri (P. Köln)* (Cologne: Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademischer Wissenschaften u. Universität Köln, 1987), 136-145. Gronewald argues that an apostrophe in P. Köln 255 is rare in manuscripts prior to the first decade of the third century.

⁹ For discussions on its relationship to the other gospels, see F. Neiryck, “Papyrus Egerton 2 and the Healing of the Leper,” *ETL* 61 (1985) 153-160; G. Mayeda, *Das Leben-Jesu-Fragment Papyrus Egerton 2 und seine Stellung in der urchristlichen Literaturgeschichte* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1946); Jon B. Daniels, “The Egerton Gospel: Its Place in Early Christianity” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1990); J.D. Crossan, *Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon* (New York: Seabury, 1985).

¹⁰ Robert M. Grant, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960). After the Nag Hammadi discoveries, the real identities of P.Oxy. 1, P.Oxy. 654, and P.Oxy. 655 became known: they were portions of the *Gospel of Thomas* (although slightly different). Thus, most of the remaining attention given to Oxyrhynchus was directed to these papyri. For more, see J.A. Fitzmyer, “The Oxyrhynchus Logoi of Jesus and the Coptic Gospel According to Thomas,” *TS* 20 (1959): 505-560; Roderick Dunkerley, “Oxyrhynchus Gospel Fragments,” *HTR* 23 (1930): 30-35; and C. Taylor, “The Oxyrhynchus and Other Agrapha,” *JTS* 7 (1906): 546-562.

¹¹ Joachim Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1964), 51.

prevented further scholarship on the document. Subsequent research (which will be discussed more in detail below) has demonstrated that the fragment may be quite historically accurate after all. Adolf Büchler commented, “It seems to me that the writer of this gospel was accurately informed on all these matters, and that tradition fully confirms the details which sound so incredible.”¹²

Thus, in light of significant new manuscript discoveries and research on apocryphal gospels since 1905, it is the intention in this study to do the first full-scale evaluation of this text—from palaeographical, historical, and exegetical perspectives—in hope of discovering its rightful place in the scope of early gospel traditions.

I. HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

A. INITIAL INTEREST (1908-1914)

P.Oxy. 840 was originally published by Grenfell and Hunt in the 1908 volume of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, and then later as a separate work entitled, *A Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*.¹³ This work is only 13 pages long and serves primarily as an overview of the document with text, translation, and commentary. Grenfell and Hunt made some brief palaeographical observations—such as size of the codex, hand of the scribe, *nomina sacra*—but offer few supplementary details. In regard to content, they recognized that the conversation of Jesus with the Pharisee in the temple has an obvious synoptic flavor and may have some connections to Matt 15:1-20 and Mark 7:1-23. They declared, “Even more clearly than the *Fragment of the Lost Gospel* published with the *New Sayings of Jesus (Oxyrh. Pap. IV, no. 655)*, the present fragment belongs to a narrative covering the same ground as the canonical gospels.”¹⁴ As a result, Grenfell and Hunt were willing to place the composition of P.Oxy. 840 well before 200 A.D and considered it “an interesting

¹² Adolf Büchler, “The New ‘Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel’,” *JQR* 20 (1908): 331.

¹³ *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. V, 1-10; Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 9-22. The two publications are virtually identical in every way.

¹⁴ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 11, emphasis his.

and valuable addition to the scanty remnant of the numerous uncanonical traditions concerning Christ's teaching which were current in many Christian communities."¹⁵

Despite these moderately positive comments, Grenfell and Hunt—as with most writers on this text—focused upon the problems created by P.Oxy. 840's references to the temple and its rituals. They considered the references inaccurate at many places and full of rhetorical language, thus indicating an author not well informed about the true nature of first-century Judaism. In regard to these issues, the editors employed the help of Emil Schürer who later published his own scathing critique of P.Oxy. 840 and argued that it erroneously applies purity regulations to the laity that are intended only for the priests.¹⁶

The negative appraisal of P.Oxy. 840 continued with Sulzbach who published a very brief article (two pages) on P.Oxy. 840 entitled, "Zum Oxyrhynchus-Fragment."¹⁷ Along with Schürer, he argued that the author was little informed about the workings of the Jewish temple: "so zeigt dieses, daß der Verf. allerdings Einrichtungen und Vorgänge, wie sie zur Zeit des Tempels waren, kennt, aber doch nur oberflächlich von ihnen weiß."¹⁸ Likewise, Zahn contributed about ten pages to the controversy and concurred with the negative assessments that preceded him.¹⁹ He too argued that P.Oxy. 840's description of the temple was seriously in error and declared that "der Verfasser hat keine Ahnung von alle dem, was für den Tempel in Jerusalem und den dortigen Kultus charakteristisch ist."²⁰ Despite offering the typical arguments against P.Oxy. 840's authenticity, Zahn did offer some helpful critical discussions of the textual reconstruction and translation—a feature lacking in most other studies.

Also persuaded of P.Oxy. 840's lack of historicity, Johannes Dräseke argued that P.Oxy. 840 was a late production (4th-5th century) of Apollinaris of Laodicea who was known for taking gospel texts and rewriting them in the dialogue form popularized by Plato and the Greeks.²¹ However, Dräseke's short article never

¹⁵ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 13.

¹⁶ E. Schürer, "Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel from Oxyrhynchus," *TLZ* 33 (1908): 170-172.

¹⁷ A. Sulzbach, "Zum Oxyrhynchus Fragment," *ZNW* 9 (1908): 175-176.

¹⁸ Sulzbach, "Zum Oxyrhynchus Fragment," 175.

¹⁹ Th. Zahn, "Neue Bruchstücke nichtkanonischer Evangelien," *NKZ* 19 (1908): 371-386.

²⁰ Zahn, "Neue Bruchstücke nichtkanonischer Evangelien," 378.

²¹ Johannes Dräseke, "Zum neuen Evangelienbruchstück von Oxyrhynchus," *ZWT* 50 (1908): 485-489; Dräseke appealed to the *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates 3.16: "The younger Apollinaris, who

offered any compelling explanation of P.Oxy. 840's connection to Apollinaris or of its relationship to the canonical gospels. Adolf Jülicher's very brief article "Ein neues Jesuswort?" also offered a critical assessment of P.Oxy. 840 and argued that Jesus' conception of purity implies a gnostic origin for the fragment.²² A bit later, David Smith offered a brief treatment of the fragment and simply rehearsed the same critical arguments of Schürer and Sulzbach, declaring that "the details of the narrative are glaringly fictitious."²³

In response to these historical criticisms of P.Oxy. 840, a number of scholars adopted a more moderate view. They admitted that the text was erroneous but insisted that it was nevertheless a valuable source for the study of ancient Christian history. Henry Swete published *Zwei Neue Evangelienfragmente herausgegeben und erklärt*,²⁴ where he devoted about 6 pages to discussing P.Oxy. 840. As did most scholars, Swete bypassed all palaeographical issues and proceeded immediately to the question of temple rituals and whether the author was informed adequately about first-century Judaism. Along with Grenfell and Hunt, Swete expressed doubts about the author's accuracy but was compelled by the clear synoptic style of the account:

The literary style is nearer to that of the Synoptists than to the Peter Gospels or the Gospels known as Apocryphal . . . the fragment is free from the false rhetoric and the fables of the later romances, nor does it shew any trace of a docetic or Gnostic tendency.²⁵

Thus, Swete assigned the composition of the gospel to the first half of the second century.

Edgar J. Goodspeed, in his very brief 1908 article "The New Gospel Fragment from Oxyrhynchus,"²⁶ also adopted a more moderate approach to P.Oxy. 840. On the one hand, he acknowledged the substantial historical problems in the fragment and sought to link it with other apocryphal gospels, particularly the *Gospel*

was well trained in eloquence, expounded the gospels and apostolic doctrines in the way of dialogue, as Plato among the Greeks had done."

²² Adolf Jülicher, "Ein neues Jesuswort?," *Christliche Welt* 8 (1908): 201-204.

²³ David Smith, *Unwritten Sayings of Our Lord* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), 133-143.

²⁴ Henry Barclay Swete, *Zwei Neue Evangelienfragmente herausgegeben und erklärt* (Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Weber, 1908), 3-9; also published with an English title, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, as seen above in n.5.

²⁵ Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, 3-4.

²⁶ Edgar J. Goodspeed, "The New Gospel Fragment from Oxyrhynchus," *BW* 31 (1908): 142-146.

of the Hebrews. On the other hand, he viewed P.Oxy. 840 as consistent with the canonical accounts and quite faithful to the teachings of Jesus. He concludes:

The writer is under no misapprehension as to the essential thought of Jesus, however fallible he may be in matters of detail, for he sets forth Jesus' teaching as to the worth of inward purity in contrast to ceremonial purification, in a way thoroughly consonant with the best evangelic tradition.²⁷

Lagrange also strove towards this balanced approach in his article, "Nouveau Fragment non canonique relatif a l'Évangile."²⁸ Lagrange offered a fairly detailed running commentary on the text, in addition to his own reconstruction and translation. Although he too recognized the historical problems present in the fragment, he suggested, like Goodspeed, that it may be a portion of the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.²⁹ He concluded that it should at least be seen to be as valuable as our other apocryphal traditions: "Quoi qu'il en soit, si notre fragment n'a aucun titre à figurer parmi les témoignages authentiques de la vie de Jésus, on voit qu'il ne le cède en intérêt à aucun des *logia* que l'Égypte a déjà fournis."³⁰

Harnack joined the discussion a few years later in 1911 with "Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück,"³¹ where he argued for a Jewish-Christian provenance for the gospel due to the themes of internal vs. external purity. He suggested that the community behind the text desired to set themselves apart from Judaism and was thus concerned with how Jesus related to the laws of Levitical purity. He noted possible connections with the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, but found it quite difficult to be certain.³² The themes and style of Jesus' words are very close to the Synoptics,

²⁷ Goodspeed, "The New Gospel Fragment," 145.

²⁸ M. -J. Lagrange, "Nouveau Fragment non canonique relatif a l'Évangile," *RB* 5 (1908): 538-553.

²⁹ Lagrange referred to the *Gospel of the Hebrews* on p.552, but also to the "l'évangile usité par les Nazaréens" on p.553. It is clear, however, that he is referring to the same gospel as Goodspeed, because he too appeals to the connection with "des courtisanes et des joueuses de flûte"(553). The confusion in titles is due to the fragmentary manner in which the Jewish Christian gospels are preserved in the writings of the church fathers. There is dispute over whether the various titles we find actually refer to three separate gospels or to different versions of the same gospel. Thus, throughout this study we will see various authors appeal to the same Jewish-Christian gospel by different titles. For further discussion see, R. Mcl. Wilson, "New Testament Apocrypha," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Eldon J. Epp and George MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 440, and A.F.J. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992).

³⁰ Lagrange, "Nouveau fragment," 553.

³¹ Adolf von Harnack, "Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück," in *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben, Band II* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1911), 239-250.

³² Harnack also suggests a possible link to the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (250), but is equally unsure.

argued Harnack, and seem to portray very recognizable images of Jesus and the Pharisees. He was aware that some of the references to the temple seem to be problematic but argued that P.Oxy. 840, nevertheless, still seems to contain ancient and authentic gospel tradition. In regard to the form and function of P.Oxy. 840, Harnack did not stress its use as an amulet, rather he suggested that the small format may have been used for travel purposes and perhaps even to allow a person to hide the document easily from those persecuting the church (e.g., Diocletian).

In addition to these more moderate reactions to Grenfell and Hunt's original publication, a number of scholars stepped forth to defend the historicity of P.Oxy. 840. Büchler rallied to its defense with a 17 page detailed analysis of its temple descriptions.³³ Drawing in detail upon Jewish literature, including the Mishnah and the Talmud, Büchler worked his way through a number of the objections against P.Oxy. 840 and concluded that the text is quite historical after all.³⁴ No attention was given to the palaeographical details of the fragment, nor did he offer a discussion of any other related topics—Büchler's mission was narrowly centered on answering objections. In fact, he concluded with the rather bold declaration, "I am already convinced that we have here more original materials than are to be found in the Synoptics."³⁵

The work of Büchler found its supporters. A brief article by W.W. Davies in 1908 provided a summary of the issues surrounding P.Oxy. 840 and defended Büchler's conclusions concerning its historical veracity.³⁶ Hans Lietzmann, although not interacting with Büchler directly, published a brief 1908 article defending the authenticity of P.Oxy. 840 against the criticisms of Schürer.³⁷ After providing a point by point rebuttal to such criticisms, Lietzmann concluded that P.Oxy. 840 contains "altes und wertvolles Material."³⁸ In addition, a very brief article by A. Marmorstein in 1914 was written in support of Büchler's overall position, entitled, "Einige Bemerkungen zum Evangelienfragment in Oxyrhynchus

³³ Büchler, "The New 'Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel'," 330-346.

³⁴ Büchler, "The New 'Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel'," 331.

³⁵ Büchler, "The New 'Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel'," 346.

³⁶ W.W. Davies, "A Fragment of Another Gospel," *Methodist Review* 90 (1908): 815-818.

³⁷ Hans Lietzmann, "Das neugefundene Evangelienfragment und seine Vorgänger," *Beilage zur allgemeinen Zeitung* 31 (1908): 662-672.

³⁸ Lietzmann, "Das neugefundene Evangelienfragment," 671.

Papyri, vol. V, n. 840, 1907.”³⁹ He cited again from a variety of Jewish sources and offered further reasons for upholding the authenticity of the document. He concluded confidently with, “Wie dem auch sei, an der Echtheit des Fragments ist nach dem Gesagten schwer zu zweifeln.”⁴⁰

Also in 1908, E. Preuschen jumped into the fray with his article, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos.”⁴¹ While acknowledging that the gospel text presented some difficulties to be surmounted, Preuschen remained confident that it was historically accurate. He spent a large portion of his article dealing with the objection raised by Grenfell and Hunt that the description of “dogs and pigs” in a Jewish bathing pool was a pure fabrication of the author. He suggested that Jesus is not here referring to the actual pool in the temple, but the pipe water that feeds that pool from the hill country. Thus, the challenge of Jesus, according to Preuschen, was designed to show the Pharisee that the water he thought made him “pure” was likely already corrupted on its journey to the temple. He stated, “Jedenfalls enthält die Erzählung, soweit wir die Verhältnisse beurteilen können, keinen Zug, der es verbote, bei dem Verfasser eine gute Ortskenntnis vorauszusetzen.”⁴² The connections that P.Oxy. 840 has with Jewish traditions, and the clear Jewish traditions present in the gospel of John, caused Preuschen to conclude his article with the bold suggestion that perhaps this fragment may be the remainder of a source for the gospel of John.

Although less vigorous than Büchler and Preuschen, Blau also made a contribution to the defense of P.Oxy. 840 with his article, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos buch- und zaubergeschichtlich betrachtet nebst sonstigen Bemerkungen.”⁴³ He concluded with a positive assessment of the author’s Jewish origins:

Demnach hat auch dieser Zug der Erzählung seine Analogie in der Halacha. All dies beweist, daß der Verfasser unseres Bruchstückes in die jüdische Gesetzeskunde eingeweiht war und bestätigt die Behauptung, daß er “über

³⁹ A. Marmorstein, “Einige Bemerkungen zum Evangelienfragment in Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. V, n. 840, 1907,” *ZNW* 15 (1914): 336-338.

⁴⁰ Marmorstein, “Einige Bemerkungen zum Evangelienfragment,” 338.

⁴¹ E. Preuschen, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 1-11.

⁴² Preuschen, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos,” 6.

⁴³ Ludwig Blau, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos buch- und zaubergeschichtlich betrachtet nebst sonstigen Bemerkungen,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 204-215.

eine Kenntnis Jerusalemer Traditionen" verfügte. Man darf auf alle Fälle einen Verfasser jüdischer Herkunft vermuten.⁴⁴

In addition, Blau refreshingly devoted much of his time to codicological and palaeographical issues. He made strong connections between our fragment and the style of Jewish biblical texts in the early centuries of Christianity, particularly the way the Jews viewed portions of the Torah as protective agents and even wore them on their bodies (e.g., phylacteries). This is evidence, he argued, that P.Oxy. 840 was indeed used as an amulet. He stated, "Alle Anzeichen weisen darauf hin, daß das Büchlein, aus welchem unser Evangelienblatt ein Überrest ist, von einem Christen als Schutzmittel getragen wurde, wie Torarollen von den Juden."⁴⁵

In summary, it is evident that P.Oxy. 840 received significant attention between 1908 and 1914. However, despite the efforts of those defending the authenticity and value of P.Oxy. 840, the initial negative verdict of Grenfell and Hunt against the fragment proved too much to overcome. Although the discovery was generally hailed as valuable for early Christian studies, it would suffer substantial neglect for nearly the next 70 years.

B. SUBSEQUENT NEGLECT (1914-1986)

After the initial enthusiasm over P.Oxy. 840 diminished, the next seven decades produced very few new works on the fragment. Riggenbach made his contribution to the study of P.Oxy. 840 in 1926 with a very brief (four page) article entitled, "Das Wort Jesu im Gespräch mit dem pharisäischen Hohenpriester nach dem Oxyrhynchus Fragment v. 840."⁴⁶ Riggenbach attempted to resolve a few of the historical problems, including the bizarre reference to "dogs and pigs" washing in the "Pool of David."

Dunkerley first commented on P.Oxy. 840 in *The Unwritten Gospel* (1925)⁴⁷ where he devoted about five pages to a discussion of the fragment. While focusing

⁴⁴ Blau, "Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos buch," 215.

⁴⁵ Blau, "Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos buch," 211.

⁴⁶ E. Riggenbach, "Das Wort Jesu im Gespräch mit dem pharisäischen Hohenpriester nach dem Oxyrhynchus Fragment v. 840," *ZNW* 25 (1926): 140-144.

⁴⁷ Dunkerley, *The Unwritten Gospel*, 113-117.

primarily on the problem of the temple language and interaction with Adolf Büchler, he concluded,

On all these points, then, I regard this narrative as of much greater accuracy than its discoverers suggested, and I consider it of far greater worth than has usually been thought. It appears to me fully in harmony with the teaching of Jesus...and I can hardly believe it did not originate with Jesus.⁴⁸

In a later article, “Oxyrhynchus Gospel Fragments,”⁴⁹ Dunkerley discussed the fragment and again defended its historical integrity, but added no substantially new material.

Joachim Jeremias was the only writer to comment at length about P.Oxy. 840 during these seven decades. In 1947 he published “Der Zusammenstoß Jesu mit dem pharisäischen Oberpriester auf den Tempelplatz. Zu Pap. Ox V 840,”⁵⁰ which was later translated into English and contained in *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, published in 1957 and reprinted in 1964.⁵¹ Jeremias was confident that this fragment is one of the few non-canonical sayings that has genuine historical merit and thus declared that P.Oxy. 840 “is by far the most important of the discoveries which the excavations have yielded,”⁵² even giving it more prominence than P. Egerton 2. He spent his remaining space (about ten pages) defending the temple language used in the fragment and concluded that it is genuine.

In addition to these three articles, it is not surprising that P.Oxy. 840 found its way into the standard collections of apocryphal material. It was re-edited by Wessely in the *Patrologia Orientalis*, by Bonaccorsi in *Vangeli Apocrifi*, and by Otero in *Los Evangelios apócrifos*.⁵³ It also received an introduction with translation and notes in other well-known collections including Hennecke and Schneemelcher, M.R. James, Mario Erbetta, Luigi Moraldi, Jack Finegan, and more recently in Robert J. Miller, J.K. Elliott, Daniel Bertrand, and Schlarb and

⁴⁸ Dunkerley, *The Unwritten Gospel*, 116.

⁴⁹ Dunkerley, “Oxyrhynchus Gospel Fragments,” 30-35.

⁵⁰ Joachim Jeremias, “Der Zusammenstoß Jesu mit dem pharisäischen Oberpriester auf den Tempelplatz. Zu Pap. Ox V 840,” *Coni. Neotest.* 2 (1947): 97-108.

⁵¹ Although the English translation is not an exact replica of the German article, for the sake of the reader, most of my citations from Jeremias will come from the English translation.

⁵² Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, 17.

⁵³ Charles Wessely, *Les plus anciens monuments du christianisme écrit sur papyrus*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. 18.3 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1924), 488-490; Giuseppe Bonaccorsi, *Vangeli Apocrifi* (Florence: Fiorentina, 1948), 37-39; Auerlio de Santos Otero, *Los Evangelios apócrifos* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1963), 78-82.

Lührmann.⁵⁴ However, most of these collections offer only translations (though a few reproduce Grenfell and Hunt's original Greek text), and contain no substantial discussion of the issues nor demonstrate any significant scholarly investment in the fragment.

C. OCCASIONAL ATTENTION (1986-2004)

After the article by Jeremias in 1947, nearly 40 years went by with no new articles or studies on P.Oxy. 840. Then in 1986 Daniel Schwartz published a brief but valuable article entitled, "Viewing the Holy Utensils (P. Ox. V, 840)."⁵⁵ His primary focus was the temple rituals that are described in the fragment, particularly the question of how a layman would be able to view the holy vessels in the tabernacle. Schwartz advanced the discussion considerably by suggesting that there was an attempt by the Pharisees of the day to "democratize" the cult and to allow the average Jew to engage in an act that was normally a priestly privilege, the viewing of the vessels. Moreover, Schwartz began the process of describing which community may have produced such a document—something rarely discussed in prior research. If Schwartz was on the right track, then it may have been a Christian community still affected by (and dealing with) Pharisaical Judaism. The implications of this proposal for the origination of P.Oxy. 840 are obvious. Such a

⁵⁴ E. Hennecke, ed., *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, vol. 1 (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1924), 17-18; E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. Mcl. Wilson, vol. 1 (3rd ed.; London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), 57-58; Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. Mcl. Wilson, vol. 1 (5th ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 94-95; M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924), 29-30; Mario Erbetta, *Gli Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. 1 (Turin: Marietti, 1966-1981), 105-106; Luigi Moraldi, *Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. 1 (Turin: UTET, 1971), 422-23 (introduction), 430-31 (bibliography), 436-438 (translation); Jack Finegan, *Hidden Records of the Life of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), 226-230; Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992), 412-415; Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 31-34; Daniel A. Bertrand, "Fragments évangéliques," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 1, ed. François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 407-410; Egbert Schlarb and Dieter Lührmann, eds., *Fragmente apokryph gewordener Evangelien in griechischer und lateinischer Sprache* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlage, 2000), 164-169. Other English translations include, E.J. Jenkinson, *The Unwritten Sayings of Jesus* (London: Epworth, 1925), 112-116; Robert M. Grant, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), 52-54; and Ron Cameron, *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 53-54. It is also mentioned briefly in the collection by F.C. Burkitt, *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1922), 21-22, but with no English translation.

⁵⁵ Daniel R. Schwartz, "Viewing the Holy Utensils (P. Ox. V, 840)," *NTS* 32 (1986): 153-159.

community would more likely be found closer to the first century than the much later time often posited for the text.

Several years later a very brief article was published by David Tripp entitled, “Meanings of the Foot-washing: John 13 and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840.”⁵⁶ Tripp bypassed the typical discussions about the Jerusalem temple and proceeded to argue that P.Oxy. 840 actually reflects early Christian controversies over baptism: “[P.Oxy. 840] is designed to look like Christian anti-Jewish (anti-Pharisee, anti-Temple). . . But what is attacked is not Jewish lustration, but *all* baptism.”⁵⁷ Tripp shifted the discussion away from Judaism and the temple and more towards the discussion of early Christianity.

A more recent article, and certainly the most substantial discussion since the original flurry of articles in 1908, is by François Bovon and entitled, “Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840, Fragment of a Lost Gospel, Witness of an Early Christian Controversy Over Purity.”⁵⁸ Bovon, like Tripp, suggested that we should not concern ourselves with the historical inaccuracies in the fragment, because these merely point us to the fact that the fragment was written for an entirely other purpose. It was written, says Bovon, as a polemical tool for a certain view of baptism in the early church. Thus, it should not be read against the background of Judaism, but against the background of baptismal controversies in early Christianity. Bovon’s contribution, then, continues to advance the position that Tripp advocated years earlier. We will discuss the merits of his argument below in chapter three.

In 2002, my own article entitled, “P.Oxy. 840: Amulet or Miniature Codex?” discussed the palaeography of the fragment.⁵⁹ This article engaged the critical and often debated question of whether P.Oxy. 840 was created to be an amulet or miniature codex. The problem was addressed by cataloging broad palaeographical trends within each of these literary categories—something that has not been attempted before now—and then using these trends to evaluate the specific case of P.Oxy. 840. This article prompted a reply in a forthcoming article by Thomas J.

⁵⁶ David Tripp, “Meanings of the Foot-washing: John 13 and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840,” *ExpT* 103 (1992): 237-239.

⁵⁷ Tripp, “Meanings of the Foot-washing,” 238; italics his.

⁵⁸ François Bovon, “Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840, Fragment of a Lost Gospel, Witness of an Early Christian Controversy Over Purity,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 705-728.

⁵⁹ Michael J. Kruger, “P.Oxy. 840: Amulet or Miniature Codex?,” *JTS* 53 (2002): 81-94. This article was derived from a portion of my work in chapter one below. A copy of the article has been included in the appendix.

Kraus, "P.Oxy. V 840--Amulett oder Miniaturkodex? Grundsätzliche unde ergänzende Anmerkungen zu zwei Termini."⁶⁰ Kraus' article agrees with my own conclusions and builds upon them by providing further palaeographical characteristics that distinguish amulets from miniature codices. In addition, Kraus engages some of the palaeographical details of P.Oxy. 840 and offers a more detailed description of the manuscript itself.

D. SUMMARY

As can be seen from the above discussion, the last century has produced lamentably few studies on P.Oxy. 840. Although there were a number of articles published during an initial surge of interest, most were relatively brief and averaged less than nine pages per article. After the initial enthusiasm wore off, the last 90 years have produced only eight new articles, and no book-length studies have ever been attempted. Amazingly, such neglect has taken place in the midst of a century that has experienced a renewed interest in apocryphal literature and a plethora of new manuscript discoveries and archaeological excavations. In light of these considerations, it should be apparent that there is a need for a full-length, comprehensive study of P.Oxy. 840.

II. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Now that we have reviewed the history of scholarship on P.Oxy. 840, the stage is set to consider the purpose of this study. Due to the paucity of previous work on P.Oxy. 840 there are a number of areas that demand further scholarly attention and will be addressed in the following five chapters:

1. *Codicology and Palaeography*. Since Grenfell and Hunt's original edition, virtually no attention has been given to studying the manuscript of P.Oxy. 840 itself. Although Blau began some of this work with his discussion of P.Oxy. 840's tiny size, substantial scholarly gaps remain. Kraus' work is a step in the

⁶⁰ Thomas J. Kraus, "P.Oxy. V 840--Amulett oder Miniaturkodex? Grundsätzliche unde ergänzende Anmerkungen zu zwei Termini," *ZAC* (2004), forthcoming. The references to page numbers of this article will be from a manuscript sent to me by the author.

right direction, and advances the discussion in important ways, but more work is needed on other features of this manuscript (e.g., punctuation, scribal habits, *nomina sacra*). As a result of this lack of palaeographical attention, there continues to be a substantial dispute over the date of this manuscript and its function within early Christian communities (e.g., was P.Oxy. 840 an amulet or miniature codex?). In chapter one I will provide a full palaeographical and codicological analysis of P.Oxy. 840, giving special attention to, among other things, its material, form, size, script, punctuation, abbreviations, and scribal habits. Not only will such an analysis shed further light on trends within early Christian book production, but this chapter will conclude that (a) P.Oxy. 840 was constructed as a miniature codex and not an amulet, and (b) that the manuscript can be reasonably dated between 300-350 A.D.

2. *New Text and Translation.* Throughout the history of discussion on P.Oxy. 840, there has always been significant dispute over some of the key textual reconstructions,⁶¹ as well as possible scribal blunders in transcription or translation.⁶² Decisions on these textual matters play a crucial role in resolving critical exegetical questions as well as establishing a coherent English translation. Given that the most recent edition of P.Oxy. 840 (that reflects any substantial effort) comes from Otero⁶³ in 1963 (over 40 years ago), it seems that the text deserves a fresh evaluation. In chapter two, therefore, I will provide a new Greek reconstruction, an accompanying English translation, and a running commentary on P.Oxy. 840 which defends and explains key exegetical choices and interpretive conclusions.
3. *Historical Problems.* Since the initial discovery of P.Oxy. 840, the bulk of the research has been devoted to raising serious questions about the accuracy of its description of Herod's temple and the ritual purity practices of first-century Judaism. The issues are centered around the combination of chief priest and Pharisee, the place of the holy vessels in the temple, the identity and function of the "Pool of David," and the restrictions on entering the temple (washing and

⁶¹ See Harnack, "Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück," 242.

⁶² Especially Sulzbach, "Zum Oxyrhynchus Fragment," 176; and Riggenbach, "Das Wort Jesu im Gespräch mit dem pharisäischen Hohenpriester," 142.

⁶³ Otero, *Los Evangelios apócrifos*, 78-82

changing clothes). Despite the attention that these issues have received (at the neglect of other important areas), they still remain largely unresolved and are deserving of a more comprehensive treatment. Chapter three will provide a thorough re-examination of these questions in hopes of establishing the necessary historical foundation for probing the origins of P.Oxy. 840 in subsequent chapters. In chapter three I will show that, despite the extensive criticism of prior scholars, P.Oxy. 840 demonstrates an impressive awareness of the details of Palestinian Judaism, particularly in regard to ritual purity and access to the temple. Such awareness suggests that P.Oxy. 840 likely originated in a Jewish-Christian milieu still familiar with first-century temple practices, and thus not from early Christian heretical groups concerned about water baptism, as Bovon and others have proposed.

4. *Relationship with the Canonical Gospels.* One of the most critical questions in our study of P.Oxy. 840 concerns its relationship to the canonical gospels. Resolving this question not only affects our understanding of the date and composition of the story, but can also shape our understanding of the way gospel traditions were transmitted and created within the early centuries of Christianity. Prior scholarship has only scratched the surface of this issue, with various suggestions here and there amounting to no more than a few paragraphs. In chapter four, therefore, I will present a detailed textual comparison between P.Oxy. 840 and the canonical gospels and will conclude that the author of P.Oxy. 840 demonstrates awareness of (and is influenced by) five canonical passages: Luke 11:37-52; Matt 23:1-39; John 7:1-52; John 13:10; and Mark 7:1-23. Such connections suggest that P.Oxy. 840 was composed after the advent of the fourfold gospel collection (early to middle second century), and, moreover, that it shares the same theological concerns as these canonical passages: ceremonial washings, inner vs. outer cleanliness, and conflict with Jewish authorities.
5. *Placing P.Oxy. 840 in Early Christianity.* The final stage of our study takes the conclusions of the prior chapters and reconstructs the probable community and religious milieu that would have given rise to P.Oxy. 840. Once again, no prior studies have attempted any serious evaluation of P.Oxy. 840's provenance, but have merely made brief suggestions about its possible connection with other

apocryphal gospels. In chapter five I will argue that P.Oxy. 840's theological interests and polemical thrust suggest that it arose from within Jewish-Christian circles engaged in dispute over ritual purity practices. One possibility is that the community of P.Oxy. 840 is part of the Jewish-Christian group known as the Nazarenes. The Nazarenes, being a rather "orthodox" and pro-Paul group, may have used P.Oxy. 840 as a tool in their conflict with the rabbinic Judaism of their day, as well as in conflict with other Jewish Christian groups, such as the Ebionites. Such a scenario would plausibly place the production of P.Oxy. 840 in Syria between 125 and 150 A.D. The final portion of chapter five will be a selective comparison to other analogous apocryphal gospel material, in order to grasp more fully P.Oxy. 840's place within the gospel traditions of early Christianity.

CHAPTER 1

THE CODICOLOGY AND PALAEOGRAPHY OF P.OXY. 840

Before we can begin to explore the historical and theological questions raised by our fragment, we must first pause to consider the nature of the fragment itself. The purpose of this chapter is to begin that process by performing a thorough codicological and palaeographical analysis of P.Oxy. 840. This analysis is designed to accomplish three tasks. First, this chapter is designed to explore the purpose for which this manuscript was created and the way it may have functioned within early Christian communities. The tiny size of P.Oxy. 840 has created much debate about whether it was designed to function as an amulet or miniature codex. The answer to this question may reveal much about the individuals who owned such gospels and the role of small formats among early Christians. Second, this chapter will fill in the gaps left by previous studies on P.Oxy. 840. Since its initial publication, the palaeographical features of this text have been woefully neglected and bypassed in favor of more exciting subjects.¹ Much of the work in this chapter, therefore, will simply be descriptive, noting how the various features of the text fit within the overall context of early Christian book production.² Third, this chapter is designed to establish a more definitive date for our manuscript. Since its initial publication, P.Oxy. 840 has been assigned dates ranging from the third century to the fifth century—a three hundred year span.³ In order to more accurately assess the origins

¹ Since the writing of this chapter, I have learned of a forthcoming article on the palaeography of P.Oxy. 840: Thomas J. Kraus, "P.Oxy. V 840--Amulett oder Miniaturkodex? Grundsätzliche und ergänzende Anmerkungen zu zwei Termini," *ZAC* (2004) forthcoming. Kraus' article was written in response to my own article (which is a portion of this chapter): Michael J. Kruger, "P.Oxy. 840: Amulet or Miniature Codex?," *JTS* 53 (2002): 81-94. Although this chapter (and my article) was written years before the publication of Kraus' article, they reach strikingly similar conclusions. I will interact with Kraus throughout this chapter as appropriate.

² All observations made in this chapter about the physical features of P.Oxy. 840 as a manuscript are derived from (a) my personal study and observation of the manuscript at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, in the Fall of 2000, (b) specially made photographic plates (color, black and white, and enlarged) from the photographic studio of the Bodleian Library, and (c) high quality digital images of both the recto and verso, also from the Bodleian Library.

³ J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 31, and M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, vol. Clarendon (Oxford: 1924), 29, both suggest a third century date. Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel* (London: Oxford

of this text and its possible role in early Christianity, a more specific date is necessary.

I. THE FORM OF P.OXY. 840: CODEX

The format of an ancient book is a fundamental component in establishing its date and tracing its origins.⁴ The primary form of a book in the Greco-Roman world was the scroll, which was made from sheets of papyrus or parchment pasted together in a long strip and rolled up.⁵ Writing was done only on the inside of the roll. The codex, in contrast, was created by taking a stack of papyrus or parchment leaves, folding them in half, and binding them at the spine.⁶ This format allowed for the traditional leaf book with writing on both sides of each page.

The simple fact that P.Oxy. 840 has writing on both sides suggests that it likely came from a codex. However, E.G. Turner correctly notes that writing on both sides alone is not sufficient to rule out other possibilities.⁷ Sometimes the writing on the recto is not continuous with the verso and may be an unrelated text or in the hand of another scribe. Furthermore, some liturgical documents (which contain portions of scripture) can have writing on both sides and yet not be from a codex. These originally would have stood alone as a single sheet.⁸ Fortunately, in

University Press, 1908), 9, and C.H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 11, each offer the possibility of a fifth century date.

⁴ General works on books in the Greco-Roman world include F.G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome* (2nd ed; Oxford: Clarendon, 1932); W. Schubart, *Das Buch bei den Griechen und Römern*, ed. E. Paul (2nd ed.; Heidelberg: Schneider, 1962); H. Blanck, *Das Buch in der Antike* (Munich: Beck, 1992); and Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁵ A helpful discussion of scrolls is found in Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 43-48.

⁶ Relevant works on the codex include A. Blanchard, ed., *Les débuts du codex* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989); C.H. Roberts and T.C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987); E.G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977); T.C. Skeat, "The Origin of the Christian Codex," *ZPE* 102 (1994): 263-268; H.A. Sanders, "The Beginnings of the Modern Book," *University of Michigan Quarterly Review* 44, no. 15 (1938): 95-111; C.C. McCown, "Codex and Roll in the New Testament," *HTR* 34 (1941): 219-250; L.W. Hurtado, "The Earliest Evidence of an Emerging Christian Material and Visual Culture: The Codex, the Nomina Sacra, and the Staurogram," in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson*, ed. Stephen G. Wilson and Michael Desjardins (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 271-288; and S.R. Llewelyn, "The Development of the Codex," in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, Vol. 7: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1982-83*, ed. S.R. Llewelyn and R.A. Kearsley (North Ryde, NSW: Macquarie University Ancient History Documentary Research Center, 1994), 249-256.

⁷ Turner, *Typology*, 9-10.

⁸ Turner, *Typology*, 10. This phenomenon is particularly common with the Psalms.

the case of P.Oxy. 840, the entire top portion of the page is intact and much of the bottom as well, allowing us to observe that the text is the continuation of a story that began on a previous pages and then proceeded onto further pages. Thus, despite Turner's helpful caution, it is virtually certain that P.Oxy. 840 did not originally stand alone, but was part of a larger codex. It is not possible to know how long this codex was, but it is clear that P.Oxy. 840 did not form the first or the last page.

The codex format helps to establish at least broad parameters for the date and historical context of P.Oxy. 840. Of course, the date of the origin of the codex has not always been clear. The domination of scrolls in the Greco-Roman world caused many early scholars to consider the codex a rather late development.⁹ But, various manuscript discoveries have revealed that the codex was quite an early phenomenon among early Christian communities. The discovery of documents like \mathcal{P}^{52} , Papyrus Egerton 2, $\mathcal{P}^4 + \mathcal{P}^{64} + \mathcal{P}^{67}$ (thought to be related¹⁰) and the Chester Beatty Codices (\mathcal{P}^{45} , \mathcal{P}^{46} , \mathcal{P}^{47}) indicate that the codex was the established Christian practice by the early second century, if not late in the first.¹¹

In light of these considerations, it should be no surprise that P.Oxy. 840 is in codex form. Virtually all early Christian texts were published in this format. In terms of dating, this consideration alone provides only very broad boundaries and would allow a date anywhere from the second century onwards. So, let us consider other factors that can help narrow down the time period.

⁹ For example, C.R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907), declared, "I am inclined to think that this change [from roll to codex] was made about the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century" (322). In fact, he viewed codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus as some of the first codices to be made. For discussion see McCown, "Codex and Roll," 219-221.

¹⁰ T.C. Skeat, "The Oldest Manuscripts of the Four Gospels?," *NTS* 43 (1997): 1-34, argues that these fragments were part of the earliest four gospel collection in the late second century.

¹¹ Roberts and Skeat confirmed the early dominance of the codex by showing how it was the format of choice for Christians from the very beginning of Christian book production (*Birth*, 38-44). This early date has been challenged by J. van Haelst, "Les origines du codex," in *Les débuts du codex*, ed. A. Blanchard (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989), 13-36, where he argues for a later date for some of these manuscripts. E.G. Turner, *Greek Papyri: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 10, also cautions against excessively early dates and suggests that since the days of dating the codex as a late phenomenon the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. However, T.C. Skeat, "Early Christian Book-Production," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 54-79, 71; and C.H. Roberts, "P Yale 1 and the Early Christian Book," *ASP* 1 (1966): 25-28, maintain an early date by appealing to the discovery of P.Yale 1 which is a papyrus codex containing Genesis and dates from 80-100 A.D.

II. THE MATERIAL OF P.OXY. 840: PARCHMENT

Despite the fact that our text is referred to as P.Oxy. 840, it is actually written on parchment and not on papyrus.¹² It is relatively light in color and has avoided the darkening that is common to many ancient parchment manuscripts (see Figure 1 and 2 in the Appendix). The parchment is very thin and the script on the opposite side can be easily seen when there is light behind the fragment. The edges are torn and brittle and there are numerous holes—probably due to worms—along the right side of the recto. A number of splotches or stains appear in various places on the manuscript, likely acquired during its time in the rubbish heap, but most do not affect the reconstruction of the text. The parchment appears shriveled or wrinkled at points, mostly on the top left margin. Although a large portion of the bottom right corner of the folio is missing, the remaining portion is in quite good condition and the text easily legible.

The identification of the recto and the verso has proved to be somewhat difficult due to confusion in terminology. In a strict sense, the term “recto” simply refers to the front of a folio and the “verso” to the back.¹³ However, as these terms were applied to papyrus and parchment manuscripts, the recto became associated with the side of the manuscript with the better writing surface (which was normally used as the front of the page). Thus, “recto” became associated with the side with horizontal fibers on papyrus manuscripts and with the flesh side of parchment manuscripts.¹⁴ Likewise, “verso” was often (though not exclusively) used to refer to the side with vertical fibers on a papyrus manuscript and to the hair side of a parchment manuscript. In regard to P.Oxy. 840, Grenfell and Hunt refer to the front side of the folio as the “verso” (instead of the expected “recto”) making it clear that they are using the term simply to refer to the “hair” side of the manuscript.¹⁵ This is

¹² For a discussion of the significance of parchment and papyrus when evaluating a manuscript, including P.Oxy. 840, see Thomas J. Kraus, “Pergament oder Papyrus?: Anmerkungen zur Signifikanz des Beschreibstoffes bei der Behandlung von Manuskripten,” *NTS* 49 (2003): 425-432.

¹³ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 265, n. 9. This is the way we will use the terms throughout this study.

¹⁴ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 46. Horizontal fibers on papyrus and the flesh side of parchment made for easier writing and often were used for the front of a page. For more see E.G. Turner, “Recto and Verso,” *JEA* 40 (1954): 102-106.

¹⁵ Grenfell and Hunt's use of the terms “recto” and “verso” has caused a great deal of confusion. Van Haelst's catalog ignores Grenfell and Hunt and uses the typical convention of using “recto” to refer to the front of the folio (V.H. 585). Likewise, even the Bodleian Library's photographic plates (reproduced in Appendix 1) refer to the first page as the “recto,” contra to Grenfell and Hunt. Bovon

confirmed by the fact that the back side of P.Oxy. 840 is slightly lighter in color and the ink has more readily faded (see especially line 25 in Figure 2).¹⁶ The flesh side of parchment manuscripts are characteristically lighter and smoother, but do not hold the ink as well as the rougher and darker hair side.

In addition to the format of early books, ancient writing material—whether papyrus¹⁷ or parchment¹⁸—is another factor that is useful for establishing a date. Although we know P.Oxy. 840 must have originated after the advent of the parchment codex, the question of whether the first codex was parchment or papyrus is quite controversial.¹⁹ However, the extant MSS in our possession indicate that papyrus was the material of choice in the construction of early Christian codices. Of Greek and Christian literature from the fourth century and earlier, Turner found some 160 codices of papyrus compared to only 29 of parchment.²⁰ Only three of these parchment codices could be placed definitively in the second century, and none of them were Christian documents. In terms of just NT manuscripts, no parchment MSS are found from the second century, only one from the second/third century (0189), two from the third century (0212, 0220), and two from the third/fourth century (0162, 0171).²¹ In the fourth century, the situation begins to

is confused as well and mistakenly declares, “By recto [Grenfell and Hunt] meant the hair side and by verso the flesh side of the folio” (“Fragment,” 710, n.18). Below we will see that their terminology also led Blau and Preuschen to believe erroneously that P.Oxy. 840 was written in reverse.

¹⁶ However, since the parchment is so thin the difference in coloration is minimized, making it more difficult than usual to distinguish the flesh side from the hair side. My personal observations of the flesh/hair sides of this manuscript were confirmed later by Kraus, “Grenfell/Hunt verwenden in der ed. pr. die Begriffe Haarseite = verso und Fleischseite = rektio, da die letztere die meist hellere und damit besser lesbare sowie oftmals zuerst beschriftete Seite eines Pergamentblattes darstellt” (“P.Oxy. v 840,” n.13).

¹⁷ For more on papyrus see Turner, *Greek Papyri*; Naphtali Lewis, *Papyrus in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974); and F.G. Kenyon, *The Palaeography of Greek Papyri* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899).

¹⁸ For details on the history and production of parchment see R. Reed, *Ancient Skins, Parchments and Leathers* (London: Seminar Press, 1972); M.L. Ryder, “The Biology and History of Parchment,” in *Pergament: Geschichte, Struktur, Restaurierung, Herstellung*, ed. P. Ruck (Simarigen: Thorbecke, 1991), 25-33; and Richard R. Johnson, “The Role of Parchment in Greco-Roman Antiquity” (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of California, 1968).

¹⁹ We do have evidence that parchment codices were known and used quite early in Egypt. P.Oxy. 30 is a non-Christian manuscript from Egypt containing the historical work *De bellis Macedonicis*. This Latin text is in the form of a parchment codex and can be dated to the early second century (Turner, *Typology*, 38). In regard to whether the parchment or papyrus codex was first, Roberts and Skeat declare, “At present the question is wide open” (Roberts and Skeat, *Birth*, 29).

²⁰ Turner, *Typology*, 37-39.

²¹ Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 76.

change rapidly and we find fourteen papyrus MSS and fourteen parchment MSS. The fifth century reveals 36 parchment MSS and two papyrus MSS.²² From this point onwards parchment is the dominant material.²³

Although exceptions to this historical trend are certainly possible, it is quite unlikely that P.Oxy. 840, as a Christian parchment codex, would be earlier than the mid-third century.

III. THE SIZE OF P.OXY. 840

One of the most striking features of P.Oxy. 840 is its miniature size.²⁴ I measured it at just 7.2 x 8.6 cm., roughly the size of computer diskette.²⁵ Upon discovery, the tiny dimensions of this manuscript sparked an ongoing debate among scholars over whether it was originally an amulet or miniature codex. Preuschen²⁶ was one of the first to argue that P.Oxy. 840 was an amulet and referred to the remarks of Chrysostom that some women and children “suspend [excerpts from?] Gospels from their necks as a powerful amulet and carry them about in all places wherever they go.”²⁷ Blau followed up Preuschen’s article and developed a lengthy

²² Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 76.

²³ This overall trend is confirmed by a key fourth century reference to parchment codices by Eusebius (c.331) in his *Life of Constantine* where he records the request of Constantine to have fifty copies of the scriptures made “on fine parchment” (*Vit. Const.* 4.36). For more discussion see Kirsopp Lake, “The Sinaitic and Vatican Manuscripts and the Copies Sent by Eusebius to Constantinople,” *HTR* 11 (1918): 32-35.

²⁴ Equally as impressive as the small size of the manuscript is the small size of the writing space. The author has managed to cram 45 lines of text (front and back) into a writing area measuring just 5.4 x 5.4 cm. The resulting margins are .9 cm. for each side, 1.4 cm. for the top and 1.8 cm. for the bottom. Kraus reached slightly different numbers: 1.4 cm. for top margin, 1.6 cm. for the bottom, and 1 cm. for the left and .8 cm. for the right (“P.Oxy. V 840,” 6). Total horizontal margin space for P.Oxy. 840, when compared with the overall width of the page, forms a ratio of 1.8/7.2, approximately 25%. In other words, ¼ of the width of the page is used for margins. The total vertical margin space forms a ratio of 3.2/8.6 with the height, which is about 37%. Thus, it appears that the scribe made the vertical margins proportionately larger than the horizontal. This disparity is primarily due to the extended lower margin which measures 1.8 cm.—basically double the side margins. Although this extended lower margin may seem odd, it fits quite well with our knowledge of other codices. The lower margins were frequently larger than the upper margin by a ration of about 3:2 (about 1.5 times larger; Turner, *Typology*, 25). In P.Oxy. 840 the ratio is 1.8:1.4, which makes the bottom margin about 1.3 times larger than the top.

²⁵ Grenfell and Hunt arrived at slightly different numbers: 7.4 x 8.8 cm. (*Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 9).

²⁶ E. Preuschen, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 1-11, 1.

²⁷ Chrysostom, *stat.* 19.14. See also *Hom. in Mat.* 72.2. All English translations of the Ante-Nicene and the Nicene/Post-Nicene Fathers are, unless otherwise noted, taken from the following: Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, ed. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols., 1885-1887 (repr., Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1994), and Philip Schaff, ed. *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 14 vols., 1886-1889 (repr., Peabody, Mass: Hendricksen, 1994). For discussion on whether Chrysostom is

argument for why P.Oxy. 840 was an amulet, depending primarily upon the assumption that it was constructed in the same manner as Jewish phylacteries.²⁸ More recently, Jeremias declared that P.Oxy. 840 “was designed for use as an amulet.”²⁹ Harnack dissented from these opinions and suggested that our fragment may simply be a miniature codex that was easily carried and hidden.³⁰ Roberts,³¹ Turner,³² and van Haelst³³ all follow Harnack’s lead and place P.Oxy. 840 in the category of miniature codices.

In light of these disagreements, it is essential that we appropriately distinguish between amulets and miniature codices. These two categories often have been blended together unnecessarily, causing any small document to immediately be labeled an amulet.³⁴ But, as we shall see, size alone is not a sufficient indicator. Miniature codices were quite popular in early Christianity and were not necessarily employed for any magical purpose. In order to better understand P.Oxy. 840, we must consider in detail the characteristics of each of these groups and establish

referring to complete gospels or simply excerpts from the gospels, see E. Nestle, “Evangelien als Amulet am Halse und am Sofa,” *ZNW* 7 (1906): 86.

²⁸ Ludwig Blau, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos buch- und zaubergeschichtlich betrachtet nebst sonstigen Bemerkungen,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 204-215, declares, “Ich erblicke gerade in dieser Beschaffenheit des Büchleins einen untrüglichen Beweis dafür, daß es zu apotropäischen Zwecken angefertigt wurde oder mit anderen Worten, daß es als Amulet getragen wurde” (207).

²⁹ Joachim Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1964), 47. Others who believe that P.Oxy. 840 was an amulet include, Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992), 413; and Daniel A. Bertrand, “Fragments évangéliques,” in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, ed. François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 407-410. In the latter work, Bertrand declares, “Ce format extrêmement réduit indique probablement que les feuillets provient d’un livret utilisé comme amulette” (407).

³⁰ Adolf von Harnack, “Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück,” in *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben, Band II* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1911), 239-250: “Das Format beweist, daß dieses Evangelienbuch nicht zum Gebrauch im Gottesdienst bestimmt war, sondern der privaten Lektüre dienen sollte. Man sollte es in der Tasche mit sich führen können (von ähnlicher Kleinheit war das Evangelienbuch von Fajjum, aus dem sich ebenfalls nur ein einziges Blatt erhalten hat) . . . um ein unkanonisches Evangelienbuch handelt, so kann der Grund für das kleine Format auch die Absicht gewesen sein, das Buch leicht zu verbergen” (240).

³¹ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 11.

³² Turner, *Typology*, 30. Turner clearly labels those documents he considers amulets; e.g., P.Oxy. 2065, and P.Lit. Lond. 239.

³³ J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires Juifs et Chrétiens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976), 583 (V.H. 585). Van Haelst does not include P.Oxy. 840 in the index of amulets, nor does he refer to it as an amulet. The term “amulet” is only used in the article that van Haelst cites: Nestle, “Evangelien als Amulet am Halse und am Sofa,” 86.

³⁴ Although amulets vary in size, they are typically less than 10 x 10 cm.; e.g., P. Grenf. 2.112a (6 x 7.5 cm.), P. Rainer 4.23 (9.5 x 4.5 cm.), and P. Ryl. 3.461 (8.5 x 7.4 cm.). Amulets that are considerably larger are usually folded when carried on the body to keep their size small. As far as miniature codices, we will follow Turner (*Typology*, 30) who defines “miniature” as less than 10 cm. in width.

general trends within each category—something that no scholar of P.Oxy. 840 has attempted up to this point.

As this discussion proceeds, it is important to remember two items: (a) Any conclusions reached must be held cautiously in light of the fortuitous preservation of manuscript evidence. Nearly all our texts derive from Egypt and it is difficult to determine whether they accurately reflect overall trends in the Greco-Roman world. It is reassuring however, to note the relatively rapid circulation of literature during this time period, which suggests that literary practices in Egypt might not have been that divergent from the rest of the Empire.³⁵ (b) The boundaries between the categories of miniature codex and amulet are not absolute. The function of literature in the ancient world was fluid and ever-changing and we should not be surprised, therefore, if we occasionally find miniature codices that are amulets, or amulets that are in the form of miniature codices. Nevertheless, I will argue that the two groups, despite their occasional overlap, form distinct literary categories.

A. AMULETS

The Greek term for amulet, *περίαμμον* or *περίαπτου*, comes from the term *περιάπτειν* (“to tie on”) and refers to an object or device that is attached to a person.³⁶ Objects hung around the neck—such as pendants, medals, and figures—were often used as amulets and assigned magical power in various cultures of antiquity.³⁷ Many had inscriptions that were thought to offer protection from things

³⁵ Several manuscript discoveries have revealed the rapidity of circulation. P.Oxy. 405, a copy of *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus dated to the late second century, was discovered in Egypt only about 20 years after its initial composition in Gaul in c.180. Likewise, the *Shepherd of Hermas* which was composed in Rome in the mid-second century was discovered in Egypt in a late-second century manuscript (P.Mich. 130). For more on this text, see Campbell Bonner, “A New Fragment of the Shepherd of Hermas, Michigan Papyrus 44,” *HTR* 20 (1927): 105-116. The famous \mathcal{P}^{52} , dated at the beginning of the second century, was discovered in Egypt only a few years after the original composition in the late first century. The primary discussion of \mathcal{P}^{52} is in C.H. Roberts, “An Unpublished Fragment of the Fourth Gospel in the John Rylands Library,” *BJRL* 20 (1936): 45-55. For more on the circulation of ancient manuscripts see, Eldon Jay Epp, “New Testament Papyrus Manuscripts and Letter Carrying in Greco-Roman Times,” in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, ed. B.A. Pearson, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 35-56.

³⁶ Roy Kotansky, “Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 107-137; 107.

³⁷ For extensive detail of magical amulets in the ancient world see, Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1950), especially 208-228; E.A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions* (London: Oxford, 1930); A. Wiedemann, *Die Amulette der*

such as sickness, bad dreams, or wild animals.³⁸ Some inscriptions were meant to be chanted or repeated in order to have their affect.³⁹ Christian amulets often, though not exclusively, were written on parchment or papyrus and were connected with the magical use of books that was so common in the ancient world.⁴⁰ Since Christians already believed scripture to contain authority and power, it is not hard to imagine that they, being influenced by their culture, would also begin to use it in a magical sense.⁴¹ Indeed, Chrysostom suggested that hanging gospels by one's bed offered

alten Aegypter (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1910); and Roy Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper and Bronze Lamellae* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1994).

³⁸ Pendants or carvings depicting a bird eating a snake or other reptiles were supposed to protect a person from such things (Bonner, *Studies*, 213-215). For specific examples of this type of amulet see H.J. Rose, "A Blood-Staunching Amulet," *HTR* 44 (1951): 59-60. Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994) provide useful examples of Christian amulets designed to heal eye pain (Berlin 21911), protect from a fever (Cologne 851), and guard against pain and distress caused by demons (P. Vindob. G. 13b).

³⁹ Bonner, *Studies*, 11-12, 216-217. Metzger describes how P. Princeton 159, a magical amulet designed to cure fevers, contained a triangular pattern of meaningless syllables that was to be chanted aloud. As the lines got shorter the fever was supposedly lessened:

ζαγουρηπαγουρη
 αγουρηπαγουρ
 γουρηπαγου
 ουρηπαγο
 υρηπαγ
 ρηπα
 ηπ
 π

For full discussion see Bruce M. Metzger, "A Magical Amulet for Curing Fevers," in *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament*, ed. Boyd L. Daniels and M. Jack Suggs (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1967), 89-94.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of magical texts in Christianity see, Patrick Crasta, "Graeco-Christian Magical Papyri," *SPap* 18 (1979): 31-40; E.A. Judge, "The Magical Use of Scripture in the Papyri," in *Perspectives on Language and Text*, ed. E.W. Conrad and E.G. Newing (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 339-349; Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*; and A. Biondi, "Le Citazioni Bibliche nei Papiri Magici Cristiani Greci," *SPap* 20 (1981): 93-127. For an overview of magic in early Christianity and the ancient world see D.E. Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," *ANRW* 23.2: 1507-1557; Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink, eds. *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); N. Brox, "Magie und Aberglaube an den Anfängen des Christentums," *TTZ* 83 (1974): 157-180; J. Engemann, "Zur Verbreitung magischer Übelabwehr in der nichtchristlichen und christlichen Spätantike," *JAC* 18 (1975): 22-48; E.M. Yamauchi, "Magic in the Biblical World," *TynBul* 34 (1983): 169-200; Stephen Benko, "Early Christian Magical Practices," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1982 Seminar Papers*, ed. Kent H. Richards (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 9-14; and Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, eds. *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997). These latter studies devote little space to discussion of the magical use of books, but are useful for establishing the broader historical context of the way magic functioned around and within early Christianity.

⁴¹ Bonner declares, "It is well known that the old religions held out for a long time after Christianity dominated the empire and, furthermore, professed Christians often clung to magic and had no scruples about using pagan figures and symbols" (*Studies*, 221). C.H. Roberts concurs, "Christians in Egypt in the third and early fourth centuries were not above using amulets much as their pagan contemporaries did" (Roberts, *Manuscript*, 82). Aune adds: "As Christianity emerged from Judaism in consequence of its paganization, it continued to absorb magical traditions from the surrounding Greco-Roman world" ("Magic," 1521).

protection from harm.⁴² He even referred to the scriptures as “divine charms” and said, “the devil will not dare to approach a house where a Gospel is lying.”⁴³ In the *Acts of Andrew*, Trophima is protected from evil because she wore “the Gospel on her bosom.”⁴⁴ The apocryphal *Epistle of Christ to Agbar* was often fixed on the doors of houses or on the gates of a city to ward off attacks.⁴⁵ Augustine records the belief of some that a headache could be cured by placing a copy of the Gospel of John under one’s head.⁴⁶ Despite the general use of amulets, they were readily condemned in official church declarations. The Synod of Laodicea (c.360) declared in canon 36 that “those who wear such, we command to be cast out of the church.”⁴⁷

Since we are primarily concerned with Christian amulets, the most appropriate source for our study is J. van Haelst’s *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires Juifs et Chrétiens*.⁴⁸ It records 118 known Christian amulets on a variety of materials, but we will focus in upon the 93 on papyrus or parchment.⁴⁹ Although there inevitably will be some dispute about whether some of these are indeed amulets, van Haelst’s catalog is exhaustive enough to be a fair representation of the situation in early Christianity. Let us examine some general trends within this group.

⁴² *Hom. 1 Cor.* 43.7.

⁴³ *Hom. Jo.* 32.3.

⁴⁴ *Gregory of Tours’ Epitome*, 23, cited in Elliott, *Apocryphal*, 280.

⁴⁵ E. von Dobschütz, “Charms and Amulets (Christian),” *ERE* 3:413-430, 425.

⁴⁶ *Tract. Ev. Jo.* 7.12.

⁴⁷ *Synod of Laodicea*, Canon 36.

⁴⁸ Other helpful catalogs include Kurt Aland, ed., *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri, I, Biblische Papyri* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976); Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1973); Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), which reproduces and supplements Preisendanz; Biondi, “Le Citazioni Bibliche nei Papiri Magici Cristiani Greci,” 100-102; and Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, 27-56. There is a significant degree of overlap between the amulets in these volumes, and van Haelst seems to be the most complete. The original Preisendanz was known and incorporated by van Haelst, and the vast majority of the new papyri described in Betz are either not Christian or were already known by van Haelst (e.g., PGM C is V.H. 902; and PGM LXXXVIII is V.H. 968). Virtually every Greek amulet in Meyer’s volume is already known by van Haelst (e.g., note #s 8,11,12,13,15,16,17,20,25,26), and the very few new amulets are mostly in Coptic. Virtually all papyri listed in Biondi occurs in van Haelst (p.100-102). Aland’s volume has limited usefulness because it does not catalog texts on any other material but papyrus, thus excluding many of the amulets that may be most like P.Oxy. 840. For more detail on the difference between Aland and van Haelst see T.C. Skeat’s review of both books in *JTS* 29 (1978): 175-192.

⁴⁹ The figure of 118 is derived from the index of van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires Juifs et Chrétiens*, 414.

- (1) A substantial majority of the amulets are written on papyrus and not parchment. Only 20 of the amulets are on parchment, and 73 on papyrus.⁵⁰ Thus, papyrus outnumbers parchment almost four to one. This fact takes on greater significance when one considers that virtually all the amulets date from the fourth century or later (with some exceptions), and a majority of these are concentrated around the fifth and sixth centuries, well after parchment had become the material of choice. There are even examples of papyrus amulets as late as the 8th century (V.H. 245). Only two parchment amulets could possibly be dated as early as the fourth century (V.H. 731, V.H. 1050) and each are likely fifth century or later. Since P.Oxy. 840 is parchment and commonly dated fourth century, it would be a rare amulet according to the trends observed here. Although these statistics certainly do not rule out parchment amulets, they suggest that the material of choice was overwhelmingly papyrus.
- (2) A large portion of the amulets have no writing on the back side (the verso). In at least 47 amulets (and perhaps more) the writing stops on the front page.⁵¹ This constitutes over 50% of the known amulets according to van Haelst. Thus, the majority of amulets could not have come from a codex and likely were constructed out of a single sheet for the sole purpose of being used as an amulet. Furthermore, of the 46 amulets with writing on both sides, at least 24 of them have writing on the reverse side that is completely unrelated to the front side.⁵² In other words, the amulets likely were constructed out of papyrus that had been used previously for a different purpose (or vice-versa). For example, V.H. 3 is an amulet with the text of Gen 1:1-5 on the verso. On the recto is an unrelated Christian letter detailing the correspondence between Christians in Arsinoïte and Rome. V.H. 899 has a Byzantine text on one side and Christian symbols on the other. V.H. 900 has a documentary text on the recto and a prayer against fever on the verso. When these factors are considered, approximately 70 out of 93

⁵⁰ The parchment amulets include the following: 88, 94, 169, 197, 199, 200, 225, 227, 240, 341, 386, 532, 727, 731, 732, 733, 848, 938, 976, 1050.

⁵¹ Amulets with blank versos include: 84, 88, 105, 124, 152, 195, 197, 199, 201, 220, 341, 345, 423, 532, 558, 720, 721, 731, 754, 757, 771, 848, 849, 865, 881, 893, 895, 896, 902, 917, 933, 948, 951, 957, 959, 960, 965, 968, 971, 972, 984, 1006, 1017, 1019, 1050, 1132, 1136.

⁵² Amulets with unrelated material on reverse side: 3, 94, 121 [for discussion of this particular example see Robert Kraft and Antonia Tripolitis, "Some Uncatalogued Papyri of Theological and Other Interest in the John Rylands Library," *BJRL* 51 (1968): 137-149], 183, 196, 202, 221, 232, 240, 242, 245, 275, 490, 536, 613, 732, 733, 898, 899, 900, 952, 955, 956, 976.

(75%) of all the amulets do not have continuous text on the front and back.

Thus, a codex form of an amulet seems to be quite rare.⁵³

- (3) The type of content found in these amulets fit into relatively clear categories. At least 31 of the amulets (about 1/3) quote from the Psalms, most of which are from Psalm 90 or Psalm 1.⁵⁴ Rarely are other Old Testament passages quoted.⁵⁵ Prayers, both biblical and private, are a second significant category.⁵⁶ These are often citations from the Lord's prayer, the doxology, incantations, and prayers to various saints. At least 47 of these 93 amulets consist of such prayers, making up over 50% of the known amulets.⁵⁷ New Testament citations make up a third category, which tends to be relatively small if the NT prayer passages (e.g., Lord's prayer) are not counted. Most of these tend to be short snippets that are easy to remember and brief enough to fit on an amulet; e.g., 2 Cor 13:13 (V.H. 345), John 1:1 (V.H. 423), 1 Tim 1:15-16 (V.H. 532). It was also common in amulets to cite the beginning of each of the four gospels (e.g., V.H. 386, 423, 731, 897).⁵⁸ Symbols and drawings form the fourth category of content for amulets. Christograms (V.H. 757, 849, 971), crosses (V.H. 423, 899), signs such as ΑΩ (V.H. 731, 899), and magic symbols (V.H. 901, 902) were common. These are frequently found interspersed among prayers or scriptural quotations.
- (4) It is clear from the above categories that Psalms and prayers dominate the content of amulets. Out of 93 amulets, I found only 15 that contain neither a Psalm nor a prayer.⁵⁹ Put another way, 5 out of every 6 amulets have a Psalm, a prayer, or both. Consequently, we should be rather surprised to find, for

⁵³ Even amulets with *related* writings on both sides do not necessarily come from a miniature codex. For example, P.Oxy. 34.2684 (V.H. 558) is an amulet containing some verses from Jude on the front and back. Although Turner lists this text as a miniature codex, Roberts declares that this text was simply "a small singled folded sheet rather than part of a miniature codex" (*Manuscript*, 82).

⁵⁴ Amulets that cite the psalms: 84, 85, 88, 93, 94, 105, 121, 124, 152, 160, 169, 183, 195, 196, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 220, 221, 225, 227, 232, 240, 345, 386, 423, 731, 771, 938. Gamble found 42 citations from the Psalms (*Books and Readers*, 238).

⁵⁵ A few examples include, 3, 242, 275, 359.

⁵⁶ See Crasta, "Graeco-Christian Magical Papyri," 39-40.

⁵⁷ Amulets consisting primarily of prayers: 720, 721, 727, 731, 732, 733, 754, 767, 771, 848, 849, 865, 881, 893, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 917, 933, 938, 948, 951, 952, 953, 955, 956, 957, 959, 960, 965, 968, 971, 972, 976, 984, 1006, 1017, 1019, 1050, 1100, 1132, 1136.

⁵⁸ See also P. Vindob. G 348 which gives incipits of the four gospels and also Ps 90. Its verso is blank. For more discussion see R.W. Daniel, "A Christian Amulet on Papyrus," *VC* 37 (1983): 400-404.

⁵⁹ Amulets with neither a Psalm nor a prayer: 3, 242, 245, 275, 341, 347, 359, 482, 490, 532, 536, 558, 591, 613, 1138.

example, an amulet that contains a continuous NT text and nothing else.⁶⁰ Amulets rarely have long citations from a single biblical passage that are uninterrupted by prayers, Psalms, symbols, or other biblical passages.⁶¹ The content of amulets are usually a conglomeration, composed of short portions of Scripture from many different sources, often intermingled with prayers, symbols, and drawings. For example, V.H. 386 contains the beginning verses of Mark, Luke, and John, the Lord's prayer (Matt 6:9-13), the Nicene Creed, and Psalm 68. V.H. 731 contains a symbol of a cross, the Trinitarian formula, Ps 90:1, Ps 117:6-7, the beginning verses of the four gospels, a liturgical formula, and the symbols AΩ. Thus, Amulets are normally a mish-mash of many different types of content. P.Oxy. 840 has difficulty fitting into any of these four categories of content. It is neither a prayer, nor a psalm. It has no symbols or drawings. Its theme does not fit well with magic or healing. It is a continuous and unbroken text from the same source. If P.Oxy. 840 were an amulet, it would be a strange one indeed.

- (5) External factors can also indicate whether a document was an amulet. Out of the 93 amulets, 21 were folded so that they could be small enough to carry on the body.⁶² Thus, folding occurs in about ¼ of all amulets and is a strong indication that a text was used in a magical way. Occasionally even a cord is found with an amulet (V.H. 169) or a hole for a cord (V.H. 558, 900).

There is only one characteristic that fits with P.Oxy. 840 being an amulet: its size. Other than this one factor, all other considerations seem to point in the opposite direction. Let us move to the next section where we can examine some trends among miniature codices.

B. MINIATURE CODICES

Small codices were not rare in the ancient world and most likely were designed for private use.⁶³ Despite their small size, some could contain a surprising

⁶⁰ We do find a few examples of this: 490, 532, 536, 558.

⁶¹ There are, of course, exceptions. V.H. 183 provides all of Ps 90 with no other texts or prayers.

⁶² Amulets that were folded: 93, 195, 199, 490, 532, 731, 848, 865, 901, 917, 948, 951, 959, 968, 971, 976, 984, 1006, 1017, 1019, 1136.

⁶³ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 10-11.

number of pages.⁶⁴ The advent of miniature parchment codices in secular literature can be dated back to the time of Martial where classical authors (e.g., Homer, Virgil, Cicero) were put in the format of *pugillaribus membranis* for the private use of the literate upper class.⁶⁵ However, this innovation did not appear to meet with much success and in the later years of Martial's publishing there are no more references to the miniature parchment codex. The popular return of the pocket codex in the fourth century can be attributed in large part to early Christian communities. The fact that 47 of the 55 codices listed by Turner are Christian demonstrates that it was a favored format among private Christian book owners.⁶⁶ These tiny books were often quite elegant and provided convenient and portable access to various forms of Christian literature. Roberts sums it up well, "They are best regarded not as amulets but as devotional handbooks for the well-to-do."⁶⁷

Since our study will employ Turner's list of 55 miniature codices ("miniature" defined by Turner as less than 10cm wide), some observations must be made before we proceed: (a) It must be remembered that any such list, like van Haelst's, is undoubtedly incomplete in some way. For example, Turner does not include P. Ryl. 3.463 which is a page from a 3rd century miniature codex (9.9 x 8.9) containing the *Gospel of Mary* (V.H. 1065).⁶⁸ But, even with such limitations in mind, Turner's catalog is an unmatched resource for evaluating the characteristics of miniature codices and is quite sufficient for our purposes here.⁶⁹ (b) Four of the codices included by Turner are known to be amulets and are included in the list

⁶⁴ The Mani Codex is the smallest known miniature codex and is about the size of a matchbox (3.5 x 4.5 cm.), yet still contains 192 pages. For more discussion see A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, "Ein griechischer Mani-Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780)," *ZPE* 5 (1970): 97-216. Other miniature codices also contained an impressive number of pages. The *Acts of Peter*, P. Oxy. 849 (early iv century), contains the page numbers 167 and 168 in the top margin.

⁶⁵ Roberts and Skeat, *Birth*, 27.

⁶⁶ These numbers have even spurred speculation that the miniature codex was a distinctively Christian invention. Roberts declares, "On present evidence the miniature codex would seem to be a Christian invention" (*Manuscript*, 12). Gamble takes a more moderate approach, "The miniature format was, if not a uniquely Christian phenomenon, one heavily favored by Christians" (*Books and Readers*, 236).

⁶⁷ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 11.

⁶⁸ A possible reason for its omission is the ambiguity about its original size. The width of the fragment is measured at 9.9 cm. and some of the margins are missing. This may have, in the eyes of Turner, pushed it past the 10 cm. limit for what he considers a "miniature" codex (Turner, *Typology*, 25).

⁶⁹ Although the vast majority of Turner's list is also included in van Haelst, he casts a wider net and supplies details on some Latin and Coptic codices.

mentioned above by van Haelst.⁷⁰ Since some of these codices have a blank verso (e.g., P.Oxy. 2065) it is unclear why he included them in the list at all. Nevertheless, it is a good reminder that these two categories are not mutually exclusive—it is possible (though rare) for a document to be both a codex and an amulet at the same time. (c) Turner does include some codices from non-Christian literature in his list, whereas van Haelst focuses primarily on Christian. However, these non-Christian miniature codices are very few and the overwhelming majority of the codices (47 out of 55) contain Christian texts. Thus, this difference between Turner and van Haelst should not affect our conclusions.

With all these considerations and qualifications in mind we will use Turner's list as it currently stands without attempting to administer a series of complicated modifications. Let us now observe some characteristics of miniature codices.

- (1) The most obvious characteristic of miniature codices is that they all have writing on the back of the page. In contrast, over 50% of amulets have a blank verso. The one miniature "codex" listed by Turner which does not have writing on the back, P.Oxy. 2065, is (not surprisingly) an amulet.⁷¹ In the case of P.Oxy. 840, not only does it have continuous writing on both sides but the story it contains began on a previous page and continued onto further pages. Thus, we can be virtually certain it was part of a codex.
- (2) The majority of the miniature codices are on parchment and not on papyrus. Of the 55 codices Turner catalogs, 45 are on parchment, composing over 80% of the known miniature codices. This figure is nearly the exact opposite of the amulet above, where 73 out of 93 are on papyrus (78%). This trend seems to have little to do with the dates of these texts. As noted above, virtually all amulets are fourth century or later, and the majority of these are concentrated in the fifth and sixth centuries—which would have been a quite natural time to use parchment. Thus, it seems possible that early Christians viewed amulets and miniature codices as distinct literary forms requiring different materials.

⁷⁰ P.Oxy. 2684 (V.H. 558); P.Ant. 2.54 (V.H. 347); P.Lit. Lond. 239 (V.H. 938); P.Oxy. 2065 (V.H. 200).

⁷¹ As noted above, it is unclear why Turner felt compelled to include this particular example. One of the other amulets, P.Ant. 2.54 (V.H. 347), has a blank page as well. However, this constitutes the fourth page of an obvious codex.

(3) The content of these miniature codices also differs substantially from amulets. First, they preserve a surprising number of non-canonical texts: the *Shepherd of Hermas*,⁷² *Acts of Peter*,⁷³ *Acts of Paul and Thecla*,⁷⁴ an apocryphal gospel,⁷⁵ *Protevangelium of James*,⁷⁶ *Didache*,⁷⁷ the *Apocalypse of Peter*,⁷⁸ the *Life of Mani*,⁷⁹ *Bel and the Dragon*,⁸⁰ the *Gospel of Mary*,⁸¹ VI Ezra,⁸² Tobit,⁸³ and the Apocalypse.⁸⁴ These types of texts are virtually non-existent in amulet form.⁸⁵ Second, nearly all these miniature codices produce continuous texts, rather than a conglomeration of texts from various sources. As noted above, a typical amulet may consist of citations from the gospels, a Psalm, the doxology, and various symbols. In contrast, the obvious trend of miniature codices is to preserve a single continuous text.⁸⁶ Third, although there are a few miniature codices containing Psalms, prayers on miniature codices are practically non-existent. This stands in stark contrast to amulets, where prayers constitute more than 50% of the known texts.

In light of these observations, it is remarkable how well P.Oxy. 840—a tiny parchment codex containing an apocryphal story of Jesus—fits within the general pattern of other miniature books. However, before reaching a final conclusion, we must first consider the arguments of Blau and Preuschen.

⁷² P.Oxy 1783 (V.H. 659)

⁷³ P.Oxy. 849 (V.H. 603)

⁷⁴ P.Ant. 1.13 (V.H. 610), and P. Ant 1.6 (VH 609)

⁷⁵ P.Oxy. 840 (V.H. 585)

⁷⁶ P.Grenf. 1.8 (V.H. 601)

⁷⁷ P.Oxy. 1782 (V.H. 642) See also R.H. Connolly, "New Fragments of the Didache," *JTS* 25 (1924): 151-153.

⁷⁸ V.H. 619. See also K. Prümm, "De genuino Apocalypsis Petri textu," *Bib* 10 (1929): 62-80; and M.R. James, "The Rainer Fragment of the Apocalypse of Peter," *JTS* 32 (1931): 270-279.

⁷⁹ P. Colon. inv. 4780 (V.H. 1072).

⁸⁰ Bodl. gr. bib. d2 (V.H. 323, 1083, palimpsest)

⁸¹ P. Ryl. 3.463 (V.H. 1065)

⁸² P.Oxy. 1010 (V.H. 574). There appears to be a typographical error in Turner which reads VI Ezra (*Typology*, 30) because when we turn to van Haelst (574), Roberts (*Manuscript*, 11), and Gamble (*Books and Readers*, 236), they all have IV Ezra.

⁸³ P.Oxy. 1594 (V.H. 82)

⁸⁴ P.Oxy. 1080 (V.H. 561). To some Revelation was seen as non-canonical.

⁸⁵ Among those amulets listed by van Haelst, there appear to be only two apocryphal texts (591, 613) but there may be some that I have missed.

⁸⁶ Examples include P.Oxy. 1782, P.Mich. 3.132, V.H. 289, P.Oxy. 1010, V.H. 545, P.Grenf. 1.6, and P.Grenf. 1.8.

C. BLAU AND PREUSCHEN

Now that we have established the general characteristics of amulets and miniature codices we are able to deal directly with Blau and Preuschen's claim that P.Oxy. 840 was an amulet. Although other authors share the same opinion, only these two have offered any substantial defense of their position. Since Blau incorporates the arguments of Preuschen into his own article, we will focus upon Blau alone for the sake of this discussion. Blau appeals to three lines of evidence for why P.Oxy. 840 was an amulet: (a) P.Oxy. 840 has been written in "reverse" (or from the back to the front) and thus has been patterned after certain magical charms which were written in this way to enhance their protective qualities. (b) Portions of the Torah, often in the form of phylacteries, were assigned protective powers by the Jews and therefore functioned as amulets. (c) P.Oxy. 840 has been constructed in the form of Jewish books and thus likely functioned as a protective agent in the same way that the Torah did.

Let us discuss each of these in order, beginning with the reversed writing of P.Oxy. 840. This observation was initially made by Preuschen, "Das Büchlein oder wenigstens das was erhalten ist, war von hinten nach vorn geschrieben."⁸⁷ Blau picks up on this observation and cites numerous sources for how reversal was used in Talmudic literature.⁸⁸ Indeed, doing things backwards was common in ancient magic and soon was incorporated into Jewish forms of magic as well.⁸⁹ Incantations are even reversed in numerous Jewish magical texts from the Cairo Genizah collection, such as T-S K 1.132; T-S Arabic 49.54; and T-S NS 246.32.⁹⁰ However,

⁸⁷ Preuschen, "Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos," 2.

⁸⁸ Blau, "Das neue Evangelienfragment," 207-208.

⁸⁹ Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 27. Works on Magic in Judaism include Ludwig Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen* (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1898); J. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (New York: Atheneum, 1982); R. Campbell, *Semitic Magic: Its Origins and Development* (NY: KTAV Publishing, 1971); Peter Schäfer, "Magic and Religion in Ancient Judaism," in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, ed. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 19-44; Rebecca Macy Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998); G. Veltri, *Magie und Halakha. Ansätze zu einem empirischen Wissenschaftsbegriff im spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Judentum* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1997).

⁹⁰ For full discussion of these texts and others see Naveh and Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, 43-142; and Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985).

despite the obvious use of reversal in ancient Jewish texts, this phenomenon is simply not present in P.Oxy. 840. It seems evident that Preuschen and Blau were confused by Grenfell and Hunt's use of the terms "recto" and "verso." Since the term "recto" is typically used for the front of a document, Preuschen must have considered this to be evidence that the booklet was written from the rear of the codex forward, i.e. in "reverse". Bovon confirms their confusion,

Building on this misunderstanding [of recto and verso], Preuschen followed by Blau believed the book had been written from the back to the front. This was of course not the case. Blau makes a case of this supposed order to determine the amulet nature of the book from which the fragment comes.⁹¹

In the end, there is no reason to believe that P.Oxy. 840 has reversed writing of any sort.

Secondly, Blau suggests that the Jews wore parts of the Torah on their bodies as magical amulets for protection or healing. This particular assertion is not in doubt and can be easily established through controversies in the Talmud over the magical use of the Scriptures.⁹² However, Blau's observation that Hebrew Scriptures were used in a magical way hardly constitutes proof that P.Oxy. 840 was an amulet. In order for Blau's observation to be persuasive it must be shown that P.Oxy. 840 was, at a minimum, constructed in the form of a Jewish book and consequently meant to be used in the same way as the Torah.

Thus, we come to Blau's third point that P.Oxy. 840 was constructed in the manner of Jewish books. He lists four characteristics of Jewish books that are shared by P.Oxy. 840:

1. Ihr Schreibstoff bestand aus Tierhaut oder Pergament.
2. Ihr Format war äußerst klein.
3. Die Zeilenzahl der Kolumne war eine verhältnismäßig sehr hohe.
4. Die Schriftzeichen waren sehr klein, wie Hieronymus bezeugt, bei Tageslicht kaum lesbar.⁹³

⁹¹ Bovon, "Fragment," 710, n.18.

⁹² *y. Sabb* 6.2 (7b); Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic*, 107. Such "protective" use of scriptural texts dates back to Deut 6:9: "Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." Phylacteries (or *tefillin*) were certainly assigned apotropaic properties and used for healings and protection. For more on this see Jeffrey H. Tigay, "On the Term Phylacteries (Matt 23:5)," *HTR* 79 (1979): 45-53; Eli Davis, "The Psalms in Hebrew Medical Amulets," *VT* 42 (1992): 172-178; and E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, vol. 2 (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1953), 209.

⁹³ Blau, "Das neue Evangelienfragment," 206-207.

Blau's first observation, that Jewish literature was written on parchment, is not in question.⁹⁴ However, when one considers that later Christian literature was *also* predominantly on parchment, then there is no compelling reason to consider it a distinctively Jewish characteristic. The key consideration in distinguishing between Jewish and Christian writings is not material but format: Jews preferred rolls and Christians preferred the codex.⁹⁵ Of course, at the time of Blau's writing many of the early manuscript discoveries of the NT had not yet taken place and the significance of the codex was not yet understood.

Points 2, 3, and 4 argue that there were Hebrew books with very small format, many lines per page, and very small characters. Although this certainly may be the case, the discussion of miniature codices above showed that Christian books of small size were also circulating during this time period. Not only were these codices small in format, but they often used small font and could contain an impressive number of lines per page; e.g., the Mani Codex contained 23 lines in a page measuring only 4.5 x 3.5 cm. What need is there to draw links to small Jewish books written in Hebrew when there is a more natural and direct link to small Christian books written in Greek? Perhaps the small books mentioned by Blau would better fit under the category of miniature scrolls in ancient literature.⁹⁶

If Blau was convinced that P.Oxy. 840 was an amulet designed in a Jewish pattern, then it would have been more reasonable to compare it to Jewish amulets rather than just to Jewish literature in general. Such a comparison would have revealed a vast disparity between Jewish amulets and P.Oxy. 840. The majority of known Jewish amulets are not on parchment, but are either written on metal sheets or in the form of various figurines.⁹⁷ Although there are numerous Jewish magical

⁹⁴ See Menahem Haran, "Book-Scrolls at the Beginning of the Second Temple Period, The Transition from Papyrus to Skins," *HUCA* 54 (1983): 111-122.

⁹⁵ Although there are scattered exceptions, codices were not used regularly for Jewish literature until after the 7th century. For more see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 207 ff.

⁹⁶ Schubart (*Das Buch bei den Griechen und Römern*, 49,51) and Kenyon (*Books and Readers*, 49) mention examples of miniature scrolls of Greek literature, some as small as 2 inches high.

⁹⁷ For detailed examinations of extant Jewish amulets see Naveh and Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, 43-142; Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 40-198; T. Schrire, *Hebrew Magic Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation* (New York: Behrman House, 1982); and P.S. Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," in *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, ed. G. Vermes, et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 3.1:342-379, esp. 352-357. For details on Jewish amulets that were figurines see Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 208-295.

texts from the Talmudic period to the middle ages,⁹⁸ there are virtually no parchment or papyrus Jewish amulets that have survived from the early centuries of the Christian era.⁹⁹ Such amulets likely existed, but their nature can only be ascertained by (a) examining Jewish amulets on parchment from the middle ages and working backwards,¹⁰⁰ or (b) examining amulets from the Greek Magical Papyri that have Jewish characteristics.

Most of the amulets from the middle ages come from the Cairo Genizah collection and are written on parchment or paper. Not only does the format of these amulets not match P.Oxy. 840,¹⁰¹ but their content is also vastly different and completely unrelated. They consistently contain the following elements: a pronouncement formula, adjurations, instructions, the client's name, magical names, and biblical verses.¹⁰² Other than the last characteristic, these features do not at all match P.Oxy. 840. Identifying Jewish amulets among the Greek papyri is a vastly difficult task, but several candidates are possible.¹⁰³ All of these are on papyrus and have content that is similar to the magical elements in the Cairo Geniza amulets.¹⁰⁴ Thus, they too, offer no substantial similarities with P.Oxy. 840.

⁹⁸ Key magical works include the *Sefer ha-Razim* (*The Book of Mysteries*) from the iv-v centuries, and the numerous magical books from the Cairo Genizah in the middle ages which are closely associated with the mystical Hekhalot literature. For more see Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," 347-350; and Lesses, *Ritual Practices*, 13-54.

⁹⁹ Naveh and Shaked declare, "It may be taken for granted that besides such materials as earthenware and metal, soft materials, such as parchment, papyrus, or cloth, were also often used for writing amulets, but have not survived" (*Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 14). Alexander adds, "Jews in the Talmudic period doubtless wrote amulets on papyrus, cloth, and other less durable materials, but apart from an Aramaic papyrus fragment from Oxyrhynchus these have not survived" ("Incantations and Books of Magic," 355).

¹⁰⁰ These later amulets may accurately reflect earlier trends based on the claim of Trachtenberg that "There is an essential uniformity in all Jewish amulets, whatever the date or place of their origin" (*Jewish Magic*, 296).

¹⁰¹ Of all the amulets on paper or parchment in Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls* (#'s 1, 3, 4, 7, 8), or *Magic Spells and Formulae* (#'s 10, 12, 19, 27, 29), none were in codex form (although they occasionally had writing on the back), several were elongated and narrow like a scroll, and several had no writing on the verso.

¹⁰² Michael D. Swartz, "Scribal Magic and Rhetoric: Formal Patterns in Medieval Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah," *HTR* 83 (1990): 163-180, esp. 172-179. See also Blau, *Das altjüdische Zaubrewesen*, 93-96 for an overview of characteristics of Jewish amulets.

¹⁰³ Several are identified as Phylacteries and thus likely used as amulets: PGM VII, 311-316, 317-318, 579-590; LIX, 1-15; LXXXIII, 1-20; LXXXIX, 1-27; CXXI, 1-14; CXXVIII, 1-12. Many of these are synchronistic and it is often difficult to separate the Jewish components from the pagan. For other suggestions on Jewish texts among PGM, see D.E. Aune, "Magic," *ISBE* 3:212-219, esp. 217; and Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," 359.

¹⁰⁴ Betz discusses some of the similarities between some PGM texts and a text from Cairo Genizah in "Jewish Magic in the Greek Magical Papyri," 52-56.

In the end, we must part ways with the conclusions of Blau and Preuschen. Although there are occasional similarities with some aspects of Jewish literature, there are too many characteristics of P.Oxy. 840 that just do not fit with a Jewish background. Furthermore, Jewish magical amulets, a category unexplored by Blau, have even fewer similarities with our text. These considerations, coupled with the fact that P.Oxy. 840 contains a distinctively Christian text (a gospel), written in a dominantly Christian format (the codex), require us to deny that it was intentionally patterned after Jewish books.

D. SUMMARY

By way of conclusion it seems clear that amulets and miniature codices form distinct literary categories that may occasionally overlap. There are certain characteristics unique to each category that can indicate the purpose for which the document was created. In the case of P.Oxy. 840 it seems evident that it was created to be a miniature codex and not an amulet. However, this data can only reveal what a document was *created* to do and cannot speak about how it may have been *used* by various owners. As the citations above from Augustine and Chrysostom made clear, the magical use of books was quite common in early Christianity and even books that were not created with a magical purpose could have been used by a later owner to cure a fever or protect a house. For the most part, we simply cannot know whether a particular book ever was used in this way.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the only relevant and meaningful question to ask is whether P.Oxy. 840 was *created* with such purposes in mind, and the answer clearly seems to be no.¹⁰⁶

As for the implications of this conclusion for our study of P.Oxy. 840, three observations are in order. First, the probable date of P.Oxy. 840 can be further clarified. All of the miniature codices in Turner are third century or later, with most being in the fourth century, indicating that the abundance of small formats was a

¹⁰⁵ Unless for some reason we have either (a) the express testimony of the owner that he used the document in this fashion, or (b) something done to the text that indicates it was used in this way, e.g., a string used to carry it around the neck, or if it was folded many times.

¹⁰⁶ Perhaps, then, careful distinctions in vocabulary would be helpful in scholarly works on this subject. The term "amulet" ought to be reserved for documents that were clearly *designed* for magical use and not for documents that simply may have been used in a magical way. The latter category is meaningless because virtually any book could be included in it.

relatively late development. Thus, we should be surprised to find a date for P.Oxy. 840 earlier than the end of the third century. Second, P.Oxy. 840 likely functioned similar to other miniature codices of the day. In contrast to larger codices designed for public use, the tiny format of these books allowed them to be easily carried on journeys, quickly referred to in the context of conversations (perhaps evangelistic discussions), and conveniently hid during times of persecution (e.g., Diocletian). Furthermore, the abundance of apocryphal literature in these miniature codices indicates that private books were a primary means of promulgating literature that had not been approved by ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁰⁷ Third, the fact that P.Oxy. 840 is a miniature codex makes it more likely to have originally contained a larger collection of Jesus stories. Given what we know about the capacity of other miniature codices—as opposed to the brevity of amulets—it seems possible that P.Oxy. 840 may have been a more fully developed gospel-like book.

IV. THE HAND OF P.OXY. 840

A distinctive feature of P.Oxy. 840 is that its miniature size is matched by a miniature script. The scribe managed to cram 45 lines of text onto the front and back of this tiny page, with approximately 28 letters per line. Other miniature codices do not necessarily have small font to correspond with their small format. For example P.Oxy. 1010, comparable in dimensions, has only 10-11 letters per line and 12 lines to the page, and P.Oxy. 1779 spreads 17 lines over two pages. The scribe of P.Oxy. 840 begins at the top of the page with the letters a bit more spread out, but then puts them closer and closer as the page continues toward the bottom.

The script is a round upright uncial with strokes of even thickness (see Figure 1 and 2).¹⁰⁸ The text could only be considered “roughly bilinear” as the scribe often extends letters such as ι, τ, ρ, φ, and υ well below the line.¹⁰⁹ The fact that the letters are frequently uneven (note the $\overline{\delta\delta}$ in line 25) and often touch one another (especially line 25 and 27) shows the scribe to be somewhat informal, though he

¹⁰⁷ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 236.

¹⁰⁸ Kraus agrees and calls the strokes, “rund und aufrecht” (“P.Oxy. V 840,” 4).

¹⁰⁹ Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (2 ed.; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 3.

maintains a competent bookhand.¹¹⁰ Grenfell and Hunt declared this hand to be “a type pointing, we think, to a fourth rather than a fifth century date.”¹¹¹

Several considerations confirm the fourth century date. The rounded, upright nature of the hand of P.Oxy. 840 contrasts with the narrow sloping hands so common to the third century.¹¹² Although not perfectly square like the “biblical majuscule”¹¹³ of the major fourth century codices, the letters are clearly headed in that direction as can be seen by the more rounded θ and ϵ (which at times are almost circular), and the wide δ .¹¹⁴ The V-shaped epsilon also appears occasionally in P.Oxy. 840, which is a common characteristic of texts in the fourth century and later.¹¹⁵ The color of the ink is also an important factor. It tends to range between light and dark brown depending on when the scribe re-inked the pen. Brown ink, according to Turner, has been mixed with iron salt or other chemicals and thus points to a date of fourth century or later.¹¹⁶

Although these factors point to a fourth century date, similarities with Cavallo and Maehler’s “upright pointed majuscule” suggest the date should be no

¹¹⁰ The two fundamental categories of handwriting are the book (or literary) hand and documentary (or cursive) hand. See Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 22; and Italo Gallo, *Greek and Latin Papyrology* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1986), 83-84.

¹¹¹ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 9.

¹¹² E.M. Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), 135. Kenyon, *Palaeography*, 107, 111. Examples include, \mathcal{P}^{48} , \mathcal{P}^{80} , P.Oxy. 2458 (Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, #32), the several texts mentioned by Kenyon (104-108), and the more recent P.Oxy. 4446 (see discussion in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. LXV, 14-15). Sloping returns to some degree in the fifth century and later as can be seen by Codex W of the gospels (Thompson, *Introduction*, 211) and perhaps the Mani Codex (Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 129).

¹¹³ Term derived from G. Cavallo, *Ricerche sulla maiuscola biblica* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1967). A detailed discussion is found in G. Cavallo and H. Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period, A.D. 300-800* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 34. I will consider this synonymous with the term “biblical uncial” which was coined by Grenfell and Hunt (discussion in Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 21-22) and employed by C.H. Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 16. For a detailed discussion of different terms for different hands, see Gallo, *Papyrology*, 82-89, and Ruth Barbour, *Greek Literary Hands: A.D. 400-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), xvi-xxx.

¹¹⁴ Note the θ in lines 10, 15, and 31, and the ϵ in line 2, 23, and especially 41. A wider θ is one of the reasons Turner gives \mathcal{P}^{66} a later date (*Greek Manuscripts*, #63). The δ can be clearly seen in line 1 and 25.

¹¹⁵ Although the scribe does not regularly use the V-shape, it appears clearly in lines 10 and 31, suggesting he may be moving in that direction. Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands*, declares this feature to be “very common in the iv century” (12). F.H. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1894), 39, also affirms that the v-shaped epsilon is common in later uncials.

¹¹⁶ Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 19. He does note some exceptions to this trend with P.Oxy. 3197 (i century) and P.Oxy. 2269 (iii century).

later than the first half of the fourth century. This style “is fairly well attested in its initial phase, in the second and third centuries, but it very rarely appears in the fourth to eighth centuries.”¹¹⁷ In addition to an upright script, this style is characterized by three things: “1, contrast between broad and narrow letter forms; 2, no marked differentiation between thin and thick strokes; 3, no decorative dashes or thickenings.”¹¹⁸ Let us examine each of these characteristics in order.¹¹⁹

First, a style with a contrast between broad and narrow letters is described by Turner as “formal mixed” and normally includes ϵ , θ , \omicron , σ among the narrow letters.¹²⁰ In P.Oxy. 840 the \omicron and σ are exceptionally small and often raised above the bottom line (note especially lines 1-4).¹²¹ As noted above, the θ tends to be quite round at points, but at other times is distinctively more narrow.¹²² Although the ϵ is normally rounded, it is relatively small in size and frequently given a straight back to make it more narrow.¹²³ Thus, the small sizes of ϵ , \omicron , σ , and occasionally θ are contrasted with the broad letters (δ , υ , τ , π , ν , λ), creating a match with the “upright pointed majuscule” style as exemplified by P.Oxy. 1352 (Cavallo and Maehler #12a).¹²⁴ However, the occasional roundness of the θ and ϵ demonstrate that P.Oxy. 840 is probably just starting to move out of this style toward biblical uncial.¹²⁵

¹¹⁷ Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands*, 4.

¹¹⁸ Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands*, 32.

¹¹⁹ As we examine the hand of P.Oxy. 840, it should be kept in mind that the inconsistent manner in which the scribe wrote various letters makes it difficult to make generalized statements. For example, the scribe forms the α and the υ in different ways throughout the short fragment, and sometimes makes θ and ϵ large and round, and other times makes them small and narrow.

¹²⁰ For discussion see Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 22-23, and plates 28, 72, and 84.

¹²¹ The contrast between these letters is especially evident in line 3 ($\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$, small \omicron and σ next to wider υ , τ , and π), line 9 ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota$, note the wide π next to ϵ), line 24 (small ϵ in $\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ compared to υ), line 31 ($\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, the small ϵ next to the θ).

¹²² The θ takes on a clear oval shape in line 3, 16, 23, 24, and the end of 28.

¹²³ The straight back is particularly evident in line 13, 16, 27 and the small size is clearly seen in lines 13, 14, and 24. Note particularly the contrast between the ν and the ϵ at the end of line 27. The straight back ϵ is found in the third-century P.Oxy. 1016 (Turner # 84), the second-century P.Oxy. 1174 (Turner #34), and the second-century P.Oxy. 1083 (Turner #28).

¹²⁴ The similarities between the two documents are especially evident in the use of \omicron and σ , with ι , τ , and υ . Note how the miniature \omicron and σ sit about half way up the ι , τ , and υ in both documents. Cavallo and Maehler mention that the \omicron becomes more oval in the later stage of this style, but stays small and circular in the early stages (32). P.Oxy. 840 is also characterized by a circular, rather than oval, omicron and is thus closer to Cavallo and Maehler’s #12a, dated to the early fourth century. The small \omicron , in contrast to the large \omicron of the major 4th century codices, was a common 3rd century characteristic according to Roberts (*Greek Literary Hands*, 17) and Kenyon (*Palaeography*, 105). This is confirmed by the abundance of texts during this time found with the small \omicron ; e.g., P.Oxy. 847, \mathcal{P}^{45} , \mathcal{P}^{75} , P.Oxy. 1016, P.Oxy. 223, P.Oxy. 2341, and P.Oxy. 1015. One other third century factor is worthy of observation. P.Oxy. 840 contains a rather small ω that tends to sit above the lower line (Note especially the examples in line 4, 10, 12, 15, 16, 23, 24, and 26). Although this feature is

It should be noted that the alternation between broad and narrow letters is also seen in later documents such as the 5th century Codex W of the gospels and the tiny Mani Codex, P. Colon inv. 4780. However, these texts are characterized by a distinctively sloped style and a marked differentiation between thin and thick strokes—both of which are lacking in P.Oxy. 840 (see below). This style is labeled “sloping pointed majuscule” by Cavallo and Maehler and does not reach its ideal until the late fourth century and then extends into later documents.¹²⁶

Second, although P.Oxy. 840 occasionally exhibits a contrast in thickness between vertical and horizontal strokes, the contrast is not “marked” and the strokes throughout the fragment tend to be more uniform in thickness.¹²⁷ Roberts notes that this type of contrast is “much more marked” in the later biblical uncial style.¹²⁸ When we compare P.Oxy. 840 to P.Oxy. 1080 (a miniature codex of Revelation from the 4th century), it is evident that the latter contains a greater contrast between fine horizontal lines and thicker vertical lines than the former, suggesting that the hand of P.Oxy. 840 is a bit earlier. Thus, our fragment is a likely precursor to such a biblical uncial and related to the “upright pointed majuscule.”¹²⁹

Third, P.Oxy. 840 does not exhibit characteristic “dashes or thickenings,” but proves to be quite a plain and unadorned hand. However, that being said, some

not an infallible dating tool, it differs dramatically from the large ω in biblical uncial and occurs with impressive frequency in the third and early fourth centuries; e.g., P.Oxy. 1016 (Turner #84), P.Oxy. 856 (Turner #73), P.Herm.Rees. 5 (Turner #70), P.Oxy. 1015 (Turner #50), P.Oxy. 2656 (Turner #43), P.Oxy. 2458 (Turner #32), B.M. Pap. 126 (Turner #14), P. Herm. Rees. 5 (Cavallo #2a), P. Chester Beatty IX (Cavallo #2b), P.Oxy. 1352 (Cavallo, #12a).

¹²⁵ The fact that P.Oxy. 840 has a bit more rounded θ and ϵ makes it a mix between P.Oxy. 1352 (Cavallo and Maehler #12a) and PSI 1171 (Cavallo and Maehler #12b), with it being a bit closer to the former than the latter. It also bears considerable resemblance to Turner’s #70, P. Herm. Rees 5, dated c.325.

¹²⁶ Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands*, 4. The category of “Alexandrian majuscule” (5) should also be mentioned because there are forms of this style that also have alternating broad and narrow letters (e.g., plates 22, 37, 47 in Cavallo and Maehler). However, they not only have a differentiation between thin and thick strokes, but are characterized by oval shaped ϵ , θ , σ , and σ (52). In P.Oxy. 840 the θ and ϵ are a mix between oval and round, and the σ and σ are always small and perfectly round.

¹²⁷ The appearance of thinner horizontal strokes is evident mostly in ϵ and occasionally in π (line 1, 6) and θ (line 10,16). It is less obvious in the τ , α , and δ (note especially the *nomina sacra* in line 25).

¹²⁸ Roberts, *Hands*, 16. For example, he observes that P.Oxy. 661 (plate 16a) only exhibits the beginnings of such a contrast and thus he dates it to the late second century, making it the earliest datable example of biblical uncial. The contrast between vertical and horizontal strokes is most clearly seen in the 4th century codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. See discussion in Kenyon, *Palaeography*, 120; and Gallo, *Papyrology*, 86.

¹²⁹ One possibility that must be considered here is that the writing was too small for the scribe to exhibit the standard difference between vertical and horizontal strokes. If his pen were too blunt for such small writing, then he would have no choice but to make strokes of equal thickness.

exceptions do occur. The Z beginning line 2 has distinctive roundels at the beginning and end of the letter that seem to be more than unintentional ink blobs.¹³⁰ Although, these are absent from the Z in line 4, the Z in line 43 has curves in the upper and lower horizontal lines which also seem to be decorative in nature. Furthermore, some other letters exhibit decorative finials, beginning or ending the stroke with slight curves or hooks.¹³¹ Turner notes that letters with roundels or serifs were prevalent from about 100 B.C. to 100 A.D., with the latest examples being found around 200-250 A.D.¹³² The haphazard occurrence of these features in P.Oxy. 840 makes it difficult to reach any definitive conclusions, however their existence at least raises the possibility that our scribe was familiar with such a writing style and that it was not too far removed from his time period. Perhaps P.Oxy. 840 exhibits a later version of the “upright pointed majuscule” that was slightly influenced by the earlier “decorated” style.

By way of conclusion, these considerations suggest that we should consider the first half of the fourth century, c.300-350, as a reasonable date for P.Oxy. 840. Although it is certainly not earlier than the fourth century, its clear similarities with the predominantly third-century “upright pointed majuscule” of Cavallo and Maehler, suggest that our scribe may be toward the end of that style and moving toward biblical uncial.¹³³

¹³⁰ The fact that “blobs” appear on three of the four corners suggest that it was done intentionally (although the roundel on the lower right corner is less obvious).

¹³¹ E.g., bottom of second vertical stroke of π in line 1, 9; beginning vertical stroke of κ in line 1, 5, 19, 24, 27; bottom of second vertical stroke of η in line 8, 13, 14, 15, 31; top of either the left or right diagonal stroke of υ in line 11, 18, 43, 44, 45. Metzger notes these features in the 2nd century P.Yale. 1 (*Manuscripts*, 62), Roberts observes them in the second century P.Oxy. 596 (*Greek Literary Hands*, 16), Turner discovers them in the second-century P.Oxy. 1083 (*Greek Manuscripts*, 58), and they are also visible in the third century \mathcal{P}^{46} and \mathcal{P}^{66} . Recent Oxyrhynchus discoveries 4403 and 4404 contain noticeable serifs and consequently dated to the late second/early third century (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. LXIV).

¹³² Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 21. He connects them with what Schubart describes as ‘Zierstil’. See also the discussion in Thompson, *Introduction*, 143.

¹³³ Although this chapter was written before the publication of Kraus’ article on the palaeography of P.Oxy. 840, he reaches an impressively similar conclusion concerning the hand of the author: “Am Ehesten vergleiche ich P.Oxy. V 840 mit PSI X 1171 (insbesondere die ovalen Buchstabenformen; dreistrichige a und u; kein expliziter Unterschied zwischen fetten und dünnen Strichen; klare Differenzierung zwischen breiten und schmalen Buchstaben) und weise dessen Schreiberhand im Großen und Ganzen dem aufrechten, ovalen Schrifttypus («la maiuscola ogiviale diritta») zu. Entsprechend ist - wie auch Grenfell/Hunt vorschlugen - auf das 4. Jahrhundert zu datieren” (“P.Oxy. V 840,” 4).

V. PUNCTUATION

The literary principle of *scriptio continua* was not always followed rigidly by early Christian scribes.¹³⁴ They used various forms of punctuation—from blank spaces to single points—to make the task of reading a bit easier. However, punctuation was sporadic and unpredictable in the early NT manuscripts and certain forms appeared rarely if at all.¹³⁵ Only in the later uncial and early miniscule manuscripts did punctuation begin to attain a substantial degree of regularity and predictability. Thus, drawing conclusions from the presence of punctuation in early manuscripts can be a difficult and controversial task. Nevertheless, in this section we shall examine the different types of punctuation visible in P.Oxy. 840 in an effort to further discover its origins and date.

A. ENLARGED FIRST LETTER

P.Oxy. 840 has three letters that are distinctively larger and serve to mark new sections. The κ in line 7 not only begins a new sentence but marks a new pericope as Jesus takes his disciples into the temple. The definite article ο in line 30 begins the response of the Savior and is substantially larger than the normally tiny omicron. The ε in line 41 marks the transitions from Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisee to a description of the "baptism" of Jesus and his disciples. Occasionally other letters—such as the κ beginning line 6 or the π at the beginning of line 9—appear to be slightly larger, but since they mark no new section they are likely the result of the scribe's normal variation (or subconscious habit).

Such enlarged first letters were often employed in documentary papyri for the opening word of a text, for the name of the addressee, and for the beginning of new sections or sentences.¹³⁶ Although this practice was less common in Roman or Ptolemaic literary papyri,¹³⁷ it was taken over by Christian scribes and used in a

¹³⁴ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 15.

¹³⁵ C. Lattey and F.C. Burkitt, "The Punctuation of New Testament Manuscripts," *JTS* 29 (1927-28): 396-398; Bruce M. Metzger, "The Punctuation of Romans 9:5," in *New Testament Studies: Philological, Versional, and Patristic* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 57-74, 59.

¹³⁶ E.g., two second century documentary texts, *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* and P. Brem. 5 (Roberts, *Manuscript*, 16).

¹³⁷ Exceptions include P. Oxy. 2161 (Aeschylus, *Dictyulci*); P.Oxy. 1373 (Aristophanes, *Equites*); P.Oxy. 1235 (Hypotheses to Menander); P.Oxy. 1182 (Demosthenes, *De Falsa Legatione*); P.Oxy. 473 (Honorary Decree). See Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 9, for more detailed discussion.

number of early Christian manuscripts, causing some scholars to argue that these scribes were more accustomed to documentary papyri and not trained in the art of writing books.¹³⁸ Although enlarged initial letters are found in some of our earliest Christian texts,¹³⁹ the practice did not become abundant or pronounced until the fourth century or later.¹⁴⁰

B. SPACES BETWEEN SENTENCES

Three spaces occur before the three enlarged letters mentioned above. It appears that these spaces served to emphasize the transition already marked by the enlarged letter. The largest space is before the κ in line 7 and two smaller spaces are before the ο in line 30 and the ε in line 41. It makes sense to put the largest space in line 7 because it marks an entirely new story, whereas the other two simply mark changes within the same story. Our scribe was thus able to use subtle changes in spacing to control the flow and structure of the stories of Jesus. This attention to detail reveals a scribe very conscious of his task and perhaps more trained in the art of writing books than previously thought.

The use of such spaces as a form of punctuation was, in addition to an enlarged first letter, also a frequent practice in documentary papyri that found its way into early Christian manuscripts.¹⁴¹ The practice is not unheard of in literary

¹³⁸ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 14-16. This does not imply that the writing of early Christian scribes was unskilled. Although they basically used a documentary hand, they were quite familiar with books and acquired a substantial degree of consistency and accuracy. Consequently, their hands are not purely documentary cursive, but are better construed as “informal uncial” or “reformed documentary” (Roberts, *Manuscript*, 14-15).

¹³⁹ E.g., P. Egerton 2 (ii century), P. Ant. 1.12 (iii century), Chester Beatty Numbers and Deuteronomy (ii/iii century), Chester Beatty Ezekiel (iii century).

¹⁴⁰ E.g., Chester Beatty Melito (iv century), P. Berlin inv. 6747 (iv century), Codex Alexandrinus (v century), Codex Bezae (v century). For discussion, see Roberts, *Manuscript*, 16-18.

¹⁴¹ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 15. Examples of its use in Christian manuscripts include P. Egerton 2 (ii century); \mathcal{P}^{46} (ii/iii century); P. Dura inv. 24 (iii century); \mathcal{P}^{75} (iii century); \mathcal{P}^{100} (iii/iv century); \mathcal{P}^{115} (iii/iv century); P. Oxy. 1080 (iv century); the Chester Beatty Melito (iv century); Codex Sinaiticus (iv century); and Codex Alexandrinus (v century).

papyri, but is less common.¹⁴² The use of spaces is considered to be one of the earliest forms of punctuation in the ancient world.¹⁴³

C. COLORING

The scribe of P.Oxy. 840 used red ink to outline the already existing text in four different ways. (1) Red circles are placed around the points of punctuation. However, the scribe forgot the red ink for the middle point in line 23 and only a slight remnant of red remains around the point in line 25. The point in line 27 is peculiar because it is not highlighted with a red circle, but simply a red dot placed over the original black dot. This change in the scribal pattern raises the possibility of a second hand, but it is difficult to be sure. (2) Red outlines are placed over the horizontal lines of the *nomina sacra*. (3) Red outlines are placed over the enlarged first letters in line 7 and line 30, but not line 41. This is yet another odd inconsistency. (4) Red outlines are given to the accents in lines 23 and 36, and to the rough breathing marks in lines 18, 33, and 42.

It is difficult to know whether the red ink was original or whether it was added by a later scribe. The inconsistent application of the red ink, as noted above, makes one suspect a later hand. However, occasional inconsistency is not unusual for our scribe as can be seen from the corrections in lines 14, 15, and 24, and from the use of the *diuresis* (see below). Thus, without explicit evidence to the contrary, we should simply assume the red ink was added by the original scribe.

Although we have colored ink in early papyrus documents, such as the apocryphal Fayyum Gospel (P. Vindob. Graec. G. 2325) dating from the third century,¹⁴⁴ it was not abundant until the advent of vellum manuscripts. Animal skin proved particularly fitting for the application of colored ink, resulting in deluxe volumes with decorations and miniatures.¹⁴⁵ Some books simply had the initial

¹⁴² W.H.P. Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), 3; Kenyon, *Palaeography*, 26-27. Examples of Greek texts that leave spaces include, Hypomnema on Homer, *Iliad*, B.M. Pap. 2055; Thucydides I.2.P. Hamb. 646; and Menander, *Sikyonios*, P. Sorbonne, Inv. 2272b.

¹⁴³ Kenyon, *Palaeography*, 27. E.J. Revell, "The Oldest Evidence for the Hebrew Accent System," *BJRL* 54 (1971): 214-222, esp. 214-215, notes that a number of texts from Qumran exhibit such spacing in order to mark various divisions in the text.

¹⁴⁴ The red ink was used to outline the abbreviation πετ for Πέτρος (Roberts, *Manuscript*, 17, n. 7).

¹⁴⁵ The 5th/6th century Vienna Genesis (Theol. Gr. 31) is dyed purple and contains 48 miniatures illustrating the content of the text (which was written in silver).

letters enlarged and decorated with a variety of colors,¹⁴⁶ and others used colored ink to mark the numbering systems.¹⁴⁷ Much of the use of color was not only for decoration, but also as an elegant and ornate form of punctuation, a bold signal to the reader to pay attention to certain breaks in the texts. This is the primary use of color in P.Oxy. 840.

D. POINTS

There are three basic types of punctuation points among Greek manuscripts: the high, middle, and low points.¹⁴⁸ These occur sporadically over several centuries in early Christian texts.¹⁴⁹ Only the middle point occurs in P.Oxy. 840 but it is used with a variety of senses, including comma, period, question mark, and possibly semi-colon. The details of how each of these points affects the sense of a line will be included in the commentary in chapter two.

The frequency of punctuation in P.Oxy. 840 is particularly noteworthy. I counted 22 extant instances of the middle point in only 45 short lines of text, which does not include the numerous points that existed in the missing portions of the text.¹⁵⁰ Depending on how one divides the text, there are approximately 12-14 complete sentences within these 45 lines, with about two punctuation points per

¹⁴⁶ E.g., 4th century Codex Vaticanus was given large and colorful (blue) initial letters by a later scribe. The first three lines of Deuteronomy, and the title and first two lines of Joshua were written in red ink in the 5th century Washington (W) manuscript. Codex Bezae used red ink for the first three lines of each book. Red ink was also a popular color for early Egyptian Demotic papyri and was frequently used to mark chapter or section headings (e.g., P. Lond.demot. 10070; P.Brit.Mus. inv. 10588; P. Louvre E3229). For discussion see, Janet H. Johnson, "Introduction to the Demotic Magical Papyri," in *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), iv-lviii, and Georges Posener, "Sur l'emploi de l'encre rouge dans les manuscrits égyptiens," *JEA* 37 (1951): 75-80.

¹⁴⁷ The Eusebius apparatus was added by the scribes of 4th century Codex Sinaiticus in the margins with red ink.

¹⁴⁸ Hatch, *Manuscripts*, 24. The high point (στιγμή τελεία) is placed above the line and is equivalent to the modern period. The middle point (στιγμή μέση) is placed in the middle of the line and has the value of a comma. The lower point (ὑποστιγμή) was placed on the line and functioned basically as a semi-colon.

¹⁴⁹ Examples among the miniature codices include, P.Oxy. 2684 (iii/iv century, middle point); P.Oxy. 1783 (iv century, middle point); P.Oxy. 1779 (iv century, high point); P.Oxy. 848 (v century, high and middle points); P.Oxy 6 (v century, middle and low points).

¹⁵⁰ E.g., although the end of line 22 is lost, it would certainly contain a middle point after αὐτῶ because it introduces a quote. The scribe has included a middle point before quotes in other places, such as in line 12 to introduce the words of the Pharisee, and in line 31 to introduce the words of Jesus.

sentence on average. In one span of six lines (20-25) there are six visible middle points and at least one that has not survived, making seven or more. The abundance of these points demonstrates that they do not just mark the beginning of new sentences, but also help the reader sift through the smaller grammatical details, such as when to pause at the appropriate points.

Grenfell and Hunt's reconstruction contains a middle point in line 28 between the *δυσαμην* and the *και*. However, after my own examination of the text, the punctuation seems doubtful. There is a small ink blob at the top of the vertical stroke of the kappa, however this hardly appears to be a middle point, and would more naturally be attributed to excess ink at the beginning of the stroke. Notice a very similarly shaped mark in the *κ* in line 24. There is also no trace of red ink, whereas all the other middle points, save one, contained red highlights. Furthermore, the grammatical construction here makes a middle point unlikely. If the scribe were to supply a middle point in this sentence it would have been before the *και τοτε* where there is already a natural pause, rather than before *και καθαρα*.

E. ACCENTS/BREATHING MARKS

Accents are found in line 23, a circumflex in *ῶν*, and in line 36, an acute accent in *αυλητριδες*. I also noticed a mark in line 12 above the omega in *τω* which has not been mentioned by scholars thus far. It is quite difficult to see clearly and could be either a circumflex or a *diuresis*. Obviously, the former would be more probable since there is no vowel next to *ω* that would require the *diuresis*. There may be faint traces of red ink, but the stains on the fragment at this location do not allow for a definitive conclusion.

Accents are more rare than breathings and found only occasionally before the 7th century.¹⁵¹ *℘*⁴⁶ (iii century) has an example of an acute accent, P. Yale 1 (iii century) may have an accent but it is uncertain,¹⁵² and P. Mich. 130 (iii century) and P. Ryl. 1.1 (iii/iv century) contain a surprising number of accents and other lectional aids.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 12.

¹⁵² Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 62. The reconstruction is in doubt here.

¹⁵³ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 10.

Grenfell and Hunt mention no breathing marks for P.Oxy. 840 and include none in their reconstructed text. Nor have I heard mention of breathing marks from any of the other scholarly publications on the text. However, as I examined the fragment I noticed several marks that can be nothing other than breathing marks, though they were nowhere mentioned before. Above the omicron of the word *ov* in line 18 is a horizontal black line with trace of a red outline. The left edge of the line seems to curve upwards, resembling the well-known shape of the rough breathing mark. The fact that *ov* requires a rough breathing, and the fact that our scribe outlines the various forms of punctuation in red, makes this conclusion the most likely. The same mark (with red trim) occurs above the omicron in *oic* in line 33, and above the omicron in *ouc* in line 42, both words demanding a rough breathing.

Breathings are found occasionally in the oldest Christian manuscripts, and when they do appear they are normally a rough breathing.¹⁵⁴ Examples include *P*⁵, *P*³⁷, *P*⁴⁵, *P*⁴⁶, *P*⁷⁵, *P*¹¹³, P.Oxy. 1779, and the Chester Beatty Genesis. Rough breathing marks were found in the recently discovered *P*¹⁰⁴ (P.Oxy. 4404) which was dated to the late second century.

F. διπλη

In line 9 of the text, there is the appearance of a διπλη, a common angular sign, >, which was often used as a filler to make the lines of the text even.¹⁵⁵ This was usually employed when a scribe began a new paragraph by moving to the following line, sometimes leaving unused space on the previous line that needed to be filled. Scribe D of Codex Sinaiticus used a διπλη to fill up such a line left partially blank.¹⁵⁶ In P.Oxy. 840, however, the scribe did not reserve its use for the end of a paragraph, he simply used it to make the line even. In fact, the end of line 9 actually is the middle of a word, *προελ / θών*, that is continued on the next line. The sign is also found in the Baden Exodus-Deuteronomy (ii century),¹⁵⁷ and the Scheide Ezekiel (early iii century).¹⁵⁸ Among miniature codices it appears in P.Oxy. 849

¹⁵⁴ Thompson, *Introduction*, 61.

¹⁵⁵ Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 32.

¹⁵⁶ Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 32; Thompson, *Introduction*, 58, 63.

¹⁵⁷ V.H. 33

¹⁵⁸ Scheide Pap. 1 (V.H. 315); Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 70.

(early iv century);¹⁵⁹ P. Osl. inv. 1661 (iv century); P.Oxy. 1782 (late iv century); and P.Oxy. 1.6 (v century).

G. DIAIRESIS

There are also six occurrences of a *diairesis* (or *tréma*), which is a pair of dots placed over a vowel designed to separate vowels that do not belong together or to emphasize/mark certain vowels.¹⁶⁰ This is a lectionary tool designed to help the reader distinguish between words within the *scriptio continua*. The occurrences in P.Oxy. 840 are in line 3, ὕμεις; line 6, κολασινῦπομενουσιν; line 13, καῖδειν; line 17, τοῖερον; line 23, τῳῖερω; line 43, εὔδασι.¹⁶¹ All these occurrences are over either an ι or a υ, which is the most common in Greek manuscripts.¹⁶² In lines 3, 13, 17, and 23 the *diairesis* is used to distinguish between vowels in a cluster that do not belong together and thus can be considered an “organic” use.¹⁶³ In lines 6 and 43 the *diairesis* is not used to separate vowels but simply to mark the initial vowel and thus is an example of the “inorganic” use.

Our scribe exhibits a bit of inconsistency in his use of the *diairesis*. He uses it for the first letter of every word that begins with ι, but he fails to use the *diairesis* for the construction τῳερω in line 9, even though he was compelled to divide the exact same construction τῳῖερω in line 23.

¹⁵⁹ Technically, the form used here is a *coronis*, but it is shaped virtually the same as the διπλή in P.Oxy. 840 and serves the same function (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. VI, 7; Thompson, *Introduction*, 58).

¹⁶⁰ Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 10. Examples of the use of the *diairesis* are plentiful and can be traced back to our earliest biblical manuscripts. It is also frequent among the miniature codices: P.Ryl. 463 (iii century); P. Col. inv. 4780 (iv/v century); P.Oxy. 2684 (iii/iv century); P.Oxy 1080 (iv century); P.Oxy. 849 (early iv century); P.Oxy. 1010 (iv century); P.Oxy. 1594 (late iii century); P.Oxy. 1168 (iv century).

¹⁶¹ It is difficult to know whether the scribe included a *diairesis* over the ὕδασιν in line 33 because the text is corrupted at that point. The habit of the scribe suggests it was likely. Our scribe insisted on marking the υ every time it began a word, even when following a consonant (lines 6 and 43) and even when beginning a new line (line 3).

¹⁶² Rarely do they occur over α, ε, ο, ω. Turner offers an exception in P.Oxy. 2455 (*Greek Manuscripts*, 10).

¹⁶³ Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 10. Although the instance in line 3 may look like an “inorganic” use because it stands alone at the beginning of a sentence, the last word on the previous line, καί, actually ends with a vowel. Since *scriptio continua* often led the scribe to separate a single word between two lines (e.g., line 9), distinguishing between vowels would be a necessary help for the reader.

H. SUMMARY

As can be seen from the above discussion, P.Oxy. 840 contains an abundance of reader's aids or lectionary tools. From these marks of punctuation we can draw several conclusions:

1. The extensive and careful punctuation (enlarged letter, spacing, color, points), the normal scribal conventions (final ν , $\delta\iota\pi\lambda\eta$, *diareisis*), and a competent book hand (as noted above), all provide further confirmation that we are dealing with a miniature codex and not an amulet. The palaeographical survey of amulets by Kraus reveals that amulets do not typically share such careful scribal features, but, in contrast, have "unsicheren wie meist grobschlächtigen Beschriftung."¹⁶⁴ The reason miniature codices and amulets have such dissimilar palaeographical features is likely due to their respective functions. Although one certainly read an amulet (if it was not folded or hidden), it was primarily designed to be worn on the body. The reading of an amulet was only occasional; e.g., during a time of sickness or need. In contrast the miniature codex was the private copy of literature that would naturally be read again and again during the course of study and travel. Consequently, reading aids were a more necessary addition.¹⁶⁵
2. These features indicate that P.Oxy. 840 was likely created for a wealthy individual. Private books were possessed by those who could afford them and had the leisure time to read them. A book that is written on fine parchment, miniature in size, adorned with color, and replete with lectional aids would be quite expensive and thus probably owned by a member of the literate upper class.
3. The fact that P.Oxy. 840 was copied in such an elegant manner suggests that by the time our scribe did his work the text had been in circulation for quite some time. It is unlikely that a recent composition, that had yet to achieve literary popularity, would warrant the creation of an expensive edition like P.Oxy. 840. We know from the scribal corrections (see below) that P.Oxy. 840 could not be

¹⁶⁴ Kraus, "P.Oxy. V 840," 7.

¹⁶⁵ Although P.Oxy. 840's small size mitigates against the likelihood of public reading, the extensive punctuation surely was designed to help the reader in his personal study. In the Greco-Roman world virtually all reading (public or private) was done aloud, mainly to help decipher words among the *scriptio continua* (Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 203).

the original autograph, and it is unlikely that the earliest copies would be in the form of a pocket-size volume. Thus, it is reasonable to think that P.Oxy. 840 was preceded by a lengthy textual history.

4. The punctuation of the text confirms that our fragment was likely a part of a larger collection of gospel material. The scribe used subtle variations in punctuation, such as spaces of different widths, to help distinguish between pericopes and sections within a pericope. These distinctions would not be necessary in a document 2-3 pages long. They imply a longer document with multiple pericopes where the reader needs to know where he is and how to separate one story from another.
5. Although our scribe tends to be careless at points (see below), the above considerations suggest that our scribe was more familiar with the art of professional copying than previous studies on P.Oxy. 840 have been willing to allow.

VI. SCRIBAL HABITS

A. CORRECTIONS

At three different points our scribe recognized that he left out a word and wrote it above the line. Of course, he may have made more scribal mistakes, but these are the only ones that he noticed during his proofreading.

1. In line 14 the scribe left out the $\tau\epsilon$ from the word $\mu\eta\tau\epsilon$. In the midst of the *scriptio continua*, the scribe may have viewed the first two letters of $\mu\eta\tau\epsilon$ as its own word ($\mu\eta$) and wrote it down separately. Upon returning to the exemplar for the next word, the scribe would have been expecting a verb and must have simply overlooked the additional $\tau\epsilon$ and copied down the $\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu\omega$.
2. In line 15 the scribe left out $\mu\eta\nu$. There is no obvious explanation for this omission, but one possibility is that after writing down $\mu\eta\tau\epsilon$, he returned to the *scriptio continua* to look for his place and saw the first two letters of $\mu\eta\nu$ and assumed it was the word he had just copied. On this false assumption, the scribe would then proceed to the next word $\tau\omega\nu$.



3. In line 24 he left out *εκεινος*. The omission resulted in *αυτω* preceding the quote of the Pharisee. This construction may have seemed natural for the scribe since he used a dative to precede a quote in line 12 and likely used the dative *αυτω* at the end of line 22 to precede the words of Jesus.¹⁶⁶ Thus, after writing *αυτω*, the scribe may have returned to the exemplar expecting the verb *καθαρευω* to come next, overlooking *εκεινος* in the process.

Although the corrections are very small and written in cramped style, they seem to be the same hand of the original scribe. The curved epsilon with the extended horizontal stroke appears in the corrections in lines 14 and 24. The sigma in *εκεινος* is small and round with the opening facing down and to the right, as it does elsewhere.¹⁶⁷ Other than the scribe's own corrections, I could find only one other possible mistake. In line 26 it appears that our scribe misspelled *κλιμακος* with *κλειμακος*.

All of these scribal errors are relatively minor and none of them affects the sense of the text. Consequently, a cursory proofreading of the text would likely miss them. A more intensive correction process would be needed to catch these sorts of mistakes, indicating that our scribe, although a bit careless in transcription, was at least intent on correcting his shortcomings. It is unlikely, therefore, that our text is full of more significant and costly blunders that have gone undetected by the scribe. If he is able to catch the omission of the small and somewhat superfluous *μην* in line 15, then it is reasonable to think that he would notice those larger mistakes that make the text incoherent or problematic. With this in mind, we should be hesitant to suggest extensive reconstructions of the text based on assumed scribal mistakes.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ See discussion in chapter 2 for the reconstruction of line 22.

¹⁶⁷ The conclusion that the corrector is the same hand of the original scribe is shared by Kraus, "Nachträgliche Ergänzungen über der Zeile (rekto 11. 14 und 15; verso l. 2), wahrscheinlich von derselben Hand, zeugen von einem Korrekturleseprozess durch den Schreiber selbst" ("P.Oxy. V 840," 6).

¹⁶⁸ These considerations play a significant role in my proposed reconstruction and translation in the next chapter. Whereas a number of scholars attempt to resolve the difficulties of the text by appealing to possible scribal mistakes, I prefer, unless there is obvious evidence to the contrary, to deal with the text as it currently stands.

B. INCONSISTENCIES

Aside from obvious mistakes, our scribe tends to be inconsistent in some of his scribal practices. As noted above, he is inconsistent in his application of the diaeresis, using it for τωῖερω in line 23, but not for τωιερω in line 9. Also mentioned above is the scribe's inconsistent use of color. He fails to outline a certain instance of punctuation (line 23) and an enlarged letter (line 41), even though he does so elsewhere.

Most interesting is the inconsistent omission of the movable *ν*.¹⁶⁹ When it comes to verbs ending in third person (ουσιν), the scribe has no predictable pattern for whether or not he drops the *ν*. He includes the final *ν* when preceding a vowel in ἀπολαμβανουσιν (line 4/5), drops the final *ν* when preceding a vowel in ἐλθουσι (line 44), includes the final *ν* when preceding a consonant in λουουσιν (line 37), and drops the final *ν* when preceding a consonant in σμηχουσι¹⁷⁰ (line 37) and καλλωπιζουσι (line 38). The same type of irregularity is seen with υδασιν in lines 33 and 43. The first occurrence drops the *ν* even though the next word begins with a vowel, and the second also drops the *ν* even though the next word begins with a consonant.

In defense of our scribe, it is possible that he may have simply been faithful to the exemplar and copied the text as the previous scribe had written it, but we cannot know one way or another. In regard to the use of diaeresis, it is no surprise that the scribe would overlook an occasion now and then. Likewise, since color was added after the entire text was written in the original ink, it is more than reasonable to understand how an occasional letter or punctuation mark may be missed throughout the whole of the codex.

¹⁶⁹ This discussion does not refer to the omission of the *ν* at the end of a line marked by a horizontal stroke. That practice will be discussed more below under scribal abbreviations. Rather it refers to the *movable ν* as discussed in F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961) §20.

¹⁷⁰ This particular example may be explained by the fact that the word occurs at the end of a line. However, in such an instance we would have expected the scribe to use a horizontal line to signal the omission as he did in lines 28 and 31.

VII. ABBREVIATIONS IN P.OXY. 840

A. *NOMINA SACRA*

The term *nomina sacra* refers to fifteen words that were written in abbreviated form in Christian documents in order to set them apart as sacred.¹⁷¹ They usually appeared as a contraction (only occasionally by suspension) with a horizontal line over the top. Roberts divides the *nomina sacra* into three categories: (a) the earliest and most consistent four, Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός, κύριος, Θεός; (b) those that appear relatively frequently and also quite early, πνεῦμα, ἄνθρωπος, σταυρός; and (c) the latest and least consistent, πατήρ, υἱός, σωτήρ, μήτηρ, οὐρανός, Ἰσραήλ, Δαυεῖδ, Ἱερουσαλήμ.¹⁷² The significance of the *nomina sacra* lies in the fact that they appear in the very earliest of our Greek manuscripts and are remarkably consistent across regions and languages—even apocryphal texts were no exception.¹⁷³

In light of the pervasive use of the *nomina sacra*, we should not be surprised that P.Oxy. 840, as a Christian document, also contains several instances. Indeed, the presence of the *nomina sacra* virtually assures us that P.Oxy. 840 has a Christian provenance. In order to evaluate the use of the *nomina sacra* in P.Oxy. 840, we will be referring to the excellent resource by A.H.R.E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries*. The following data, therefore, will be derived from Paap and only apply to the time before c.500.

¹⁷¹ Studies on the *nomina sacra* include Ludwig Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* (Munich: Beck, 1907); A.H.R.E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959); Jose O'Callaghan, *Nomina Sacra in Papyrus Graecis Saeculi III Neotestamentariis* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970); S. Brown, "Concerning the Origin of the Nomina Sacra," *SPap* 9 (1970): 7-19; G. Howard, "The Tetragram and the New Testament," *JBL* 96 (1977): 63-83; Roberts, *Manuscript*, 26-48; and Larry W. Hurtado, "The Origin of the Nomina Sacra: A Proposal," *JBL* 117 (1998): 655-673.

¹⁷² Although these fifteen are the most common, scribes occasionally experimented with new/different words as *nomina sacra*. Examples of such variants can be found in P. Egerton 2 and P.Oxy. 1008 (P¹⁵). For other examples of variants of *nomina sacra* see Aland, *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri*, 420-428, and Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 36-37.

¹⁷³ *Nomina sacra* are found not only in Greek MSS, but also in Latin, Coptic, Slavonic and Armenian. Furthermore, they are widely found in apocryphal texts (P.Egerton 2, *Gospel of Thomas*, P.Oxy. 840), amulets (see Bonner, *Studies*, 185, 223), and other Christian literature (for further discussion see Hurtado, *Nomina Sacra*, 656-658). The rare exceptions occur in private documents, magical texts (e.g., P.Oxy. 407), or from oversights of a careless scribe (e.g., P.Oxy. 656; Traube, *Nomina Sacra*, 90). For more detail see Roberts, *Manuscript*, 27.

1. ἄνθρωπος

Line 5: $\overline{\alpha\nu\omega\nu}$ occurs for ἀνθρώπων

Line 39: $\overline{\alpha\nu\omega\nu}$ occurs for ἀνθρώπων

The first known instance that ἄνθρωπος is abbreviated¹⁷⁴ as part of the *nomina sacra* is in the first half of the second century in the Chester Beatty Septuagint (Bibl. P. Fasc. V.). But, its first known NT occurrence, also in the Chester Beatty Papyri (Fasc. III), is around A.D. 200. In a comparatively large portion of sources, 73 out of 124, ἄνθρωπος is not contracted at all.¹⁷⁵ Thus, it is given sacred status somewhat inconsistently. This may be due the fact that most occurrences of the word are in the profane sense as opposed to the sacred sense.¹⁷⁶ Not only are both occurrences of ἄνθρωπος contracted in P.Oxy. 840 (implying a degree of consistency), but both are in the profane sense—indeed, they refer to “evil-doers of men” (οἱ κακοῦργοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων) and the “lust of men” (ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων). The willingness of our scribe to still abbreviate ἄνθρωπος despite its excessively profane referents suggests that the word may have attained a degree of regularity among the *nomina sacra* by this time. However, the fact that the earliest abbreviation of the word in the second century also had a profane referent prevents us from drawing any definitive conclusions concerning the date of P.Oxy. 840.

2. Δαυείδ

Line 25 $\overline{\delta\delta}$ occurs for Δαυείδ

The first known abbreviation of Δαυείδ occurs in an apocryphal text, the *Acts of Paul*, dated c. 300.¹⁷⁷ This contraction is quite rare and of the 40 manuscripts in the first five centuries containing Δαυείδ, only 9 of them use the contraction. Only four of these manuscripts (18 instances) use the distinctive form $\overline{\delta\delta}$. Thus, in contrast to ἄνθρωπος above, the contraction of Δαυείδ is a bit more useful for dating.

¹⁷⁴ Throughout these discussions I will use the term “abbreviation” or “contraction” as interchangeable with *nomina sacra*, except where otherwise noted (e.g., for non-Christian abbreviations).

¹⁷⁵ Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 105.

¹⁷⁶ Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 105.

¹⁷⁷ Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 106.

Although the *argumentum ex silentio* ought to be used with some caution, the fact that we have 12 sources before c.300 that do *not* contract Δαυείδ makes a strong case for a later date. Indeed, our extant examples derive primarily from the fourth century and later.¹⁷⁸ Even after allowing for varying habits of individual scribes,¹⁷⁹ we must acknowledge that it is highly unlikely that P.Oxy. 840 would be earlier than the late third century.

3. σωτήρ

Line 12 σωρι occurs for σωτήρι

Line 21 σωρ occurs for σωτήρ (based on reconstruction)

Line 30 σωρ occurs for σωτήρ

The earliest known occurrence of σωτήρ as part of the *nomina sacra* is in P. Berol. 13415 in the 4th century. It is one of the most rare and is only contracted 12 times in 7 sources. Like Δαυείδ above, the abbreviation of σωτήρ also suggests a later date.¹⁸⁰ Of the 28 sources which contain the term σωτήρ, 11 of these occur before P. Berol. 13415 and do *not* have the abbreviation. Thus, despite the infrequent occurrence of σωτήρ in extant MSS (42 times out of 28 sources¹⁸¹), there is still reason to believe that this member of the *nomina sacra* was quite a late development. The existence of this abbreviation in P.Oxy. 840, therefore, argues for a probable *terminus post quem* of late-third/early-fourth century.

By way of conclusion, the *nomina sacra* provide useful, though not definitive, guidance for establishing a date. Rather than telling us exactly when this

¹⁷⁸ Other examples include P. Leipz. 39 (iv century), Codex W (iv/v century), and P. graec. Vind. 29832 (iv/v century).

¹⁷⁹ For example, fourth-century codex Sinaiticus exhibits quite a developed stage of *nomina sacra*, using the rare abbreviations (πνεῦμα, Δαυείδ, Ἱεροουσαλήμ, Ἰσραήλ) quite consistently. In contrast, the scribe of fourth-century codex Vaticanus seemed to be more of a traditionalist and used only Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός, κύριος, Θεός in a consistent manner (Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 119-120). Codex Bezae, a sixth century text, is likewise more archaic in its use of the *nomina sacra*. This is especially true in the Greek portions and not so much in the Latin. For more detail on the *nomina sacra* in Bezae see the erudite study D.C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and its Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), esp. 97-106.

¹⁸⁰ Roberts suggests that the late addition of σωτήρ to the list of *nomina sacra* could be due to its "strong pagan associations" and its prevalence in Gnostic circles (*Manuscript*, 40).

¹⁸¹ The word σωτήρ only occurs 24 times in the entire NT and only three times in the gospels (Lk 1:47, 2:11; Jn 4:42).

document was written, it can only imply a reasonable lower limit. Although the actual date is possibly later than this limit, it does establish a helpful foundation on which further work can build. In regard to the scribe, he is the model of what we would expect in the later centuries of Christianity: (a) He consistently uses rare *nomina sacra* (ἄνθρωπος, Δαυείδ, σωτήρ) which indicates that he likely wrote in a time period after the abbreviation of these words had become common practice. (b) All his abbreviations are in the form of contraction, rather than suspension, indicating a period when the practice was more standardized.¹⁸² (c) He never uses the full-length form of any words that are normally abbreviated as part of the *nomina sacra*. In other words, there are no exceptions that would indicate an earlier date. In the end, however, our conclusions about the scribe must remain tentative due to the fragmentary nature of our text.

B. OMITTED ν

There are two other instances of scribal abbreviations where the scribe omits the last ν of the line. In line 28 the final word of the line is ηλθον and the scribe placed a horizontal line over the omicron to signal the missing ν . In line 31 the scribe divides a word over two lines, ορων / τεε, and places a horizontal line over the omega in place of the ν . Both of these horizontal lines extend well into the margin. This type of abbreviation was not distinctively Christian and was a common occurrence from the second century A.D. onwards.¹⁸³ Although abbreviations were commonly associated with non-literary papyri and documents of a “lower” standard,¹⁸⁴ the dropping of the final ν was not considered inappropriate for literary texts.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² The suspended form of the *nomina sacra* was undoubtedly the earlier form which later gave way to fully contracted forms (Roberts, *Manuscript*, 26). E.g., the use of Ιησοϋς in the suspended form was quite common in early documents, but was replaced by the contracted form in later texts (Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 107-110; Hurtado, *Nomina Sacra*, 665-666, footnote 36). The suspended form Ιη can be found in 6 sources (46 instances) before c.300: Chester Beatty (Fasc.II); P. Graec. Vind. 31974; Yale D. Tatian; P.Oxy. 17.2070; P.Oxy. 2.210; and, most notably, P. Egerton 2 (c.150).

¹⁸³ Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 15. Thompson, *Introduction*, 78.

¹⁸⁴ Kenyon, *Palaeography*, 32-33.

¹⁸⁵ Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 15.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter has been to review the codicological and palaeographical features of P.Oxy. 840 in order to (a) establish its role and function within early Christian communities, (b) explore the textual features and scribal characteristics that have been neglected, and (c) establish a more definitive date for the manuscript itself. Let us review our conclusions in these three areas.

The tiny size of our fragment has spurred speculation about its role and function within early Christian communities. An extensive examination of amulets, early magical texts, and miniature codices has led to the conclusion that P.Oxy. 840 was not created with a magical purpose in mind but was designed to be a small, portable, pocket codex for the personal study and edification of its owner. The extensive reading aids and decoration suggest that this copy was made for someone who was a member of the literate upper class. If these conclusions are correct, then this study of P.Oxy. 840 brings greater clarity to the category of miniature codex—a vital stage in the development of the early Christian book—and reveals how early Christians often preferred small formats for their private reading. In contrast to larger codices designed for public use, tiny Christian books played a distinctive role within early Christian communities, without necessarily being used in a magical sense. Those creating these miniature books seemed to understand amulets and miniature codices to be distinct literary categories requiring different materials, different format, and different content.

Regarding the palaeographical features of P.Oxy. 840, this chapter has explored many of the details neglected over the past 100 years, such as the hand of the scribe, the habits of the scribe (including mistakes and corrections), the use of punctuation (including the observation of rough breathing marks not mentioned before), the use of abbreviations, and the implications of the *nomina sacra*. Several deductions have been drawn from these observations: (a) Although our scribe is a bit informal, he seems to be experienced in copying books and professional documents. (b) His extensive use of punctuation and reader's aids suggests that P.Oxy. 840 is probably a page out of an extended collection of gospel stories that may have looked quite similar to the canonical gospels. (c) P.Oxy. 840 was likely an expensive copy which

implies that the stories it contained had gained substantial popularity by the time the scribe copied it. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that P.Oxy. 840 was preceded by a lengthy textual history.

As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, dates for P.Oxy. 840 have ranged from the third to the fifth century. Several factors have led to the suggested date of c.300-350. The fact that P.Oxy. 840 is a miniature codex written on parchment makes it very likely to be fourth century, considering what we know of the transition to vellum and when miniature codices were abundant. Moreover, the hand of our scribe has substantial similarities with “upright pointed majuscule” (which was abundant in the second and third centuries) yet often exhibits the common roundness of later biblical uncial, suggesting our scribe is moving out of the former hand and into the latter. Other scribal characteristics such as the use of color, extensive punctuation, and rare instances of the *nomina sacra* reinforced a date in the early fourth century. Taken as a whole, these considerations make a third century date quite unlikely, if not impossible. The fifth century date is still a possibility, but has been ruled out by the hand of the scribe. A date of c.300-350 ought to provide the historical and contextual foundation on which the later chapters of this study can be built.

CHAPTER 2

TEXT AND TRANSLATION OF P.OXY. 840

Having explored the nature of P.Oxy. 840 as a manuscript in the previous chapter, we now turn our attention to exploring its content. Our primary purpose here is to reconstruct the original Greek text and to offer an English translation. Although this study is not the first to perform such a task, it seemed appropriate and necessary—considering this is the first full-length study on P.Oxy. 840—to establish the text anew. Indeed, this is the only way to take account of the plethora of opinions that have been offered on the details of this text over the last century. Furthermore, there are numerous points at which I disagree with both the reconstruction and translation of previous writers, requiring me to establish my own.

The first portion of this chapter will simply be my reconstruction and translation of P.Oxy. 840, along with a critical apparatus. The second and longer portion will be a running commentary on the text offering detailed rationale and explanations for my choices. I offer this detail out of the conviction that one's conclusions on larger historical questions are often dependent upon seemingly small grammatical and textual decisions. Since prior studies have lacked such specific explanations, I intend to offer them here.

I. THE TEXT

Below I offer three different versions of the text, two in Greek and one in English. Several comments are in order about each of these texts. The first Greek text is a reconstruction of the fragment in uncials without attempting to fill in the missing portions. Partially preserved letters are reconstructed as best as possible. The text is designed to look like the actual fragment itself and thus includes details such as original punctuation, enlarged letters, spacing, and scribal corrections between the lines.

The second Greek text is designed for easy reading and reference, and will be the one cited throughout the course of this study. It eliminates uncials and *scriptio continua*, employs normal punctuation, does not use abbreviations, includes the corrections within the text itself, and most importantly, inserts plausible reconstructions of the missing portions. Footnotes will serve as a critical apparatus, including the opinions of the following scholars: Grenfell and Hunt (GH), Swete, Lagrange, Wessely, Bonaccorsi, Jeremias, and Otero.¹ My text is based on Grenfell and Hunt's initial publication unless otherwise noted. I will mention only those authors who differ with the text printed here. The Greek text under question will appear first, followed by each suggested restoration and the name of the scholar(s) who adopts it. Although the text does not include accents, I insert them occasionally and will explain the rationale for my choices when I do so.

The third text is my English translation. Since an accurate translation requires a degree of interpretation, this chapter is really the beginning of the exegetical process. Consequently, the bulk of the running commentary is devoted to explaining and defending my decisions regarding the English translation. Although I attempt to follow the Greek text as closely as possible, including the proposed reconstructions, I take some liberty at points in the English translation to better capture the sense of the Greek. In order for the text to read smoothly, I use brackets only in the portions of the text that are completely missing and not in the portions where the lacunae are partially legible.

In all the texts, the following symbols are used:

- [] Brackets indicate missing portions of the text
- A dot indicates the lacuna is partially legible and has been restored
- () Parentheses indicate a proposed scribal omission

¹ Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908), 11-15; Henry Barclay Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1908), 4-5; M. -J. Lagrange, "Nouveau Fragment non canonique relatif a l'Évangile," *RB* 5 (1908): 538-540; Charles Wessely, *Les plus anciens monuments du christianisme écrit sur papyrus*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. 18.3 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1924), 488-490; Giuseppe Bonaccorsi, *Vangeli Apocrifi* (Florence: Fiorentina, 1948), 36-39; Joachim Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1964), 49-50; Auerlio de Santos Otero, *Los Evangelios apócrifos* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1963), 80-82. Although other scholars have argued for various textual reconstructions, these seven scholars have offered the most substantial attempts to reconstruct the text of P.Oxy. 840 and therefore only their opinions will be included in the textual apparatus. The opinions of other scholars will be treated in the commentary portion when relevant.

A. RECONSTRUCTED UNCIAL TEXT

RECTO

1. ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΠΡΟΑΔΙΚΗ ΣΑΙ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΣΟΦΙ
2. ΖΕΤΑΙ· ΑΛΛΑ ΠΡΟΣΕΧΕΤΕ ΜΗ ΠΩΣ ΚΑΙ
3. ὙΜΕΙΣ ΤΑ ΟΜΟΙΑ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΠΑΘΗΤΕ· ΟΥ ΓΑΡ
4. ΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΖΩΟΙΣ ΜΟΝΟΙΣ ΑΠΟΛΑΜΒΑΝΟΥ
5. ΣΙΝ ΟΙΚΑΚΟΥΡΓΟΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΝΩΝ· ΑΛΛΑ ΑΙ ΑΙ
6. ΚΟΛΑΣΙΝ ὙΠΟΜΕΝΟΥΣΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛ[.]ΗΝ
7. ΒΑΣΑΝΟΝ· ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΑΛΑΒΩΝ ΑΥΤΟΥΣ
8. ΕΙΣ ΗΓΑΓΕΝ ΕΙΣ ΑΥΤΟ ΤΟ ΑΓΝΕΥΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ
9. ΠΕΡΙΕΠΑΤΕΙ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΙΕΡΩ· ΚΑΙ ΠΡΟΕ[.]>
10. ΘΩΝ ΦΑΡΙΣΑΙΟΙ ΣΤΙΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ ΔΕΥ[.]...
11. ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΣΥΝΕΤΥΧΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΚΑΙ Ε[.]...
12. ΤΩ ΣΩΡΙ· ΤΙΣ ΕΠΕΤΡΕΨΕΝ ΣΟΙ ΠΑΤ[.]...
13. ΤΟΥΤΟ ΤΟ ΑΓΝΕΥΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ἸΔΕΙΝ[.]...
ΤΕ
14. ΤΑ ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΣΚΕΥΗ ΜΗ ΛΟΥΣΑ[.] ΕΝ[.] Μ[.]
ΜΗΝ
15. ΤΕ ΤΩΝ ΜΑΘΗΤΩΝ ΣΟΥ ΤΟΥΣ Π[.].....
16. ΠΤΙΣ ΘΕΝ ΤΩΝ· ΑΛΛΑ ΜΕ ΜΟΛΥ[.].....
17. ΕΠΑΤΗΣΑΣ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΤΟ ἸΕΡΟΝ Τ[.].....
18. ΤΑ ΚΑΘΑΡΟΝ· ὁ ΝΟΥ ΔΕΙΣ Α[.].....
19. ΛΟΥΣΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΛΛΑ Α[.].....
20. ΜΑΤΑ ΠΑΤΕΙ· ΟΥ ΔΕ Ο[.].....
21. ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΣΚΕΥΗ· ΚΑΙ Σ[.].....
22.] ΟΙΣ ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙ[.].....

VERSO

23. ΣΥ ΟΥΝ ΕΝ ΤΑΥΘΑ ΩΝ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΙΕΡΩ· ΚΑΘΑ
ΕΚΕΙΝΟΣ
24. ΡΕΥΕΙΣ· ΛΕΓΕΙΑΥ ΤΩ ΚΑΘΑΡΕΥΩ· ΕΛΟΥΣΑ

25. ΜΗΝΓΑΡΕΝΤΗΛΙΜΝΗΤΟΥΥΔΔ·ΚΑΙΔΙΕΤΕ
 26. ΡΑϚΚΛΕΙΜΑΚΟϚΚΑΤΕΛΘΩΝΔΙΕΤΕΡΑϚ
 27. Α[.]ΗΛΩΩΝ·ΚΑΙΛΕΥΚΑΕΝΔΥΜΑΤΑΕΝΕ
 28. ΔΥϚΑΜΗΝΚΑΙΚΑΘΑΡΑΚΑΙΤΟΤΕΗΛΘΟ
 29. ΚΑΙΠΡΟϚΕΒΛΕΨΑΤΟΥΤΟΙϚΤΟΙϚΑΓΙΟΙϚ
 30. ϚΚΕΥΕϚΙΝ· ΟϚΩΡ̄ΠΡΟϚΑΥΤΟΝΑΠΟ
 31. . . .]ΘΕΙϚΕΙΠΕΝ·ΟΥΑΙΤΥΦΛΟΙΜΗΟΡ̄Ω
 32. Τ[.]ϚϚΥΕΛΟΥϚΩΤΟΥΤΟΙϚΤΟΙϚϚΧΕΟΜΕΝΟΙϚ
 33. Υ[.]ΑϚΙΕΝ̄ΘΙϚΚΥΝΕϚΚΑΙΧΟΙΡΟΙΒΕΒΛΗΝ
 34. . . .]ΝΥΚΤΟϚΚΑΙΗΜΕΡΑϚ·ΚΑΙΝΙΨΑΜΕ
 35.]ΟϚΤΟΕΚΤΟϚΔΕΡΜΑΕϚΜΗΞΩ·ΟΠΕΡ
 36. . . .]ΙΑΙΠΟΡΝΑΙΚΑΙΑ[.]ΑΥΛΗΤΡΙΔΕϚΜΥΡΙ
 37.]ΟΥ[. . . .]ΑΙΛΟΥΟΥϚΙΝΚΑΙϚΜΗΚΟΥϚΙ
 38.]ΑΛΛΩΠΙΖΟΥϚΙΠΡΟϚΕΠΙΘΥΜΙ
 39.]ΩΝ̄ΑΝΩΝ·ΕΝΔΟΘΕΝΔΕΕΚΕΙ
 40.]ΗΡΩΤΑΙϚΚΟΡΠΙΩΝΚΑΙ
 41.]ΚΙΑϚ· ΕΓΩΔΕΚΑΙΟΙ
 42.]ΘΥϚΛΕΓΕΙϚΜΗΒΕΒΑ[.]
 43.]ΜΜΕΘΑΕΝΨΔΑϚΙΖΩ[.]
 44.]ΥΕΛΘΟΥϚΙΑΠΟ[. . .
 45.]ΑΛΟΥΑΙ[.]ΟΙϚ[. . .

B. RECONSTRUCTED MINUSCULE TEXT

RECTO

(suggested previous verb)... βουλομενος]

1. προτερον προαδικησαι² παντα σοφι
2. ζεται. αλλα προσεχετε μη πως και
3. υμεις τα ομοια αυτοις παθητε, ου γαρ
4. εν τοις ζωις³ μονοις απολαμβανου

² προαδικησαι; προ (του) αδικησαι, GH, Wessely, Jeremias.

³ ζωις ("living"); ζωοις ("animals"), Swete, Wessely.

5. σιν οι κακουργοι των ανθρωπων αλλα [κ]αι
6. κολασιν υπομενουσιν⁴ και πολ[λ]ην
7. βασανον. και παραλαβων αυτους
8. εισηγαγεν εισ αυτο το αγνευτηριον και
9. περιεπατει εν τω ιερω. και προε[λ]⁵ >
10. θων Φαρισαιος τις αρχιερευς Λε[υ]εις
11. το ονομα συνετυχεν αυτοις και ε[ι]πεν
12. τω σωτηρι, τις επετρεψεν σοι πατ[ειν]
13. τουτο το αγνευτηριον και ιδειν [ταυ]
14. τα τα αγια σκευη μητε λουσα[μ]εν[ω] μ[η]
15. τε μην των μαθητων σου τους π[ο]δας βα
16. πτισθεντων; αλλα μεμολυ[μ]μενος
17. επατησας τουτο το ιερον τ[ο]ποιον ον
18. τα καθαρον, ον ουδεις α[γ]λλος ει μη
19. λουσαμενος και αλλα[ξ]ας τα ενδυ
20. ματα πατει, ουδε ο[ρ]αν τολμα ταυτα
21. τα αγια σκευη. και σ[τ]αθεις ευθυς⁶ ο σωτηρ
22. συν τ]οις μαθηται[ς] απεκριθη αυτω⁷

VERSO

23. συ ουν ενταυθα ων εν τω ιερω καθα
24. ρευεις; λεγει αυτω εκεινος καθαρευω. ελουσα
25. μην γαρ εν τη λιμνη του Δαυειδ, και δι ετε
26. ρας κλειμακος κατελθων δι ετερας
27. α[ν]ηλων, και λευκα ενδυματα ενε
28. δυσαμην και καθαρα και τοτε ηλθον
29. και προσεβλεψα τουτοις τοις αγιοις
30. σκευεσιν. ο σωτηρ προς αυτον απο

⁴ ὑπομενοῦσιν (future); ὑπομένουσιν (present), GH, Swete, Bonaccorsi, Jeremias.

⁵ προελθων; προσελθων, GH, Lagrange, Swete, Wessely, Bonaccorsi, Jeremias, Otero.

⁶ σταθεις ευθυς; στας ευθεως, GH, Lagrange, Wessely, Otero.

⁷ απεκριθη αυτω; αυτου απεκριθη, Swete, Bonaccorsi, Jeremias.

31. κρι]θεις ειπεν, ουαι τυφλοι μη ορων
 32. τ[ε]ς. συ ελουσω τουτοις τοις χεομενοις
 33. υ[δ]ασι(ν) εν οις κυνες και χοιροι βεβλην
 34. ται] νυκτος και ημερας, και νιψαμε
 35. ν]ος το εκτος δερμα εσμηξω, οπερ
 36. κα]ι αι πορναι και αι αυλητριδες μυρι
 37. ζ]ου[σιν⁸ κ]αι λουουσιν και σμηκουσι
 38. και κ]αλλωπιζουσι προς επιθυμι
 39. αν τ]ων ανθρωπων, ενδοθεν δε εκει
 40. νων⁹ πεπληρωται¹⁰ σκορπιων και
 41. πασης κακ]ιας.¹¹ εγω δε και οι
 42. μαθηται μου] ους λεγεις μη Βεβα
 43. πισθαι¹² βεβα]μμεθα εν υδασι ζω
 44. σιν εκ του ουρανο]υ ελθουσι(ν)¹³ απο [του
 45. πατρος επανω.¹⁴ αλ]λα ουαι τοις[...

C. ENGLISH TRANSLATION

...he who intends] beforehand to strike first deviously plans out everything. But, take care lest you also suffer the same things as them, for not only among the living do evil-doers among men receive judgment, but they also will endure eternal punishment and great torment in the life to come.

And he took them and led them into the place of purification itself and was walking in the temple. A certain Pharisee, a chief priest named Levi, came along and met them and said to the Savior, "Who allowed you to trample this place of purification and to see these holy vessels, when you have not bathed yourself nor have your disciples washed their feet? But, being defiled, you trampled

⁸ μυριζουσιν; μυριζουσαι, Swete, Bonaccorsi.

⁹ εκεινων; εκειναι, GH, Swete, Wessely, Jeremias, Bonaccorsi.

¹⁰ πεπληρωται; πεπληρω(ν)ται, GH, Swete, Wessely, Bonaccorsi, Jeremias.

¹¹ κακιας; αδικιας, Swete, Bonaccorsi, Jeremias.

¹² βεβαπισθαι; βεβαμμενους, Swete, Bonaccorsi.

¹³ ζωσιν εκ του ουρανου ελθουσιν; ζωης αιωνιου τοις ελθουσιν, GH, Lagrange, Wessely, Otero; ζωσι και καθαροις τοις ελθουσιν, Jeremias; ζωης αιωνιου τοις κατελθουσιν, Swete, Bonaccorsi.

¹⁴ πατρος επανω; θεου εκ του ουρανου, Swete, Bonaccorsi; no suggestions made, GH, Otero, Lagrange, Jeremias, Wessely.

this temple place which is clean, where no one walks or dares to view these holy vessels except he who has bathed himself and changed his clothes.”

And then the Savior stood with the disciples and answered, “Are you therefore, being here in this temple, clean?”

He said to him, “I am clean. For I bathed in the Pool of David, and went down by one staircase and came up by another, and put on white and clean garments, and then I came and looked upon these holy vessels.”

The Savior answered him and said, “Woe to you blind men who do not see! You have bathed in only these natural waters in which dogs and pigs lay night and day. And having washed, you have wiped the outer skin, which also prostitutes and flute-girls anoint and wash and wipe and beautify for the lust of men, but the inside of them is full of scorpions and all wickedness. But, I and my disciples, who you say have not bathed, have been bathed in living waters [from heaven] which come from [the Father above]. But, woe to...

II. COMMENTARY

This commentary will attempt to discuss as much of the detail as possible, but items of less importance will be omitted. Explanations for the reconstruction of the Greek text will only be provided when they differ from the text offered by Grenfell and Hunt.

A. LINE 1

The opening line of P.Oxy. 840 is one of the most difficult to translate due to the fact that we only possess the end of a sentence that was begun on a previous page. The problems are exacerbated by some odd sentence constructions that suggest that the scribe either may have omitted some words or may have assumed details only provided by the larger context.

Our first extant word, *πρωτερον*, can either be understood as an adjective or an adverb depending on the context. The absence of an available noun for it to modify gives the proximity of the verb *προαδικησαι* greater significance and suggests it may naturally be seen as an adverb. Although there conceivably could be

a noun on the previous page, the majority of times when *προτερον* is used as an adjective in the NT it precedes the noun it modifies.¹⁵ Thus, it seems reasonable to consider *προτερον* an adverb indicating the time of the main action, i.e., “before” or “ahead of time.”

The fundamental sense of line 1 is determined by how one understands the aorist infinitive verb *προαδικησαι*. Grenfell and Hunt divided it into two separate words, *προ* and *αδικησαι*, in their initial publication of P.Oxy. 840.¹⁶ It seems they viewed *αδικησαι* as an example of the common temporal aorist infinitives in the NT that regularly follow the preposition *προ*.¹⁷ Since infinitives following *προ* are almost always preceded by a genitive article, *του*, this likely explains why Grenfell and Hunt felt compelled to include the article between *προ* and *αδικησαι* in the reconstructed text, even though it was not there originally.¹⁸ Although our scribe is a bit careless from time to time and may have simply omitted this article, this construction seems to be unlikely. When the words are divided this way it creates an awkward and seemingly superfluous repetition of *προτερον* and *προ*, each having essentially the same meaning. Such a nonsensical word order was unlikely the original intent of the scribe. Furthermore, in the aforementioned NT examples where the temporal infinitives follow the construction *προ του*, the subject of the infinitive is explicitly given and also follows the *προ του*, except in one instance.¹⁹ Thus, based on the NT trend at least, having an aorist infinitive follow a *προ του* *without* an explicit subject, as would be the case in P.Oxy. 840, seems to be the exception rather than the rule.²⁰ For these reasons, it seems best not to assume the

¹⁵ *προτερον* occurs only 11 times in the NT and the three times it is certainly an adjective it precedes the noun it modifies: Eph 4:22; Heb 10:32; 1 Pet 1:14. Other occurrences include John 6:62, 7:50, 9:8; 2 Cor 1:15; Gal 4:13; 1 Tim 1:13; Heb 4:6, 7:27.

¹⁶ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 15.

¹⁷ F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), § 403. Examples include Matt 6:8; Luke 2:21, 22:15; Acts 23:15; John 1:48, 13:19; Gal 2:12, 3:23; present infinitive in John 17:5. For more discussion on temporal infinitives see, Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 201.

¹⁸ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 15.

¹⁹ The verses in Blass, *Greek Grammar*, § 403: Matt 6:8; Luke 22:15; Acts 23:15; John 1:48; Gal 2:12, 3:23; the exception is John 13:19 where the subject of the infinitive is implied.

²⁰ One must consider the possibility that *παντα* could be the subject of the infinitive rather than the direct object of the following verb. Thus, we would have to consider it a masculine, accusative, singular meaning “every (man)” or “everyone.” This portion of the sentence, therefore, could be translated, “before every (man) does wrong, he craftily devises.” Although this is a possibility, it faces four difficulties: (a) When the masculine singular *παντα* stands alone in the NT without a noun

scribe omitted του.²¹

The preferred option is to consider προ and αδικησαι to be one word coming from the root, προαδικεω, which simply means “to be first in wrong-doing”²² or in a more contemporary sense “to strike first.” This option is found in the texts of Swete, Otero, and Lagrange.²³ Although absent from the NT, the word προαδικεω occurs in several other Greek texts, including Plutarch,²⁴ Philo,²⁵ and Diodorus of Sicily.²⁶ The latter text exemplifies the definition of this word where we read, “he had only taken vengeance on men who had wronged him first (προαδικησαντας).”²⁷ This understanding is confirmed in the *Wisdom of Solomon* 18:2 where we read, “[They] were thankful that they did not harm them though wronged first (προηδικημενοι).”²⁸ Combining the προ and the αδικησαι as one word eliminates the need for guessing whether the scribe omitted the του and also eases the awkwardness of the double time indicators, προτερον and προ.

Rather than trying to create an articular infinitive with no article, it seems more natural to understand προαδικησαι as a complementary infinitive that corresponds to a verb on the previous page. Not only is the complementary infinitive one of the most common uses of infinitives,²⁹ but it is consistent with the demonstrated style of the author of P.Oxy. 840. Complementary infinitives appear in three other instances in this short text: line 12, πατειν; line 13, ιδειν; and line 20, οραν. Thus, it would be quite natural to expect one in this verse as well. A clue to

to modify, it rarely, if ever, refers to a man (one exception is Acts 10:43). When standing alone, this form is much more frequently understood as the neuter plural meaning “everything” or “all things.” (b) According to the teaching of Jesus in P.Oxy. 840, it is not “every man” or “everyone” who commits wrong with pre-planning, but only particular men that face torment in this life and the life to come. (c) It still requires us to insert the article του and assume the scribe omitted it. (d) If a του is inserted, then it still does not solve or explain the problem of the awkward construction προτερον προ.

²¹ Th. Zahn, “Neue Bruchstücke nichtkanonischer Evangelien,” *NKZ* 19 (1908): 371-386, esp. 373, n.4, also argues that the definite article should be omitted here, but for slightly different reasons.

²² Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 702.

²³ Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, 6; and Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment,” 541.

²⁴ *Mor.* 1090E.

²⁵ *Moses* 1.303.

²⁶ *Bibliotheca historica* 4.53.1.

²⁷ *Bibliotheca historica* 4.53.1 English translation from Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, trans. C.H. Oldfather, 12 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935).

²⁸ David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 303.

²⁹ See the abundance of examples supplied in Blass, *Greek Grammar*, § 392; and Porter, *Idioms*, 96-98.

the possibility of such a construction comes from 2 Cor 1:15, the only NT example I could find of προτερον being followed by an aorist infinitive: Καὶ ταύτη τῇ πεποιθήσει ἐβουλόμην πρότερον πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε, “In this confidence I intended before to come to you, so that you might twice receive a blessing.”³⁰ In this verse, πρότερον divides the main verb, ἐβουλόμην, from its aorist infinitive complement, ἐλθεῖν. If we assumed a similar construction for line 1 of P.Oxy. 840, and used βουλομενος as the hypothetical preceding verb, then we could have something like this: βουλομενος προτερον προαδικησαι, “he who intends beforehand to strike first...”

In the NT, the term παντα is normally understood to mean “all things” or “everything,” especially when it is a neuter plural and stands alone. Since it is in the accusative case, it clearly functions as the direct object of σοφίζεται.³¹ Although this verb usually means “to make wise, teach,” Bauer notes that when it is used as a middle voice it means “concoct subtly, devise craftily.”³² Grenfell and Hunt strangely render this phrase as “makes all manner of subtle excuse.”³³ However, aside from the fact that this option is not even offered by Bauer, it seems odd for the evil-doer to make excuses *before* committing the sinful act. Lagrange concurs, “Il est d'ailleurs assez difficile d'accepter leur traduction qui donne à σοφίζεται le sens de «s'excuser», ce qui est peu naturel avant la faute.”³⁴

B. LINES 2-3

A middle point falls between σοφίζεται and αλλα and functions as a period, marking the start of a new sentence. The switch to the present imperative προσεχετε, signals a new line of thought as Jesus warns his listeners to be watchful. But, to whom does Jesus direct this imperative in line 2? Most likely the disciples are in view here. Jesus frequently warned them with the term προσεχετε in the NT, and we would expect no different here.³⁵ But, there is reason to believe that in some of

³⁰ This is my own modified English translation.

³¹ Although the neuter nominative plural has the same form, it makes no sense to say, “everything devises craftily.” For discussion of παντα as a masculine accusative singular see above, footnote 20.

³² Bauer, *Lexicon*, 760.

³³ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 16.

³⁴ Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment,” 541.

³⁵ Matt 6:1, 7:15, 10:17, 16:6,11; Luke 12:1, 17:3, 20:46, 21:34.

these NT instances more than the disciples were present. The deciding factor, therefore, is the use of *αυτους* in line 7. If the group that Jesus took into the temple was different than the group he was warning, then the author could not have simply used “they,” but would have needed to be more specific. Since the phrase *των μαθητων σου* in line 15 makes it clear that the group with Jesus in the temple was his disciples, then we know they were the same group he warned not to be like evil-doers.

The phrase *μη πως* is used frequently by Paul and can simply mean “otherwise” or “lest.”³⁶ He uses it 11 times and in 9 of those it is followed by a subjunctive³⁷ and 8 of those subjunctives are aorist.³⁸ It is also followed here by an aorist subjunctive *παθητε*, which can be rendered “suffer” or “might suffer.” Curiously, *μη πως* never appears on the lips of Jesus in the canonical gospels.

These lines reveal a difficulty that has yet to be resolved. Why does Jesus speak of the evil-doer in the 3rd person singular in lines 1-2, and then switch to the 3rd person plural (*αυτοις*) in line 3? This problem was recognized by Harnack who suggested that in line 1 the term *παντα* was actually a subject rather than the direct object.³⁹ Thus, the first lines of his own translation reads, “... bevor das Schädigen eintritt, wird Alles ... ; aber sehet zu, daß nicht auch ihr dasselbe wie sie erleiden müßt.”⁴⁰ Harnack argues that the word *σοφίζεται* is too tenuously reconstructed from the damaged portion of line 1 and therefore could be a variety of other options.

Although Harnack’s suggestion is technically possible, I am not convinced that this problem is serious enough to warrant going against Grenfell and Hunt’s reconstruction of *σοφίζεται*.⁴¹ It seems quite natural to switch from plural to singular when one moves from talking about a particular group in general to discussing a specific example of their behavior. Thus, it is certainly plausible that

³⁶ NT examples include Rom 11:21, 1 Cor 8:9, 9:27; 2 Cor 2:7, 9:4, 11:3, 12:20; Gal 2:2, 4:11; 1 Thess 3:5.

³⁷ The phrase is followed by a subjunctive in 1 Cor 8:9; 9:27; 2 Cor 2:7; 9:4; 11:3; 12:20; Gal 2:2; 1 Thess 3:5. The two exceptions are Rom 11:21 and Gal 4:11.

³⁸ Gal 2:2 is a present subjunctive.

³⁹ Adolf von Harnack, “Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück,” in *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben, Band II* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1911), 239-250; 242.

⁴⁰ Harnack, “Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück,” 241.

⁴¹ Although that portion of the text is difficult to decipher, it seems that the outline of a *σ* and the top and bottom portions of *φ* are still visible. It would be better for Harnack to offer a plausible alternative rather than rejecting Grenfell and Hunt’s suggestion and leaving his reconstruction blank at that location.

Jesus was speaking in general terms on the previous page of these wicked men (plural), and then proceeded to give a specific example of their behavior in proverbial or maxim-like form: "...a wicked man (singular) who intends ahead of time to strike first, plans out everything." After giving this specific example of behavior, it would be natural for Jesus to return to the plural when making his summary remarks: "take care that you are not like them..." In the end, we can only speculate and hope that these words would make eminently more sense if we had the context provided by the previous page.

C. LINES 3-7

A middle point in line 3 separates the παθητε from the ου and most likely functions as a comma or semi-colon, although a period is a possibility. Either way, a complete sentence is contained in lines 3-7, starting with ου and ending with βασανον. This sentence contains a number of complications that need to be resolved. First, the verb απολαμβανουσιν in line 4 lacks the expected object and makes the reader ask, "receive what?" Although the lack of an object is admittedly strange, it seems that the overall context of the verse allows the reader to fill in the gap naturally. The manner in which Jesus warns his disciples not to "suffer"(παθητε) the same fate as the evil-doers and the fact that he indicates that the wicked will endure "punishment" and "much torment," points the reader to the undeniable object for απολαμβανουσιν: judgment. Lagrange offers similar sentiment, "Απολαμβανουσιν est un peu étonnant sans régime. Le contexte rendait sans doute la chose plus claire. Tel qu'il est, il doit signifier recevoir en retour, coup pour coup."⁴²

This explanation probably would not have seemed sufficient for Preuschen who also recognizes the problem and attempts a creative solution:

Auffallend ist der absolute Gebrauch von απολαμβανουσιν Z.3 im Sinne von "sein Teil erhalten." Im NT ist das Wort stets mit einem Objekt verbunden. Vielleicht ist auch hier das Objekt nur durch ein Versehen des Schreibers ausgefallen, der auch an anderen Stellen Worte und Wortteile ausgelassen, diese aber zumeist über der Zeile nachgetragen hat. Setz man hinter μόνους

⁴² Lagrange, "Nouveau Fragment," 542.

etwas μισθόν ein, so ergibt sich eine brauchbare klimax: μισθον
 απολαμβανουσιν -- κολασιν υπομενουσιν και -- βασανον.⁴³

Although we can agree with Preuschen that our scribe made mistakes, he seemed to be quite diligent about catching his mistakes, and it is hard to believe that he would miss such an obvious error. Furthermore, Preuschen never explains how the reader would understand the negative ου in light of his proposed changes. The text would then teach that the evil-doer does *not* receive his due in this life at all, but is only judged in the life to come. Such a statement would be strange to say the least. Why would Jesus—in the midst of a warning—go out of his way to make sure the disciples understood that there would *not* be judgment in this life? In light of such difficulties, we should be hesitant to suggest such conjectural scribal changes.

The phrase εν τοις ζωοις has elicited much debate and, depending on the accents over ζωοις, can either be rendered as εν τοις ζωοις (“among the living”) or as εν τοις ζώοις (“among the animals”). Grenfell and Hunt,⁴⁴ Otero,⁴⁵ Lagrange,⁴⁶ and Jeremias⁴⁷ ascribe to the former position, whereas Swete,⁴⁸ Preuschen,⁴⁹ and Harnack⁵⁰ ascribe to the latter. The most common argument offered in favor of “among the animals” is that the author intended to draw a contrast between ζωοις and ανθρωπων in line 5.

In order to resolve this question (and others), we must first understand the grammatical construction of this sentence. The sentence employs the familiar NT combination of ου(κ)...μονος ... αλλα (not...only...but...).⁵¹ The αλλα and the point of punctuation at the end of line 5 clearly divide the sentence into two halves that are to be contrasted. We see this precise construction in the well-known verse from Matt 4:4: “Man shall not (ουκ) live on bread alone (μονος) but (αλλα) on every

⁴³ E. Preuschen, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 1-11; 4.

⁴⁴ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 17-18.

⁴⁵ Otero, *Los Evangelios*, 80.

⁴⁶ Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment,” 539.

⁴⁷ Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 104.

⁴⁸ Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, 6.

⁴⁹ Preuschen, “Das neue Evangelienfragment,” 3.

⁵⁰ Harnack, “Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück,” 242.

⁵¹ Curiously, the phrase in P.Oxy. 840, ου γαρ εν τοις ζωοις μονοις αλλα [κ]αι..., is very similar to a phrase found in the writings of the second century medical doctor Galen where he writes: ουκ εν τοις ζωοις μονον, αλλα και... (*De plenitudine liber*, 7.524.5). For a similar phrase see also Galen’s *Hippocratis* 15.124.5. Although these are interesting connections, there is not enough overlap here to suggest any sort of relationship between the two texts.

word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” A diagram⁵² of this sentence may look as follows:

Man lives | not only on bread

But

(Man lives) | on the Word of God

Two items are worth noting about this structure that can help us understand the sentence in P.Oxy. 840: (a) The obvious contrast in Matt 4:4 is between the two halves of the sentence divided by *αλλα*, i.e., between “bread” and the “word of God”. Thus, the contrast is not between features in the *same* half of the sentence. The suggestion above that the contrast in line 4 of P.Oxy. 840 is being drawn between “animals” and “man” would be tantamount to suggesting Matt 4:4 is drawing a contrast between “man” and “bread,” which is, of course, absurd. (b) The word modified by *μονος* (in this case “bread”), is the characteristic we should expect contrasted in the second half of the sentence. Keeping this in mind, we see in line 4 of P.Oxy. 840 that *μονοις* modifies *εν τοις ζωοις*. Therefore, however one understands *εν τοις ζωοις*, it is *this* characteristic that must be logically contrasted in the second half of the sentence.

The problem, however, is that the second half of the sentence leaves out the expected contrast with *εν τοις ζωοις* (e.g., *τη ζωη μελλουση*) and it must be reconstructed from the context. Thus, a simplified diagram of our sentence would be as follows:

Evil-doers among men | receive (judgment) | not only εν τοις ζωοις

But

(Evil-doers among men) | endure punishment and torment | ??????????

Our choice of definition for *εν τοις ζωοις* will be determined by what phrase could most naturally be inserted into the blank. In regard to whether *εν τοις ζωοις* means

⁵² The diagrams will be in English and will be a simplified version of the sentence. The vertical mark “|” is used to separate different components of the sentence, parentheses are used to indicate implied portions of the sentence, and the underlined portion marks the area of contrast.

“among the animals,” the context (immediate or historical) does not seem to commend it. We already noted above that there could be no intended contrast with *των ανθρωπων*. Furthermore, it is difficult to conceive of a logical contrast with punishment “among the animals” that would naturally be supplied by the reader. I suppose that one could propose that the author is contrasting punishment among animals with punishment among men, but this hardly is evident from the context. In the end, this position seems to be an unlikely alternative.

If the contrast arranged by the author between the two halves of the sentence is to be honored, then Grenfell and Hunt’s suggestion is the most plausible. It offers a natural distinction between the punishment the evil-doer may receive while among the living, with the torment he will receive after he dies and faces the future judgment. There are several factors which commend this alternative: (1) The verb *υπομεινω*, often assumed to be present tense, can be understood as a future. As a liquid verb, it forms the future by replacing the *σ* with an *ε* on the end of the simple stem, allowing the present and future third person plural, *υπομένουσιν* and *υπομενοῦσιν* respectively, to look identical apart from accents. A future verb would more readily incline the reader to think of the afterlife. (2) The contrast between the present life and the reality of future torment in the next life was a common theme in the canonical accounts of Jesus and therefore we should not be surprised if that same contrast is found here.⁵³ Especially noteworthy is Matt 10:28: “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Moreover, the whole concept of punishment among animals is foreign to the New Testament and was certainly not a theological construction that was prevalent in the early church. (3) The terms on the lips of Jesus in lines 5 and 6, *κολασιν* and *βασανον*, were commonly used in the canonical gospels to describe the future judgment in the afterlife. In Matt 25:46 Jesus declares, “These will go away into eternal punishment (*κόλασιν*), but the righteous into eternal life.” In Luke 16:23 the rich man is in the fires of judgment and Jesus says, “In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment (*βασάνοις*), and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.” Thus, any reader who was at all familiar with the canonical gospels and the teachings of Jesus, would be inclined to think that this

⁵³ Matt 5:22,29-30; 18:9; 23:33; Mark 9:43-47; Luke 12:5; 16:23

sentence in P.Oxy. 840 was referring to the eternal judgment to come and certainly would add in his own mind an implicit phrase such as τη ζωη μελλουση “in the life to come.”⁵⁴

Based on this understanding, the diagram would be something like what follows:

Evil-doers among men | receive (judgment) | not only among the living

But

(Evil-doers among men) | will endure punishment and torment | (in the life to come)

In order to capture this sense in my English translation, I have inserted the adjective “eternal” before the word “punishment”, and have added “in the life to come” at the end of the sentence. These changes help express what I think to be the true intention of the author here.

The final question to be discussed here is the meaning of the genitive construction οι κακουργοι των ανθρωπων in line 5. The two basic choices are the subjective genitive (“the evil-doers among men” / “the men who do evil”) and the objective genitive (“those who do evil to men”). Either choice is possible and does not substantially alter the sense of this verse. Preuschen opts for the objective genitive,⁵⁵ as does Lagrange,⁵⁶ whereas Grenfell and Hunt view it as a subjective genitive.⁵⁷ However, the subjective genitive preferred by Grenfell and Hunt does have some historical precedent in earlier Greek literature, where the exact phrase is used and clearly refers to men who commit evil acts.⁵⁸ Thus, we shall prefer the subjective genitive in our translation. Jeremias offers a third choice with his unique

⁵⁴ A very similar construction is found in 1 Tim 4:8, ζωης της νυν και της μελλούσης (“the present life and the life to come”).

⁵⁵ Preuschen, “Das neue Evangelienfragment,” 3.

⁵⁶ Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment,” 542.

⁵⁷ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 17-18.

⁵⁸ E.g., this exact phrase occurs two times in *Aesop's Fables* dating from the sixth century B.C. where it has the basic connotations of “thief” or “criminal.” The term appears in 190: Ο λόγος δηλοῖ ὅτι οἱ κακοῦργοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐξ ἀπόπτου δηλοῖ εἰσιν ; and flip-flopped in 157: τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἱ κακοῦργοι. For the Greek text see Ben Edwin Perry, ed., *Aesopica* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952). Although an interesting connection, it is unlikely that the author of P.Oxy. 840 copied from Aesop's Fables. With such a large time span between the two writings, it is more probable that the phrase οι κακουργοι των ανθρωπων would have become a standard and widely-used designation for a thief or a criminal by the time our author composed his text and thus he could have drawn the phrase from a number of different sources.

translation, “evil-doers receive retribution *from men*.”⁵⁹ Although a creative idea, this suggestion breaks down when one considers the contrast between the two parts of the sentence. If we adopt Jeremias’ option, the sense of the verse would have to be as follows: Evil-doers receive retribution from men not only among the living, but they will also receive retribution from men in the afterlife. Of course, this is nonsensical because men will not be the executors of punishment in the future judgment. So, once again, we have to reject an option because it fails to make sense out of the obvious contrast that the author has constructed.

D. LINES 7-12

The new sentence in line 7 is marked by a middle point between βασιανον and και which functions as a period. There is a vivid change here as the text switches from the words of Jesus to the words of a narrator who describes Jesus’ actions. This transition in narration serves to mark the division between two pericopes; the first was Jesus’ pronouncements of judgment on the evil-doers in lines 1-7, and now the second is the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisaic High Priest in the temple which will consume lines 7-45.

Since the verb εισηγαγεν by itself means “to lead into”, the addition of εις (“into”) may seem to be superfluous. However, this is a frequent construction, at least in the NT.⁶⁰ The word αυτο is in an odd location, but it seems to be used as the reflexive with το αγνευτηριον, meaning “the place of purification itself.” The use of the reflexive seems to draw attention to the special nature of the place that Jesus took his disciples. The unique word το αγνευτηριον does not appear in the NT and its specific reference is somewhat ambiguous. The details of the different parts of the temple, and the part to which this term may refer, will be dealt with in a later chapter, but for now the translation “place of purification” is sufficient.

The verb περιπατει is appropriately in the imperfect form because it refers to an action that Jesus was engaged in before he was interrupted. So, the sense here is really, “he was walking in the temple *when*...” The observant reader may note that this verb is in the 3rd person singular rather than the 3rd person plural as we

⁵⁹ Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 105, emphasis mine.

⁶⁰ Luke 22:54; John 18:16; Acts 7:54; 9:8; 21:28,29.

might expect. Though this may suggest that Jesus was walking in the temple alone when confronted by the Pharisee, the use of *αυτοις* in line 11 suggests otherwise. If the Pharisee were approaching only Jesus, then we would have expected *αυτω* in line 11 instead. The mention of *των μαθητων σου* in line 15 and *συν τοις μαθηταις* in line 22 confirm that the disciples were with Jesus during his stroll through the temple. The explanation for the singular *περιεπατει* is that the author likely felt that addition of something like *συν τοις μαθηταις* would be implied naturally by the context and thus added by the reader. Since Jesus led his disciples to the temple in the first place, it is logical to assume that they stayed with him during their visit.

The middle point between *ιερω* and *και* has the sense of a period and marks the beginning of the next sentence which runs through line 16. We are introduced here to the Pharisee who confronts Jesus about temple purity. A difficulty arises in the reconstruction of the verb at the end of line 9 and beginning of line 10. The letters *προ* are clearly visible before the text becomes corrupted at the end of line 9 and the letters *θων* are clearly visible at the beginning of line 10. All reconstructions of the text follow Grenfell and Hunt with the verb *προσελθων*. However, upon closer scrutiny it seems the letter after the *προ* could in no way be *σ* because the remaining portions of that letter are simply too large. The sigmas in P.Oxy. 840 are consistently small and round, and similar to the omicron in size. In contrast, the letter in question is nearly double the size of the omicron that precedes it. For the letter after *προ* to be a sigma, we would have to believe that the scribe made this sigma, and *only* this sigma, nearly double the size of every other sigma in P.Oxy. 840. Instead, I suggest that we have the remnants of an *ε*. Three lines of evidence support this suggestion: (a) The size and curve of this letter matches the average size of the *ε* almost exactly. (b) To the lower right of this letter you can see the lower left leg of the *λ* which follows. If the letter after *προ* were a *σ* as Grenfell and Hunt argue, then we would have to believe the next letter were an *ε*, but this remnant of *λ* makes this impossible. (c) Upon close examination you can decipher what I believe is the tip of the middle horizontal extension of the *ε*. This extension barely touches the left leg of the *λ* in a very similar way that the *ε* and *λ* touch in *ελουσαμην* in line 24.

In light of these considerations, it seems that we have the word προελθων rather than προσελθων in line 9/10.⁶¹ Either the scribe made a mistake and accidentally omitted the σ (which certainly is possible), or he intended a different meaning here. Although προελθων usually means “to go ahead” it can also mean “to go along” or “to pass by.”⁶² On this rendering, the verb actually makes quite good sense: “A certain Pharisee, a chief priest named Levi, came along and met them and said . . .”

The indefinite pronoun τις in line 10 is used in the adjectival sense and can be translated as “certain” or “some.” The reading Λευεις is described by Grenfell and Hunt as “extremely doubtful” due to the damaged fragment.⁶³ The translation of the term αρχιερευς has been debated since there was never a “high priest” named Levi. This debate will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

The term τω σωτηρι is used for the first time in line 12 as the title of Jesus. Curiously, the term Ιησους is never used in the text of our fragment. The historical significance of this will be discussed in future chapters.

E. LINES 12-16

The middle point between σωτηρι and τις has the sense of a comma and introduces the words of the Pharisee. The opening word τις signals that the sentence running from lines 12-16 is in the form of a question. The present infinitive πατειν is followed by a direct object and is thus in the transitive use.⁶⁴ Since the dative phrase εν τω ιερω was used in line 9 to describe Jesus walking (περιεπατει) in the temple, we may have expected the dative in line 13 as well. However, the author makes the distinct switch to the accusative case το αγνευτηριον. Consequently, it means more than simply “to walk,” but has the sense of “trample” or “tread on.”⁶⁵ It

⁶¹ One may raise the objection that this word would leave an extra space at the end of line 9. However, the scribe may have used two διπλη instead of one to fill the space, or he may have simply left a brief blank space before the διπλη. In general, it is difficult to understand why the scribe would use the διπλη at all. If he has room for the διπλη would he not have room for another letter?

⁶² Bauer, *Lexicon*, 705. A good example of this use is Acts 12:10: και εξελθόντες προήλθον ρύμην μίαν, και εϋθέως απέστη ο ἄγγελος ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

⁶³ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 19.

⁶⁴ A helpful discussion of transitive and intransitive verbs can be found in Porter, *Idioms*, 63-69.

⁶⁵ Bauer (*Lexicon*, 634-635) recognizes that the transitive can mean “tread” or “trample” and even cites P.Oxy. 840 as an example of such a use.

is used this way in Lk 10:19, ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ὑμῖν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄψεων καὶ σκορπίων, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ, καὶ οὐδὲν ὑμᾶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήση. Thus, the Pharisee uses the verb in a more pejorative sense to convey undertones of “abuse” or “desecration” of the temple.

The phrase τα ἁγία σκευη is not found in the NT and can best be translated as “the holy vessels.” It is not quite clear, however, which of the temple furnishings are intended by this phrase. The aorist participle λουσαμενω can be best translated as “having bathed/washed” and is in the dative because it modifies the σοι in line 12. Again, the singular participle raises the question of whether the Pharisee means only that Jesus has failed to wash or that the disciples need to wash as well. The confusion is increased when he mentions the failure of the disciples to wash their feet, but does not seem to include Jesus in that portion of the rebuke. Although Grenfell and Hunt reconstructed the first π of ποδας, I could not see anything past the preceding σ. Nevertheless, the accusative definite article τους is best explained by the existence of ποδας, so we will assume that Grenfell and Hunt were correct in their reconstruction at this point. More discussion of foot washing will be offered in the next chapter.

Although the aorist participle βαπτισθεντων comes from the root word βαπτίζω meaning “to baptize,” in different contexts it can also be rendered “to bathe” or “to wash.”⁶⁶ Line 15 contains an odd construction that raises a grammatical question: If it is the feet of the disciples which are being “washed”, then why is the participle βαπτισθεντων in the genitive and not in the accusative like τους ποδας? It seems that we have a case here of the genitive absolute with των μαθητων ... βαπτισθεντων. The genitive absolute is basically an adverbial participle which is often used for clauses that are loosely tied to the main sentence and intended to supply background information.⁶⁷ Since the discussion of the disciples’ feet is certainly secondary to the main rebuke directed to Jesus, the genitive absolute seems appropriate. However, since the participle βαπτισθεντων is passive, how does the accusative τους ποδας fit in? This construction is likely the accusative of respect

⁶⁶ Luke 11:38; Mark 7:4.

⁶⁷ Blass, *Grammar*, §423. More discussion can be found in C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 43; Ernest D. Burton, *Syntax of the Mood and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1955), §452-454; and Porter, *Idioms*, 183-184.

which is rare in the NT but occurs occasionally.⁶⁸ So, the sentence would literally read, "...nor have your disciples been washed with respect to their feet."

F. LINES 16-21

The middle point in line 16 between βαπτισθεντων and αλλα functions as a question mark and signals the beginning of a new sentence that runs until line 21. The reconstruction μεμολυμμενος at the end of line 16 is fairly certain considering the grammatical context.⁶⁹ Being a perfect passive participle, it refers to a completed action in the past that results in a present state or condition.⁷⁰ Thus, it is best translated in the present tense as "being defiled."⁷¹ Elliott correctly assesses the sense of this verb with his translation, "in a state of defilement."⁷²

Although "temple" was used in the dative case in line 9, on the lips of the Pharisee in line 17 it occurs in the accusative, το ιερον. Thus, the aorist επατησας in line 17 is transitive and again translated "trampled," as was πατειν in line 12. Another middle point occurs between καθαρων and ον and clearly has the sense of a comma because of its place in the flow of the sentence. The relative pronoun ον normally means "which," but can be translated "when" or "where" if the context demands it. The latter option is most appropriate in line 18 because it modifies a particular location, το ιερον.

The verb πατει in line 20 is intransitive due to its lack of a direct object. As a result, it has a slightly different sense than its transitive use in lines 12 and 17 and is simply translated as "walk." The intransitive fits the context of line 20, where the Pharisee is speaking about who can *legitimately* "walk" in the temple, and he

⁶⁸ Blass, *Grammar*, §160; Porter, *Idioms*, 90; Examples include Matt 27:57; John 6:10; and Heb 2:17.

⁶⁹ We have enough remaining text to be sure, at a minimum, that the word is a perfect form of μολυνω. If the verb were a perfect indicative, instead of a perfect participle, then the only possible subject would be the implied "you." The problem with this scenario is that there would be no room at the end of line 16 for the και that is necessary to separate these two verbs. The only way to have these two verbs side by side without a και is if one of them is a participle.

⁷⁰ Moule describes the perfect as expressing a "punctiliar event in the past, related in its effects to the present" (*Idiom-Book*, 13). Porter states that the perfect tense occurs "in contexts where the user of Greek wishes to depict the action as reflecting a given (often complex) state of affairs" (*Idioms*, 39). See also Blass, *Grammar*, 342.

⁷¹ This is also the translation choice taken by Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 48. An example of how the perfect participle can be translated in the present is found in I Cor 7:10: τοις δε γεγαμηκosis παραγγελλω; "Now to those who *are married* I command..."

⁷² J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 33.

certainly would not want to give the connotation of “trample” as he did in lines 12 and 17.

The middle point between *πατει* and *ουδε* cannot function as a period because the remaining clause between *ουδε* and *σκευη* cannot stand alone. Thus, it was most likely used as a comma or semi-colon.

G. LINES 21-24

The middle point in line 21 between *σκευη* and *και* functions as a period as the speaker changes from the Pharisee to Jesus. The text is quite corrupted in lines 21-22 making it difficult to reach any assurance about our reconstruction. Particularly in doubt is the end of line 21 where Grenfell and Hunt suggest the phrase *στας ευθεως*, whereas Swete prefers *σταθεις ευθυσ*. The difference in meaning between the aorist active *στας* and the aorist passive *σταθεις* is minimal. Both Jeremias—who adopts Swete’s reading—and Grenfell and Hunt translate it the same way: “stood still.” Likewise, the difference between *ευθεως* and *ευθυσ* is negligible; they both can mean “immediately” or “then.” Although either combination is certainly possible, the very similar construction in Acts 2:14 has led me to Swete’s conclusion: *σταθεις δε ο Πετρος συν τοις ενδεκα επηρευ την φωνην αυτου και απεφθεγγατο αυτοις*, “But Peter stood with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them...” Here we have the verb *σταθεις* preceding its subject and followed by a *συν*, just like in line 22 of our text.

The end of line 22 is also missing. All agree that only Jesus is speaking due to the fact that *τοις μαθηταις* is in the dative and not in the nominative, and that *αυτω* in line 24 is singular dative. Since only Jesus is doing the talking, we can plausibly reconstruct the third person singular verb *απεκριθη* at the end of line 22. The disagreements, however, center around the other word with *απεκριθη*. Grenfell and Hunt and Lagrange use *απεκριθη αυτω*, whereas as Swete and Jeremias use *αυτου απεκριθη*. Both options have merit, but the fact that *απεκριθη* is overwhelmingly followed by a dative object in the canonical gospels lends weight to the former

choice.⁷³ The Pharisee's response in line 24 also has the dative *αυτω* preceding it. On the other hand, the fact that the other two occurrences of *μαθηται* in P.Oxy. 840 also have the possessive pronoun lends weight to the *αυτου*.

The adverb *ενταυθα*, meaning “here,” does not occur in the NT and is quite rare in ancient literature as well. The middle point between *ιερω* and *καθαρευεις* has the sense of a comma. The verb *καθαρευω* in lines 23 and 24 does not occur in the NT and means “to be clean, pure.” Although we might have expected the common NT verb *καθαριζω*, its definition, “to make clean,” would make no sense on the lips of Jesus and the Pharisee here.

H. LINES 24-30

A middle point occurs after *καθαρευω* and can function as a period, a semi-colon, or a comma. The comma is unlikely, however, because it makes for quite a long sentence that would more naturally begin at *ελουσαμην*. The phrase *λιμνη του Δαυειδ* has caused an enormous amount of controversy, most of which will be reviewed in a later chapter. Although *λιμνη* is most commonly used as “lake” in the NT, it can also mean “pool.”⁷⁴ The rare word *κλειμακος*—which does not appear in the NT—is used for “steps” instead of the expected *αναβαθμος*. It appears our scribe has misspelled the word and added an epsilon to the correct form *κλιμακος*. Curiously, the term does appear in the LXX in Neh 3:15 and 12:37, and both times it is associated with the *πόλεως Δαυιδ*.

The verb *προσεβλεψα* does not occur in the NT and simply means “to look upon.” Since there are no spaces in *scriptio continua*, one might suggest that there are two different words in view here, *προς* and *εβλεψα*. However, this construction also does not occur in either the NT or the LXX. Furthermore, we would expect the word order to be reversed if the author was simply using *προς* as a preposition to precede *τουτοις τοις αγιοις σκευσειν*.⁷⁵

⁷³ *απεκριθη* is followed by a dative object in the NT the vast majority of the time (e.g., Mat 15:23, 27:14; Mk 9:17, 12:28; Lk 8:50, 13:50), whereas it is decidedly more infrequent for *απεκριθη* to directly precede a quote with nothing in between (e.g., Mk 12:29; Jn 1:21, 3:5, 7:20).

⁷⁴ Bauer, *Lexicon*, 475.

⁷⁵ But, even this would be very unlikely because *προς* is normally followed by accusatives and much less frequently by datives (Blass, *Grammar*, 239-240). The nearest possibility would be something

I. LINES 30-34

Since the speaker switches from the Pharisee to Jesus, the middle point between σκευεσιν and ο σωτηρ clearly functions as a period. The term ουαι is frequently used by Jesus in the Synoptic gospels, and although it is followed by the nominative τυφλοι in line 31, it is normally followed by the dative in the NT.⁷⁶ There are exceptions to this trend found in Lk 6:25, οὐαί, οἱ γελῶντες νῦν, and Rev 18:16 and 19, Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ, ἡ πόλις. Apparently our author was familiar with both practices because he uses the dative after ουαι in line 45.

The middle point between ορωντες and συ functions as a period as Jesus changes the object of his rebuke from the third person plural τυφλοι to the second person singular συ. Later in line 45, Jesus returns to the plural again with ουαι τοις. This alternating between plural and singular is rather odd considering there is (apparently) only the one Pharisee in the audience. This same sort of interchange between singular and plural happened in the first discourse in lines 1-7 where I argued that Jesus likely discussed wicked men (plural) in general on the previous page, gave the specific example of one (singular) who plans to strike first, and then returns to the general (plural) when he warns his disciples to not be like “them.” Perhaps Jesus again is following this pattern as he pronounces general woes on the spiritually blind (line 31), gives the specific example of a spiritually blind man when he rebukes the Pharisee (lines 32-41), and then returns to general woes again (line 45).

Although the original text of P.Oxy. 840 contains υδασι in line 33, I have included a final ν along with Grenfell and Hunt because the next word begins with a vowel. However, in line 43, I leave υδασι as it is because the next word does not begin with a vowel.

Since the meaning of the participle χεομενοις is central to our understanding of Jesus’ rebuke, it has elicited a substantial amount of debate. Bauer defines the root χεω as “pour out, gush forth.”⁷⁷ As a present participle, χεομενοις may

like the phrase found in Ezekiel 8:14, βλεπούσης πρὸς βορρᾶν; but the word order is reversed and πρὸς is followed by an accusative.

⁷⁶ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 21. Especially with υμιν: Matt 23:13,15,16,23,25,27,29; Luke 6:24,25,26; 11:42,43,44,46,47.

⁷⁷ Bauer, *Lexicon*, 881.

communicate a characteristic action or state, and thus could be translated as “waters which are poured” or more simply “running waters.”⁷⁸ Preuschen and Büchler both adopt this sense as they argue that the waters are from a pipeline running down from the Jewish mountains. Blau concurs and translates the phrase as “fließende Wasser.”⁷⁹

Other scholars reject this translation. Sulzbach argues for a scribal error when the original translation was made from Hebrew to Greek. Thus, according to Sulzbach, the sense of the original text was “Du glaubst rein zu sein, indem du in einem elenden faulichten Tümpel gebadet hast, der Unkraut hervorbringt und in dem Tintenfische hausen.”⁸⁰ Aside from being pure speculation, his suggestion suffers from another problem: How do we know the text was originally in Hebrew? This assertion is also pure conjecture and Sulzbach offers no evidence to support it. Riggensbach likewise posits a textual corruption, arguing that instead of *χεομενοις*, the original gospel must have contained a word that meant “irdisch.”⁸¹ But, his theory, like Sulzbach’s, is unverifiable and lacks any external confirmation. Such theories, though creative and interesting, have little chance of producing reliable exegetical conclusions and should not divert our attention away from the text as it currently stands.

Although Preuschen and Büchler are technically correct that *χεομενοις* can be translated as “running water,” the Jewish context suggests another, and more viable, option. I will argue at length in the next chapter that the type of pool in view here is clearly a Jewish bathing pool, or *miqveh*, which required “running” water. For the Jews, this did not mean that the water had to be currently moving while one bathed, but simply that the water had not been drawn by human hands, i.e., it had to be natural or “undrawn” water. I will use the term “natural water” in my translation.

⁷⁸ This participle would likely fall under Burton’s heading of “The General Present Participle” (*Moods and Tenses*, §123). Consequently, it would denote a general characteristic of the water, or of water belonging to a particular class, i.e. “water which moves.”

⁷⁹ Ludwig Blau, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchus buch- und zaubergeschichtlich betrachtet nebst sonstigen Bemerkungen,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 204-215; 215.

⁸⁰ A. Sulzbach, “Zum Oxyrhynchus Fragment,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 175-176; 176.

⁸¹ E. Riggensbach, “Das Wort Jesu im Gespräch mit dem pharisäischen Hohenpriester nach dem Oxyrhynchus Fragment v. 840,” *ZNW* 25 (1926): 140-44; 142. Although I reject Riggensbach’s suggested scribal correction, I think his description of the water as “irdisch” is consistent with the meaning of the phrase “running water.” As noted below, this phrase is simply Pharisaical language for referring to “natural” or undrawn water.

The nature of these pools and the water they contained will be discussed in the next chapter.

The term βεβληνται has also generated some debate. Lagrange opposes Buchler's suggestion that dogs and pigs were washed in the aqueducts by arguing that βεβληνται means "to throw" and thus must refer to corpses and not live animals.⁸² Preuschen⁸³ also argues that βεβληνται implies corpses and Grenfell and Hunt translated the term as "cast."⁸⁴ Although this word can certainly have such a meaning, it also can be translated as "to put, place, lay."⁸⁵ Indeed, in John 5:7 it is used in the story of the lame man by the pool where he declares, Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα ὅταν παραχθῆ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν, "Lord, I have no man to *put* me into the pool when the water is stirred up."⁸⁶ Surely the lame man is not asking to be picked up and "thrown" into the pool.⁸⁷ Thus, there is a semantic range for βαλλω beyond "throw" that must be considered.

As we make a decision about βεβληνται, the author's choice to use the perfect tense is a fundamental consideration. As we noted above with μεμολυμμενος in line 16, the perfect tense communicates a finished past action with continuing results, and thus can refer to an ongoing condition or a characteristic state.⁸⁸ Such a use of the perfect is found in Mt 8:6 which reads, Κύριε, ὁ παῖς μου βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ παραλυτικός, "Lord, my servant is *lying* paralyzed at home." When one considers the phrase νυκτος και ημερας in line 34, the same sort of understanding of βεβληνται seems inevitable. After all, it seems unnatural to speak of a past event ("have been thrown") as happening on an ongoing basis ("night and day"). "Night and day" clearly implies an action that is continual or characteristic. Thus, the sentence seems best translated, "running waters in which dogs and pigs *lie* night and day."⁸⁹ Riggenbach reaches these same conclusions about βεβληνται and sums it up nicely,

⁸² Lagrange, "Nouveau Fragment," 548.

⁸³ Preuschen, "Das neue Evangelienfragment," 6-7.

⁸⁴ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 17.

⁸⁵ Bauer, *Lexicon*, 131.

⁸⁶ Emphasis mine.

⁸⁷ βεβληνται is used in Mark 7:33 where Jesus "puts" his fingers into the ears of a deaf man, and also in Matt 9:17 where new wine is "put" in old wine skins.

⁸⁸ Blass, *Grammar*, 342.

⁸⁹ Although he offers no explanation, Jeremias also opts for the term "lie" (*Unknown Sayings*, 49). Elliott uses the verb "wallowed" (*Apocryphal*, 33). One may wonder what to make of the fact that

Es scheint mir indes, man dürfe βέβληνται nicht durch »geworfen sind« oder gar durch »geworfen werden« übersetzen, vielmehr bedeutet das Verbum hier einfach »liegen«... Wie an diesen Stellen, so kann auch in dem Evangelienfragment βεβλήσθαι nur »liegen« bedeuten. Das ergibt sich teils aus ἐν ὄϊς, teils aus νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας welche Ausdrücke beide ein Verbum der Ruhe fordern. Man hat also zu übersetzen: »in welchem bei Nacht und bei Tag Hunde und Schweine liegen«.⁹⁰

J. LINES 34-41

The middle point in line 34 between ημερας and και functions as a comma. The verb εσμηζω is not found in the NT and can be rendered simply “wipe off, rub off.”⁹¹ Büchler modifies this definition: “The word rendered wipe (σμεχειν) really means anointing with oil, after the Oriental manner, applying a cosmetic after the washing had occurred.”⁹² But, Lagrange insists “to wipe” is still the best definition, “On sait que les anciens pratiquaient l'onction avant ou après le bain; ce sens est possible à la rigueur, mais rien n'oblige à abandonner la signification normale d'«essuyer».”⁹³

The odd construction of this sentence leaves the verb εσμηζω without an explicit direct object. The reader could either (a) insert an understood “it” after the verb, or (b) he could let the participle νιψαμενος stand alone and use the phrase το εκτος δερμα⁹⁴ as the direct object of εσμηζω. Although either option is viable, I will use the latter option which would then read, “Having bathed (yourself), you wiped the outer skin.”

βεβληνται is in the passive. There are two choices: (a) It may mean that the owners of these animals lay them in the water for a washing on a regular basis, or (b) It may be understood as the middle voice, since the passive and middle are the same form. This option would have the sense of “running waters in which dogs and pigs lie (themselves) day and night.” Either of these choices is viable, although I prefer the latter.

⁹⁰ Riggenbach, “Das Wort Jesu,” 141.

⁹¹ Bauer, *Lexicon*, 758.

⁹² Adolf Büchler, “The New “Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel”,” *JQR* 20 (1908): 330-346, 344.

⁹³ Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment,” 549.

⁹⁴ Curiously, this rather odd phrase εκτος δερμα (“outer skin”) also appears in the second-century doctor Galen in numerous places: *De usu pulsuum* 5.164.17; and *Hippocratis aphorismos commentarii* 17b.394.2. However, there is no reason to think there is any relationship with Galen.

The phrase *αι πορναι και αι αυλητριδες* has garnered much attention due to its connection with the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. The historical issues associated with this phrase will be reserved for a later chapter. The word *αυλητριδες* is quite rare and does not occur in the NT. Curiously, one of the two accents in our fragment occurs over this word, raising the possibility that the scribe may have known his readers were unfamiliar with it. The word *καλλωπιζουσι* also does not appear in the NT and means “to adorn, beautify.”⁹⁵

Swete suggests that *μυριζουσιν* in line 36-37 should be *μυριζουσαι* instead, because “this seems to place the use of unguents to (sic) early in the sentence.”⁹⁶ However, this seems to ignore the obvious string of present tense verbs in lines 36-38 (*λουουσιν*, *σημχουσιν*, and *καλλωπιζουσι*) in which *μυριζουσιν* fits so naturally. The middle point in line 39 between *ανων* and *ειδοθεν* could theoretically function as a comma, period or a semi-colon, but the period is the least likely because it breaks up the natural flow of the sentence. The term *ειδοθεν* is yet another word which does not appear in the NT.

The verb *πεπληρωται* is confusing because it is in the third person singular where the context seems to suggest a third person plural. Although the first four letters of the verb are not visible, the remaining ones can be deciphered clearly. Grenfell and Hunt (and others) solve this problem by assuming there was a scribal error at this point, thus inserting a *ν* and creating the third person plural *πεπληρω(ν)ται*. Although it is possible that our scribe made such a mistake, conjectural emendations ought to be considered only when there are no other viable options. The clue to the solution to this problem lies in the very similar text of Luke 11:39 which reads, *ὕμεις οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τὸ ἔσωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τοῦ πίνακος καθαρίζετε, τὸ δὲ ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν γέμει ἀρπαγῆς καὶ πονηρίας.*⁹⁷ In this passage Jesus addresses the Pharisees in the second person plural (*ὕμεις*), and thus one would expect the final verb of this sentence to also be in the second person plural (“you are filled...”). However, *γέμει* is in the third singular, making the final phrase read, “But the inside of you is full of greed and wickedness.” Consequently, the term *ἔσωθεν* actually functions as the subject of the final verb and is modified by the

⁹⁵ Bauer, *Lexicon*, 400.

⁹⁶ Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, 8.

⁹⁷ The relationship between P.Oxy. 840 and Luke 11:39 will be discussed further in a later chapter.

genitive ὑμῶν (“of you”). In a similar manner, it seems P.Oxy. 840 is using εἰδοθεν as the subject of the clause in l.39-40, thus taking the third person singular πεπληρωται. The demonstrative pronoun, then, ought not to be the nominative plural ἐκεῖναι as suggested by Grenfell and Hunt, but is best reconstructed as the genitive plural ἐκεῖνων.⁹⁸ Thus, the translation would simply be, “But the inside of them is full of scorpions and all wickedness.”

K. LINES 41-45

The middle point in line 41 between κακίας and ἐγώ clearly functions as a period because of the blank space and the enlarged epsilon. The text is quite corrupted in these last five lines and much conjecture is necessary. Although the proposed μαθηται μου is not visible, it is a reasonable inference based on the plural definite article οἱ in line 41. The most certain reconstructed word is βεβαμμεθα in the middle of line 43. Although the first μ is doubtful, it could not be a σ or an υ, thus ruling out words such as λελουμεθα and βεβαπτισμεθα.⁹⁹ The verb which begins on line 42, βεβα-, has an unknown ending on line 43. Grenfell and Hunt supply the verb βεβαπτισθαι because it matches the previous verb (βαπτισθεντων) used in the Pharisee’s original accusation in line 15/16. This is reasonable considering the phrase λεγεις suggests Jesus is virtually quoting the Pharisee. Swete differs and reconstructs the word as βεβαμμενους so that it matches the βεβαμμεθα which immediately follows. I follow Grenfell and Hunt’s suggestion because it is quite probable that Jesus would use the same word chosen by the Pharisee when attempting to refute him, and it seems unlikely that the author would repeat the same verb twice in a row. After all, our author seems quite willing to vary his choice of

⁹⁸ Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment,” 540, and Otero, *Los Evangelios apócrifos*, 82, share this view. Zahn, “Neue Bruchstücke nichtkanonischer Evangelien,” 375, n.2, recognizes the same issues in the text but argues that ἐκεῖναι should be reconstructed as ἐκεῖνο. Although this is technically possible, two problems arise. First, Zahn’s view suggests that the implied subject of πεπληρωται would be το ἐκτος δερμας. Thus, his translation of this final clause is rather odd, “inwendig aber ist sie (die Haut) angefüllt mit Skorpionen und aller Schlechtigkeit” (375). Although εἰδοθεν is certainly contrasted with το ἐκτος, that does not mean that το ἐκτος δερμας is the *subject* of l.39-40. Second, the spacing of l.40 strongly suggests the longer ἐκεῖνων rather than the shorter ἐκεῖνο. Indeed, if Zahn were correct, this would leave only six letters to the left of the eta in l.40, making it one of the shortest lines on the verso.

⁹⁹ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 22.

words: for wash/bathe he uses λουω, βαπτίζω, νιπτω, and βαπτω; and for look/see he even uses different words, οραω (and ιδειν) and προσβλεπω, when referring to the same act of looking.

At the end of line 43 we have the letters ζω, and the remaining portion of the word has not been preserved. Due to space and contextual considerations, it is virtually certain that this word is a variant of the word “life,” such as the noun ζωης (Grenfell and Hunt) or possibly the participle ζωσιν (Jeremias). Not only is this consistent with other known NT themes (John 4:10, 11; 7:38), but it allows one to draw a suitable contrast between the water of the Pharisee (line 33) and the water of Jesus and his disciples. I have chosen to use the participle ζωσιν for two reasons: (a) The water in line 43 is contrasted to the water of the Pharisee in line 33. Since the water of the Pharisee is modified by a participle (χεομενοις), the contrast would make it likely that the water of Jesus and his disciples would also be modified by a participle (ζωσιν). (b) Since the theme of “living water” is most definitively associated with John’s gospel, and since all appearances of “living water” in John use the participle and not the noun, it seemed reasonable for that trend to continue here.¹⁰⁰ In the end, either option is viable and does not substantially alter the theological message of the text.

In line 44, the word ελθουσιν is still visible, but what precedes it is unclear.¹⁰¹ Grenfell and Hunt suggest ης αιωνιου τοις ελθουσιν, Swete opts for ης αιωνιου τοις κατελθουσιν, and Jeremias uses σι και καθαροις τοις ελθουσιν. However, all these choices assume that the letter before ελθουσιν is either σ or τ. But, upon close examination, neither of these fit the remaining portion of that letter. Portions of a straight vertical stroke and also the upper right portion of a horizontal stroke are clearly visible, ruling out the σ completely.¹⁰² The τ is more plausible, but the upper right horizontal stroke curves downward and ends in a slight serif, which is never found on another τ in P.Oxy. 840, but occurs frequently with the υ.¹⁰³ Thus, we have no choice but to consider a reconstruction that ends in υ. I offer one for line

¹⁰⁰ John 4:10, 11; 7:38. Jn 4:14 is the only possible exception.

¹⁰¹ I have decided to include the final υ on ελθουσι even though it is not in the original text. Because the next word (απο) begins with a vowel, this allows my Greek text to read more smoothly.

¹⁰² Grenfell and Hunt acknowledged that the letter may be a τ or an υ (*Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 22), but then proceeded to use the ζ even though there seems to be no evidence for that letter.

¹⁰³ Note particularly the υ in line 42 and 43 which aptly demonstrates this characteristic curve in the upper right arm. Such a serif is never found in a τ in this fragment.

44: σιν εκ του ουρανο]υ ελθουσιν α[πο του. The beginning of line 45 is completely lost, but it conceivably could be something such as πατρος επανω. The entire sentence would then read, "...have bathed in living waters from heaven, (which) have come down from the Father above..."

The last discernible phrase in line 45 is αλ]λα ουαι [τ]οις. At this point Jesus obviously begins another series of "woes" against a plural group (as indicated by the τοις).

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORICAL PROBLEMS OF P.OXY. 840

Ever since the publication of P.Oxy. 840 in 1908, the little scholarly attention it has received has been consumed almost entirely with its historical veracity. The fragment's detailed description of Herod's temple, and the individuals and practices associated with the temple, has led scholars over the years to compare it with first-century Judaism. Upon examination, the fragment appears to contain a number of odd historical references which are either previously unattested or, according to some, downright mistaken. Consequently, a large number of scholars have simply rejected the story as a late and untrustworthy composition, and viewed the author as quite unfamiliar with Jewish customs. Indeed, it was this position that dominated the initial publications on the fragment and laid the foundation for its subsequent neglect and obscurity. Although P.Oxy. 840 has had its defenders from time to time, the general perception that it is unhistorical has never been overturned.

It is the purpose of this chapter to reassess the historical veracity of P.Oxy. 840. The reasons for this are twofold. First, nearly a century has passed since the initial negative verdict leaving much new research to be evaluated. Specifically, new archaeological discoveries have come to light which may influence our assessment of the fragment. Second, the historical details of P.Oxy. 840 may reveal much about the origins of the gospel story it contains. If we conclude that indeed there are considerable divergences and inconsistencies with a first-century Jewish milieu, then this may not only indicate a later date for the story, but may also provide clues to the historical circumstances that led to its production. On the other hand, if our fragment proves to be quite familiar with the details of Palestinian Judaism, then we have one less obstacle to considering an early date and a substantial reason to think the story originated from a community that was versed in Jewish culture.

Particularly relevant to the historical origins of the gospel story in P.Oxy. 840 is the recent theory of François Bovon.¹ Armed with these historical problems, Bovon suggests that P.Oxy. 840 was not intended to reflect first-century realities at all, but was crafted as a “picture” of early church baptismal controversies. He declares,

The philological and historical problems that have been discussed since the discovery of the fragment find a more plausible solution as soon as we no longer visualize the scene in Jerusalem during Jesus’ life. Every term and category fits *better* into the framework of ancient Christianity.²

Thus, according to Bovon, we should not be concerned if there are historical inaccuracies in the fragment, because these merely point us to the fact that the fragment was written for an entirely other purpose, to be a polemical tool for a particular view on baptism. How is one to evaluate this claim? It seems the most appropriate course of action is to challenge Bovon’s assertion that the details of the fragment fit “better” into early Christianity. If it could be shown that the problematic terms and categories of the fragment can, after all, be adequately explained in the context of first-century Judaism, then his theory would lose probability. Since the setting of the fragment itself is in the first century, that setting should not be overturned unless there are substantial historical reasons to do so. Although specific aspects of Bovon’s theory will be considered at various points throughout this chapter, the fundamental challenge to its validity will come from the broader argument that the details of P.Oxy. 840 accurately reflect a first-century setting.

Although the main purpose of this chapter is primarily negative (to address prior criticism against P.Oxy. 840), it should not be forgotten that the details of our study will also produce a positive contribution to our knowledge of first-century Judaism. Indeed, as we shall see, our fragment sheds much-needed light on the structure and practices of Herod’s temple, the typical Jewish attitude toward ceremonial cleanliness, and the role of bathing pools (*miqva’ot*) during the time of Jesus.

¹ François Bovon, “Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840, Fragment of a Lost Gospel, Witness of an Early Christian Controversy Over Purity,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 705-728.

² Bovon, “Fragment,” 705-706, emphasis mine.

I. PHARISAIC HIGH PRIEST

The identification of the Pharisee as ἀρχιερεύς has raised doubts about the fragment because (a) there was never a high priest named “Levi,”³ and (b) high priests were generally drawn from the Sadducean order, and therefore were not Pharisees.⁴ Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine that the high priest himself would confront Jesus and his disciples since he would be entirely consumed with his own cultic responsibilities, and well aware that the task of policing the temple was distinctively given to others.⁵

A. DEFINITION OF ἀρχιερεύς

In order to resolve this difficulty, we must examine the term ἀρχιερεύς more closely. In the Gospels and Acts alone, the term “high priest” is used in the plural (e.g., ἀρχιερείς) more than 64 times, although we know only one man held the office at a time.⁶ Thus, there seems to be a semantic range for the term that must be considered. One possibility is that these NT texts are referring to high priests that are no longer in office. It is certainly true that ex-high priests did retain a degree of authority and prestige, still sat among the Sanhedrin, and were still addressed by the same title.⁷ However, this option can only explain some occurrences of the term

³ A complete list of high priests from 200 B.C. to 70 A.D. can be found in Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 377-378.

⁴ E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, vol. II (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 235, 404. See also Acts 5:17 and Josephus, *Ant.* 20.199.

⁵ This task primarily fell to the Levites. Philo declares, “Some of these [temple attendants] are stationed at the doors as gatekeepers at the very entrances, some within in front of the sanctuary to prevent any unlawful person from setting foot thereon, either intentionally or unintentionally” (*Spec. Laws* 1.156). Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of Philo will be taken from, *Philo*, trans. F.H. Colson et al., 10 vols., Loeb Classical Library (London: William Hienemann, 1937). For discussion of the guardians of the temple, see E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE* (London: SCM, 1992), 81-82.

⁶ Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 175ff.

⁷ Schürer, *History*, II.233. We read in *m. Hor.* 3:4, “There is no difference between a high priest presently in service and a priest who served in the past, except for the bringing of the bullock of the Day of Atonement and the tenth of an ephah. This one and that one are equivalent in regard to the service on the Day of Atonement.” All citations from the Mishnah, unless otherwise noted, are taken from Jacob Neusner, ed., *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Although I will refer to various rabbinic sources when appropriate throughout this chapter, I am well aware of the dangers and difficulties of employing these writings to refer to situations before 70 A.D. Such concerns have been voiced adequately in recent years: Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees before 70*, 3 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971); P. Schäfer, “Zur

because many historical sources mention names of “high priests” that do not appear in the lists of former high priests.⁸

Schürer suggests that ἀρχιερείς, in addition to ex-high priests, can also refer to “members of the noble families from which the high priests were selected.”⁹ Members of these noble families, argues Schürer, were endowed with a degree of authority and allowed to sit with the Sanhedrin.¹⁰ However, Jeremias has questioned Schürer’s line of reasoning by pointing out that there would never be room for all of these nobles in the 71-member Sanhedrin if they achieved a seat by birthright alone.¹¹ Consequently, he suggests ἀρχιερείς can mean “in the wider sense archpriests or chief priests of higher rank than the majority.”¹² In other words, this was a group of priests who held a more prominent and distinguished position than the main body of priests. Jeremias argues that these “chief priests” were comprised of distinctive offices below the reigning high priest, such as “Captain of the Temple” or “Temple Treasurer.”

Geschichtsauffassung des rabbinischen Judentums,” in *Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 23-44; Geza Vermes, “Jewish Literature and New Testament Exegesis: Reflections on Methodology,” *JJS* 33 (1982): 361-376; Lou H. Silberman, “Anent the Use of Rabbinic Material,” *NTS* 24 (1978): 416-417; S.T. Lachs, “Rabbinic Sources for New Testament Studies--Use and Misuse,” *JQR* 59 (1983): 159-173; and Craig A. Evans, “Early Rabbinic Sources and Jesus Research,” in *Society of Biblical Literature 1995 Seminar Papers*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering Jr. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 53-76. It is not the intention of this study (nor is there space) to resolve such an enormous debate. However, in light of these concerns, when citing rabbinic sources I have made an extra effort to either cite other sources that confirm the specific affirmations of the rabbinic source, or to establish a broader historical framework that would make the rabbinic affirmation at least a genuine possibility. Furthermore, I have attempted to show that some of the rabbinic sources prove to be remarkably accurate in their descriptions of pre-70 situations; e.g., the nature and use of *miqva’ot* (Jewish ritual baths). Lee Levine, “Josephus’ Description of the Jerusalem Temple: *War*, *Antiquities*, and Other Sources,” in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, ed. Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 233-246, in regard to the Mishnah’s description of the temple, declares, “Thus, it would appear that much of what has been preserved in the Mishnah was indeed drawn from the immediate pre-70 reality” (240-241). A.I. Baumgarten, “Rabbinic Literature as a Source for the History of Jewish Sectarianism in the Second Temple Period,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 2 (1995): 14-57, is also more optimistic about the historical value of the rabbinic writings and declares that there is “a high degree of certainty that Tannaitic sources seem very well informed concerning the pre-70 period” (18). In the end, as with all historical study, our conclusions must be held loosely in light of the limited (and often contradictory) historical sources at our disposal.

⁸ Josephus mentions Jesus (son of Sapphias), Simon, and Matthias (son of Boethus) (*J.W.* 2.566; 4.574). Also we read in Acts 19:14 of “the sons of Sceva, a Jewish high priest.” More detail can be found in Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 175.

⁹ Schürer, *History*, II.235.

¹⁰ *J.W.* 6.114; *m. Ket.* 13:1-2; Acts 4:6; Schürer, *History*, II.234.

¹¹ Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 176-177.

¹² Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 178.

When the ἀρχιερεὺς of P.Oxy. 840 is viewed from this perspective offered by Jeremias, we see that it fits remarkably well with the activities of the “chief priests” described in the NT. It is clear that the “chief priests” were the body who oversaw the temple treasury (Matt 26:14-15; 27:6), the temple activities (Matt 21:23, Mark 11:27), the temple police as they arrested Jesus (Matt 26:47; Luke 22:4-5), and the arrest of the apostles in the temple (Acts 5:24). The chief priest in P.Oxy. 840 is obviously taking on a similar role in protecting the temple from unlawful trespass and contamination. Who better to challenge Jesus and the disciples than a chief priest who oversees the operations of the temple?

B. THE COMBINATION OF PHARISEE AND CHIEF PRIEST

Now that we have a better idea of what ἀρχιερεὺς may mean in P.Oxy. 840, the final question before us is whether ἀρχιερεὺς could also be a Pharisee at the same time. There are numerous historical reasons for thinking this was possible. First, according to Jeremias, quite a large number of ordinary priests were also Pharisees.¹³ One example is found in Josephus where he mentions that Joazar “also a Pharisee, came of a priestly family.”¹⁴ There are even reasons to believe that Josephus himself was both a priest and a Pharisee, although it is still debated.¹⁵ Schürer argues that a certain Yoezer who belonged to the Pharisaic school of Shammai was also a priest and temple official.¹⁶ The fact that the Pharisees washed

¹³ Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 256.

¹⁴ *Life*, 197. All English translations of Josephus, unless otherwise noted, will be from, *Josephus*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, 13 vols., Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heineman, 1927).

¹⁵ *Life* 80, seems to indicate that he was a priest, which is substantiated by his extensive knowledge of the temple and his aristocratic pedigree (*Life*, 1-3). William Whiston, *Josephus: The Complete Works* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998; original edition 1737), declares that Josephus not only was born into a family of priests but “became a priest himself” (vii). Levine declares that Josephus was “a priest living in Jerusalem during the last decades of the Second Temple period” (“Josephus’ Description of the Jerusalem Temple,” 235). In addition to being a priest, many scholars think that Josephus became a Pharisee after his time in the desert with Banus (*Life* 11-12). See also J.J. Scott, “Josephus,” *DJG* 391-394. Schürer declares that “Josephus was one of their [the Pharisees] number” (*History*, II.389). Urban C. Von Wahlde, “The Relationships Between the Pharisees and Chief Priests: Some Observations on the Texts in Matthew, John, and Josephus,” *NTS* 42 (1996): 506-522, sums it up well when he says that “Josephus himself is a priest and by common reading of the text also a Pharisee” (509). For a detailed argument for why Josephus was *not* a Pharisee see, Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), esp. 325-341; and, very similar, Scott Mason, “Was Josephus a Pharisee? A Re-examination of *Life* 10-12,” *JJS* 40 (1989): 30-45. Günter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 5-7, seems a bit undecided.

¹⁶ *m. Or.* 2:12; Schürer, *History*, II.405.

the candelabrum has led some scholars to suggest, “the Pharisees in this incident appear to have been priests.”¹⁷ With such examples in mind, it is not hard to imagine that *chief* priests could also be Pharisees. Second, Pharisees and chief priests are often mentioned together in both Josephus and the canonical gospels suggesting a close link between the two groups.¹⁸ This frequent juxtaposition of the two terms has led Von Wahlde to declare, “Certainly it was common that the chief priests would have members who were also Pharisees.”¹⁹ Third, and most importantly, the Mishnah speaks of Haninah, “Captain of the Priests” (סגן הכהנים)—also known as “Captain of the Temple” or the *segan*—who was both a chief priest and a Pharisee.²⁰ The overall duty of the *segan* (סגן) was the oversight of the temple cult and to act as the chief of the temple police.²¹ Indeed, it was the στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ (“Captain of the Temple”) who arrested the apostles in Acts 5:24. In addition, a primary role of the *segan* was to aid the high priest in his duties, and to supervise the high priest to ensure that he did not violate the Pharisaic teachings.²² Thus, Narkiss declares that “the holders of the office of *segan* who are known by name are all Pharisees.”²³

That the Captain of the Temple, a chief priest, may have been a Pharisee is a remarkable confirmation of the details of P.Oxy. 840. Furthermore, what we know about the duties of the Captain of the Temple provides an uncanny fit with the description of the activities of the Pharisaic chief priest in our fragment. Schürer argues that there were also *seganim*, officials like the *segan* but of a lower rank, who

¹⁷ Jack Lightstone, “Sadducees Versus Pharisees,” in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults, Part III, Judaism Before 70*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 206-217, 208.

Lightstone refers here to the passage from *t. Hag.* 3:35.

¹⁸ *Life* 21; *J.W.* 2.410-411; John 7:45-52, 11:47, 18:1-3; Matt 21:45, 27:62. For a full discussion of these texts, see Von Wahlde, “Pharisees and Chief Priests,” 506-522.

¹⁹ Von Wahlde, “Pharisees and Chief Priests,” 520, n.40. J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), declares, “Certain chief priests were not only members of the Sanhedrin but also of the Pharisaic party” (76).

²⁰ *m. Abot.* 3:2; *m. Pesah.* 1:6. Adolf Büchler, *Die Priester und der Cultus im letzten Jahrzehnt des Jerusalemischen Tempels* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1895), 107-11; Daniel R. Schwartz, “Viewing the Holy Utensils (P. Ox. V, 840),” *NTS* 32 (1986): 159, n.33; Schürer, *History*, II.278, n.18; Sanders, *Judaism*, 404; and Joseph M. Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), 64.

²¹ H.D. Mantel, “The High Priesthood and the Sanhedrin in the Time of the Second Temple,” in *The Herodian Period*, ed. Michael Avi-Yonah (London: W.H. Allen, 1975), 264-281, esp. 273; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 163.

²² *m. Yom.* 4:1; *m. Tam.* 7:3. See S. Safrai, “The Temple and the Divine Service,” in *The Herodian Period*, ed. Michael Avi-Yonah (London: W.H. Allen, 1975), 282-337, esp. 299-300; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 161, n.46.

²³ Bezalel Narkiss, ““Temple: Ritual,”” *EncJud* 15:969-980, 974. In agreement are Mantel, “The High Priesthood and the Sanhedrin,” 273; and Safrai, “The Temple and the Divine Service,” 299-300.

patrolled the temple for those who might violate its ordinances.²⁴ Could one of these *seganim* be the very official described in P.Oxy. 840? It is, of course, impossible to know for sure. But, based on the limited information we possess, it seems to be the most likely option.

In summary, there seems to be no reason to assume that the author of P.Oxy. 840 has simply created the combination of Pharisee-priest for his own purposes. The rarity of this combination raises an important question: If the author came from an obscure Egyptian village—as some critics have suggested²⁵—then how would he know that the temple official primarily concerned with enforcing purity would be both a chief priest and a Pharisee at the same time? Such a specialized piece of knowledge presupposes an author more familiar with the structure of the temple authorities and their respective duties than previously thought.

II. TEMPLE LAYOUT AND THE “HOLY VESSELS”

The confusion over the identity and location of ἀγνευτηριον and αγια σκευη has led many scholars to be skeptical of our fragment’s historical accuracy. The problem centers around the fact that wherever the ἀγνευτηριον happens to be (nobody knows for sure), from that location the αγια σκευη are visible. If the latter term refers to revered articles within the sanctuary (e.g., the candelabrum, the altar of incense, and table of shewbread), then how would Jesus and his disciples see them since (a) they are normally not visible from the Court of the Israelites, and (b) no laymen were allowed into the sanctuary? It is for this reason that Grenfell and Hunt suggest that the author of P.Oxy. 840 may have been in error,²⁶ and Swete argues that the author “confused the Court of the Israelites with the Court of the Priests.”²⁷ Schürer also rejects the accuracy of the fragment and declares, “Der

²⁴ Schürer, *History*, II.278.

²⁵ Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908), suggest the author may have been thinking of “stagnant pools which are a common feature of Egyptian villages” when speaking of how the author may have received the idea for the “pool of David” (22).

²⁶ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 18-19.

²⁷ Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, 6.

Verfasser hat aber auch von den Lokalitäten des Tempels offenbar keine deutliche und richtige Anschauung.”²⁸

A. *αγία σκευή*

We will begin our discussion with *αγία σκευή* because it is the term more easily identified, and thus provides a more definitive starting place. Once we have determined the likely identity of these “holy vessels” then we can proceed to identify *αγνευτηριου*, knowing that these vessels must be visible from that location. Let us consider four possible options.

First, the term *αγία σκευή* can refer to the sacred items kept in the sanctuary, primarily the golden altar of incense, the seven-branched candelabrum, the golden table of the shewbread, and their associated items.²⁹ These vessels played the central role in the priestly duties³⁰ and are even described in the LXX by the very similar phrases *σκεύη τοῦ ἁγίου* (Num 3:31), and *σκεύη τὰ ἅγια* (Num 18:3; 1 Kings 8:4; 1 Chron 9:29, 22:19; 2 Chron 5:5). The Hebrew equivalent in these OT passages is *כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ*. The phrase *σκεύη ἅγια* is found in 1 Macc 4:49 and clearly refers to the candelabrum, altar of incense, and the table of the shewbread. Philo confirms that this understanding of the term was common among Jews: *τριῶν ὄντων*

²⁸ E. Schürer, “Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel from Oxyrhynchus,” *TLZ* 33 (1908): 170-172, 171.

²⁹ Schürer, *History*, II.296-298. Although the phrase seems to mainly refer to these three items, it also can include the other smaller items in the sanctuary that are associated with them. See discussion in Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 156-157. Num 3:31 seems to imply that “holy vessels” included more items than just the three major vessels. 1 Kings 7:48-50 (LXX) uses *σκευή* to describe items such as tongs, basins, wick-trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes, and censers, all of which are associated with the three vessels; see Victor Hurowitz, “Solomon's Golden Vessels (1 Kings 7:48-50) and the Cult of the First Temple,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells*, ed. David P. Wright, Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 151-164. Carol Meyers cites numerous other biblical texts that point to this same conclusion in “Realms of Sanctity: The Case of the ‘Misplaced’ Incense Altar in the Tabernacle Texts of Exodus,” in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions*, ed. Michael W. Fox et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 33-46, esp. 39. Furthermore, 2 Baruch 6:7-9, although predominantly known in Syriac, also confirms this understanding: “And I saw him descend into the Holy of Holies and take from thence the veil, and the holy ark, and the mercy-seat, and the two tables, and the holy raiment of the priests, and the altar of incense, and the forty-eight precious stones, wherewith the priest was adorned, and all the *holy vessels* of the tabernacle” [cited from R. H. Charles, ed. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), emphasis mine].

³⁰ When inside the sanctuary, the three primary acts of the priests center around these items: (a) The offering of incense, (b) the ritual tending of the lamps, and (c) the arrangement of the 12 loaves of bread (Haran, *Temples*, 208-210).

ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις σκευῶν, λυχνίας, τραπέζης, θυμιατηρίου. “The holy vessels are threefold, candlestick, table, and altar of incense.”³¹ Josephus uses the phrase exactly as it is found in P.Oxy. 840: οἰκοδομηθέντος δὲ τοῦ ναοῦ τὴν κιβωτὸν αὐτὸν ἀποθέσθαι προσέταξε καὶ τὰ ἅγια σκεῦη. “He also gave orders, that when the temple should be once built, they should put the ark therein, with the holy vessels.”³²

Second, the term *αγια σκευη* can refer to the variety of vessels that were used outside the sanctuary but still inside the Court of the Priests. These numerous items were used around the brazen altar to perform the various sacrificial duties. Both Jeremiah and Grenfell and Hunt suggest this possibility (along with the next one below).³³ Exodus 27:3 (LXX) uses *σκευη* to describe these utensils: καὶ ποιήσεις στεφάνην τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ καὶ τὸν καλυπτῆρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς φιάλας αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς κρεάγρας αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ πυρεῖον αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντα τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ποιήσεις χαλκᾶ; “And thou shalt make a rim for the altar; and its covering and its cups, and its flesh-hooks, and its fire-pan, and all its vessels shalt thou make of brass.” Mishnah Tamid reveals that there were a high number of such vessels stored in the chambers surrounding the Temple Court: “They went into the office for utensils and brought out from there ninety-three silver and gold utensils (כִּלִּי).”³⁴ Elsewhere, the same tractate uses כִּלִּי to describe the silver fire shovel used to scoop ash from the altar.³⁵ The appearance of *σκεύη τὰ ἅγια* in Numbers 4:15 (LXX; כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ in Hebrew) confirms this understanding: “And Aaron and his sons shall finish covering the holy things, and all the *holy vessels*, when the camp begins to move.” The immediate context makes it clear that the brazen altar, outside the sanctuary, was included among these “holy vessels.”³⁶ Num 31:6 also contains the phrase *σκεύη τὰ ἅγια* (LXX) and most likely does not refer to just the three items in the sanctuary.³⁷ Thus,

³¹ *Heir* 226.2; translation mine.

³² *Ant.* 7.342. English translation from Whiston, *Josephus*, 7.14.3.

³³ See a similar view advocated in Hans Lietzmann, “Das neugefundene Evangelienfragment und seine Vorgänger,” *Beilage zur allgemeinen Zeitung* 31 (1908): 662-672.

³⁴ *m. Tam.* 3:4. נכנסו ללשכת הכהנים. והוציאו משם תשעים ושלשה כלי כסף וכלי זהב.

³⁵ *m. Tam.* 1:4. והם אומרים לו. הוזהר שמא תגע בכלי. עד שתקדש ידיך ורגליך מן הכיור.

³⁶ In the Midrashic interpretation of this text, the author actually includes the brazen altar and its accompanying “appurtenances” within the term כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ. Midrash Rabbah Numbers 4:18: ואת כל כלי הקודש אלו שלחן ומנורה ושני מזבחות וכל כליהן “And all the holy vessels refers to the table, the candlestick, the two altars and all their appurtenances.” The context makes it clear that the two altars in view here are the altar of incense inside the sanctuary and the altar of burnt offering *outside* the sanctuary.

³⁷ In the Midrashic commentary on this passage, the author concludes that the phrase כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ refers to the diadem, the plate that Aaron wore on his head which had the inscription “Holy to the Lord” (Ex 28:36). Midrash Rabbah Numbers 20:20 (this section is actually commenting on Numbers

there seemed to be a semantic range for the phrase that included items both inside and outside the sanctuary.

Third, *αγια σκευη* may refer to the many vessels stored in the temple treasuries. David had dedicated to Yahweh a large number of gold, silver and bronze vessels (*σκευη*) taken from the people he had subdued (2 Sam 8:7-12). These vessels were later placed in the temple treasuries by King Solomon (1 Kings 7:51). Also, a number of the vessels in the temple treasuries were donations from the people who wanted to contribute to the work of the temple (2 Kings 12:5). In fact, Ezra 8:28 (LXX) even uses *σκεύη ἅγια* to describe such silver and gold items that were dedicated by the kings and the people: *καὶ εἶπα πρὸς αὐτούς ὑμεῖς ἅγιοι τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ τὰ σκεύη ἅγια καὶ τὸ ἀργύριον καὶ τὸ χρυσίον ἐκούσια τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ πατέρων ὑμῶν*; “Then I said to them, ‘You are holy to the Lord, and the holy vessels, and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the Lord God of your fathers.’”³⁸ Nehemiah 10:40 (LXX) also makes it clear that *σκεύη τὰ ἅγια* are stored in the temple treasuries: “For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring into the treasuries the first-fruits of the corn, and wine, and oil; and there are the holy vessels (*σκεύη τὰ ἅγια*), and the priests, and the ministers, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.” This practice is supported by the Mishnah which speaks of how there was a “chamber of utensils” in the temple where worshipers could come and offer their “vessels” (*כלי*) as gifts toward the temple upkeep.³⁹ Haran comments on the status of these items, “The vessels in the temple treasuries were also deemed holy, though they were certainly less sacred than those in the temple sanctums.”⁴⁰

31:6 and not 20:20) reads: *וּכְלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ זֶה הַצִּיִּץ שֶׁכְּתוּב בּוֹ קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה* “*With the holy vessels*. This refers to the plate upon which was the inscription, *Holy to the Lord*.” There is some dispute about whether the high priest actually wore the diadem and other sacred overgarments *outside* the sanctuary. However, Sir. 50:11-15 makes it clear that at least in post-exilic times the high priest would wear such items when officiating in the Court of the Priests near the brazen altar. Furthermore, there is no passage that states such garments must be worn only inside the sanctuary. For more discussion see Haran, *Temples*, 210-212. Amazingly, another Midrashic discussion of the same passage reaches an entirely different conclusion and argues that *כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ* refers to the ark of the covenant (Midrash Rabbah Numbers 22:4).

³⁸ The context of this passage reveals the nature of these “holy vessels.”

³⁹ *m. Seqal*. 5:6. The presence of this chamber and the fact that worshippers could enter it freely, suggests that they were able to view the vessels from that location.

⁴⁰ Haran, *Temples*, 284.

A fourth option,⁴¹ suggested by Bovon, is that the “holy vessels” refer to the chalice and plate used in the Christian eucharist. He even notes that such a phrase was used by church fathers such as Eusebius and Epiphanius. Although such a reference certainly can fit into the framework of ancient Christianity, it does not meet Bovon’s own criteria of something that “fits *better* into the framework of ancient Christianity.”⁴² Undoubtedly, the term can be more than adequately explained within the context of early Judaism, making an appeal to fourth century Christianity a bit superfluous.⁴³ Indeed, one could argue that the Christian use of “holy vessels”—along with other eucharistic terms like “priest” and “altar”—was ultimately derived from its Jewish context. Thus, in a story where the setting is the Jerusalem temple, it is difficult to believe that a Jewish Christian, when reading about the “holy vessels,” would think of anything other than the Jewish use of the term.⁴⁴

In the end, therefore, we must choose between the first three options presented to us. Choices two and three become particularly attractive because they would undercut the criticisms of some scholars that P.Oxy. 840 mistakenly refers to the articles kept in the sanctuary which could not be seen by Jesus and his disciples from the Court of the Israelites. However, we must let the context of P.Oxy. 840 dictate what is meant and not our desire to have difficulties alleviated. The key contextual consideration is the fact that at three different points in our fragment—lines 13, 20, and 29—the Pharisaic chief priest makes mention of the fact that Jesus and his disciples should not be “looking” upon the holy vessels. The priest’s deep concern that these vessels be properly viewed suggests that there is some sort of

⁴¹ There is conceivably a fifth option, suggested by Preuschen, where he argues that when the text mentions “seeing” the *αγία σκευή* it does not literally mean the temple vessels at all, but is simply a phrase that means “to see God” or “stand before the face of God” (“Das neue Evangelienfragment,” 5). Thus, “seeing the holy vessels” is another way to describe the act of coming to worship at the temple. Although this is a creative idea, and perhaps even a remote possibility, it lacks any textual evidence in its favor and Preuschen never offers an example of it being used in this way elsewhere.

⁴² Bovon, “Fragment,” 705-706; emphasis mine.

⁴³ Curiously, all the references by Bovon to *αγία σκευή* in the church fathers are fourth century or later. All would agree (even Bovon it seems) that the story in our fragment dates back into the second century. Thus, we would need some sort of evidence prior to the fourth century that “holy vessels” were used to refer to the cup and the chalice of the Christian eucharist.

⁴⁴ This, of course, does not mean that the Jewish-Christian could not *apply* the story to his present situation, which may include baptismal practices. For example, a person reading this story could say, “In the same way that Jesus did not need to bathe before viewing the Jewish vessels, so we Christians do not need to bathe (i.e. be baptized) in order to view the eucharistic vessels.” Although I agree with this possible application/use of the text, this is not the same thing as saying that the text was *created* with that purpose in mind.

cultic prohibition of sight associated with them. The relevant question then becomes, which of the three choices can better explain the concern of the priest? Admittedly, choices two and three have some difficulty here. After all, the items in the Court of the Priests and in the temple treasuries were regularly seen by worshipers during their visit to the temple and would not have occasioned any special comments by the priest about their being viewed.⁴⁵ In contrast, the attitude of the priest fits quite well with what we know of the cultic prohibition on viewing the items within the sanctuary itself. Haran comments, “A non-priest may not even look at any articles of furniture within the tabernacle. In this respect, the inner furniture is distinguished from the outer: it is concealed behind curtains, removed from visual as well as physical contact.”⁴⁶ In Num 4:18-20 the Kohathites are warned not even to *look* at the inner vessels or they will die. Such statements are not made about the vessels that are kept outside the sanctuary. This prohibition on sight is exemplified in the meticulous manner in which the temple vessels were covered with special cloth during transportation from one place to another so that no one may accidentally view them.⁴⁷

In addition, historical references from Josephus demonstrate that this general prohibition continued during the time of Herod’s temple.⁴⁸ Commenting on Pompey’s entrance into the temple, Josephus emphasizes how troubled the people were that he *saw* the holy vessels: “Of all the calamities of that time, none so deeply

⁴⁵ Incidentally, Bovon argues that there was a type of restriction on “viewing” the eucharistic chalice and plate. Bovon correctly notes that participation in the eucharist was restricted to baptized believers and that they were even removed from the place of worship before communion was given. See. G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1943), esp. 16-19. However, it is not clear that this was due to fear that the plate and chalice might be “seen” but only due to the rules Paul provided in 1 Cor 11:17-34. The text of the *Didache* only mentions that the unbaptized were not allowed to “eat or drink” and mentions nothing about “viewing.” In fact, Justin is quite open about the details of the eucharist to his pagan audience (*1 Apol.* 65-66). Ambrose, in his teachings on the sacraments, mentions that what is seen with physical eyes is *not* important, rather we should concentrate on what our spiritual eyes see (*Myst.* 3.8, 3.15, 8.44). Furthermore, in the *Canons of Laodicea* 21, there is detailed discussion about who is allowed to touch the vessels of the eucharist, but there is no mention anywhere about the importance of (or restrictions on) viewing them. When compared to the Jewish explanation below, the reader must decide whether the Christian context really provides a “better” fit.

⁴⁶ Haran, *Temples*, 178.

⁴⁷ Special blue cloth (בגד תכלת) was designated for the covering of these items (Num 4:5-15). For more, see discussion in Philip Peter Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 104-106. Although the brazen altar was also covered, it was covered with a different colored cloth, which set it apart as less holy than the vessels inside the sanctuary.

⁴⁸ My attention was drawn to the following passages in Josephus by Schwartz, “Viewing the Holy Utensils,” 153-159.

affected the nation as the exposure to alien eyes of the Holy Place, hitherto screened from view.”⁴⁹ In the parallel account speaking of the same event, Josephus declares:

And not light was the sin committed against the sanctuary, which before that time had never been entered or *seen*. For Pompey and not a few of his men went into it and saw what it was unlawful for any but the high priest to *see*. But though the golden table was there and the sacred lampstand and the libation vessels and a great quantity of spices...he touched none of these because of piety.⁵⁰

Although Pompey touched nothing, great offense was taken at merely the *viewing* of what was inside the sanctuary. Josephus speaks later about how Herod went to great lengths to ensure that foreign allies would not see the inside of the temple. Herod feared the consequences “if any of the things forbidden to men’s eyes should be seen by them.”⁵¹ These references make it evident that prohibitions of sight mainly pertained to the items in the sanctuary and not to those items outside the sanctuary that are normally in plain view.

Consequently, P.Oxy. 840’s emphasis on “viewing” the holy vessels inclines us to understand the “holy vessels” to be those items routinely kept in the sanctuary and hidden from sight. With this context in mind, a reader of P.Oxy. 840 who was familiar with the temple and its customs would unlikely associate *αγια σκευη* with the items in the temple treasury or those around the brazen altar. This conclusion, of course, does not alleviate the original problems with the fragment. If the vessels of the sanctuary are intended, then how could Jesus and his disciples see them since there was a curtain and no one but the priests was allowed into the sanctuary? And what implications does this have on the location of the *αγνευτηριον*? For the answer to these questions, we turn to the next section.

B. *αγνευτηριον*

If we examine the use of *αγνευτηριον* (“place of purification”) in ancient literature in hopes of establishing a clear definition, we most certainly will be disappointed. However, despite the limited usage of the term (only 3 times), some

⁴⁹ *J.W.* 1.152.

⁵⁰ *Ant.* 14.71-72. Emphasis mine.

⁵¹ *Ant.* 14.483.

progress can be made. The first occurrence is from the first century Stoic philosopher Chaeremon where he describes the activities of the Egyptian priests in the temple. During their time of fasting, the priests were not allowed to have contact with anyone except for those who were pure “or with those who divided among themselves the rooms of purification and fasting which were inaccessible to those who were not pure and which were set apart for the religious services”; ἢ ἀγνευτήρια τοῖς μὴ καθαρεύουσιν ἄδυστα καὶ πρὸς ἱερουργίας ἅγια καταναεμόμενοις.⁵² Interestingly, the ἀγνευτηριον here is described as a place which is (a) inaccessible to the impure, and (b) used for religious services. These two characteristics provide a good starting place for identifying this term. Later, Gregory of Nazianzus uses ἀγνευτηριον twice. In his *Poemata Moralia*, we read: Ναὸς δὲ λαοῦ σεπτὸν ἀγνευτηριον; “But the temple of the people (is) a venerable place of purification.”⁵³ The use here is too vague for definitive conclusions, but the term is again connected with the temple. Although Gregory is probably using “temple” to refer to a church,⁵⁴ it is consistent with Chaeremon as a place which is (a) inaccessible to the impure, and (b) used for religious services. In *Contra Julium*, Gregory tells us that Julian planned to provide ξενῶνας, ἀγνευτήριά τε καὶ παρθενῶνας καὶ φροντιστήρια καὶ τὴν εἰς τοὺς δεομένους φιλανθρωπίαν; “hospices, places of purification, asylums for virgins, places of meditation, and help for the needy.”⁵⁵ It is not clear what Gregory meant here, but most scholars see the word as possibly referring to a monastery.⁵⁶ If so, it would still be consistent with the two characteristics mentioned above.

Although the above evidence is scanty, it seems evident that ἀγνευτηριον is a place which is (a) inaccessible to the impure, and (b) used for religious services. Thus, a person does not enter the ἀγνευτηριον to *become clean* (as if it were a place

⁵² *Hist.* 4; Chaeremon is actually preserved in Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, 4.6. Text and English translation from, Peter Willem van der Horst, *Chaeremon, Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher: The Fragments Collected and Translated with Explanatory Notes* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984); see also Michael Patillon and Alain Ph. Segonds, *Porphyre, De L'Abstinence* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1995).

⁵³ *Carm.* 1.2.34.224 (PG 37:962); translation mine.

⁵⁴ For this opinion, see G.W.H. Lampe, ed. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961).

⁵⁵ *Or.* 4:111; translation mine, text from J. Bernardi, ed. *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 4-5 contre Julien* (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 266-268. Bernardi's French translation for the cited portion of Greek: “des hospices, des lieux de purification, des asiles pour les vierges, des lieux de méditation, et prescrire la bienfaisance à l'égard des nécessiteux.”

⁵⁶ C.W. King, *Julian the Emperor* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1888) translates it as “monasteries for men”; Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, describes it as a “monastery.”

for washing) but must *already be clean* in order to participate in the religious activity that transpires there. With this foundation in place we can now ask the question which will narrow down the identity of this term: Was there ever an opportunity for the non-priestly Israelite to view the holy vessels that were kept in the tabernacle? If so, then this may be the final clue to the location of the *αγνευτηριον*.

Büchler (followed by Lagrange and others) suggests that *αγνευτηριον* referred to one of the smaller rooms around the Temple Court⁵⁷ where the vessels were cleaned after the festival and where a layman might have been able to see them.⁵⁸ However, this would entail understanding *αγνευτηριον* as a place where purification takes place, rather than as a place where one must already be purified to enter, thus contradicting the historical use of this term as was seen above. Furthermore, this view seems unnecessarily complicated. Although we know that these vessels were cleaned, we are not sure where that was done or whether lay Israelites would even have had access to the procedure. Though we know the use of many rooms in the Temple Court, there is no record of a room used for such a purpose.⁵⁹

Bovon understands *αγνευτηριον*, in the context of the story, as referring to a place for “lustration, a washing of the hands and feet, before entering the temple to see the holy vessels.”⁶⁰ However, it is not clear where he finds this in the text itself. The Pharisaic chief priest clearly does not see the *αγνευτηριον* as a place for feet to *be washed* because he rebukes the disciples for entering the *αγνευτηριον* without *already washing* their feet: “Who allowed you to trample this place of purification

⁵⁷ I will be using the term “Temple Court” to refer to the area distinct from the Women’s Court, that included both the Court of the Israelites and the Court of the Priests (it appears that *m. Mid.* 2:3 uses this term in the same way).

⁵⁸ Adolf Büchler, “The New ‘Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel,’” *JQR* 20 (1908): 330-346, 338.

⁵⁹ There were many chambers in the walls that surrounded the Temple Court, including the Chamber of the Hearth, the House of Abtinas, the Rinsing Chamber, and the Chamber of Hewn Stone. See Dan Bahat, “The Herodian Temple,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. 3: Early Roman Period*, ed. W. Horbury, W.D. Davies, and John Sturdy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 38-58, 53-55. According to *Mid.* 5:3 there were six primary chambers, and there were likely many smaller ones that served a variety of functions for the priests. For more see, Michael Avi-Yonah, “Temple: Structure,” *EncJud* 15:960-968. There are numerous washing areas known to us, however all have clearly defined uses. The Parvah Chamber contained a pool on its roof (*m. Mid.* 5:3), and there was a pool above the Water Gate (*m. Mid.* 1:4), both of which were used for the needs of the High Priest. The northwest corner of the Chamber of the Hearth contained an immersion bath (*m. Mid.* 1:6), but it was an underground cavern reserved for the priests. There was also a Rinsing Chamber (*m. Mid.* 5:3) but it was used for rinsing animal parts.

⁶⁰ Bovon, “Fragment,” 719.

(αγνευτηριον) and to see these holy vessels, when you have not bathed yourself, nor have your disciples even washed their feet?” Thus, the αγνευτηριον must be some sort of court that was prohibited to those who had not washed their feet prior to entry into it. This conclusion fits with the historical usage of the term demonstrated above, but contradicts Bovon’s assertion.

As a result, Bovon’s suggestion that the ultimate *Christian* reference of αγνευτηριον is to the “water basin or fountain, located outside an ancient Christian basilica, often in the middle of the atrium preceding the church”⁶¹ is simply untenable. Furthermore, Bovon’s reference to the Christian basilica encounters more problems when compared to the dating of P.Oxy. 840. It is generally agreed that the Christian basilica arose only after the time of Constantine in the fourth century.⁶² However, virtually all scholars of P.Oxy. 840 agree that the gospel story therein extends back to the second century.⁶³ How was this story supposed to reflect the structure of the Christian basilica when such architecture was not even used by Christians in the second century (or the third)? This entire combination of issues raises substantial doubts about Bovon’s theory.

In contrast to the above suggestions, a passage in Josephus seems to present a more simple and straightforward solution to our dilemma—and one that fits the historical usage of the term αγνευτηριον. Apparently, during certain special times of the year (solemn days or festivals), the aforementioned restrictions on viewing the

⁶¹ Bovon, “Fragment,” 719.

⁶² L. Michael White, *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), esp. 8-26. White declares, “Archaeologists and architectural historians have now determined that the basilica had antecedents in Roman public architecture but was not used at all by Christians prior to the fourth century” (8). Even if one would concede that the basilica was not necessary for Bovon’s theory, he still needs quite a developed form of Christian architecture that contained baptisteries, atriums, and a separate room for the eucharist. If Christians were expected to know what the αγνευτηριον referred to, then a degree of architectural standardization would have to be required. However, this level of Christian architecture was certainly not around until at least the middle of the 3rd century (Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965], esp. 1-15), still too late for the story in P.Oxy. 840. For more on the development of the early Christian building see, J.G. Davies, *The Origin and Development of Early Christian Church Architecture* (London: SCM Press, 1952); J.W. Crowfoot, *Early Churches in Palestine* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941); and L. Michael White, *Building God's House in the Roman World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

⁶³ E.g., Edgar J. Goodspeed, “The New Gospel Fragment from Oxyrhynchus,” *BW* 31 (1908): 142-146; Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, 3-4; Grenfell and Hunt, “Fragment,” 13; Ron Cameron, *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 53. More discussion on the 2nd century date will be given below in chapter five.

vessels were temporarily suspended, and the curtain of the tabernacle was rolled back so that the people could view the interior:

ὑπὲρ δὲ τούτου λίνεον ἦν ἰσομέγεθες φάρσος ἐφελκόμενον ἀπὸ κάλων ἐπὶ θάτερα, τῶν κρίκων τῷ τε ὕφει καὶ τῷ κάλῳ διακονούντων πρὸς τε τὸ ἐκπετάνυσθαι καὶ συνελκόμενον ἴστασθαι κατὰ γωνίαν, ἐμποδῶν οὐκ ἐσόμενον πρὸς τὸ κατοπτεῦεσθαι καὶ μάλιστα ἐν ταῖς ἐπισήμοις ἡμέρας.

Over this there was a veil of linen, of the same largeness with the former: it was to be drawn this way or that way by cords, the rings of which, fixed to the texture of the veil, and to the cords also, were subservient to the drawing and undrawing of the veil, and to the fastening it at the corner, *that then it might be no hindrance to the view of the sanctuary, especially on solemn days.*⁶⁴

This custom of periodically allowing the common Israelite to view the sanctuary, and thus the holy vessels, is confirmed in the Talmud which refers to the event several times:

When the Israelites came up for the pilgrim festival, they removed the curtain and showed the cherubim, whose bodies were twisted with one another, and they said to them, ‘See how much you are loved before the Omnipresent, the way a man and a woman love one another.’⁶⁵

So the usage bears the lesson that they would lift [the table] up and show the pilgrims the showbread that was on it, saying, ‘Behold God’s love for you! The bread when it is taken out is as fresh as it is when it is laid forth on the table a week earlier.’⁶⁶

They said, ‘It didn’t take long before they covered the inner sanctum entirely with gold plates a cubit square and a gold denar thick. And at pilgrim festivals they would lay them together and put them on a high place on the Temple Mount, so the festival pilgrims might say how beautiful was the workmanship, and how there was no flaw in them.’⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Ant.* 3.128. Emphasis mine. This particular translation is from Whiston, *Josephus*, 103.

⁶⁵ *b. Yoma*. 54a:

בשעה שהיו ישראל עולין לרגל מגללין להם את הפרוכת, ומראין להם את הכרובים שהיו מעורים זה בזה, ואומרים להן: ראו חבתכם לפני המקום כחבת זכר ונקבה

All Babylonian Talmud English citations taken from Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of Babylonia: An American Translation*, 39 vols. (Chico, CA and Atlanta, GA: Scholar’s Press, 1984-).

⁶⁶ *b. Hag.* 26b:

אלא מלמד שמגביהין אותו, ומראין בו לעולי רגלים להם הפנים, ואומרים להם: ראו חבתכם לפני המקום, סילוקו כסידורו.

See also *b. Yom.* 21b and *b. Men.* 96b for very similar statements.

⁶⁷ *b. Pesah.* 57a:

אמרו: לא היו ימים מועטים עד שחיפו את ההיכל כולו בטבלאות של זהב שהן אמה על אמה כעובי דינר זהב. ולרגל היו מקפלין אותן ומניחין אותן על גב מעלה בהר

The testimonies of both Josephus and the Talmud indicate that there was likely a time during certain Jewish festivals when—despite the normal prohibitions on sight—the utensils of the tabernacle were put on display so that the visiting pilgrims could see them. Narkiss concurs:

During the festival the curtain which normally hung at the entrance to the sanctuary was rolled up to enable the people to view the Holy of Holies, and the holy vessels and appurtenances were even brought out into the *azarah* in full view of the pilgrims.⁶⁸

The rationale behind this custom is not clear, but some scholars have suggested that it may be the result of Pharisaic pressure upon the priests to allow the common Israelite to participate in activities of the temple cult normally reserved for priests alone—i.e., to extend priestly privileges to the laity.⁶⁹ Israel Knohl comments at length:

Restrictions which are meant to delimit sacred areas and exclude Israelites and unfit priests from coming into close contact with the holy, are annulled on the festivals. The dominant tendency of Pharisee custom is the removal of barriers on the festival days, to allow the people to experience proximity to the holy. This tendency is realized through a two-way movement: the sanctified ritual objects move from the holy area—the sanctuary—outwards, while the people penetrate the inner sanctified area where they may not set foot during the rest of the year.⁷⁰

הבית, כדי שיהו עולי רגלים רואין שמלאכתם נאה ואין בה דלם

⁶⁸ Narkiss, "Temple: Ritual," 978.

⁶⁹ E.g., see Israel Knohl, "Post-Biblical Sectarianism and the Priestly Schools of the Pentateuch: The Issue of Popular Participation in the Temple Cult on Festivals," in *The Madrid Qumran Conference*, vol. II, ed. Julio Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 601-609; Israel Knohl, "The Priestly Torah versus the Holiness School," *HUCA* 58 (1987): 65-117, esp. 105; and Schwartz, "Viewing the Holy Utensils," 153-159. There are other examples of disagreements between Pharisees and Sadducees where the former, on behalf of the lay Israelites, attempt to place priests and non-priests on the same level of purity. A primary example of this is the controversy over the purification of the high priest during the ritual of the red heifer (Num 19). The Pharisees intentionally defiled the high priest and made him wash and prepare the ashes without waiting for sundown—to demonstrate that immersion alone was enough to accomplish the requisite purity (*m. Parah*. 3:7). The Sadducees, on the other hand, maintained that sundown was a requirement (Lev 11:24,27,28,39,40; 15:5-7). Further discussion of controversies between the Pharisees and Sadducees can be found in Solomon Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall of the Judean State*, vol. I (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962), 177-182; Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962), 661-692; and Joseph M. Baumgarten, "The Pharisaic-Sadducean Controversies about Purity and the Qumran Texts," *JJS* 31 (1980): 157-170.

⁷⁰ Knohl, "Post-Biblical Sectarianism," 602.

The movement of the common Israelite into sacred areas took place mainly during the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) where they marched around the altar—inside the Court of the Priests—waving willow branches in their hands and praying to God.⁷¹ Rubenstein declares, “So festive was the occasion and so popular the ritual that the normal prohibition banning non-priests from the inner temple precincts was suspended.”⁷² This custom of beating the willow branches was opposed by the Sadducean/Boethusian groups and at times they even attempted to prevent it.⁷³ Apparently they were not as comfortable as the Pharisees with the periodic “democratization” of the temple cult.

The display of the holy vessels at festival time also helps explain some other Jewish practices that took place then, such as the washing of the vessels when the festival was over.⁷⁴ Why would there be a particular concern about the cleanliness of the vessels after the festival (as opposed to other times of the year)? Knohl, Zeitlin, and others suggest that the priests must have felt compelled to cleanse these vessels after the festival because they had been viewed by non-priests and perhaps even touched by the throng of pilgrims.⁷⁵ The same concern, in fact, may have led

⁷¹ *m. Sukkah*. 4:5; *b. Sukkah*. 43b; *m. Kelim*. 1:8; and similarities with *Jub.* 16:31. For a full discussion of the *Sukkot* and the beating of the willow branches, see Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1995), 106-117. Joseph Baumgarten declares, “The quest for universality was most pronounced during the festivals when even those who were not ordinarily meticulous about the observance of purity were assumed so and therefore granted access to the Temple courts. This included not only the Court of Women and the Court of Israelites, but on *Sukkot* even the restricted area around the altar. The veil before the sanctuary was drawn back so that people could see into it, and the vessels were brought out for them to inspect” (*Studies in Qumran Law*, 64).

⁷² Rubenstein, *Sukkot*, 109. Safrai makes a similar statement: “During festival time it seems almost as if the Temple was removed from the authority of the priests and the Sadducee High Priests and handed over to the ordinary people, who conducted the worship in accordance with the teaching of the Sages and their Pharisee customs” (“The Temple and the Divine Service,” 308).

⁷³ *t. Sukkah*. 4:1; see discussion in Knohl, “Post Biblical Sectarianism,” 603-604; and Schwartz, “Viewing the Holy Utensils,” 156. The Sadducean displeasure is evident from their criticism about the washing of the candelabrum by the Pharisees, *t. Hag.* 3:35; *y. Hag.* 3:8 (79d). Evidence that the Pharisees held some influence over the priestly factions can be found in Josephus, *Ant.* 18.17; *t. Yoma*. 5:8; *t. Parah.* 3:8; see also Gedaliah Alon, *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1980), 200-201; and Tal Ilan, “The Attraction of Aristocratic Women to Pharisaism During the Second Temple Period,” *HTR* 88 (1995): 1-33.

⁷⁴ *m. Hag.* 3:7-8.

⁷⁵ Knohl, “Post-Biblical Sectarianism,” 602; Zeitlin, *Rise and Fall*, 180-181. See also Schwartz, “Viewing the Holy Utensils,” 158, n. 29; Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), 53; and Hyam Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and its Place in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 187-188. Some scholars have suggested that the washing of the utensils was due to the fact that they were defiled by the priests themselves. However, even if one allows for the fact that priests could defile the holy vessels

the Pharisees to wash the candelabrum itself.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the popular display of the vessels may help explain the coins of the Bar Kochba revolt which depict an outline of the temple with the table of the shewbread visible in the center.⁷⁷

Grossberg and others have argued that these coins reflect what the people had witnessed during the time of the Jerusalem festivals: the table on display before the masses.⁷⁸

In the end, there is no reason to assume—along with the many critics of this text—that P.Oxy. 840 was mistaken about the viewing of the vessels or that the ἀγνευτηριον was referring to the sanctuary itself. Rather, it seems most likely that the term simply refers to the Court of the Israelites or the Court of the Priests where the common Israelite, during the festival, was allowed to view the interior of the tabernacle and to witness the vessels on display.⁷⁹ This understanding also helps explain the phrase περιπατεῖ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ. It is much more plausible that Jesus and his disciples would be described as “walking in the temple” if they were in an open area such as the Court of the Israelites or the Court of the Priests rather than in a small washing chamber as Büchler has suggested. “The place of purification” refers, then, not to a place where purification is accomplished or performed, but to a place where one must be purified to enter. Consequently, it is no surprise that our Pharisaic chief priest is especially concerned that whoever enters this area to view

(which is a disputed idea), this does not explain why the cleaning is described as happening during the time of the festival. Would not the priests also defile the vessels at other times of the year? Furthermore, the Talmud’s explanation of *m. Hag.* 3:7-8 includes the reference to the fact that the table of shewbread was displayed to the pilgrims (*y. Hag.* 3:8 (79d); *b. Hag.* 26d), strongly implying that the table needed to be cleaned because of inappropriate contact by worshippers.

⁷⁶ *t. Hag.* 3:35; *y. Hag.* 3:8 (79d). For more discussion of the washing of the candelabrum, see Baumgarten, “The Pharisaic-Sadducean Controversies,” 165-166; and Lightstone, “Sadducees Versus Pharisees,” 206-217.

⁷⁷ Dan Barag, “The Showbread Table and the Facade of the Temple on Coins of the Bar-Kochba Revolt,” in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Hillel Geva (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 272-276; see also A. Engle, “Amphorisk of the Second Temple Period,” *PEQ* 109 (1977): 117-122. This latter work describes an Amphorisk that was evidently a souvenir from someone who had attended the Sukkoth festival. It contains an inscription of a vessel which likely supplied the oil to the candelabrum. Furthermore, it contains the inscription of a vine that may be a reference to the golden vine that stood over the entrance to the sanctuary itself (*m. Mid.* 3:8).

⁷⁸ See comments by Asher Grossberg, *Qadmoniot* 21 (1977-78): 81-82 (in Hebrew); the source for this reference was Knohl, “Post-Biblical Sectarianism,” 602, n.4.

⁷⁹ Curiously, in Lev 14:13 the space near the altar in the Court of the Priests where the sin offering is slaughtered is referred to as מקום הקדש; “place of holiness” (see also Lev 10:17). If ἀγνευτηριον refers to the area of the Court of the Priests where the willow branch ceremony was carried out (which is also around the altar), is it possible that מקום הקדש and ἀγνευτηριον are referring to the same place? If so, then ἀγνευτηριον is better rendered “place of holiness” instead of “place of purification.”

the vessels—a privilege normally reserved for priests alone—be in a proper state of purification.

III. CEREMONIAL WASHING AND “THE POOL OF DAVID”

One of the most controversial historical references in P.Oxy. 840 is the description of the λιμνη του δαυειδ in which the Pharisee bathed before entering the temple. Grenfell and Hunt offer this critical remark:

Whether a pool called after David really existed is, however, very doubtful, for the details concerning it are more picturesque than convincing. The subtle distinction of different stairways for the use of the clean and the unclean, though plausible in itself, is in the absence of corroboration more likely to be due to the imagination of the author of the gospel than to have an historical basis.⁸⁰

Other scholars make objections as well. Sulzbach thinks the author has confused the Pool of David with the Pool of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:20.⁸¹ Schürer argues that the author was remembering the “brazen sea” of Solomon’s temple and thus declares, “Die Angaben über die λιμνη του δαυειδ sind also freie Phantasie.”⁸²

Although it is true that there are no explicit historical references to such a pool named after David, there seems to be no reason why this fact alone should occasion any difficulty. After all, our historical knowledge of Palestine has always been incomplete and there must be innumerable structures that possessed names that have not yet been discovered.⁸³ Harnack eloquently argues that this name was probably not invented:

Was sodann “den Teich Davids” betrifft, so gestehe ich, daß es mir wenig glaublich erscheint, daß solch ein Teich einfach erfunden ist. Es wird in Jerusalem manchen gegrabenen Teich, den man zu Reinigungen benutzte, gegeben haben, den wir nicht kennen. Auch lag der Name “Teich Davids” einem Erfinder gewiß nicht nahe. Warum brauchte er aber überhaupt hier

⁸⁰ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 21.

⁸¹ Sulzbach, “Zum Oxyrhynchus-Fragment,” 176.

⁸² Schürer, “Fragment,” 171.

⁸³ E.g., Josephus mentions the otherwise unknown “Gate of the Essenes” (*J.W.* 5.144-146), and Acts 3:2 refers to the otherwise unattested name “The Beautiful Gate.”

etwas zu erfinden, da er einen bestimmten Teich zu erwähnen gar nicht nötig hatte oder auch einen bekannten nennen konnte?⁸⁴

Instead of being overly concerned about the name, the more fundamental question is whether the description, location, and function of this pool fits with what we know of first-century practice. So, let us begin by examining some of these historical questions.

A. THE POOL OF DAVID AS A MIQVEH

With all the speculation over the Pool of David over the last century, it is remarkable that more has not been written about its relationship to Jewish *miqva'ot* (ritual baths; *miqveh* in the singular). In the earlier literature, Blau is one of the few even to mention some of the characteristics of these ritual baths, but does not provide much detail.⁸⁵ Part of the reason for this lack of discussion is because not much was known about these baths until the extensive archaeological excavations of the twentieth century—still yet to come when P.Oxy. 840 was discovered. So, with the benefit of another century of research, let us examine five characteristics of the pool in P.Oxy. 840 and compare them with what we now know about Jewish *miqva'ot*.

1. THE POOL OF DAVID WAS USED FOR CEREMONIAL CLEANING

From the perspective of the Pharisaic chief priest in P.Oxy. 840, his immersion in the Pool of David accomplished the necessary purification for him to enter into the temple. His declaration to Jesus of καθαρευω, “I am clean,” is followed by the phrase ελουσαμην γαρ εν τη λιμνη του Δαυειδ. Thus, we know that the Pool of David was for ceremonial cleaning and not considered to be a bathtub, cistern, swimming pool, or other type of pool in first century Palestine. Likewise, the *miqva'ot*, or immersion pools, used by Palestinian Jews were also designed strictly for ceremonial use. Sanders declares, “They had no conceivable purpose

⁸⁴ Adolf von Harnack, “Ein neues Evangelienbruchstück,” in *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben, Band II* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1911), 239-250, 248.

⁸⁵ Blau, “Das neue Evangelienfragment,” 215.

except religious purification.”⁸⁶ Pools used as cisterns or bathtubs were built separately with distinctive characteristics and were not confused with *miqva'ot*.⁸⁷

2. THE POOL OF DAVID HAD STEPS

Our Pharisaic chief priest describes his immersion activity as involving steps: και δι' ετερας κλειμακος κατελθων δι' ετερας α[ν]ηλων; “And I went down by one staircase and came up by another.” When we examine *miqva'ot* we learn that the existence of steps is their fundamental and most distinctive characteristic.⁸⁸ In fact, according to Ronny Reich, whose Hebrew University of Jerusalem dissertation is the definitive work thus far on *miqva'ot*, virtually all stepped pools are *miqva'ot*.⁸⁹ This fact becomes abundantly clear when they are compared to other facilities which used water, such as bathtubs, pools, and cisterns.⁹⁰ The main reason for the steps was so that a person could lower himself deep enough into the water to be immersed without having to swim or fear drowning.⁹¹ Jews understood passages such as Lev 15:16—which declared that a man must bathe “his whole body”—to

⁸⁶ Sanders, *Judaism*, 225.

⁸⁷ E.P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (London: SCM, 1990), 216-217.

⁸⁸ Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 216-217. Stairs make up a substantial amount of the space of a *miqva'ot* and usually run all the way to the bottom. In contrast, in other pools that may occasionally also have steps (although this is dramatically more rare), the steps tend to take up a low percentage of the space of the pool and do not run all the way to the bottom (*Judaism*, 224).

⁸⁹ Ronny Reich, “Miqva'ot (Jewish Ritual Baths) in the Second Temple Period and the Period of the Mishnah and the Talmud” (Ph.D. Dissertation (in Hebrew), Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1990), English Abstract, 6.

⁹⁰ *Miqva'ot* tend to be distinctive because of a combination of factors: (a) steps that take up a large portion of the space, (b) deep enough to hold a lot of water, usually 2 meters or more, and (c) large surface area, usually 2-3 meters each way. In contrast (a) cisterns have very large capacity for water, but very narrow entrances and rarely steps, (b) bathtubs are very shallow and water is usually poured over a person as they sit in it, and (c) swimming pools have an area so large and open to the sky that they are not confused with *miqva'ot*. However, there are those who dispute Reich's claims that all stepped pools are *miqva'ot*; for more discussion on this point see Benjamin G. Wright, “Jewish Ritual Baths--Interpreting the Digs and the Texts: Some Issues in the Social History of Second Temple Judaism,” in *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present*, ed. Neil A. Silberman and David Small (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1997), 190-214; and Hanan Eshel, “They're not Ritual Baths,” *BAR* 26, no. 4 (2000): 42-45.

⁹¹ Ehud Netzer, “Ancient Ritual Baths (Miqvaot) in Jericho,” in *The Jerusalem Cathedral*, 2, ed. Lee I. Levine (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982), 106-119. Lietzmann, not having access to information about *miqva'ot*, misunderstands the steps here as only providing access to a shallow pool to wash one's feet (“Das neugefundene Evangelienfragment,” 670).

mean that full immersion was necessary in order to eliminate all the impurities and be ceremonially clean.⁹²

3. THE POOL OF DAVID HAD DIVIDED STEPS

One of the most curious features about the description of the Pool of David is that there are *two* sets of steps, one going in and one coming back out. As noted above, Grenfell and Hunt declared that such an idea was “likely to be due to the imagination of the author.”⁹³ Concerning divided steps, Schürer offers this scathing criticism:

Auch für die an sich mögliche, in unserer Erzählung vorausgesetzte Observanz, daß die peinlich Genauen beim Heraufsteigen aus dem Tauchbad eine andere Leiter oder Treppe benützten als beim Hinabsteigen, kann B[üchler] nur auf eine vage Analogie ans den Aboth de R. Nathan hinweisen (S. 343). Seine allgemeine Behauptung, daß die Tradition völlig übereinstimme mit den Details der Erzählung, geht also gänzlich in die Brüche.⁹⁴

Bovon uses the same objection to argue for a later Christian context for the fragment:

I contend that the “Pool of David”... is connected to the ritual of mainstream Christian or Jewish-Christian communities. The descent from one side of the pool and the ascent on the other is reminiscent of the baptismal ceremonies described in the catechetical homilies of Ambrose of Milan or Theodore of Mopseustia.⁹⁵

However, when we examine the characteristics of *miqva'ot* we learn that divided stairways were in fact very common among stepped pools of the second temple period.⁹⁶ Moreover, such divided stairs, according to the archaeological

⁹² Hannah K. Harrington, *The Impurity Systems of Qumran and the Rabbis* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1993), 113-139, esp. 137. Full immersion was also important to the Qumran community: *CD* 10:11-13; and Joseph M. Baumgarten, “The Purification Rituals in DJD 7,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 199-209.

⁹³ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 21.

⁹⁴ Schürer, “Fragment,” 172.

⁹⁵ Bovon, “Fragment,” 721.

⁹⁶ Ronny Reich, “Mishnah, Sheqalim 8:2 and the Archaeological Evidence,” in *Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period: Abraham Schalit Memorial Volume*, ed. A. Oppenheimer, U. Rappaport, and M. Stern (Jerusalem: 1980), 225-256 (Hebrew with English summary); see also Ronny Reich, “A Miqveh at Isawiya near Jerusalem,” *IEJ* 34 (1984): 220-223; Stephen D. Ricks, “Miqvaot: Ritual Immersion Baths in Second Temple (Intertestamental) Jewish History,” *Brigham Young University*

study of Ronny Reich, were particularly common in the area in and around Jerusalem—precisely the setting of our story in P.Oxy. 840.⁹⁷ This archaeological evidence is confirmed by allusions to such divided stairs in the Mishnah:

All utensils found in Jerusalem on the path down to the immersion pool, are assumed to be unclean. If they are found on the path up from the immersion pool, they are assumed to be clean. 'For the way down is different from the way up.'⁹⁸

Again, it is evident that the steps going into the pool were separate from those going out. One can hardly dispute that our fragment is a remarkable confirmation of the type of immersion pools that were used in first-century Jerusalem.

In regard to Bovon's theory, the divided stairways of the *miqva'ot* presents substantial difficulties for his contention that the "Pool of David" refers to later Christian baptistries. Unquestionably, the data are "better" explained on the basis of the fragment's own setting. Furthermore, Bovon's evidence for split stairways in early Christian baptistries is a bit forced. The descriptions of Ambrose and Theodore of Mopsuestia, aside from being fourth century or later, are exceedingly vague and provide no real basis for thinking split stairways were a central component of the baptismal rite.⁹⁹ Although we certainly have archaeological remains of baptistries with split stairs, all of these references are fourth century or

Studies 36 (1996-1997): 277-286. These divided stepped pools were even common in places such as Qumran; see H. Shanks, "The Enigma of Qumran: Four Archaeologists Assess the Site," *BAR* 24, no. 1 (1998): 24-37, 78, esp. 26-27, 32; Stephen J. Pfann, "The Essene Yearly Renewal Ceremony and the Baptism of Repentance," in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Eugene Ulrich (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), 337-352, esp. 349-350; Bryant G. Wood, "To Dip or Sprinkle? The Qumran Cisterns in Perspective," *BASOR* 256 (1984): 53-58; and Lena Cansdale, *Qumran and the Essenes* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1997), 125-136.

⁹⁷ Ronny Reich, "Ritual Baths," *OEANE* 430-431. In particular, Reich found *miqva'ot* with divided stairs at the top of the Eastern slope of Jerusalem and dated them to the first century; see "Four Notes on Jerusalem," *IEJ* 37 (1987): 158-167. Also, Reich has found other such divided stairs in the areas around Jerusalem in "A Miqveh at 'Isawiya near Jerusalem," 220-223.

⁹⁸ *m. Seqal.* 8:2. The correlation between the descriptions in the Mishnah and the archaeological evidence confirms that at least some of the rabbinic writings accurately reflect practices prior to 70 AD (see n. 7 above). Furthermore, the concept of divided entrances and exits is also evident in other historical sources; e.g., *m. Mid.* 2:2, and the Temple Scroll from Qumran. On the latter see, Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), 159-160.

⁹⁹ Any such implication also goes unnoticed by Raymond Burnish, *The Meaning of Baptism* (London: SPCK, 1985) in his comments on Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 37-56, in his comments on Ambrose. See also discussions in André Benoît, *Le baptême dans l'Église ancienne* (Vienna: Lang, 1994). Amazingly, Bovon dismisses references to *m. Seqal.* 8.2 because it does "not mention explicitly two distinct stairs" ("Fragment," 717, n. 45), when Ambrose and Theodore of Mopsuestia do not mention staircases at all.

later, which again presents problems when compared to the probable second-century origin of the story.¹⁰⁰ The original practice of early Christians was to do baptisms in moving water like streams or rivers,¹⁰¹ and the earliest archaeological remains of a baptistry comes from the middle of the third century and does not contain divided steps.¹⁰²

4. THE POOL OF DAVID CONTAINED "NATURAL" OR "RUNNING" WATER

One of the most confusing aspects of our fragment is where Jesus describes the kind of water in which the Pharisee has bathed: *χεομενοις υδασιν*, literally "running water." Since this language seems more fitting for a river than a pool, scholars have struggled to understand the meaning. Preuschen, Büchler, Lagrange, and a host of others, suggest that this language does not refer to the pool directly but to the fact that this water was piped in from aqueducts outside the city. Sulzbach and Riggensbach appeal to scribal errors and argue that different words must have originally been in this place. But, despite these attempts at a solution, the answer is readily found when we examine the kind of water that was needed to fill a *miqveh*.

It is clear that the Pharisees believed a *miqveh* was only valid if it was filled with "living" or "running" water.¹⁰³ This requirement was most likely derived from passages such as Lev 11:36 which mentions that "spring" water is valid for cleansing even if a dead swarming thing falls into it, and Lev 15:13 which states that

¹⁰⁰ J.G. Davies, *The Architectural Setting of Baptism* (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1962), esp. 18-36. See also, A. Khatchatrian, *Les baptistères paléochrétiens* (Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1962); Clement F. Rogers, *Baptism and Christian Archaeology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903); Wolfred Nelson Cote, *The Archaeology of Baptism* (London: Yates and Alexander, 1876); and M. Ben-Pechat, "Baptism and Monasticism in the Holy Land: Archaeological and Literary Evidence," in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land, New Discoveries*, ed. G.C. Bottini (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1990), 501-522.

¹⁰¹ *Didache* 7.1 makes reference to the preference for "running water." See Finn, *Early Christian Baptism*, 7-8.

¹⁰² L. Michael White, "Baptisteries," *OEANE* 271-272; White, *Christian Architecture*, 18-20. The site of Dura-Europos, from the mid-third century, contains a small font with a domed roof over it. Although the baptismal does have a small step beside it, I could find no indication of a second set of steps. Baptisteries with a single set of stairs were quite common in the early stages of their development. In fact, the baptistry in Dura-Europos is not easily identified as such and some have suggested it was a sarcophagus holding the body of a martyred saint (discussion in Davies, *Architectural Setting*, 18-19).

¹⁰³ *m. Miqw.* 1-10; David Kotlar, "Mikveh," *EncJud* 11:1534-1544; Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 215. Furthermore, the tractate of the Mishnah designates that the *miqva'ot* must be filled with a minimum of 40 *se'ah* of water.

a man must bathe in “living” or “running” water (בְּמַיִם חַיִּים).¹⁰⁴ Such a restriction did not mean that the water a person bathed in must actually be moving at the time, rather it simply meant that the water must not be drawn but gathered by itself; i.e., “natural” water.¹⁰⁵ These Pharisaic standards for water are vividly seen in the archaeological excavations of the second temple period. Many of the excavated *miqva'ot* had another unstepped pool beside them called an *otsar* which was linked to the *miqveh* by a small pipe.¹⁰⁶ This *otsar* collected rain or spring water and stored it there. When the *miqveh* had a low water level, or when the water became undesirable, it would be filled with drawn water. However, in order to make the drawn water pure, the pipe connected to the *otsar* was opened and the fresh “running” water would flow in and purify the drawn water in the process.¹⁰⁷

Concerns about drawn or undrawn water turn up regularly in the *Miqva'ot* tractate of the Mishnah and thus reveal that it was very much a Pharisaic and not a priestly concern. In contrast to the Pharisees, certain aristocratic/priestly factions had immersion pools with only drawn water and still considered them to be valid.¹⁰⁸ The debate over drawn vs. undrawn water in first-century Judaism adds even greater credibility to our fragment. If the encounter in P.Oxy. 840 was merely with a chief priest then the fragment would likely be mistaken, because priests saw no need to bathe in “running” water. However, we are told that this chief priest was *also* a Pharisee and it is this fact—which is often ridiculed as impossible or improbable—that makes the text coherent. Jesus felt compelled to mention “running” water in the midst of his rebuke because of the Pharisee’s pious insistence that it was *that* kind of water which made him clean.

¹⁰⁴ Wright, *Jewish Ritual Baths*, 209.

¹⁰⁵ Harrington declares, “The contaminated vessel of Lev. 11:34 was clearly filled by humans, whereas the spring or cistern of 11:36 was provided directly by heaven. This is the reason an immersion pool is invalidated if filled with water drawn from a vessel” (*Impurity Systems*, 134).

¹⁰⁶ Such pools are found in Jerusalem, Jericho, Masada, Sepphoris and elsewhere (Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 218). For details on the finds at Sepphoris, see Eshel, “They’re not Ritual Baths,” 42-45; and Hanan Eshel, “A Note on ‘Miqvaot’ at Sepphoris,” in *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Greco-Roman and Byzantine Periods*, ed. Douglas R. Edwards and C. Thomas McCollough (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 131-133; for Jericho see Netzer, “Ancient Ritual Baths,” 106-119.

¹⁰⁷ *m. Miqw* 6:8; more discussion in Netzer, “Ancient Ritual Baths,” 107.

¹⁰⁸ Harrington, *Impurity Systems*, 136-138. Some aspects of Herod’s baths, for example, may show that not everyone accepted the Pharisaic view; for descriptions of these baths see Ronny Reich, “The Hot Bath-House (balneum), the Miqveh and the Jewish Community in the Second Temple Period,” *JJS* 39 (1988): 102-107; discussion in Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 220-225. Also, in the predominantly aristocratic Upper City Jerusalem few pools are found with an *otsar* (and piped in water was not possible).

5. THE POOL OF DAVID WAS LOCATED IN JERUSALEM NEAR THE TEMPLE

Although P.Oxy. 840 does not tell us exactly where the Pool of David was located, the context of the story requires that it at least be within the city of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the Pharisee's own testimony suggests the pool was very close to the temple, if not within the outer walls. The Pharisee said that after he bathed, *τοτε ηλθον και προσεβλεψα τουτοις τοις αγιοις σκευεσιν*; "then I came and looked upon these holy vessels." The temporal adverb *τοτε* indicates that entering the temple was the next event after the bathing—and the nature of purification suggests that he did not have far to travel before leaving the pool (lest he defile himself and his fresh white clothes on the way).¹⁰⁹ With these considerations in mind, does the historical evidence corroborate the location of the Pool of David?

In Ronny Reich's erudite study of the *miqva'ot*, he discovered over 300 such stepped pools in Israel, with over 150 of these in Jerusalem alone.¹¹⁰ Such a concentration of ritual baths in Jerusalem is expected because they were primarily used to prepare one for entry into the temple—exactly the purpose for which the Pharisee was using the Pool of David in P.Oxy. 840. In addition to the number of *miqva'ot* in Jerusalem, we know the priests and high priests used pools around the temple courts,¹¹¹ we have archaeological records of over 40 *miqva'ot* around the outside of the temple,¹¹² and we even have an instance of two *miqva'ot* on the

¹⁰⁹ At this point one may wonder whether the *τουτοις* ("these") in line 32 means that Jesus must have been within visual site of the pool during his rebuke of the Pharisee. However, there is nothing in the text that demands the pool be visible. Riggensbach agrees, "So kann das allerdings nicht gemeint sein, daß Jesus, etwa sein Wort mit einer Handbewegung begleitend, mittels *τουτοις* auf den vor Augen liegenden Teich Davids hinzeigte. Die Art, wie der Hohepriester von diesem Wasserbecken spricht macht es unwahrscheinlich, daß sich dasselbe im Gesichtskreis der Stelle befindet, wo das Gespräch vor sich geht" (*Das Wort Jesu*, 142).

¹¹⁰ Reich, *Miqva'ot (Jewish Ritual Baths) in the Second Temple Period*, English Abstract, 6. These many pools were supplied by the vast array of aqueducts that supplied Jerusalem with water during the second temple period; for details see A. Mazar, "The Aqueducts of Jerusalem," in *Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Yigael Yadin (London: Yale University Press, 1976), 79-84; and R. Amiran, "The Water Supply of Israelite Jerusalem," in *Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Yigael Yadin (London: Yale University Press, 1976), 75-78.

¹¹¹ There were numerous washing areas known to us: the Parvah Chamber contained a pool on its roof (*m. Mid.* 5:3), and there was a pool above the Water Gate (*m. Mid.* 1:4), both of which were used for the needs of the High Priest. The northwest corner of the Chamber of the Hearth contained an immersion bath (*m. Mid.* 1:6), but it was an underground cavern reserved for the priests. There was also a Rinsing Chamber (*m. Mid.* 5:3) but it was used for rinsing animal parts.

¹¹² These are located near the monumental stairways that led to the Temple Mount; see Benjamin Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 146, 210-212; Ricks, "Miqvaot," 277-286; Benjamin Mazar, "Herodian Jerusalem in Light of the Excavations South and South-West of the Temple Mount," *IEJ* 28 (1978): 230-237. Mazar comments on some baths near

Temple Mount itself.¹¹³ This last archaeological find is worthy of further discussion. These two baths are located at the end of the tunnel that goes from the western Hulda gate (the double gate) up to the Temple Mount.¹¹⁴ Thus, they were located just outside the inner walls (the *soreg*), symmetrically situated on either side of the tunnel's exit. Jacobson comments: "In our scheme, the two *mikva'ot* would have provided the last opportunity for worshippers to cleanse themselves ritually before entering the consecrated ground."¹¹⁵

In summary, there seems to be little doubt that the Pool of David described in P.Oxy. 840 was a Jewish ritual bath, or *miqveh*. Indeed, what we know about the structure and function of *miqva'ot* fits remarkably well with the description provided in our fragment, and although we are not familiar with the name "Pool of David" there are numerous baths which could have possessed such a name near or on the Temple Mount. In light of these considerations, we must part ways with the skeptical conclusions of Grenfell and Hunt, Bovon, Schürer, and other scholars who have doubted the integrity of the fragment on these grounds.

B. DOGS AND PIGS AND THE POOL OF DAVID

In addition to the description and name of the Pool of David, lines 33-34 have caused much confusion because they describe the water as a place, *εν οίς κυνες και χοιροι βεβληνται νυκτος και ημερας*; "in which dogs and pigs lie night and day."¹¹⁶ Grenfell and Hunt declare the such a description was "invented for the sake of rhetorical effect, for that a high priest washed himself in a pool of the character described in the fragment is incredible."¹¹⁷

Aside from proposed scribal errors, two primary attempts have been made to solve this problem. First, and most prominent, is the idea of Büchler, Preuschen, Lagrange, and others, that the text is referring to dogs and pigs being thrown in (or

the triple gate: "[the structure] is characterized by its cisterns and pools, and it may well have served as a ritual bath complex for those coming to the Temple, prior to their entry into the sacred enclosure" (236).

¹¹³ Ronny Reich, "Two Possible *Miqwa'ot* on the Temple Mount," *IEJ* 39 (1989): 63-65.

¹¹⁴ For an excellent diagram see, David Jacobson, "Sacred Geometry: Unlocking the Secret of the Temple Mount, Part 2," *BAR* 25, no. 5 (1999): 54-63, 74, esp. 56.

¹¹⁵ Jacobson, "Sacred Geometry," 61.

¹¹⁶ I explain and defend the details of my English translation above in chapter 2.

¹¹⁷ Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, 12.

simply bathing in) various parts of the aqueducts as the water traveled from the hillsides to Jerusalem. This proposal fits with their idea that “running water” is referring to these very aqueducts. Second, Jeremias, Bovon and Miller in more recent studies have argued for the figurative use of “dogs and pigs,” suggesting they mean sinners or evil-doers.¹¹⁸ In order to deal with each of these suggestions, and to offer my own opinion, it is first necessary that we understand the structure of this text.

Although the text of P.Oxy. 840 is often criticized as being awkward and unorganized, the speech of Jesus in lines 32-41 has quite a defined literary structure. Jesus compares the Pharisee and his behavior to two other groups: (a) dogs and pigs, and (b) harlots and flute-girls, each of which contain two sub-members. Furthermore, in each comparison, Jesus follows the same format to make his point:

- 1) Jesus mentions an action of the Pharisee: Washes in “running” water (l. 32-33)
- 2) Jesus compares that action to an unclean group that does the same thing: Dogs and Pigs wash in “running” water (l. 33-34)
- 3) Jesus mentions an action of the Pharisee: Washes and wipes the outer skin (l. 34-35)
- 4) Jesus compares that action to an unclean group that does the same thing: Harlots and flute-girls wash and wipe the outer skin (l. 36-41)

The fact that both comparisons use the same literary structure suggests that Jesus is using both comparisons to make the *same* theological point, namely that there are other groups that perform the same actions of the Pharisee and yet they are obviously not “clean” as a result. Thus, the overall thrust of Jesus’ argument is that *washing the outside does not clean the inside*, which, incidentally, matches quite well with the synoptic teachings of Jesus (Matt 15:1-20, 23:25-28; Mark 7:1-23; Luke 11:39).

With this in mind, we can begin to understand the mention of the dogs and the pigs. A point often overlooked, except by Riggenbach,¹¹⁹ is that Jesus does not actually say that these dogs and pigs were lying in the Pool of David, rather he

¹¹⁸ Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 56; Bovon, “Fragment,” 717; Robert J. Miller, ed. *The Complete Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992), 415.

¹¹⁹ Riggenbach, “Das Wort Jesu,” 143. This observation is also made by Lietzmann, “Das neugefundene Evangelienfragment,” 671.

simply said that they also lie in “running” waters like the Pharisee. Above we concluded that “running” waters were actually better understood as “natural” waters, based on the Pharisaical regulations for *miqva'ot*. Thus, I contend that Jesus is not suggesting that these dogs and pigs were in the same pool as the Pharisee—any more than the harlots and flute-girls were in the same pool—rather that they were washing in the same *kind* of water as the Pharisee, namely “natural” (or undrawn) water. This matches what is said about the harlots and flute-girls: although *both* the Pharisee and the harlots/flute-girls wash the outer skin, Jesus is not suggesting that they do it in the same *location*. Consequently, the sense of lines 32-34 is simply as follows: “You wash in these natural waters, (the same kind) in which dogs and pigs routinely wash.”¹²⁰

Unfortunately, the aqueduct theory of Büchler, Preuschen, and Lagrange does not allow for this meaning of “running” water and therefore reaches a different conclusion. On their scheme, Jesus mentions the dogs and pigs to the Pharisee to demonstrate that he can never really be sure that the water he is bathing in is actually pure because he does not know what happened to it during its journey to the temple. However true this may be, it does not fit with the overall structure of Jesus’ argument as we showed above. Jesus is not claiming the Pharisee is unclean simply because the water is contaminated—as if non-contaminated water would make him clean—rather, the Pharisee is unclean because earthly water, no matter how pure, can never change the character of a person. In other words, the problem, according to the Jesus of P.Oxy. 840, is not just that the water is *sometimes* impure without the Pharisee knowing (as when dogs and pigs bathe in it); rather the problem is that water is *never* able to cleanse a person in the way he really needs to be cleansed: from the inside out. Furthermore, the aqueduct explanation runs into another problem, which Swete points out: “It is difficult to suppose that any public reservoir near Jerusalem would be defiled in this way.”¹²¹ Although one could conceive of dogs and pigs in the water source up near Galilee, it hardly seems as probable so near Jerusalem.

¹²⁰ Lietzmann, like Rigggenbach, captures the sense well when he refers to the water of the dogs and pigs as “irdischen Wasser” (“Das neugefundene Evangelienfragment,” 671).

¹²¹ Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, 8.

Jeremias, Bovon, and Miller's suggestion that dogs and pigs are an allegorical reference to wicked men would still be a possible understanding of the text.¹²² Perhaps Jesus could be making the point that wicked men also wash in "natural" water and still remain wicked men. However, this option seems to have some difficulty accounting for the verb βεβληνται, "lie."¹²³ Although one could certainly conceive of animals performing such an action, it is a peculiar reference if humans are in view. Furthermore, one could readily see how dogs and pigs in the wild would bathe themselves in "natural" water; after all, that is the only water that is available to them. However, if "sinners" is meant here then we have a difficulty. Pagans and sinners would have not been concerned about Pharisaical prohibitions against drawn water and would likely bathe in such water as a common practice. Although wicked men may occasionally bathe in a stream from time to time (which could be construed as "natural" water) this is hardly often enough to explain the adverbial phrase "night and day." This phrase would be more understandable if literal dogs and pigs were meant because this is the *only* kind of water that would be available on a daily basis. In the end, therefore, it seems more natural to construe these "dogs and pigs" as literal animals.

IV. RESTRICTIONS ON ENTERING THE TEMPLE

The last category of historical objections leveled against P.Oxy. 840 concerns the restrictions it places on those who may enter the temple. In short, our fragment suggests that all worshippers must perform the following acts: (a) Completely immerse in a bath (whether previously "clean" or not), (b) dress in white garments, and (c) wash their feet. These three claims have drawn the heaviest fire from critics of the fragment. Schürer declares,

Aber es war keineswegs gefordert, daß sie unter allen Umständen vor Betreten des Vorhofes ein rituelles Tauchbad nehmen und dann noch die Füße waschen sollten. . . Also was Vorschrift für die Priester war, wird hier für alle Israeliten gefordert.¹²⁴

¹²² 2 Pet 2:2; Matt 7:6; Rev 22:15; Ignatius, *Eph.* 7.1.

¹²³ For an explanation of the tense of this verb and its English translation, see chapter 2 above.

¹²⁴ Schürer, "Fragment," 171.

Undoubtedly, these difficulties prove to be the most troublesome for P.Oxy. 840. There is no explicit historical evidence for these practices, and they are not mentioned in the Old Testament purity texts. Thus, if they were actually practiced, then they would have been common custom and the result of the general expansion and elaboration of the ceremonial laws of the day.

A. IMMERSION BEFORE ENTERING THE TEMPLE

Many dispute the accuracy of P.Oxy. 840 because it demands that all Israelites, and not the priests only, immerse before entering the temple. It was generally agreed that priests must bathe before each entrance into the temple,¹²⁵ whereas the non-priest, if he is in a purified state (usually attained by immersion and the setting of the sun the day before), does not need to immerse again. Although it is certainly true that we have no historical reference that directly mentions immersion for non-priests, there are good reasons to think that such a custom may have been probable during the period of the Herodian temple. As Sanders notes, the general expansion and elaboration of the ceremonial laws of the day was a common occurrence: “there was also a distinct tendency [within Judaism] to invent new purifications or to extend biblical laws beyond their original sphere.”¹²⁶ G. Alon makes a similar observation, “Custom removed the application of the laws of purity from the narrow sphere to which the established Halakha had confined them— Temple, consecrated objects and priests—and expanded it in many new ways and aspects.”¹²⁷

There are numerous examples of the expansion of purity laws, however we want to focus upon those expansions which deal with immersion (whether directly or indirectly). Although bathing (by immersion) was required for a number of Levitical impurities,¹²⁸ there are numerous instances where immersion was applied in new ways: (a) *Immersion for women*. In the second temple period women, like

¹²⁵ *Testament of Levi* 9:11; *Jubilees* 21:16; *m. Tamid*. 1:2; Lev 8:6, 16:4.

¹²⁶ Sanders, *Judaism*, 230.

¹²⁷ Gedaliah Alon, *Jews, Judaism, and the Classical World* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1977), 230.

¹²⁸ E.g., the leper (Lev 14:8-9); the male discharge (Lev 15:13); the corpse-contaminated person (Num 19); emission of semen (Lev 15:16); eating a dead animal (Lev 17:15); those who have contact with a man who has discharge or his furniture (Lev 15:5-8, 11-12); those who have contact with a menstruant or her furniture (Lev 15:21-22).

men, were required to immerse despite the fact that Leviticus prescribes only a passing of time and perhaps the presentation of an offering (Lev 12:1-8, 15:19-28), but not a bath.¹²⁹ (b) *Immersion before prayer*. Although there is no biblical prohibition against praying in an unclean state, some Jews held that one must immerse ahead of time in case he had suffered some pollution.¹³⁰ (c) *Immersion before reciting or reading the Torah*. Tradition developed that if one was in a state of uncleanness one was required to immerse, but did not have to wait until evening, in order to read or recite the Torah.¹³¹ (d) *Immersion before eating*. Not only did the Pharisees (and likely others) during the second temple period immerse their hands prior to meals,¹³² but there are reasons to think the bodily immersion was also required prior to eating.¹³³ (e) *Immersion for those who touch a carcass*. Although the O.T. prescribes washing for those who eat or carry a carcass (Lev 11:39-40,

¹²⁹ *m. Miqw.* 8:1-5. Sanders refers to this as “one of the principle modifications of the purity laws” (*Judaism*, 220), and attributes this change to the advent of the Court of the Women during the Herodian period. Harrington disagrees and argues that women had always bathed, but she arrives at this from inference and still admits that the Levitical law does not directly prescribe such a thing (*Impurity Systems*, 114-115, 124-125).

¹³⁰ *t. Yad.* 2:20; *y. Yoma.* 3:3 (40b) declares, “He subject to flux...or a menstruant...must immerse themselves [before they say the Prayer].” English translations of the Jerusalem Talmud, unless otherwise noted, are taken from Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*, 35 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982-1994). Judith 12:7-8 tells of the heroine who goes outside the camp to bathe and then pray; see discussion in Wright, “Ritual Baths,” 208. 2 Macc 12:38 speaks of “customary” immersion before the Sabbath, which could be construed as a time of prayer (see *m. Besah.* 2.2). See also Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World*, 196.

¹³¹ *m. Ber.* 3:4-6; *Ant.* 12.106; *Arist.* 305-306 (hands only). Full discussion in Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World*, 191-196.

¹³² *Mk* 7:3-4; John C. Poirier, “Why Did the Pharisees Wash their Hands?,” *JJS* 47 (1996): 217-233. Ironically, the special handling of priest’s food was itself an addition to the known laws about food purity. Although priestly food must be *consumed* in a state of purity (Lev 10:14; Num 18:11), nowhere is there an indication that it must be *handled* in purity. For more discussion, see Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 134-151. There is also evidence for handwashing among diaspora Jews; see *Arist.* 305-306, and *Sib. Or.* 3:591-593.

¹³³ *m. Par.* 11:4-5; *m. Hag.* 2:5-7. There is general agreement that the Pharisees ate their meals in a state of Levitical purity and thus would have needed to immerse themselves. For more, see Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees before 70*, 3:288; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 257-267; Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World*, 193, 205-223; Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 94-95. See also 4Q274 and how it gives permission to the unclean to eat after bathing (Joseph M. Baumgarten, “Zab Impurity in Qumran and Rabbinic Law,” *JJS* 45 (1994): 273-277). Closely connected with the need to immerse before eating is the status of the *Tebul Yom*—a person who has bathed but not yet waited until evening (*m. Kelim.* 1:5; *m. T. Yom.* 1-4). Although the O.T. clearly requires sundown for a person to be clean (Lev 11:24,27,28,39, 40; 15:5-7,18,27,32), Pharisees argued that a person was “clean” (to some degree) before sundown. A substantial number of scholars argue that this category derived from the practical need a person would have to eat before sundown; thus immersion before eating. For more on *Tebul Yom*, see Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall of the Judean State*, 180; Finkelstein, *Pharisees*, 661-692; Baumgarten, “Pharisaic-Sadducean Controversies,” 157-161; Jacob Milgrom, “Studies in the Temple Scroll,” *JBL* 97 (1978): 512-518; Baumgarten, “The Purification Rituals in DJD 7,” 199-209.

17:15), there is no washing prescribed for those who merely touch it. However, it is evident that such immersion was practiced regularly, especially as it affected food.¹³⁴

It is evident from these examples that the laws of purity not only expanded, but became progressively more strict for the common Israelite. What can account for this shift? Although this question is much debated, Alon suggests that the “basic aim” of the expansion of the laws of cleanness is “the application of the precept of cleanness to all Israel and the extension of the priestly sanctity to the entire nation.”¹³⁵ In other words, these changes are designed to apply priestly rules to the laity. Neusner, at least in regard to the food practices of the Pharisees, concurs:

But the Pharisees held that even outside of the Temple, in one’s own home, the laws of ritual purity were to be followed in the only circumstances in which they might apply, namely, at the table. Therefore, one must eat secular food (ordinary, every day meals) in a state of ritual purity *as if one were a Temple priest*. The Pharisees thus arrogated to themselves—and to all Jews equally—the status of the Temple priests, and *performed actions restricted to priests* on account of that status. The table of every Jew in his home was seen as being like the table of the Lord in the Jerusalem Temple. The commandment, ‘You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy people’, was taken literally: Everyone is a priest, everyone stands in the same relationship to God, and *everyone must keep the priestly laws*.¹³⁶

Jeremias agrees when he says the Pharisees “sought to raise to the level of a general norm the practice of purity laws even among non priestly folk, those laws which only need be enforced for priests.”¹³⁷ Apparently, then, at least among some Jews there was a tendency to imitate the purity laws of the priesthood.

Assuming Neusner, Alon, and Jeremias are correct, is it possible that the laws of immersion applying to priests would have been imitated naturally by some lay Israelites? In other words, if some Jews—concerned they had unknowingly

¹³⁴ *m. Tehar.* 5:4; *m. Miqw.* 10:8. Both Harrington and Sanders agree that the Mishnah prescribes bathing for merely touching a carcass, however Sanders believes it was an innovation (*Jewish Law*, 140-142) whereas Harrington does not (*Impurity Systems*, 116-118).

¹³⁵ Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World*, 191.

¹³⁶ Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), 83, emphasis mine. Those disagreeing with Neusner’s and Alon’s assessment include, Ellis Rivkin, *A Hidden Revolution* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978); Poirier, “Why Did the Pharisees Wash their Hands?,” 217-233; Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 166-184; for more detail on the *haberim* see Jacob Neusner, “The Fellowship (*Haberim*) in the Second Jewish Commonwealth,” *HTR* 53 (1960): 125-142.

¹³⁷ Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 257.

acquired an impurity—were concerned to immerse before prayer or Torah reading, would it not be reasonable to also immerse prior to entry into the temple itself? This suggestion fits well with what we learned about the viewing of the vessels during the festival times. If during the festival Pharisees were concerned to place priests and laity on the same level, perhaps they also placed them on the same level concerning the requirements of immersion. The possibility that lay Israelites immersed before entry into the temple finds additional support in the following considerations:

- 1) The express words of *m. Yom. 3:3* suggest that everyone had to immerse prior to entry into the temple: “A person does not enter the courtyard for the service, even if he is clean, unless he immerses.” Although some scholars have argued that this passage refers only to the priests, the comments of the Talmud on this text suggest that it included all worshippers: “It is not the end of the matter that he comes for the service. But even if he is *not there for the service*, he still must immerse.”¹³⁸ Thus, it seems even the non-priest was required to bathe before entering the temple. This understanding is confirmed by further comments in the Talmud (*b. Yoma 30b*) where a leper is required to immerse before entry into the temple even if he had immersed the day before. Narkiss understands the texts this way: “Before a non-priest entered the Court he ritually immersed himself even if he was levitically clean (*TJ, YOMA 3:3, 40b*).”¹³⁹
- 2) The location and frequency of *miqva’ot* seem to suggest that the common Israelite immersed more often than O.T. law would require. In regard to the location of bathing facilities, Donald Binder declares, “It is likely that total immersion was the norm for everyone prior to entry [to the temple], as suggested by the large number of pools surrounding the temple mount.”¹⁴⁰ Safrai concurs, “Before an Israelite entered the Temple court he bathed in water; this was required even if he was clean, and he could do so in one of the many ritual baths

¹³⁸ *y. Yoma. 3:3 (40b)*. Thomas Kazen, *Jesus and the Purity Halakhah. Was Jesus Indifferent to Purity?* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 2002), declares, “While the context [of *m. Yoma. 3.3*] is one of priestly service, the saying seems to be general, referring to any visitor in the court assigned for worship” (254, n.251).

¹³⁹ Narkiss, “Temple: Ritual,” 972. A number of other modern scholars agree with Narkiss’ understanding of these texts, including Cecil Roth, “Purity and Impurity,” *EncJud 13:1405-1414*, esp. 1412; and Safrai, “The Temple and the Divine Service,” 296.

¹⁴⁰ Donald D. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 392-393.

to be found in the Temple courts or in front of the gates.”¹⁴¹ Furthermore, Ronny Reich’s discovery of two *miqva’ot* on the Temple Mount itself¹⁴²—at the end of the tunnel from the western Hulda gate (double gate)—brings up a critical question: What purpose would these immersion pools have served if the lay Israelite was not required to immerse before entry into the temple? If a Jew in Jerusalem used it simply to attain standard Levitical cleanness, then he would have to walk all the way from his home, through the double gate, through the underground tunnel to the mount itself, bathe in the *miqveh*, and then turn around and go back to his home and await evening. Of course, such an idea is ridiculous. There were plenty of other *miqva’ot* available in Jerusalem, outside the temple, that would have more conveniently met his need. Instead, these pools make sense only if the pilgrims, on their way to the temple, likely in a clean state already, ritually immersed before entering.¹⁴³

In addition to location of *miqva’ot*, their abundance is consistent with the aforementioned expansion of immersion and other purity laws. As noted above, Reich’s archaeological investigations uncovered over 300 of these stepped pools in Palestine.¹⁴⁴ He argues that the lack of pools dating to the time of the first temple indicates that there was less concern for ritual purity during this time and that concern for ritual purity had therefore greatly increased by the time of the second temple.¹⁴⁵ This fact is consistent with the above description of the expanding purity laws which suggest that the average Israelite would immerse for more than just explicit O.T. reasons; e.g., for meals, prayer, reading of the Torah, or contact with a carcass.

¹⁴¹ Safrai, “The Temple and the Divine Service,” 296; and Shmuel Safrai, *Die Wallfahrt im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 177.

¹⁴² Reich, “Two Possible *Miqva’ot*,” 63-65.

¹⁴³ One may suggest that these pools were used only by priests, however its difficult to imagine priests bathing in the Court of the Gentiles where they would be in view of all the people and subject to their defilements. As noted above, there were a number of pools within the walls around the Court of the Priests which would have been sufficient for their needs. Furthermore, the location of the pools at the end of the western Hulda gate suggests it was to be used by the common Israelite entering the temple by that way.

¹⁴⁴ Reich, *Miqva’ot (Jewish Ritual Baths) in the Second Temple Period*, English Abstract, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Reich, *Miqva’ot (Jewish Ritual Baths) in the Second Temple Period*, English Abstract, 7. Furthermore, Sanders argues that the presence of *miqva’ot* outside the temple during this time suggests that the average household was becoming more and more concerned with domestic impurities (menstruation, semen-impurity) and more frequently engaging in immersion (*Jewish Law*, 257).

- 3) Josephus tells of the confrontation between Ananus, who held the outer court of the temple, and the zealots, who held the inner court of the temple. He notes that “Ananus thought it sinful to lead the people into the inner court without precedent purification (προηγνευκώς).”¹⁴⁶ Having learned that Ananus planned to enter the inner court under the pretense of worship, John the Zealot warned his friends that “[Ananus] has announced a purification (ἀγνείαν) for tomorrow, in order that his followers may obtain admission here [to the inner court]” (*J.W.* 4.218). The term ἀγνείαν can hardly mean levitical purity requiring sunset because Ananus planned to have his followers purified on the same day that they entered the temple. When we examine the use of ἀγνείαν elsewhere in Josephus we see that it normally refers to washing with water. In *J.W.* 2.129, he describes the Essenes and clearly equates ἀγνείαν with bathing: “[The Essenes] bathe their bodies in cold water. After this purification (ἀγνείαν), they assemble in a private apartment.” When referring to John the Baptist, Josephus describes his water immersion as ἐφ’ ἀγνεία τοῦ σώματος, again using the same word.¹⁴⁷ If we consider the closely related verb form, ἀγνίζω, it is clear that Josephus also uses this word to refer to washing: “[Moses] purified (ἠγνίζε) it with the waters of perennial springs.”¹⁴⁸ So, in light of the way ἀγνεία and ἀγνίζω are used elsewhere in Josephus, there are considerable reasons to think *J.W.* 4.218 refers to immersion immediately before entrance into the temple.
- 4) There is strong evidence that Jews ritually immersed prior to entry into Palestinian synagogues in the first century period. Archaeological evidence of *miqva’ot* just outside the entrances to these synagogues makes this a likely possibility. Binder comments:

The discovery of *mikvaoth* throughout Palestine presents evidence that many Jews took purity laws seriously not only during festivals in Jerusalem, but also at other times. This particularly seems to have been the case in connection with the synagogues of our period, since *mikvaoth* have been routinely found nearby, suggesting that Jews immersed themselves before entry into the synagogues.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ *J.W.* 4.205. Büchler notes this same reference in Josephus (“Fragment,” 332-334).

¹⁴⁷ *Ant.* 18.117.

¹⁴⁸ *Ant.* 3.258. This is the same verb used in the LXX of Lev 8:21: “So the Levites purified (ἠγνίσαντο) and washed their clothes.”

¹⁴⁹ Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 394. On *miqva’ot* and synagogues see also Hanswulf Bloedhorn and Gil Hüttenmeister, “The Synagogue,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. William

Binder argues that this practice of the synagogue is likely reflective of the practice of the Jerusalem temple itself since the synagogue was viewed as an extension of the temple in the lives of worshippers who resided outside of Jerusalem.¹⁵⁰ Incidentally, these synagogues are yet another example of the general expansion of purity laws in second-temple Judaism.

The combination of these considerations suggests that there was a strong possibility, if not probability, that common custom required both non-priests and priests to immerse immediately before entrance into the temple.

B. DRESSING IN WHITE GARMENTS

In addition to requiring immersion for the non-priest, our fragment also requires that they change clothes, presumably into white garments (λευκά ενδύματα).¹⁵¹ Although historical evidence for such a practice is limited, the aforementioned general expansion of purity laws and the application of priestly requirements to the laity suggest that it may have been common custom for people to change clothes prior to entering the temple.¹⁵² After all, impurities can be transmitted by contact with clothing, as is evident by the extensive commands that the clothing of an unclean person be washed.¹⁵³ Furthermore, it seems that Jews may have considered the clothing of the ordinary Israelite to be always in a state of impurity.¹⁵⁴ Bickerman declares,

Horbury, W.D. Davies, and John Sturdy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 267-297, esp. 281.

¹⁵⁰ Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 392-393, 477-493. For further argumentation about synagogues reflecting the temple see Steven Fine, *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue During the Greco-Roman Period* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), esp. 25-33; and Shaye J.D. Cohen, "The Temple and the Synagogue," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. William Horbury, W.D. Davies, and John Sturdy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3:298-325.

¹⁵¹ I say "presumably" here because the fragment only mentions white clothing for the priest and simply a change of clothes (with no specified color) for Jesus and his disciples. Although it is natural to assume that everyone's clothes must be white, it is not explicitly stated in the text itself.

¹⁵² Priestly clothing is specifically described in Ex 28:40-42; 39:27-29; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.83; *Arist. 87; Ant.* 3.152-158.

¹⁵³ Lev 11:25,28,40; 13:6,34; 14:8,9,47; 15:5-27; 17:15.

¹⁵⁴ *m. Hag.* 2:7; see discussion in Sanders, *Judaism*, 229.

So that the priests and pilgrims might not be contaminated, everyone in Jerusalem was obliged to follow the rules of Levitical purity. In the Roman period the clothes of a Pharisee, who certainly may be supposed to have been a ritualist, were considered capable of contaminating a priest preparing to partake of an offering.¹⁵⁵

In light of such concerns, it would be natural to change into fresh garments prior to entering the temple so that a worshipper would not re-contaminate himself after bathing (by putting on the same unclean clothes) or contaminate other clean worshippers (or priests) he may contact.¹⁵⁶

Josephus provides a number of references that may indicate changing into white clothes was more common than previously thought. Archelaus, after a funeral, is described as one who “put on a white garment and went up to the temple.”¹⁵⁷ Similarly, Josephus says that King David, after the death of his son, “arose up and washed himself and took a white garment and came into the tabernacle of God.”¹⁵⁸ Curiously, the O.T. account of this story (2 Sam 12:20) does not mention that David’s clothing was white; that detail was added by Josephus. Perhaps this indicates that by the time of Josephus, it was customary to wear white before entering the temple and consequently he inserted that bit of detail into the story. The connection between proper clothes and the temple is supported by Eusebius as he describes James the brother of Jesus: “He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary, for he did not wear wool but linen.”¹⁵⁹ According to Josephus, Simon tried to frighten the Romans by putting on “white tunics” and standing in the place of the temple.¹⁶⁰ Although Simon’s intentions are not entirely clear, it is another example of a change of clothes being associated with the temple. Although these passages do not say white garments were required for all worshippers, it

¹⁵⁵ Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 135. Bickerman adds later: “No Jew was permitted to penetrate the altar court of the temple except after a ceremonial ablution” (135).

¹⁵⁶ Saul Lieberman, “Palestine in the 3rd and 4th Centuries,” *JQR* 37 (1946): 31-54, declares: “Although there is no specific law which prohibits admission to the Temple in filthy clothes, it is obvious from the Mishnah that such dress (even in the premises of the Temple) would be considered a mark of disrespect towards the Temple” (45-46, n. 33).

¹⁵⁷ *Ant.* 2.1.

¹⁵⁸ *Ant.* 7.156. Although both this text and the one concerning Archelaus speak of a funeral, there is no reason to think that the change of clothes is only due to the funeral and not due to the entrance into the temple. It would be customary to engage in an act of worship after the death of a loved one and apparently a change into white clothes was needed for that worship.

¹⁵⁹ *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.

¹⁶⁰ *J.W.* 7.29

suggests that at least some followed this custom. Narkiss agrees that before entering the temple “many people made a point of dressing themselves in white.”¹⁶¹ Safrai adds, “It appears to have been the custom to enter the Temple only in white garments, for this was used as indicating modesty and piety.”¹⁶²

In addition, there are other general references to non-priests dressing in white. The high priest Jaddus, following a dream, had everyone in Jerusalem dress in white garments.¹⁶³ On the fifteenth day of Ab and the Day of Atonement, it was customary that “Jerusalemite girls go out in borrowed white dresses.”¹⁶⁴ Speaking of the nearness of God to Israel, the Talmud declares that Israelites, in contrast to other nations, “wear white and wrap themselves in white”¹⁶⁵ and Ecclesiastes 9:8 tells Israelites to “always be clothed in white.”

In light of these many references, it is not hard to imagine that if the common Israelite bathed before entering the temple, then a change of clothes would have been a natural custom to follow. Indeed, such an act, although not necessarily required, would have been a convincing demonstration to the temple authorities that a person was committed to maintaining ritual purity.

C. THE ESSENES

Now that a reasonable foundation has been established for believing some Israelites may have washed and dressed in white prior to entry to the temple, we find that our suspicions are confirmed when we examine the practice of the Essenes.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Narkiss, “Temple: Ritual,” 972.

¹⁶² Safrai, “The Temple and the Divine Service,” 296; Safrai, *Die Wallfahrt im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels*, 177-178.

¹⁶³ *Ant.* 11.327.

¹⁶⁴ *m. Taan.* 4:8

¹⁶⁵ *y. Ros. Has.* 1:3 (57b).

¹⁶⁶ For the sake of this discussion I will follow the scholarly majority that the Qumran community and the Essenes are one in the same; or at least that the Qumran community is a stricter version of the larger Essene population. See James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), xxxii-xxxv. However, not all agree with the consensus; e.g., G. Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Cansdale, *Qumran and the Essenes*; Martin Goodman, “A Note on the Qumran Sectarians, the Essenes and Josephus,” *JJS* 46 (1995): 160-166; and G. Ory, *A la recherche des Essènes: Essai Critique* (Paris: Cercle Ernest-Renan, 1975). Since I accept the scholarly majority, I will refer to Qumran writings as generally reflective of Essene beliefs; for more on the relationship and agreement between Qumran texts and Josephus see Todd S. Beall, *Josephus’ Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); John Strugnell, “Flavius Josephus and the Essenes:

Remarkably, we learn that prior to entering their “temple-like” ceremonies, every member would fully immerse and change into white garments. Let us examine these practices in more detail.

- a) Every day the Essenes observed a sacred midday prayer and meal in a special building “as if it was a holy temple.”¹⁶⁷ There is general agreement that the Essenes viewed their meeting place as having the status of the Jerusalem temple itself:¹⁶⁸ the meeting was presided over by a priest,¹⁶⁹ it reflected temple-like liturgy,¹⁷⁰ only unblemished members were allowed,¹⁷¹ and the food was viewed as “first-fruits” given as a priestly tithe.¹⁷²
- b) Immediately before entering this building they put on linen loincloths and “wash all over with cold water.”¹⁷³ In light of the number of *miqva’ot* excavated at Qumran (see above), there is no doubt that the Essenes completely immersed

Anitquities XVIII.18-22,” *JBL* 77 (1958): 106-115; and Morton Smith, “The Description of the Essenes in Josephus and the Philosophumena,” *HUCA* 29 (1958): 273-313.

¹⁶⁷ *J.W.* 2.129. Translation by, G.A. Williamson, ed. *Josephus: The Jewish War* (London: Penguin, 1981). For further discussion of the sacred meal see, Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 26-40; Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 10-15; Matthew Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1961), 91-115; and Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Communal Meals at Qumran,” *RQ* 10 (1979-81): 45-56.

¹⁶⁸ Jacob Neusner, “History and Purity in First-Century Judaism,” *HR* 18 (1978-1979): 1-17, concurs with this understanding when he declares the meals of the Essenes “replicated the holiness of the Temple” (4). Annette Steudel, “The Houses of Prostration CD XI, 21-XII,1--Duplicates of the Temple,” *RQ* 16 (1993-1995): 49-66, also agrees, declaring that the meeting places of the Essenes were “as holy as the Jerusalem Temple” (56).

¹⁶⁹ *J.W.* 2.131; 1QS 6.2-5.

¹⁷⁰ *J.W.* 2.131; 1QS 6.3-8; The meals exhibit a very ordered and hierarchical structure with prayers offered at particular times. 1QS 2.2-9 gives a detailed order of blessings and curses during the Covenant Ceremony that clearly reflects the Aaronite blessing in Num 6:24-26.

¹⁷¹ 1QSa 2.3-10: “No man smitten with any human uncleanness shall enter the assembly of God... No man smitten in his flesh or paralyzed in his feet or hands, or lame, or blind, or deaf, or dumb, or smitten in his flesh with a visible blemish.” These are obviously the same requirements made of *priests* in Lev 21:17-24. See also 1QM 7.4-6; 4QCD^b; 11QT 45.12-14; see fuller discussion in Michael Knibb, *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 152-153; Beall, *Josephus’ Description of the Essenes*, 58; and James D.G. Dunn, “Jesus, Table-Fellowship, and Qumran,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Double Day, 1992), 254-272.

¹⁷² 1QS 6.2-5. This meal refers to the “firstfruits of the bread” which was given to the priests (Num 15:19-21; 18:12; Deut 18:4). See also 1QSa 2:17-21: “[When] they shall gather for the common [tab]le, to eat and [to drink] new wine...let no man extend his hand over the *firstfruits of bread* and wine before the Priest” (emphasis mine).

¹⁷³ *J.W.* 2.129. Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law*, 44. The requirement for washing prior to entering worship is paralleled in CD 11.21-22: “No man entering the house of worship shall come unclean and in need of washing.” The “house of worship” here, according to Steudel, is not the temple, but the place where the Essenes gather for prayer and meals (“The Houses of Prostration CD XI, 21-XII,1--Duplicates of the Temple,” 49-66).

- before entering these temple-like meals.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, other Qumran texts indicate that the Essenes also required “undrawn” or “running” water for their purifications.¹⁷⁵
- c) After washing, they placed on a sacred white garment before entering the building. Josephus mentions that when the meal was over, after “removing their garments (ἑσθητάς) as sacred they go back to their work.”¹⁷⁶ We know these special garments are distinctive from the linen loincloths (σκεπάσμασιν λινοῖς) put on before bathing (2.129) because Josephus distinguishes between the two later when he mentions that new members receive both τὸ προειρημένον περιμίζωμα καὶ λευκὴν ἑσθητά; “the loincloth mentioned above, and white garments.”¹⁷⁷ The obvious connection between ἑσθητάς and λευκὴν ἑσθητά shows that the garments put on after bathing were indeed white. This conclusion fits well Josephus’ description elsewhere that the Essenes made a point of “always being dressed in white.”¹⁷⁸ Schürer agrees: “The ἱεραὶ ἑσθηταί are the white ceremonial garments.”¹⁷⁹

In the case of the Essenes, therefore, we have a group that fully immerses and changes into white clothing prior to entering their version of the temple precincts. Stegemann sums up this entire event well:

It is especially important to notice that the Essenes regarded the common prayer services, along with the meals that followed them, as ritual events in the sense of the temple ritual. It was insufficient for participation, therefore, merely to have just completed several days’ rites of purification prescribed by the Torah in case of sexual intercourse or contact with the dead. Instead,

¹⁷⁴ For more on bathing at Qumran, see Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 469-473; Edmund F. Sutcliffe, “Baptism and Baptismal Rites at Qumran?” *HeyJ* 1 (1960): 179-188; Pfann, “The Essene Yearly Renewal Ceremony and the Baptism of Repentance,” 337-352.

¹⁷⁵ CD 10.10: “No man shall bathe in dirty water or in an amount too shallow to cover a man. He shall not purify himself with water contained in a vessel.”

¹⁷⁶ *J.W.* 2.131 (translation by Williamson).

¹⁷⁷ *J.W.* 2.137 (translation by Williamson). The Essenes would have to put on some other garment because it is highly unlikely that they would be allowed to enter the sacred meals in only linen loincloths.

¹⁷⁸ *J.W.* 2.123. The War Scroll describes the priestly clothing as “vestments of white cloth” (1QM 7.10).

¹⁷⁹ Schürer, *History*, II.571, note 59. Also in agreement is A. I. Baumgarten, “He Knew that He Knew that He knew that He was an Essene,” *JJS* 48 (1997): 53-61. He refers to “the white garment worn at the meal itself, taken off (as a priest removed his vestments after serving in the Temple)” (55).

immediately before entering the assembly hall, each participant also had to take an immersion bath, *which in the Temple was prescribed only for priests about to perform service, but which the Essenes made a matter of obligation for all members equally.*¹⁸⁰

The Essenes are yet another example of a group within Jewish Palestine where the non-priests tended to imitate certain aspects of the priestly purity. In addition to the practices already mentioned, they also imitated other “priest-like” activities: (a) bathing after touching someone less pure,¹⁸¹ (b) avoidance of sexual intercourse,¹⁸² and (c) bathing immediately after defecation.¹⁸³ Gärtner observes this trend, “A number of the characteristics of the temple priests which distinguished them from the common people are stressed in the Qumran texts, *but here they are applied to the whole community.*”¹⁸⁴ Yadin notices this same pattern when he refers to the author of the Temple Scroll as one who “extends certain laws of uncleanness and purity, which the biblical text directs to the priest alone, to all Israel.”¹⁸⁵

The fundamental question, of course, is *why* did the Essenes imitate the priestly purity? Are these stricter purity practices simply their own innovations? Perhaps. But, above we examined the expansion of purity laws among the general Jewish population and concluded that there were other groups who also seemed to imitate aspects of the priestly purity, particularly the Pharisees. Furthermore, there are good reasons to think that the Essenes were not isolated to the Qumran settlement, but lived in many places throughout Palestine, including Jerusalem, and numbered around 4000.¹⁸⁶ Is it possible that the Essenes washed and changed clothes before entering their “temple” because that was what the common Israelite

¹⁸⁰ Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 192; emphasis mine.

¹⁸¹ *J.W.* 2.150.

¹⁸² *Ant* 18.21; *J.W.* 2.160-161; 11QT 45.11-12; CD 12.1-2; see discussion in Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 172-175; G.W. Buchanan, “The Role of Purity in the Structure of the Essene Sect,” *RQ* 4 (1963-1964): 397-406; and Rainer Riesner, “Jesus, the Primitive Community, and the Essene Quarter of Jerusalem,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Double Day, 1992), 198-234, esp. 215.

¹⁸³ *J.W.* 2.149. Riesner argues that the *miqva’ot* near the Essene Gate are for ritual washing after using the latrine (“Essene Quarter of Jerusalem,” 213-214).

¹⁸⁴ Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community*, 5; emphasis mine.

¹⁸⁵ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 172.

¹⁸⁶ *J.W.* 2.124; *Ant.* 18.20; Philo, *Good Person* 75-76; IQM 3.11 mentions the “congregation in Jerusalem.” For further discussion about Essenes in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine see Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus*, 130-131; Riesner, “Essene Quarter of Jerusalem,” 198-234; B.C. Daniel, “Nouveaux arguments en faveur de l’identification des Hérodiens et des Esséniens,” *RQ* 7 (1970): 397-402, esp. 398; Schürer, *History*, II.563; Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law*, 66-67; and Beall, *Josephus’ Description of the Essenes*, 48-50.

did before entering the Jerusalem temple? Although there is no clear answer to this question, the practice of the Essenes provides a substantial impetus for believing that ritual immersion and changing of clothes may have been more widespread than originally thought.

D. FOOT WASHING

The final requirement of our fragment is that a worshipper must wash his feet prior to entry into the temple. The Pharisaic priest not only rebuked Jesus for not bathing and changing his clothes, but also said: μητε μην των μαθητων σου τους π[οδας βα] πτισθεντων; “nor have your disciples even washed their feet.” Although the command to wash one’s feet is given only to the priests in the O.T. (Ex 30:17-21), there are good reasons to think that common custom compelled all Israelites to wash their feet. In *m. Ber.* 9:5 one reads, “One should not enter the Temple mount with his walking stick, his overshoes, his money bag, or with dust on his feet.” Josephus echoes a similar sentiment when he criticizes the zealots for having “entered the sanctuary with polluted feet.”¹⁸⁷ Not only does this requirement comport with general biblical restrictions on wearing shoes in holy places (Ex 3:5; Josh 5:15; Acts 7:33), but it also fits with the words of Jesus, “A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet” (John 13:10).

Since it is not difficult to imagine foot-washing being a requirement to enter the temple, we need to concern ourselves with the more important (and difficult) question here: Why does the Pharisee seem to apply one set of requirements to Jesus (bathing) and a distinctive set of requirements to his disciples (foot-washing)? Notice that the Pharisee addresses only Jesus (and not the disciples) when he declares, τις επετρεψεν σοι πατ[ειν] τουτο το αγνευτηριον και ιδειν [ταυ]τα τα αγια σκευη μητε λουσα[μ]εν[ω]; “Who allowed you to trample this place of purification and to see these holy vessels, when you have not bathed yourself?” Only then does the Pharisee mention the disciples, μητε μην των μαθητων σου τους π[οδας βα]πτισθεντων; “nor have your disciples even washed their feet.”

¹⁸⁷ *J.W.* 4.150. See also the comments by Philo where he says, “one should not enter with unwashed feet on the pavement of the temple of God” (*Q.E.* 1.2).

Admittedly, there are no easy answers to this problem. With the limited information we possess, it may have to remain unresolved. However, I will attempt to outline three possible, albeit imperfect, solutions:

- 1) *The term π[οδας] may not actually be in the text.* In my own reconstruction of the Greek text above, I noted that I could not see the π that Grenfell and Hunt claimed to have observed in line 15. Furthermore, the genitive construct in conjunction with the accusative of respect is such an odd combination that one suspects either a scribal error or a mistake in the reconstruction of the Greek text. However, that being said, eliminating π[οδας] would still not solve our problem. We would still have to explain (a) the reason the Pharisee used a different verb ([βα]πτισθαι) to describe the bathing of the disciples, and (b) the purpose of the plural definite article τους. In the end, it is safer to stick with Grenfell and Hunt's original reconstruction.
- 2) *Jesus already bathed his feet.* If Jesus somehow found the time to bathe his feet before entering the temple, and the disciples did not, then it would make sense why the Pharisee focused upon Jesus' lack of immersion (because he had already washed his feet). After noticing the disciples, the Pharisee focused not upon the fact that they had not washed, but upon the fact that they had not even accomplished the *minimal* requirements of foot-washing that Jesus had: "nor have your disciples *even* washed their feet." In other words, the Pharisee is saying to Jesus, "Not only have you fallen short of the purity requirements, but your disciples have not even done as much as you!" Lagrange argues for a similar solution:

Le grand prêtre reproche à Jésus de ne pas s'être lavé, de n'avoir pas pris de bain; quant aux disciples, ils ne se sont pas même lavé les pieds. Comment s'est-il rendu compte de ces particularités? Peut-être Jésus avait-il les pieds déchaux et les avait-il trempés dans un bassin en passant. Le grand prêtre a pensé qu'il se contentait de cette purification, selon lui insuffisante; il affirmera plus loin qu'il est absolument nécessaire pour fouler ce lieu de prendre un bain et de changer de vêtements.¹⁸⁸

Although this suggestion technically provides an explanation for the problem, it encounters a substantial difficulty: Is it likely that Jesus would have washed his

¹⁸⁸ M. -J. Lagrange, "Nouveau Fragment non canonique relatif a l'Évangile," *RB* 5 (1908): 538-553, esp. 545-546.

feet while the disciples did not? Considering the fact that the disciples were following their master to the temple and tended to closely imitate his behavior, one must consider this improbable.

- 3) *Jesus had entered the Court of the Priests, while the disciples remained just on the outside.* Above we concluded that during certain festival times laymen were allowed into the Court of the Priests to view the holy vessels. Our fragment makes it clear that Jesus and the disciples could see the holy vessels from where they were and thus were either inside the Court of the Priests itself or on the edge and about to enter in. The precise nature of the border between the Court of the Priests and the Court of the Israelites is unclear, but it may have been a low stone parapet or even stairs leading from one court to the next.¹⁸⁹ This location is precisely where we would expect to find a temple official examining people as they enter into the Court of the Priests to make sure they were appropriately purified. Assuming the requirement for bathing and white clothes was only for those entering the Court of the Priests, then we have a ready explanation for why only Jesus was rebuked for violating these customs. If Jesus had entered the Court of the Priests first, while his disciples were still outside (but about to enter), then the temple official would immediately confront Jesus for not washing and changing clothes and only rebuke the disciples for the fact that they had not washed their feet. This suggested solution, however, runs into one major difficulty. Earlier the text seems to indicate that Jesus already led his disciples into the *αγνευτηριον* prior to being approached by the Pharisaic chief priest (1.7-9). Thus, it would be difficult to believe they were still on the outside.

In the end, all three of the solutions have weaknesses. Although choice two is probably the best available to us, without more information this problem will have to remain unresolved.

¹⁸⁹ *J.W.* 5.226; *m. Mid.* 2:6; F.J. Hollis, *The Archaeology of Herod's Temple* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1934), 295.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was a simple one: to reassess the historical veracity of P.Oxy. 840. To accomplish that task, we have examined four main categories of objections that have been raised against the fragment since its initial publication. In each instance the case was made that the data can fit quite adequately into a first-century Jewish milieu. Where explicit historical testimony was unavailable for certain practices, I attempted to demonstrate that such a practice would have been consistent within the known context of early Judaism, if not highly probable. As these historical problems have been resolved, a clearer and more coherent picture has begun to emerge from the text of P.Oxy. 840. (1) The Pharisaic chief priest is not only possible, but would have been the appropriate authority to challenge a worshipper's purity status. (2) The description of the *αγνευτηριον* not only fits with the historical usage of the word elsewhere, but actually is a place where a person can view the "holy vessels" during the festival. (3) The "Pool of David" becomes much less mysterious when we realize it was probably a Jewish *miqveh* with a divided staircase. Furthermore, the identification of the pool as a *miqveh* actually explains both the "running" water and the reference to the "dogs and pigs." (4) And finally, the expansion of purity laws and the practice of the Essenes, make it quite likely that Jews generally immersed before entering the temple and some probably chose to dress in white. In the end, we have not simply solved a number of isolated historical questions, but have uncovered the framework of a cohesive and intricate story of Jesus debating purity laws with a Jewish authority figure.

If these conclusions prove true, what implications do they have for the historical origins of the gospel story that P.Oxy. 840 contains? First, we must part ways with the argument by Bovon that P.Oxy. 840 was crafted as a "picture" of early Christian baptismal controversies. Since the historical problems that were the foundation for his theory have been shown to fit "better" within a Jewish context, then we have no reason to overturn the setting of the fragment itself. Indeed, insisting on a Christian context for the Jewish terminology seems to create more problems than it solves. That being said, one must acknowledge that Bovon has

uncovered a possible use of P.Oxy. 840 within early Christian communities. It is entirely possible that P.Oxy. 840 was *employed* as a polemical tool in various baptism debates, however this is not the same thing as saying it was *created* with that sole purpose in mind.

Second, the argument that the author of P.Oxy. 840 was wholly unfamiliar with early Palestinian Judaism must be rejected. At numerous points our fragment has shown an uncanny fit with various Jewish practices during the time of the Herodian temple. As a result, not only should the extensive skepticism toward the fragment be reconsidered, but there are strong reasons to think that this story of Jesus originated within Jewish-Christian circles where the temple and its rituals were still well-known and understood.

Third, if P.Oxy. 840 originated in such a well-informed Jewish-Christian historical context, then we must seriously consider an earlier date for its original composition. Although intimate familiarity with Palestinian Judaism does not guarantee an early date, such familiarity becomes more historically probable the closer one moves toward the first century. This chapter, therefore, lays the foundation for further discussions of date and origins in chapters four and five.

As for the implications of this chapter on broader historical questions, it is important to note that P.Oxy. 840 should be considered an important resource for our understanding of first-century Judaism. It illuminates the details of the festival of *Sukkoth* and how Jews were allowed to view the interior of the sanctuary, it provides insight into the structure of Herod's temple and the role of the *αγνευτηριον*, and it is a valuable example of the ever-expanding tradition in early Judaism, particularly as it pertains to the role of ritual bathing. Rather than being forgotten as an unreliable and embellished gospel text, perhaps P.Oxy. 840 can make a positive contribution to the study of Judaism during the time of Jesus.

CHAPTER 4

THE RELATIONSHIP OF P.OXY. 840 TO THE CANONICAL GOSPELS

Even a cursory reading of P.Oxy. 840 reveals that it shares a number of general similarities with the canonical gospels that require further exploration. However, because the stories contained in our fragment are unparalleled and unknown in any other source, the question before us is not simply one of dependence vs. independence. Obviously, since the stories of P.Oxy. 840 are not found in the canonical gospels then the author could not have copied them from the canonical texts (or vice versa). Thus, we are faced with the more complicated task of assessing whether the canonical gospels played a more *indirect* role in the formation of these stories. How then shall we proceed?

Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that assessing the relationship between P.Oxy. 840 and the canonical gospels is analogous to the manner in which one assesses the relationship between John and the Synoptic gospels. Although John clearly has some sort of connection with the Synoptics, it is not nearly as obvious or straightforward as the connections between the Synoptics themselves; i.e., the relationship is more *indirect*. D. Moody Smith, noting how John is both similar and yet very different from the Synoptics, suggests that the quandary of the John-synoptic relationship can serve as a model for how apocryphal gospels might be related to the canonical gospels. Smith even suggests that (in some sense) John is the first apocryphal gospel.¹ Although there is vigorous debate over the relationship between John and the Synoptics, the various positions can be summarized in three distinct categories: (a) John was literarily dependent on one or more of the Synoptics, (b) John was literarily independent of the Synoptics and the similarities are due to the fact that he was aware of them (i.e., he knew them but did not *use* them), and (c) John was literarily independent of the Synoptics and the similarities

¹ D. Moody Smith, "The Problem of John and the Synoptics in Light of the Relation between Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels," in *John and the Synoptics*, ed. A. Denaux (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 147-162.

are due to use of a common source.² The fact that scholars fall into each category reveals the complexity of the debate and how evidence can be interpreted in so many different ways.

I am not concerned here to attempt to choose among these three choices, but instead to use them as a model for how to resolve the relationship between P.Oxy. 840 and the canonical gospels. Three similar choices exist: (a) P.Oxy. 840 was literarily dependent upon the canonical gospels, (b) P.Oxy. 840 was literarily independent of the canonical gospels, and similarities are due to the fact that the author was aware of them and influenced by them, and (c) P.Oxy. 840 was literarily independent of the canonical gospels and the similarities are due to the author using a common source. Let us discuss these each in turn:

1. Choice (a), which I will label the “dependence” view, is the most straightforward in that it argues that the author not only possessed and read the canonical gospels but that they were the source from which he drew his material. Thus, on this view, there was a deliberate and conscious effort by the author to use portions from the canonical gospels in his own composition. Of course, this conception of literary dependence does not imply that the author of P.Oxy. 840 slavishly copied his canonical sources (any more than John directly copied the Synoptics). Rather, it simply suggests the author used the texts of the canonical gospels in an intentional manner. Examples of this type of literary dependence abound among the known apocryphal gospels. Indeed, some scholars would argue that the majority of our apocryphal gospels are derivative from and dependent upon the canonical texts.³ James Kelhoffer has made a convincing case that the long ending of Mark—an early second-century production—is simply a patchwork of material from the other three canonical gospels.⁴ J. Jeremias, D. Wright and F. Neirynek have made a similar case for P. Egerton 2.⁵

² Robert Kysar, “The Gospel of John in Current Research,” *RelSRev* 9 (1983): 314-323; James D. Dvorak, “The Relationship between John and the Synoptic Gospels,” *JETS* 41 (1998): 201-213.

³ E.g., John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 112-166.

⁴ James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

⁵ Jeremias’ introduction to P.Egerton 2 in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. McL. Wilson, vol. 1 (5th ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 96-99; David F. Wright, “Apocryphal Gospels: The ‘Unknown Gospel’ (Pap. Egerton 2) and the *Gospel of Peter*,” in *Gospel Perspectives: The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels*, ed. David Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT

2. Choice (c), which I will label the “independence” view, suggests that there is no evidence that requires that the author of P.Oxy. 840 knew or used the canonical gospels in the construction of his text. Although there are still similarities between P.Oxy. 840 and the canonical gospels, they are not as explicit as would be required by choice (a) and therefore are better explained by both parties using a common source (whether oral or written). Some have argued that examples of such a phenomenon can be found in the citations of the Apostolic Fathers where sayings of Jesus are reminiscent of our canonical gospels but are so different that they are better explained by appealing to a common oral/written source.⁶
3. The final choice, (b), is a mediating view between (a) and (c), and I will label it the “*indirect* dependence” view. It argues that although the author of P.Oxy. 840 knew the canonical gospels, he did not *intentionally* employ them as sources but intended to write his own story. The remaining similarities are explained by the fact that the author was influenced by the cadence and language of the canonical texts and his memory of those texts unconsciously flowed into the composition of P.Oxy. 840.⁷ In other words, as our author sought to compose his story of Jesus it is natural that he would attempt to make it sound like the other stories of

Press, 1985), 207-232; F. Neiryck, “Papyrus Egerton 2 and the Healing of the Leper,” *ETL* 61 (1985): 153-160.

⁶ Helmut Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den apostolischen Vätern* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957); *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. A Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905); Donald A. Hagner, “The Sayings of Jesus in the Apostolic Fathers and Justin Martyr,” in *Gospel Perspectives: The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels*, ed. David Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 233-268; Arthur J. Bellinzoni, “The Gospel of Matthew in the Second Century,” *SecCent* 9 (1992): 197-258. Of course, some have disputed this view and have argued that these citations in the church fathers are quotations of the gospel texts via memory; see, John Barton, *The Spirit and the Letter: Studies in the Biblical Canon* (London: SPCK, 1997), 63-105; Édouard Massaux, *Influence de L'Évangile de Saint Matthieu sur la littérature chrétienne avant Saint Irénée* (Lueven: Lueven University Press, 1986); and W.-D. Köhler, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums in der Zeit vor Irenäus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987). Such disagreements reveal the complexity of the issue at hand.

⁷ A clarification is in order here. When choice “b” refers to the author of P.Oxy. 840 drawing upon the canonical gospels via “memory,” it does *not* mean that he is intentionally trying to copy the canonical gospels but simply does not have the texts in front of him (and therefore must recall the content). Rather it is referring to how the content of the canonical gospels resides in the author’s memory and unintentionally finds its way into the text as the author composes a story that is very similar in nature. Simply put, the author of P.Oxy. 840 was composing an original story but wanted his account to sound like the Jesus everyone knew from the canonical gospels, thus allowing the memories of gospel texts to naturally influence his composition. Thus, perhaps it is necessary to distinguish between two types of “intention.” Although the author was, in one sense, *intentionally* trying to make his story sound like other known Jesus stories (i.e., the canonical gospels), that is not the same as *intentionally* trying to copy the canonical gospel stories word for word. The latter seeks to *replicate*, the former seeks to *imitate*.

Jesus that he was already familiar with in the canonical texts. Bell and Skeat entertain such an option with P. Egerton 2, however they seem to be torn between choices (b) and (c):

So far, then, as the Synoptists are concerned, we may conclude that [the Egerton Gospel] appears to represent a quite independent tradition. It is not even certain that its author knew those Gospels at all; if he did it is in the last degree improbable that he was copying from and embroidering them with the text of one or all of them before him; the most that can be conceded is that he had read them and that words and phrases from them had remained in his memory and found their way into the text.⁸

Two comments are in order about the above three choices. First, it must be noted that deciding among these three choices is notoriously complex. Scholars have differed vigorously, as we have seen, over which writings fall into which categories. Thus, it is important to understand that these three choices are not entirely distinct from one another, but exist on a continuum and their boundaries blend together. Second, and related to the first point, there appears to be very little substantive difference between choices (b) and (c). What criteria does one employ to distinguish between an author drawing upon earlier tradition or being influenced by the gospel texts in his memory? Daniels notes a similar problem with P. Egerton 2:

There is little to choose between the hypothesis that Egerton's author drew upon the synoptic gospels from memory and the hypothesis that s/he drew upon independent traditions, because there are no clear criteria upon which to base such a decision. How can one tell the difference between an author's memory of having read or heard a written text and his/her memory of having heard an oral tale?⁹

In the end, therefore, the larger thrust of this chapter will be to decide between choice (a) on the one side and choices (b) and (c) on the other. If choices (b)/(c) are chosen, then I will attempt to suggest further reasons for choosing one or the other, but we are unlikely to reach any conclusion that can be considered definitive.

⁸ H.I. Bell and T.C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1935), 34.

⁹ Jon B. Daniels, "The Egerton Gospel: Its Place in Early Christianity" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1990), 65.

I. PERICOPE 1 (L. 1-7)

The first pericope has generally been neglected in prior studies on P.Oxy. 840 because of its awkward grammatical structure and fragmentary nature. The fact that we possess only the very end of this episode makes it difficult to establish the flow of the story and to reach any definitive conclusions about its genre and origins. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, these first seven lines still possess a great deal of value for our study and offer the scholar yet another glimpse at extra-canonical words of Jesus that may provide a window into the life of the early church.

A. TEXTUAL RELATIONSHIPS: VOCABULARY, PHRASEOLOGY, GRAMMAR¹⁰

The word *προτερον* occurs only 3 times in the canonical gospels and they are all in John (6:62, 7:50, 9:8) and each time used as an adverb just as in P.Oxy. 840. There are several examples in the Synoptics where Jesus warns his disciples not to be like the Jewish leaders with the same verb form used in line 2, *προσεχετε* (e.g., Matt 6:1-18; Luke 12:1-7; Mark 12:38-40). Although the term *ομοια* occurs numerous times in the Synoptics, it normally appears when Jesus compares the kingdom to things, and rarely in the context of judgment. However, the verb form appears in a similar text that warns the disciples not to be like evil-doers:

Matt 6:8: *μη ουν ομοιωθητε αυτοις*; “So do not be the same as them.”

P.Oxy. 840: *μη πως και υμεις τα ομοια αυτοις παθητε*; “Lest you suffer the same as them.”

¹⁰ As this pericope and the next pericope are compared to the canonical gospels, two qualifications are in order: (i) I will not compare *every* word/phrase in P.Oxy. 840 to the canonical gospels, but will focus upon those words/phrases that are most immediately relevant in demonstrating the relationship between the two texts. (ii) When comparing a word/phrase in P.Oxy. 840 to the canonical gospels, I will not refer to every instance where it appears in the canonical gospels. Instead, I will focus upon “representative” instances or upon the appearances in the canonical gospels that are most relevant in drawing connections with P.Oxy. 840. To trace every word of P.Oxy. 840 to its every occurrence in the canonical gospels would not only be unnecessary to accomplish our goal (which is to establish the relationship between the two texts), but would also needlessly clutter the page and distract the reader.

As noted above, the ου...μονοις...αλλα combination is common in both the Synoptics and John, but is especially evident on the lips of Jesus in Matt 4:4. The form απολαμβανουσιν does not appear in the NT, however the root occurs occasionally (Mark 7:33, Luke 6:34, 15:27, 16:25, 18:30, 23:41). Its appearance in Luke 18:30 is similar to P.Oxy. 840 in that it compares what a person receives in this life with what they receive in the next life: “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive (ἀπολάβῃ) many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.” The term κακουργοι occurs only in Luke and refers to the criminals being crucified with Jesus (Luke 23:32,33,39). Particularly of interest are the two words describing judgment, κολασιν and βασανον. The former is very rare in the NT and refers to eternal punishment in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:46), whereas the latter refers to torment in hell in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:23).

Vocabulary words in Pericope 1 either not used in canonical gospels or not used in the same manner include the following:

προαδικησαι—not found in NT at all (for origins see chapter 2 above), although the root word αδικεω is fairly common.

σοφίζεται —occurs only in 2 Tim 3:15 and 2 Pet 1:16; the latter in the passive (σεσοφισμένοις) “cleverly devised.”

μη πως—very common construction in Pauline epistles but never appears on the lips of Jesus.¹¹

ζωις—appears in 2 Pet 2:12, Jude 1:10, and numerous times in Revelation.

υπομενουσιν—although it appears four times in the canonical gospels (Matt 10:22, 24:13; Mark 13:13; Luke 2:23), it is never used to refer to the suffering of the wicked, but always to the endurance of the saints.

In conclusion, there seems to be no evidence of direct literary dependence between the text of the first pericope and any canonical gospel text. That being said, the very similar use of προσεχετε, κολασιν and βασανον—all within the context of warning and judgment—suggests that the author may have been familiar with the

¹¹ NT examples include Rom 11:21; 1 Cor 8:9, 9:27; 2 Cor 2:7, 9:4, 11:3, 12:20; Gal. 2:2, 4:11; 1 Thess 3:5.

traditions of the canonical gospels and influenced by their language (indirect dependence view). However, these similarities could also be explained by the author's awareness of traditions behind the canonical gospels (independence view).

B. LITERARY FORM/STRUCTURE

As we attempt to trace the origins of this story, it is important that we identify what *kind* of story it is; i.e., its literary form or genre. In this pericope Jesus is clearly offering a warning to his listeners about the activities of evil-doers, lest they suffer the same judgment as them. In order to understand this text more fully, two items must be established from the outset: (a) the audience of Jesus, and (b) the identity of the evil-doers. In regard to (a), we concluded above in chapter 2 that the use of *αυτους* in line 7 (and *των μαθητων σου* in line 15) suggests the audience here is likely Jesus' disciples. Resolving (b) is more complex. Since we lack the context of the previous pages we cannot be entirely sure of the identity of these wicked men, but there are good reasons to think that he is referring to Jewish leaders. The fact that the story which immediately follows is about conflict with Jewish authorities lends weight to the idea that it was placed there by the author to provide examples of these "evil-doers among men." Furthermore, other gospel traditions, particularly the canonical gospels, show that when Jesus warns about wicked men, he seems to invariably refer to the Jewish authorities.¹² As noted above, the term *προσεχετε* in line 2 is found in the canonical gospels a number of times and regularly refers to episodes where Jesus warns his disciples of the Pharisees, scribes, and other Jewish leaders.¹³

With these tentative results in mind, it seems we are dealing with a common "warning story" where Jesus warns his disciples about the activities of wicked men, most likely Jewish authorities. This type of story is not uncommon in the Synoptic gospels, where Jesus frequently cautions his disciples (using *προσεχετε*) to beware of the Pharisees and other authorities, and often describes their immoral and hypocritical activities (Matt 6:1,5,16; 16:6-12; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 12:1-7, 20:45-47). Upon closer examination, a three-fold structure is readily apparent in this

¹² Of course, there are exceptions. Matt 7:15 simply refers to "false prophets" and 10:17 mentions simply "men" who might harass the disciples on their journey.

¹³ Matt 6:1, 10:17, 16:6, 16:11, 16:12; Mark 12:38; Luke 12:1, 20:46.

pericope: (i) Description of the Wicked (l.1-2a); (ii) Exhortation to the Disciples to Beware (l. 2-3);¹⁴ and (iii) Declaration of Judgment on the Wicked (l.3-7). The status of this pericope as a possible “warning story” is strengthened when we compare this threefold structure with Luke 20:45-47, a typical “warning story” in the Synoptic gospels:

<p>Exhortation to the disciples: εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς [αὐτοῦ], προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν γραμματέων</p> <p>“He said to his disciples, Beware of the teachers of the law” (Luke 20:45-46a)</p>	<p>Exhortation to the disciples: ἀλλὰ προσεχετε μὴ πως καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ ὁμοία αὐτοῖς παθητε</p> <p>“But beware, lest you also suffer the same things as them” (840 l. 2-3)</p>
<p>Description of the wicked: τῶν θελότων περιπατεῖν ἐν στολαῖς καὶ φιλοῦντων ἀσπασμοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς καὶ πρωτοκαθεδρίας ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ πρωτοκλισίας ἐν τοῖς δείπνοις, οἳ κατεσθίουσιν τὰς οἰκίας τῶν χηρῶν καὶ προφάσει μακρὰ προσεύχονται</p> <p>“who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers” (Luke 20:46b-47a).</p>	<p>Description of the wicked: Βουλομενος] προτερον προαδικησαι παντα σοφίζεται.</p> <p>“...he who intends] beforehand to strike first, deviously plans out everything” (840, l.1-2)</p>
<p>Declaration of Judgment: οὗτοι λήμψονται περισσότερον κρίμα.</p> <p>“Such men will receive extraordinary judgment” (Luke 20:47b)</p>	<p>Declaration of Judgment: οὐ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ζῶοις μόνοις ἀπολαμβάνουσιν οἱ κακοῦργοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ [κ]αὶ κόλασιν ὑπομένουσιν καὶ πολ[λ]ὴν βασανον.</p> <p>“for not only among the living do evil-doers among men receive judgment, but they also will endure eternal punishment and great torment [in the life to come]” (840, l. 3-7).</p>

Although the order is slightly different for P.Oxy. 840 (the wicked are described before the exhortation to the disciples), the general structural similarities between these stories remains. If this pericope can be regarded as a “warning story” then we have another possible connection with canonical gospels. However, it is still possible that the author could have been influenced by warning stories outside the canonical texts.

¹⁴ E.g., Matt 6:1: “Beware (προσεχετε) of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.” Matt 16:6: “Watch out and beware (προσεχετε) of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

C. ORIGINS OF THE TRADITION

Now that we have examined the textual relationships and literary form of this pericope, we can attempt to trace its historical origins. Assuming the above analysis is correct, then we have a story that seems well acquainted with the form and structure of canonical “warning stories” and employs some key canonical vocabulary concerning judgment (προσεχετε, κολασιν, βασιανου). Having already eliminated choice “a” above (dependence view), it seems that choice “b” (indirect dependence view) is a likely possibility, although choice “c” (independence view) cannot be ruled out. Perhaps a further consideration can aid our decision. If it can be shown that the tradition in P.Oxy. 840 is likely a development later than the tradition in the canonical gospels, then the possibility of choice “b” is somewhat increased since there is a better chance our author, by that time, would have been exposed to the canonical gospels (directly or indirectly). However, even under this scenario choice “c” (independence view) could not be completely ruled out, since it is possible that P.Oxy. 840 was simply a later development of the traditions *behind* the canonical gospels.

When we compare Pericope 1 with the similar type of “warning” story in Luke 20:45-47 and the canonical gospels as a whole we see two notable differences. These differences are not matters of substance (as if a new theology were being introduced), rather these differences are a matter of emphasis. Both differences introduce slight changes designed to serve the same theological objective: to increase the severity of the judgment on the Jews in P.Oxy. 840.

- a) *Severity of judgment increased by expanding the “who.”* P.Oxy. 840 places added emphasis on the fact that the disciples are also liable to suffer (παθητε) the same fate as the wicked Jewish leaders. Although this is certainly implied in many canonical texts, it is nowhere explicitly stated. In contrast to Luke 20:45 where Jesus cautions his disciples only to “beware” of the Jewish authorities, the Jesus of P.Oxy. 840 takes the next step by expressly including them in the potential judgment: “lest you also suffer the same things as them.” This same contrast can be seen in the very similar texts that were compared above:

Matt 6:8: μὴ οὖν ὁμοιωθῆτε αὐτοῖς ; “So do not be the same as them.”

P.Oxy. 840: μὴ πως καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ ὁμοία αὐτοῖς παθῆτε ; “Lest you suffer the same as them.”

The first text issues a simple warning not to be like the hypocrites, whereas the second distinctively mentions the potential judgment if one does not heed the warning. The underlying theological message is that the wickedness of the Jewish leaders is so severe that no one is exempt from possible judgment if they fall into their sinful ways—not even Jesus’ own disciples. Such an emphasis would have been particularly relevant in the early church when it was frequently besieged by Jewish opponents and needed to warn its members that judgment is sure to come (even to them) if they succumb to their deceptions. As the church faced the ever-present threat of persecution from the outside and apostasy from the inside, it would have had an increasing need for such stories to motivate (and warn) its people to stay the course. Thus, as we consider how such “warning stories” may have developed and changed over time, it is more likely that the warnings would have broadened their scope and severity rather than the other way around. With such a trend in mind, it seems probable that Pericope 1 would be a later development than the canonical accounts.

- b) *The severity of judgment increased by expanding the “when.”* Although Luke 20:47 emphasises the *future* suffering of the wicked (future tense λήμψονται), P.Oxy. 840 includes the additional idea that the wicked will also suffer in this life—a theme which is not explicitly mentioned in the canonical gospels. Although such an idea is certainly not inconsistent with the teachings of the canonical Jesus, and is even implied in various texts, it seems that Jesus normally views both reward and judgment as primarily future, eschatological realities.¹⁵ Thus, P.Oxy. 840 seems to broaden the canonical conception of judgment to include more explicitly the *present* sufferings of evil-doers. Such an emphasis, like the one above, would serve to increase the severity of the

¹⁵ Although Jesus spends much time teaching about *how* one should live in the present, it seems the reward or punishment for that present behavior is a decidedly future phenomenon. For example, Jesus warns in Matt 6:1, “Be careful (Προσέχετε) not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have *no reward from your Father in heaven*.” Likewise, in regard to judgment, Matt 5:22 says, “But anyone who says ‘You fool’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.” Of course, there is a sense in which some receive present rewards, “I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full” (Matt 6:16).

judgment on the wicked—a judgment that is now *both* in the present and future—in order to encourage members of the early church to take extra caution lest they suffer the same fate. Again, it is easier to account for this change if we consider P.Oxy. 840 later than the canonical gospels, rather than the other way around. Once the early Christian communities realized that the return of Christ (and the accompanying eschatological judgment) was not imminent, the focus shifted from future eschatological hopes to concern for the present church age¹⁶—a situation where the church would be particularly prone to see judgment on the wicked as a present (and not just future) reality.

If we are correct in our above assessment, then we can conclude that Pericope 1 is a “warning story” written by an author who was influenced by the traditions contained in the canonical gospels. His purpose may have been to construct a story that resembled those in the canonical texts (indirect dependence view) so that it would prove useful in exposing the wickedness of those who attacked the infant church (most likely Jews), demonstrating the certainty and severity of their present and future judgment, and encouraging church members to guard their lives and not be tempted to follow the path of the wicked.

II. PERICOPE 2 (L. 7-45)

A. TEXTUAL RELATIONSHIPS: VOCABULARY, PHRASEOLOGY, AND GRAMMAR¹⁷

1. COMPARISONS TO THE CANONICAL GOSPELS

Lines 7-9. The setting in the Jerusalem temple is very common in the canonical gospels where we frequently find Jesus and his disciples engaging in various activities (Matt 21:12,23; 24:1; Mark 11:11-15, 12:35; Luke 20:1, 21:37; John 7:14, 8:2). Thus, the context of this story would sound quite familiar to readers of the

¹⁶ The shift away from a focus on the imminent parousia to a focus on the church-age is particularly evident in the second century. The delay of the parousia was an issue rarely raised in the second century and was a decidedly more first-century concern; see L.W. Barnard, “Justin Martyr’s Eschatology,” *VC* 19 (1965): 86-98; and Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 292-295.

¹⁷ See comments above in footnote #10 concerning the limitations of the comparisons here.

canonical texts. The exact verb form παραλαβων occurs frequently in the Synoptics and always refers to Jesus taking his disciples somewhere (Mat 26:37, Mark 10:32; Luke 9:10, 9:28, 18:31). The verb εισηγαγεν often refers to entering the temple or other type of building (Luke 2:27, 14:21; John 18:16) and is even followed by εις in Luke 22:54, as it is here. In John 10:23 there is a reference to Jesus walking in the temple that is almost exactly like our text.

John 10:23: καὶ περιεπάτει ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ

P.Oxy. 840, 1.9: καὶ περιεπάτει ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ

Curiously, this verse also mentions a more specific area of the temple, “the Stoa of Solomon” (τῆ στοᾶ τοῦ Σολομῶνος) which is reminiscent of P.Oxy. 840 mentioning the more specific area “the place of purification” (αγνευτηριον). A similar phrase of Jesus walking in the temple also occurs in Mark 11:27: ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ περιπατοῦντος αὐτοῦ. In both John 10:23 and Mark 11:27 Jesus’ stroll through the temple is quickly interrupted as he is confronted by Jewish leaders who riddle him with questions and accusations.

Lines 9-21. Although we have many examples of Φαρισαῖος and ἀρχιερεὺς in the canonical gospels, we find no example where the two offices are combined into one. However, as noted above, a distinctive Johannine trait was to speak of these two groups together: ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ Φαρισαίους (John 7:45-52; see also 11:47, 18:1-3). The verb προε[λ]θων appears only in the Synoptic gospels (Matt 26:39; Mark 6:33, 14:35; Luke 1:17, 22:47) and is absent from John. The term συνετυχεν occurs only once in the four gospels, in Luke 8:19 referring to Jesus’ mother and brothers wishing to “meet” him. Although τῷ σωτηρι occurs 3 times in the canonical texts (Luke 1:47, 2:11; John 4:42) it never occurs as a replacement for the name of Jesus as it does here in P.Oxy. 840. The verb ἐπετρεψεν is found in the exact form in Matt 19:18, Mark 5:13, 10:5, Luke 8:32, and John 19:38, but is never on the lips of a Pharisee or other Jewish official. The term πατειν is rare and is found only in Luke’s gospel, but it refers once (10:19) to trampling “scorpions” (σκορπίων), the same word which appears in line 40 (the aorist form επατησας in l.17 does not occur in the NT). The combination of μητε...μητε is present only in the Synoptics (Matt 5:34, 35, 36; 11:18; Luke 7:33, 9:3).

Although the specific form βαπτισθεντων is not found in the canonical gospels, its root is abundant and appears in Mark 7:4 referring to the ceremonial washing of cups and pots and in Luke 11:38 for the washing of hands. The adjective καθαρον is used in Matt 23:26 to refer to the Pharisees keeping the outside of the cup clean while neglecting the inside and also appears in John 13:10 when Jesus washes the disciples' feet. Occurring only in the Synoptics is the noun ενδυματα which refers to the clothing at the transfiguration in Matt 28:3 and the clothes at the parable of the wedding banquet in Matt 22:11. Curiously, the verb λουσαμενω occurs in only John's gospel at the footwashing (13:10).

Lines 21-30. The root of the verb σ[ταθεις] is abundant in the canonical texts and is used in Luke 18:11 to refer to the Pharisee standing in the temple. The term ευθυς is notable here because it is used frequently in all the gospel texts, particularly Mark, as a connector between a series of actions. The combination λεγει αυτω is very common in all four gospels for introducing a speaker's words. The noun λιμνη is used only in Luke among the canonical gospels (5:1,2; 8:22,23,33), but also appears in Acts and Revelation. Among the canonical gospels, the verb κατελθων appears only in Luke (4:31; 9:37). The adjective λευκα appears in all four gospels and frequently refers to the color of clothing (Matt 17:2, 28:3; Mark 9:3, 16:5; John 4:35, 20:12). The verb form ενεδυσαμην, "to clothe," occurs only in the Synoptics, always referring to clothes.

There are two noticeable Johannine constructions here. First, the use of εκεινος preceding a quote is found only in John (7:45; 9:11; 9:25; 9:36; 18:17,25; 19:15,21; 20:13). Also, the root of the verb ανηλθον ("go up") appears only in John 6:3 and in no other canonical gospel.

Lines 30-45. The construction of αποκριθεις ειπεν before a quotation is very common in the Synoptics, but not John.¹⁸ The well-known term ουαι is abundant throughout the Synoptic gospels but is also missing from John (Matt 23:13-29; Mark 13:17, 14:21; Luke 6:24-26, 11:42-52). In fact, a very similar phrase is found in Matt 23:16, Ουαι υμιν, οδηγοι τυφλοι. Although the root of ορωντ[ε]ς is found all throughout the canonical gospels, this actual form is only found in 1 Pet 1:8 also

¹⁸ John uses a similar construction but almost always prefers the aorist passive indicative, απεκριθη.

preceded by μη. The noun κυνες is found in Matt 7:6 and Luke 16:21, but is absent from John's gospel (also appears in Phil 3:2; 2 Pet 2:22; Rev 22:15), as is its counterpart χοιροι which is also found in Matt 7:6. The combination phrase νυκτος και ημερας occurs in this exact form in story of the pigs and the demoniac in Mark 5:5. It also occurs frequently in other synoptic texts, but not in John as a pair. The interesting verb νιψαμενος is found in Matt 15:2 and Mark 7:3 in the context of ceremonial washing and also in John 13:10 when Jesus washes the disciples' feet. The word εκτος appears in Matt 23:26 referring to the Pharisees' refusal to wash the outside of the cup. Since the concept of "outer skin" is a bit forced, it seems this term was probably added to the story so that it would resemble the other stories of Jesus that were already familiar to P.Oxy. 840's audience.

The rare term πορναι is found in only Matt 21:31,32 and Luke 15:30 in the canonical gospels, but does occur regularly in other NT texts (1 Cor 6:15,16; Rev 17:1,5,15). Very rare is the verb μυριζουσιν which only occurs in Mark 14:8 when speaking of anointing the body of Jesus. The term επιθυμιαν is found throughout the canonical gospels (Mark 4:19, Luke 22:15, John 8:44), and the combination επιθυμι[αν τ]ων ανθρωπων is almost identical with 1 Pet 4:2 which has ανθρωπων επιθυμιας. Although the term σκορπιων is found in Luke's gospel (10:19, 11:12) it is not used there to refer to what is inside wicked men. The term κακιας is quite rare and only appears in Matt 6:34 in the canonical gospels, but is more common throughout the NT epistles. The introductory phrase, εγω δε ("But I...") is regularly used by Jesus in all four gospels to start a sentence. The infrequent verb βαπτω is found only in Luke 16:24 and John 13:26 among the canonical gospels. The phrase υδασιν ζωσιν is strongly Johannine in its origin (4:10,11; 7:38, also Rev 7:17, 21:6, 22:1,17), but does not occur in the plural in any of these citations as it does in P.Oxy. 840.

2. DIVERGENT VOCABULARY

Vocabulary words and/or phrases in Pericope 2 either not used in canonical gospels or not used in the same manner include the following:¹⁹

¹⁹ Again, for the sake of space and efficiency, I provide only a representative sample of where these words/phrases appear outside the canonical gospels, based on Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur

- αγνευτηριον—not in the NT; discussed above in chapter 3.
- προελθων—although the root occurs in the Synoptics, it is not used in the same manner. Only in Acts 12:10 is it used in a similar way to P.Oxy. 840 where it has the connotations of “coming along.”
- φαρισαιος τις αρχιερευς Λευεις—although each of these words occurs separately in the canonical gospels, they never are all used to refer to one person.
- μην—found only in Luke but is never used as a particle as it is in P.Oxy. 840; instead it always means “month.” The only time it used as a particle in the NT is in Heb 6:14, but there it appears in the combination phrase ει μην.²⁰
- αγια σκευη—words found separately in gospels, but never together.
- μεμολυμμενος;—appears in 1 Cor 8:7; Rev 3:4, 14:4.
- αλλαξας—does not occur in gospels; only appears rarely in other NT texts (e.g., Acts 6:14; Rom 1:23; 1 Cor 15:51) and never refers to changing clothes.
- ενταυθα—not in the NT (LXX, Josephus).
- καθαρευω—not in the NT; (*Gos.Pet.*, Philo, Plutarch).
- κλιμακος—not in the NT (LXX, Philo, Josephus).
- προσεβλεψα—not in the NT (Plutarch, Lucian, Philo).
- τουτοις τοις—combination not in the NT.
- χεομενοις—not in the NT (Philo, Josephus, *Sibylline Oracles*).
- εσμηξω; σμηκουσιν — not in the NT (Homer, Hippocrates, Josephus).
- δερμα—occurs only in Heb 11:37 (LXX, Philo, Josephus, Galen).
- οπερ—not in NT (LXX, Josephus)
- αυλητριδες—not in the NT; in combo with πορναι occurs in *Gospel of the Hebrews* and Chrysostom.
- καλλωπιζουσιν—not in the NT (LXX, Josephus).
- ενδοθεν—not in the NT (LXX, Philo, Josephus).

Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979). For example, I may mention that a word appears in the LXX or Josephus without mentioning the specific references of everywhere it appears within that work. Any significant linguistic connections that P.Oxy. 840 has with extra-canonical works have been evaluated in prior chapters or will be evaluated as needed in the next chapter.

²⁰ Such a use of μην is found more commonly in the LXX, e.g., see Job 32:21.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

By way of summary, it seems evident that when P.Oxy. 840 is compared with the canonical gospels there is very little extended verbal overlap. Although common vocabulary is shared from time to time, there is no evidence of direct citation or copying. The nearest example of an extended verbal connection would be John 10:23 where it describes Jesus walking in the temple:

John 10:23: καὶ περιεπάτει ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ

P.Oxy. 840, 1.9: καὶ περιεπάτει ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ

But, this does not prove to be a conclusive textual link. The vocabulary chosen here is not distinctive and would be a natural way to describe such an activity. Furthermore, walking in the temple was a common activity for Jesus, described or implied in a number of different canonical stories, and surely would have been a prevalent theme in early Jesus tradition. Thus, the author of P.Oxy. 840 could have drawn such words from a number of different sources.

Such a lack of clear textual overlap strongly suggests that P.Oxy. 840 was not using the canonical gospels as a direct source. If the author of P.Oxy. 840 had the canonical manuscripts before him then certain differences are hard to explain. For example, when we compare the structure of the woe statements in P.Oxy. 840 with Matt 23:25-27 (more on this below) we see that they are virtually identical. Why then, if the canonical manuscripts were being used, would the author use the terms *εκτος* (outer) and *ενδοθεν* (inner) when the both the canonical parallels use *ἔξωθεν* (outer) and *ἔσωθεν* (inner)? Or why would the author use *πεπληρωται* (are full) instead of the canonical term *γέμουσιν* in Matt 23:25? Likewise, if the author had John's gospel in front of him why use the plural *υδασι ζω[σιν]* (living waters) instead of the singular *ὑδωρ ζῶν* (living water) as it appears in John 4:10? This lack of textual overlap, combined with an inordinately high number of divergent vocabulary (as noted above), makes choice "a" (dependence view) the least likely alternative that would adequately explain the origins of P.Oxy. 840. Of course, choices "b" (indirect dependence view) and "c" (independence view) still remain possibilities.

Deciding between "b" and "c" is notoriously difficult, but perhaps some progress can be made. Although the textual links with the canonical gospels are

generally “sporadic” with no particular pattern, closer examination reveals that a number of these links appear clumped together in a select few canonical passages. The next section will examine these five passages in greater detail so that we may assess their relationship with P.Oxy. 840.

B. FIVE CANONICAL PASSAGES

1. LUKE 11:37-52

When we examine the final response of Jesus in P.Oxy. 840 (l.31-45) we notice that it employs the common term of judgment *οὐαι* “Woe.” This term appears in numerous places throughout the Synoptic gospels, however it appears only in Matt 23:1-32 and Luke 11:37-52 when used as a direct rebuke to the Jewish authorities. One of the unique characteristics of this second pericope in P.Oxy. 840—which will be discussed further below—is that this “woe statement”²¹ in l.31-45 is embedded within the larger framework of a controversy dialogue. Only one other instance of this combination exists: Luke 11:37-52. Although this text does not provide the full details of a dialogue between Jesus and a Pharisee, the text tells us that the Pharisee was surprised that Jesus did not wash before the meal. Knowing this, Jesus then proceeds to pronounce severe judgment on the Pharisees and teachers of the law through a series of woe statements (v.39-53). If Luke 11:37-52 could be considered a “controversy dialogue,” which is the most likely option, then it would stand as the only text outside of P.Oxy. 840 where a controversy dialogue and a woe statement are combined in one story. In addition to this striking connection, there are a number of others worth noting:

²¹ The term “woe statement” as it is used here refers to woes pronounced about Jewish authorities or leaders, not simply the use of the term “woe” against cities, regions, or other individuals. There are several examples of the latter in apocryphal literature; e.g., *Epistula Apostolorum*, 47; *Book of Thomas*, 143-144; *Apocryphon of James*, 11.10-15; 13.5-10. On this last apocryphal work see, B. Dehandschutter, “L’Epistula Jacobi apocrypha de Nag Hammadi (CG I,2) comme apocrypha néotestamentaire,” *ANRW* 25.6:4536-39; Ron Cameron, *Sayings Traditions in the Apocryphon of James* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); and Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 187-200. The only example I could find of an apocryphal woe against Jewish leaders (other than P.Oxy. 840) occurs in the *Gospel of Thomas*, 102: “Woe to them, the Pharisees, for they resemble a dog lying in the manger of an oxen, for he neither eats nor lets the oxen eat.”

- (a) Both texts concern a controversy between Jesus and a *single* Pharisee. This is quite rare in the canonical gospels where Jesus is usually in conflict with groups of Jewish leaders (e.g., Mark 2:6; 2:16; 2:18; 2:24; 3:2).
- (b) Although the conflict is with a single Pharisee, in both texts the “woes” are addressed to *plural* Pharisees. Luke switches from the singular ὁ Φαρισαῖος in v. 38 to the plural οἱ Φαρισαῖοι in v. 39. Likewise, P.Oxy. 840 has Jesus addressing a single Pharisee in l.31 with the plural τυφλοι and later in l.45 with οὐαι τοις.
- (c) In both texts the Jewish authorities attack Jesus himself rather than just his disciples. The latter is more common in the Synoptics (e.g., Mark 2:18, 2:24; Matt 15:2), although there are exceptions (Mark 11:28).
- (d) Both texts concern a controversy over ceremonial washing. In Luke 11:38 the Pharisee is shocked that Jesus did not first wash himself (ἐβαπτίσθη) before the meal. The aorist passive here (“was baptized”), according to Booth, implies that Luke is referring to the immersion of the whole body which would typically be done in a *miqveh*.²² The verb βαπτίζω is used elsewhere in Luke to refer to the full bodily immersions of John the Baptist (3:7,12,16,21) and stands in contrast to the verb νίπτω which is used in the other gospels for the washing of only the hands (Mark 7:3; Matt 15:2) or the face (Matt 6:17) (more on this below). The requirement of a bath before a meal in Luke 11:38 is consistent with our conclusions above in chapter three where we argued that certain Pharisaical groups (the *haberim*) followed the priestly purity laws in their daily lives (particularly at meals).²³ They would have expected Jesus to wash from his journey where he presumably was in contact with the public and may have been defiled. P.Oxy. 840 records a remarkably similar scene where a Pharisee also demands that Jesus and his disciples follow the priestly purity laws of immersing in a *miqveh* prior to entrance into the temple, likely due to the probability that they were contaminated on their journey.

²² Roger P. Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 23-25, 200-202. Such a view is supported by R. Uro, ““Washing the Outside of the Cup”: Gos. Thom. 89 and Synoptic Parallels,” in *From Quest to Q*, ed. Jon Asgeirsson, Kristin de Troyer, and Marvin W. Meyer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 303-322, esp. 307.

²³ For a fuller treatment of the *haberim* and their ritual practices before meals, see Booth, *Laws of Purity*, 189-203; Joseph M. Baumgarten, “The Pharisaic-Sadducean Controversies about Purity and the Qumran Texts,” *JJS* 31 (1980): 157-170; E. Rivkin, “Defining the Pharisees: The Tinnaitic Sources,” *HUCA* 40, no. 205-249 (1969-1970).

- (e) Both texts use woe statements that contrast internal and external cleanliness. Whereas P.Oxy. 840 berates the Pharisee for being like the prostitutes (πορναι) and only washing the outer skin, Luke chides the Pharisees for only washing the outer portion of the cup or vessel (11:39) instead of the inside. It is obvious that the “outside of the cup” (11:39) is not talking about literal dishes, but is figurative for the outside (or “skin”) of an individual because the second half of the verse says “but the inside of *you* is full of greed and wickedness.” Thus, the reference to cleaning the outside of the cup in 11:39 may be an allusion to the outer washing in a *miqveh* mentioned in 11:38.²⁴ Here, then, is a remarkable parallel between P.Oxy. 840 and Luke 11:37-39.
- (f) Both woe statements in Luke 11:39 and P.Oxy. 840 use a rather odd singular verb to describe how the inside is “filled.” Jesus rebukes the Pharisees in the first half of Luke 11:39 for only washing the outside of the cup and dish. Thus, in the second half of the verse the reader might expect Luke to use a plural verb to refer to the filling of these vessels (“*they* are filled with...”), or perhaps a second person (“*you* are filled with...”). But, instead Luke unexpectedly switches to the singular (γέμει), making the final phrase read, “But the inside of you is full of greed and wickedness.” Thus, in Luke 11:39, the term ἔσωθεν (“inside”) actually functions as the singular subject of the final verb. In a strikingly similar manner, P.Oxy. 840 also begins its woe statement referring to plural items (prostitutes and flutegirls) and thus one also might expect a plural verb (“*they* are filled with...”). But, P.Oxy. 840, in the second half of the verse, makes the same unexpected switch to a singular verb (πεπληρωται). Moreover, the term εἰδοθεν (“inside”) functions as the singular subject of the final verb.
- (g) Both woe statements in Luke 11:39 and P.Oxy. 840 share the same threefold structure: (i) declaration of woe, (ii) nature of the outside, and (iii) nature of the inside (filled with two items). This connection will be discussed in more detail below.
- (h) In some MSS (e.g., A, C, D, W, Θ, and the Koine text-tradition) we have the addition of τις before Φαρισαῖος (“a certain Pharisee”). This corresponds quite

²⁴ Uro, “Washing the Outside of the Cup,” 307.

remarkably with P.Oxy. 840 l.10: φαρισαῖος τις (“a certain Pharisee”).²⁵ If P.Oxy. 840 was influenced by the gospel of Luke, it may have been from this text family.

- (i) Both texts describe the speaking activity of the Pharisee in the historical present:²⁶ Luke 11:37 uses ἐρωτᾷ (“asked”) and P.Oxy. 840 l.24 uses λεγει (“said”).²⁷ The fact the historical present is fairly uncommon in Luke makes its appearance here all the more noteworthy.²⁸ Not only do Luke and P.Oxy. 840 both have the historical present in the context of a woe saying, but both use it for precisely the same function: to describe the speaking of the single Pharisee.
- (j) Both passages are immediately preceded by a saying of Jesus (Luke 11:33-36; 840 l.1-7) which at the core contains a warning against wickedness:
- Luke 11:35: “Then watch out, that the light within you is not darkness...”
- P.Oxy. 840 l.2-3: “But take care, lest you suffer the same things...”
- Thus, the two pericopes in P.Oxy. 840 seem to have a logical order that may reflect Luke's. First, the disciples are given an exhortation to not be like the Jews, and then the Jewish leaders themselves are addressed.²⁹ If P.Oxy. 840 was only drawing on a source behind Luke, and not Luke itself, then it is less likely that it would have preserved the same chronological order of the pericopes.
- (k) Key vocabulary words from P.Oxy. 840 that are connected with ritual purity are found in Luke 11: the verb βαπτίζω (v.38) and the adjective καθαρος (v. 41). Other vocabulary connections include ἰδους (v.38) compared to ἰδειν (l.13); περιπατοῦντες (v.44) compared to περιεπατει (l.9); τοὺς ἀνθρώπους (v.46) compared to τῶν ἀνθρώπων (l.5,39); εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν (v.39a) compared to ὁ σωτηρ πρὸς αὐτον ἀπο[κρι]θεις εἶπεν (l.30-31).

These considerations lend weight to the possibility that the author of P.Oxy. 840 was familiar with and influenced by the Gospel of Luke itself (indirectly by

²⁵ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 946. Most likely these variants were due to the influence of Luke 7:36: Ἡρώτα δὲ τις αὐτὸν τῶν Φαρισαίων ἵνα φάγη μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Φαρισαίου κατεκλίθη.

²⁶ For discussion of this grammatical feature see F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), § 321.

²⁷ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 493. Another possible historical present is λεγεις in l.42.

²⁸ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 107. Fitzmyer also notes that the historical present appears 13 times in Acts.

²⁹ We will see below that Matthew 23 exhibits a very similar structure.

memory) and not just a source behind Luke. When the possible Q source³⁰ behind Luke 11:37-53 is considered as an influence on P.Oxy. 840, one quickly realizes that many of the key distinctives are missing: (i) no controversy dialogue, (ii) no mention of a single Pharisee, (iii) no dispute over Jesus' lack of ceremonial washings, (iv) no use of τις before Φαρισαῖος, (v) no use of the historical present, and (vi) no use of the key vocabulary βαπτίζω (v.38) and καθαρός (v. 41). The bulk of these details are from v.37-39a and v.41, none of which are considered to be part of the Q source.³¹ Rather, they are considered to be the result of Luke's redactional activity. The following considerations confirm this conclusion:

- (a) v.37-38. Bultmann, observing the way that Luke adapts stories into his gospel, rightly recognizes that, "For the most part Luke fashioned his own introductions independently."³² Thus, he suggests that Luke did the same for the introduction in 11:37-38.³³ Moreover, when other stories in Luke are examined, his preference elsewhere for meal settings becomes abundantly clear (7:36ff., 14:1ff.) and therefore should not be surprising here.³⁴ Although some have suggested that he drew upon Mark 7:1ff., I. Howard Marshall rightly notes that this idea "is unlikely since there is no significant verbal correspondence."³⁵

³⁰ I recognize that the existence and precise reconstruction of Q is vigorously debated and I will not attempt to resolve that dispute here. Thus, I will refer to the conclusions of the International Q Project as a fair assessment of the general consensus: James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). Their reconstruction includes the following verses from Luke: 42, 39b, 41, 43-44, 46b, 52, 47-51. Other reconstructions can be found in P.J. Hartin, "The Woes Against the Pharisees (Matthew 23,1-39): The Reception and Development of Q 11,39-52 within the Matthean Community," in *From Quest to Q*, ed. Jon Asgeirsson, Kristin de Troyer, and Marvin W. Meyer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 265-283; H. Schürmann, "Die Redekomposition wider 'dieses Geschlecht' und seine Führung in der Redenquelle (vgl. Mt 23, 1-39 par Lk 11,37-54): Bestand--Akoluthie--Kompositionformen," *SUNT* 11 (1986): 33-81; John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 139-148; and David R. Catchpole, *The Quest for Q* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 256-279. Although there are various theories on the reconstruction of Q, the majority still leave out the features mentioned above, thus making them the likely result of Luke's redaction (or possibly, but not likely, from the "L" source).

³¹ Although the International Q Project lists Luke 11:41 as part of its reconstruction of Q, that portion of Q is almost entirely taken from Matt 23:26b. Thus, it seems evident that the text of Luke 11:41, despite being listed, is not really part of the reconstructed Q. Curiously, this fact is picked up in an earlier publication of the International Q Project which left out Luke 11:41 entirely: J.M. Asgeirsson and J.M. Robinson, "The International Q Project Work Sessions 12-14 July, 22 November 1991," *JBL* 111 (1991): 504-505.

³² Rudolph Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 334.

³³ T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) disagrees with Bultmann and assigns Luke 11:37-41 to "L" (96).

³⁴ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 468.

³⁵ Marshall, *Luke*, 491.

The verb λαλεω is common in all four gospels, but the aorist infinitive λαλῆσαι is a favorite of Luke-Acts (1:19, 1:20, 1:22, 11:37; Acts 14:1, 16:6, 21:39, 23:18) and appears in Matthew twice (12:46,47), once in Mark's disputed long ending (16:19), and never in John. The use of ἐν with an articular infinitive is a known Lukan feature, as is the use of ὅπως with a verb of asking (v.37).³⁶ Fitzmyer sums it up well, "Luke himself fashioned the introductory vv.37-38."³⁷

- (b) v.39a. This brief introduction to the first rebuke of the Pharisees has some distinctive Lukan phrases. The absolute use of ὁ κύριος as a reference to Jesus is characteristic of Luke (7:13,19; 10:1,39,41; 12:42a; 13:15; 17:5,6; 18:6; 19:8,31,34; 24:3,34) and only appears once in Mark (11:3).³⁸ The use of προς plus an accusative after a verb of speaking (e.g., εἶπεν) is distinctive to Luke's grammar but rare in the Synoptics (1:13; 4:36; 5:22; 7:24,40; 15:3,22; 22:15,70; 23:4; 24:18,44, and also in Acts).
- (c) v. 39b. Above we observed how the woe statements in Luke 11:39b and P.Oxy. 840 both use the unexpected singular verb to describe how the inside is filled. Since Luke 11:39b is universally considered to be derived from Q, one might think this connection could be explained by P.Oxy. 840's knowledge of Q instead of its knowledge of Luke. However, the International Q Project's reconstruction of Q 11:39 uses a plural final verb (γεμουσιν; "they are filled"). Thus, if this reconstruction is correct, then (i) P.Oxy. 840 has a connection to the redactional portion of Luke 11:39b, and (ii) these two texts stand alone as the only two woe texts that use a singular verb to describe the filling of the inside.
- (d) v.41. The stress here on almsgiving (ἐλεημοσύνην) is perfectly consistent with Luke's overall motif that focuses on the poor and outcast.³⁹ The term ἐλεημοσύνην does not appear in Matthew and John, but is common in Luke

³⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 27-29; Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 139, n.161.

³⁷ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 943. Robert J. Miller, "The Inside is (Not) the Outside: Q 11:39-41 and GTHOM 89," *Forum* 5 (1989): 92-105, declares that "Luke's narrative context (vss 37-38) is artificial" (98).

³⁸ C.F. Evans, *St. Luke* (Philadelphia: Trinity International Press, 1990), 503; John Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989), 322-323; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 202-203.

³⁹ I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 141-144; Uro, "Washing the Outside of the Cup," 312-314. The well-known commentary on Luke, Julius Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Lucae* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1904), argues that the phrase δότε ἐλεημοσύνην was actually a mistranslation of an Aramaic term for "cleanse." Although this is an interesting idea and an argument for an Aramaic Q, Kloppenborg has convincingly refuted it in John S. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 74-76.

(11:41; 12:33) and Acts (9:36; 10:2,4,31).⁴⁰ Furthermore, this verse contains the term *παλὴν* (“except, but, rather”) which is one of Luke’s favorite adversative conjunctions.⁴¹ Fitzmyer sums it up again, “Luke has added v.41, which has no parallel in Matthew; it stems from his own composition.”⁴²

The implications of this analysis should now be clear. If v.37-39a and v.41 are products of Luke’s own composition (along with portions of v.39b), and it is precisely these verses that form the fundamental connections with P.Oxy. 840, then we have strong reasons to believe that P.Oxy. 840 was influenced by Luke’s finished gospel.

2. MATT 23:13-32

Matthew 23 forms the only other “woe statement” with the Pharisees in the canonical gospels. The fundamental connection with P.Oxy. 840 comes from the structure of the woe statements themselves, particularly v.25 and v.27. However, the same general structure can also be found in Luke 11:39, and Q 11:39b. Thus, we will compare all these woe statements in the following chart to discover the connections to P.Oxy. 840. All these woe statements share a threefold structure: (a) Jesus issues the declaration of woe itself, (b) Jesus rebukes the Pharisees with an analogy, first describing their *external* characteristics, and (c) Jesus continues the analogy with a twofold *internal* description of the Pharisees; e.g., “robbery *and* self-indulgence.”⁴³ When we line these texts up side by side we see the remarkable structural similarities:

⁴⁰ Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, 142.

⁴¹ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 943; Miller, “The Inside is (Not) the Outside,” 98, n.14.

⁴² Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 943.

⁴³ One may also note that the *Gospel of Thomas* 89 has a similar saying, “Why do you wash the outside of the cup? Do you not realize that he who made the inside is the same one who made the outside?” Although this saying clearly bears similarities to the passages being considered here, it is not included because it does not share the three-fold structure outlined above. It does not contain a woe statement and does not expand on what is inside the cup (“But the inside is full...”). Moreover, it is clear that *Gospel of Thomas* 89 parallels Luke 11:39b-40, which is already considered dependent upon Q. Thus, including this passage from the *Gospel of Thomas* does not advance our analysis here.

(a) Declara- tion of Woe	Luke 11:39b Νῦν ὑμεῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι' Now you Pharisees	Q 11:39b Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, τοῖς Φαρισαῖοι Woe to you Pharisees,	Matt 23:25 Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!	Matt 23:27 Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!	840, l. 31-41 ουαι τυφλοι μη ορωντ[ε]ς. Woe to you blind men who do not see!
(b) Nature of the Outside	τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τοῦ πίνακος καθαρίζετε, (you) clean the outside of the cup and of the platter,	ὅτι καθαρίζετε τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τῆς παροψίδος, For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish,	ὅτι καθαρίζετε τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τῆς παροψίδος, For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish,	ὅτι παρομοιάζετε τάφοις κεκονιαμένοις, οἵτινες ἔξωθεν μὲν φαίνονται ὡραῖοι, For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful,	συ ελουσω τουτοις τοις χρομενοις υ[δ]ασι(ν) εν οις κυνες και χοιροι βεβλην[ται] νυκτος και ημερας, και νιψαμε[ν]ος το εκτος δερμα εσηξω, οπερ [κα]ι αι πορναι και αι αυλητριδες μυρι[ζ]ου[σιν κ]αι λουουσιν και σηγκουσι [και κ]αλλωπιζουσι προς επιθυμι[αν τ]ων ανθρωπων, You have bathed in only these natural waters in which dogs and pigs lay night and day, and having washed you have wiped the outer skin, which also prostitutes and flute-girls anoint and wash and wipe and beautify for the lust of men,
(c) Nature of the Inside (filled with two items)	δὲ ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν γέμει ἀρπαγῆς καὶ πονηρίας. but inside of you is full of robbery and wickedness	ἔσωθεν δὲ γέμουσιν ἐξ ἀρπαγῆς καὶ ἀκρασίας. but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.	ἔσωθεν δὲ γέμουσιν ἐξ ἀρπαγῆς καὶ ἀκρασίας. but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.	ἔσωθεν δὲ γέμουσιν ὀστέων νεκρῶν καὶ πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας. but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.	ενδοθεν δε εκει[νων] πεπληρωται σκορπιων και [πασης κακ]ιας. but the inside of them is full of scorpions and all wickedness.

The structural and literary similarities between these woe statements are so close that we have to suggest that some sort of connection exists between them. The general consensus, of course, is that Matthew and Luke drew upon Q and then made their own changes, based upon their own redactional preferences or upon another

source (“M” or “L”).⁴⁴ The question, then, is whether P.Oxy. 840 may be related to Luke, Q, or Matthew. Although the structure of all these texts is remarkably similar, the differences suggest that P.Oxy. 840 was influenced by Matthew’s gospel itself:

- 1) In level (a) of the chart above, Matthew is the only gospel to add a pejorative label after the woe statement, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, *hypocrites!*” Not only do both Luke and Q lack this additional label, but Luke even lacks the term “woe” (ουαι) itself. P.Oxy. 840 follows the Matthean pattern with the use of the term “woe” and the addition of the pejorative phrase μη ορωντ[ε]ς (“who do not see!”). The fact that this phrase is a bit redundant when placed after “blind men” (τυφλοι) suggests that the author may have sought to imitate the pattern in Matthew, but ended up with an awkward phrase as a result.
- 2) The severity of Matthew’s language in his woe statements—as compared to the other gospels—is exemplified again in 23:27. In level (c) of that verse, as noted in the chart above, Matthew makes the slight addition of the term πάσης (“all”) to the second item on the inside of the Pharisee. Thus, the Pharisee is not filled with just *some* uncleanness (ἀκαθαρσίας), but *all* uncleanness according to Matthew. P.Oxy. 840 does virtually the same thing with the second item inside the Pharisee with the phrase [πασης κακ]ιας (“all wickedness”).⁴⁵
- 3) In level (b) above, Matthew is the only gospel to compare the Pharisees to some other unclean entity (e.g., “whitewashed tombs” in 23:27), rather than simply describing the actions of the Pharisees (“you clean the outside of the cup” in Luke 11:39, Q 11:39b). This is precisely what we find in P.Oxy. 840 when the writer seems intent on drawing comparisons with other unclean things such as dogs and pigs, and prostitutes and flutegirls.
- 4) In level (b) above, all the gospel texts refer to the cleaning of the exterior of something. However, only Matt 23:27 and P.Oxy. 840 go beyond simple

⁴⁴ It is not my intention here to try to reconstruct the development of Matt 23:25,27 or Luke 11:39 from Q and its other sources (e.g., “M” and “L”). It seems likely that Q 11:39b provides the foundation for Matt 23:25 and for some of Luke 11:39b, and that the remaining differences can be attributed reasonably to Matthean and Lukan redaction (Hartin, “Woes,” 273). Matt 23:27 may be plausibly based upon Q 11:44, “Woe to you, for you are like graves that are not seen and the people walking over them do not know it,” but the differences seem to be the result of Matthean redaction (more on this below).

⁴⁵ Although the specific term πασης is conjectural based on the reconstructed text, the spacing of the line suggests that some word (likely an adjective) belonged before κακιας. Since none of the other texts in the chart above have an additional word in this location, we can still draw a reasonable connection between Matthew and P.Oxy. 840.

cleaning and make explicit reference to *beautifying* the exterior of something. Matt 23:27 speaks of making the outside of tombs “beautiful” (ὠραῖοι) and P.Oxy. 840 speaks of prostitutes making their skin “beautiful” (καλλωπιζουσι).

- 5) When the structure of level (b) itself is broken down, Matt 23:27 offers a notable difference when compared to 23:25, Luke 11:39 and Q 11:39b. In essence, there is a two level structure to 23:27 linked with a relative pronoun:

- (i) “You are like whitewashed tombs”
- (ii) “which (οἳτινες) on the outside appear beautiful”

Likewise, in P.Oxy. 840 there is also a two level structure linked with a relative pronoun:

- (i) “For you have bathed in only these natural waters”
- (ii) “in which (οις) dogs and pigs lay night and day”

And again:

- (i) “having washed you have wiped the outer skin,”
- (ii) “which (οπερ) also prostitutes and flute-girls anoint and wash and wipe and beautify for the lust of men”

This two level structure is found only in the woe of Matthew 23:27 and P.Oxy. 840 and is lacking in Luke and Q.

In addition to these connections between P.Oxy. 840 and Matthew 23:27 (and 23:25), consider connections to other portions of Matthew’s woe statements:

- 1) Both Matthew and P.Oxy. 840 both concern a controversy with the Pharisees over the role and status of the temple.⁴⁶ Matthew discusses the issue of swearing by the temple (16-22, uses ναος) and P.Oxy. 840 discusses the issue of entrance into the temple (ιερος).
- 2) Both Matthew and P.Oxy. 840 compare the Pharisees to animals—a feature lacking in Luke and Q. Matthew refers to the Pharisees in v.33 as “snakes” (ὄφεις) and “vipers” (ἐχιδνῶν) and P.Oxy. 840 compares them with “dogs and pigs” (κυνες και χοιροι; l.33) and more importantly with “scorpions” (σκορπιων; l.40).

⁴⁶ Although the concept of temple comes up in Luke 11:51, it is only vaguely referred to with the phrase τοῦ οἴκου, and fills a much less prominent role within the entire woe section. For more on the temple in the woe statements, see David R. Catchpole, “Temple Traditions in Q,” in *Templum Amicitiae*, ed. William Horbury (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 305-329.

- 3) Matthew is the only canonical gospel to refer to Jewish authorities as “blind men” and does so five times throughout his woe statements (23: 16, 17,19, 24, 26).⁴⁷ Four out of these five instances use the form τυφλοι—the exact same form which is used in P.Oxy. 840’s woe statement to describe the Pharisee (l.31).
- 4) The probable relationship between P.Oxy. 840 and Matthew is solidified further by shared vocabulary in v.26 which reads:
- Φαρισαῖε τυφλέ, καθάρισον πρῶτον τὸ ἐντὸς τοῦ ποτηρίου, ἵνα γένηται καὶ τὸ ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ καθαρόν.
- Consider the following connections: (a) the reference again to a *single* Pharisee: φαρισαῖε; (b) the adjective καθαρὸν used in a ceremonial sense, just like καθαρὸν in l.18,28 of P.Oxy. 840; (c) both texts use the adjective ἐκτος in the exact same manner: to refer to the outer portion of the item being washed (P.Oxy. 840 l.35); (d) both texts describe the Pharisee with the exact same term τυφλοι (as noted above); and (e) the verb of cleansing καθάρισον compared to the very similar verb καθαρεύω in P.Oxy. 840 l.24.
- 5) As previously noted, one might wonder why P.Oxy. 840 uses the verb πεπληρωται to describe the inside of the Pharisees, while Matt 23:27 uses γέμουσιν. However, just a few verses later in Matthew (23:32) the same verb in P.Oxy. 840 appears: πληρώσατε (a verb that does not appear in Luke’s set of woe statements). If the author of P.Oxy. 840 was influenced by his memory of Matthew, it is quite plausible that he simply recalled the verb from v.32 rather than v.27 since both have very similar meanings.
- 6) As in P.Oxy. 840 (and Luke 11:35), Matthew’s woes on the Pharisees are preceded by an exhortation given directly to Jesus’ disciples. Notice that in Matt 23:1-12 Jesus addresses his disciples with keen warnings against the wickedness of the Pharisees and only then addresses the Pharisees directly in 23:12-36. Likewise, Pericope 1 in P.Oxy. 840 warns the disciples of the Jews and then Pericope 2 issues woes directly against the Pharisees. Compare the sense of the following two statements:

⁴⁷ One could possibly see John 9:41 as a reference to Jewish authorities as “blind men,” however the accusation is more indirect than in Matthew 23 and not in the context of a woe statement.

P.Oxy. 840 1.2-3: “But take care, lest you suffer the same things...”

Matthew 23:3: “But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach...”

Thus, it seems the order of the stories in P.Oxy. 840 may not be accidental, but may reflect the canonical order of either Matthew, or Luke (or both).⁴⁸

The combinations of all these Matthean features—not shared by Luke or Q but by P.Oxy. 840—suggest the possibility that P.Oxy. 840 knew the Gospel of Matthew. However, one may argue that these distinctive features in Matthew, rather than being the result of Matthean redaction, were acquired from an M source⁴⁹ and combined with the available Q material. Thus, it may be argued, that P.Oxy. 840 could have drawn upon the same Q and M sources, or something similar. In order to resolve this question, we must examine whether these verses are the result of Matthean redaction. Although there are connections in v.16-22, 33 and elsewhere, the bulk of the connections are found in v.26-27 and therefore our attention will be focused there:

- (a) v.26. Given the reconstruction of Q by the International Q Project (as noted above), Matt 23:25 was drawn from Q 11:39 and Matt 23:26 was not part of Q. Consequently, many have suggested that 23:26 was drawn from the M source.⁵⁰ However, when we examine 23:26 we see that it forms a chiasm with 23:25: outside—inside—inside—outside.⁵¹ Such a deliberate link between these two verses suggests that the author could not have drawn 23:26 from another source but likely composed it to fit particularly with 23:25. Moreover, the switch to the singular *φαρισαῖε* in 23:26 also fits well with the singular *ποτηρίου* (“cup”) and *παροψίδος* (“dish”) in the analogy of v.25.⁵² Again, such a connection suggests

⁴⁸ Unfortunately, many prior studies on P.Oxy. 840 have separated these two pericopes from one another as if they are not related. This arbitrary separation causes the reader to miss the larger connections with Matthew and Luke’s structure in the canonical accounts.

⁴⁹ I understand the M source here not to refer to redactional changes of Matthew, but to refer to source material that was used by Matthew in writing his gospel; i.e., material not constructed by Matthew himself. Thus, material unique to Matthew’s gospel (such as discussed here) could be attributed to either M or to Matthew’s redactional activity.

⁵⁰ E.g., Manson, *Sayings*, 96, argues that 23:26 derives from M.

⁵¹ W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 298.

⁵² Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 465; Davies, *Matthew*, 299.

that Matthew composed 23:26 to clarify (and correspond with) the imagery of 23:25, making M an unlikely source. This contention is supported by Gundry who argues that Matthew has a “habit of assimilating sayings to each other for the sake of parallelism.”⁵³ Two other features suggest 23:26 is redactional: (i) v.26 uses the imperative verb καθαρίσον which appears elsewhere only in Matthew 10:8 (καθαρίζετε).⁵⁴ Furthermore, in Matthew’s woes, an imperative verb occurs only here and in 23:32 (πληρώσατε). Since it is generally agreed that the imperative in 23:32 is Matthean, then we have good reasons to think that 23:26 is as well.⁵⁵ (ii) The subjunctive aorist γένηται seems to be a favorite of Matthew and occurs 12 times,⁵⁶ two of which are found in the woes (23:15,26). The combination phrase ἵνα γένηται also appears to be Matthean as it occurs elsewhere in 10:25.⁵⁷ Eduard Schweizer sums it up well when he declares that v.26 “is definitely Matthew’s own.”⁵⁸

- (b) v.27. Kloppenborg has convincingly argued that the discussion of tombs in Matthew 23:27 is loosely based on a similar discussion in Q 11:44: οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, ὅτι ἐστὲ ὡς τὰ μνημεῖα τὰ ἄδηλα, καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι [οἱ] περιπατοῦντες ἐπάνω οὐκ οἴδασιν.⁵⁹ Apparently, Matthew has taken Q 11:44 and combined it with the inside/outside dichotomy of 23:25 in order to speak towards the issue of hypocrisy which is so prevalent throughout the rest of his woe statements. Consequently, the bulk of Matt 23:27 is Matthew’s own redactional expansion. Consider the following confirmations of Matthew’s activity: (i) Matthew misuses the grave analogy found in Q 11:44. In Q, the analogy makes the express point that Pharisees are like graves in that there is nothing on the outside that reveals their internal defilements, thus allowing men to unknowingly walk over them and become unclean. Matthew, on the other hand, tries to use the same tomb analogy to speak of hypocrisy but fails to make a coherent

⁵³ Gundry, *Matthew*, 466.

⁵⁴ The imperative *passive* καθάρισθητι (“be cleansed”) does occur when Jesus heals the leper in Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13, however nowhere else does the *active* imperative occur except for Matthew.

⁵⁵ Gundry, *Matthew*, 468. Of course, there is also an imperative in Luke 11:41, which has led some scholars to argue that Q included a similar verse that both Luke and Matthew modeled in their own work.

⁵⁶ 5 times in Mark, 6 in Luke, 4 in John.

⁵⁷ Matt 10:25 is considered to be Matthean due to the combination of γίνομαι + ὡς which also appears in 6:16, 18:3, and 28:4; see Davies, *Matthew*, 194.

⁵⁸ Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (John Knox Press: Atlanta, 1975), 435.

⁵⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 141.

comparison. The act of “whitewashing” tombs was not designed to make them beautiful—as if to hide their true contents—rather it was designed to advertise their true contents so that the passer by could be adequately warned.⁶⁰ The awkwardness of 23:27, therefore, suggests the misuse of an earlier source, namely Q 11:44. (ii) Matthew’s use of τάφοις (“tombs”) rather than the μνημεία (“graves”) in Q 11:44 (cf. Luke 11:44) fits well with Matthew’s preference for τάφοις elsewhere (23:29; 27:61, 64. 66; 28:1). This word appears only in Matthew among the four gospels, suggesting again that 23:27 is a distinctively Matthean redaction of the earlier Q source. (iii) The term φαίνονται is also a favorite Matthean word, appearing at least 14 times in his gospel while appearing only twice in each of the other three—yet another mark of Matthew’s redactional activities.

If our analysis has been correct, then P.Oxy. 840 has substantial connections with Matthew’s woe statements, both on a structural and verbal level. Since these connections are concentrated around v.26-27, which are the product of Matthew’s own composition, then we have reasons to think P.Oxy. 840 may have been familiar with Matthew’s finished gospel.

3. JOHN 7:1-52

This entire chapter recalls the story of Jesus going to the temple in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. Again, we note a number of textual connections that suggest a possible link between this passage and P.Oxy. 840:

- a) Both texts have Jesus in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. Of the four canonical gospels, only John mentions this feast and recounts the participation of Jesus (7:2).⁶¹ In chapter three above, we concluded that P.Oxy. 840 also has Jesus in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles because this was the one time of the year when the veil of the sanctuary was pulled back so people could view the interior.

⁶⁰ Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 99; Davies, *Matthew*, 300-301; David E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 152.

⁶¹ For more on this subject see Charles W.F. Smith, “Tabernacles in the Fourth Gospel and Mark,” *NTS* 9 (1962-63): 130-146.

- b) In the midst of the Feast of Tabernacles, John employs the use of the key Johannine phrase *ὕδατος ζωντος* (“living water”) in v.37. Similarly, P.Oxy. 840 uses nearly the exact same phrase *ὕδασι ζω[σιν]* (“living waters”) in l.43-44.
- c) Both use this “living water” language in contrast to a water-based ceremony in the temple. The water libation ceremony around the altar was a central component of the Feast of Tabernacles and the likely backdrop the saying of Jesus in 7:37-38 where he speaks on the “last and greatest day of the feast.”⁶² Likewise, the phrase in P.Oxy. 840 is contrasted with the ceremonial immersion required by the Pharisee in a pool of water at the temple (l.14,25).
- d) Both texts use the “living water” language in a way that reflects traditional Johannine “vertical dualism.”⁶³ John develops this dualism throughout his gospel by contrasting various opposing themes: light vs. dark, heavenly vs. earthly, spirit vs. flesh, above vs. below. Consequently, John often uses earthly things as symbols of heavenly realities. For example, Jesus uses physical birth (3:4) as a picture of spiritual birth (3:3-8); the giving of physical bread (6:1-13) is only a symbol of the true “bread of life” that Jesus can offer (6:35); Jesus heals a man from his physical blindness (9:7) and then declares himself the “light of the world” (9:5); after the physical death of Lazarus (11:14), he declares himself to be “the resurrection and the life” (11:25); he physically washes his disciples feet (13:4-5) to point out their need for spiritual washing (13:8-11). Likewise, here in 7:37-38 Jesus again contrasts the earthly water in the libation ceremony with the spiritual water that he offers. In the same way, the author of P.Oxy. 840 contrasts the earthly, physical water used by the Pharisee with the heavenly, spiritual “water” used by Jesus and his disciples.
- e) In conjunction with the above point about vertical dualism, both texts use water imagery to contrast inner and outer cleanliness. The issue is rather explicit in P.Oxy. 840 where Jesus rebukes the Pharisaical emphasis on only external washings (l.30-45) but says that he and his disciples have been “bathed”

⁶² It is well-known that on the Feast of Tabernacles the High Priest led a procession from the Pool of Siloam to the temple carrying a golden flagon of water. It was then poured out before the Lord at the altar while the temple choir sang the *Hillel* (*m. Suk* 4:9). For more, see C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 347-351; George W. MacRae, “The Meaning and Evolution of the Feast of Tabernacles,” *CBQ* 22 (1960): 251-276.

⁶³ For a full treatment of this Johannine concept see the comprehensive work by John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 205-237.

([βεβα]μμεθα) in living waters, implying a cleansing by the Holy Spirit. John 7:37-39 also implies such a contrast when Jesus compares the water poured out at the altar during the Feast of Tabernacles with the “streams from within” (ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας) that can flow on behalf of those that believe on him (v.38).⁶⁴ And it is clear from the gloss in v.39 that these “streams” of water that cleanse the believer are symbolic of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ Elsewhere throughout his gospel, John contrasts earthly “water” with the internal washings of the Holy Spirit. For example, 1:33 contrasts John’s “baptism” using earthly water with Jesus’ “baptism” using the Holy Spirit. At the wedding in Cana (2:1 ff.), the pitchers of water—symbolizing external Jewish ceremony—are exchanged for wine, which is a picture of vital spiritual life.⁶⁶ In 3:5 Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must not only be born of water, but also of Spirit—a likely contrast of external water-baptism with internal spirit-baptism.⁶⁷ And, of course, Jesus contrasts the earthly water available in the Samaritan woman’s well with the water of eternal life that offers real internal change: “the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (4:14). Thus, it seems that P.Oxy. 840 follows a very similar thematic pattern as John’s gospel.

- f) While walking in the temple in John 7:32, Jesus is confronted by *both* Pharisees and chief priests. As noted above, this combination is fairly rare in the Synoptics but found predominantly in the gospel of John where the two groups are often viewed together as a unit.⁶⁸ Of course, this presents a remarkable

⁶⁴ There is a dispute concerning whether the streams flow from Christ or from the believer. For my point here it makes no difference which exegetical choice is made; for further work on the question see G. Bienaimé, “L’annonce des fleuves d’eau vive en Jean 7,37-39,” *RTL* (1990): 281-310; Maarten J.J. Menken, “The Origin of the Old Testament Quotation in John 7:38,” *NT 38* (1996): 160-175; Joel Marcus, “Rivers of Living Water from Jesus’ Belly (John 7:38),” *JBL* 117 (1998): 328-330; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 320.

⁶⁵ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 192-195; Larry Paul Jones, *The Symbol of Water in the Gospel of John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 156.

⁶⁶ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 105, sees a contrast here between Jewish purification rites and the “new wine” that Jesus brings in salvation; see also Dunn, *Historical Tradition*, 223-228.

⁶⁷ See Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 141-145; Rudolph Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 138-139, for a discussion of the interpretation of these verses.

⁶⁸ Johannine references include: 7:45-52; 11:47; 18:1-3. Outside of John, the combination is found only in Matt 21:45 and 27:62. For more, see Urban C. Von Wahlde, “The Relationships Between the Pharisees and Chief Priests: Some Observations on the Texts in Matthew, John, and Josephus,” *NTS* 42 (1996): 506-522.

connection with P.Oxy. 840 where Jesus is also walking through the temple and confronted by a “Pharisaic chief priest” (l.10).

- g) The use of *ἐκεῖνος* preceding a quote is found only in John (9:11; 9:25; 9:36; 18:17,25; 19:15,21; 20:13) and is also here in 7:45 and P.Oxy. 840 l.24. When we compare the two statements side by side we see they are structurally very similar and share word order:

John 7:45: εἶπον αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖνοι

P.Oxy. 840, l.24: λέγει αὐτῷ ἐκεῖνος

- h) Further vocabulary connections include: (i) use of the imperfect *περιεπατεῖ* for Jesus “walking”(7:1) compared to *περιεπατεῖ* in l.9 where Jesus is walking through the temple;⁶⁹ (ii) Jesus stands (*εἰστήκει*; root *ιστημι*) in the temple before speaking (7:37), just as he stands (*σταθεις*; root *ιστημι*) in the temple before speaking in P.Oxy. 840 (l.21); (iii) the term *προτερον*, which only is found in John’s gospel, appears in 7:50 and also P.Oxy. 840 (l.1).

In addition to establishing textual and thematic links with P.Oxy. 840, the above considerations have also demonstrated that much of John 7 is distinctively Johannine and therefore unlikely to have come from another source. For example, the following are typically Johannine elements: (i) the phrase “living water”; (ii) vertical dualism; (iii) contrast between water and Spirit; (iv) combination of chief priests and Pharisees; (v) the use of *ἐκεῖνος*; (vi) the imperfect form *περιεπατεῖ*; (vii) the use of *προτερον* as an adverb. Now, it is certainly possible that one or more of these characteristics in chapter 7 could have originated from non-Johannine sources, but it seems hardly likely that *all* of them did.⁷⁰ But, even if they all did come from an earlier source, then we would have to believe that John and P.Oxy. 840 both independently combined them with a setting at the Feast of Tabernacles with a water ceremony as a backdrop—a rather unlikely scenario. Instead, it seems easier to see

⁶⁹ This imperfect form of *περιπατεω* is a favorite of John’s (5:9, 7:1, 10:23, 11:54) and only appears in Mark 5:42 elsewhere. Notably, the same form appears in John 10:23 which is very similar to P.Oxy. 840: καὶ περιεπάτει ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐν τῇ στοᾷ τοῦ Σολομῶνος.

⁷⁰ Raymond Brown, “The Gospel of Thomas and St. John’s Gospel,” *NTS* 9 (1962-63): 155-177; Brown argues that the discourse at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:37ff.) is one of the last portions of John to take their present form (p.175-176), thus increasing the likelihood that P.Oxy. 840 knew the gospel of John (indirectly).

the shared combination of items as evidence that P.Oxy. 840 was likely influenced by John's finished gospel.

4. JOHN 13:10

Within John's account of the final meal with his disciples (13:1-30), we are given the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet (v.5-17). Particularly in v.10, but also elsewhere, we again notice a number of connections with P.Oxy. 840:

- a) Both share the theme of ceremonial washings, specifically of the feet.⁷¹ The mention of footwashing is very rare in the canonical gospels and occurs only here in John 13:10 and Luke 7:44. Compare the two phrases:

John 13:10: τοὺς πόδας νίψασθαι

P.Oxy. 840, l.15: τοὺς ποδας βαπτισθεντων

Both use the exact same phrase τοὺς ποδας followed by their respective verbs of washing. Moreover, both passages join the discussion of τοὺς ποδας with τῶν μαθητῶν. Compare the fuller citation in P.Oxy. 840 with the remarkably similar John 13:5:

John 13:5: τοὺς πόδας τῶν μαθητῶν.

P.Oxy. 840 l.15: τῶν μαθητῶν σου τοὺς ποδας

- b) Both passages share the theme of inner vs. outer cleanliness in the context of this ceremonial washing. Jesus is washing Peter's feet externally, but is making a theological point about *internal* cleansing: "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me" (13:8).⁷² The contrast between exterior washing by water and the internal cleansing that Jesus offers is consistent with the Johannine usage seen above in 7:38. Likewise, P.Oxy. 840 suggests that external washing with "natural" water is not efficacious, but must be coupled with the internal washing of "living water."

⁷¹ David Tripp, "Meanings of the Foot-washing: John 13 and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840," *ExpT* 103 (1992): 237-239.

⁷² Arland J. Hultgren, "The Johannine Footwashing (13.1-11): A Symbol of Eschatological Hospitality," *NTS* 28 (1982): 539-546; J. D.G. Dunn, "The Washing of the Disciples' Feet in John 13.1-20," *ZNW* 61 (1970): 247-252; E. Hirsch, *Das vierte Evangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1936), 330-337; for a fuller bibliography of this view see John Christopher Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 14-15.

- c) Both stories mention two distinctive washings. John 13:10 declares that someone who has already bathed (λελουμένος) needs only to wash (νίψασθαι) his feet.⁷³ Although there is a vast difference of opinion on this verse, there are ample reasons to understand the former verb as referring to a bath of full immersion and the latter to simply the washing of feet.⁷⁴ In addition, a distinction was made between these two washings among the early church fathers, who often took the λελουμένος to refer to original baptism and the νίψασθαι to refer to the lesser cleansing of subsequent sin.⁷⁵ When we turn to P.Oxy. 840, we see that it too references two distinctive washings: the Pharisee chides Jesus for not taking a full bath (λουσαμενω), but then rebukes the disciples for not having washed (βαπτισθεντων) their feet. As noted above in chapter

⁷³ There is a well known text-critical question here concerning the inclusion of εἰ μὴ τοὺς πόδας. However, in view of its superior external attestation, the UBS committee has included the phrase in the original text and therefore I will do the same here. Others in agreement include Hans von Campenhausen, "Zur Auslegung von Joh 13,6-10," *ZNW* 33 (1934): 259-271; J.A.T. Robinson, "The Significance of the Footwashing," in *Neotestamentica et Patristica*, ed. W.C. van Unnik (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962), 144-147; J.N. Sanders and B.A. Mastin, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (London: A&C Black, 1968); Thomas, *Footwashing*, 21-25; F.F. Segovia, "John 13.1-20, The Footwashing in the Johannine Tradition," *ZNW* 73 (1982): 31-51, 44. In the end, it does not matter whether the phrase was there originally because the author of P.Oxy. 840 may have simply had the phrase in the texts that influenced him and understood it to imply two distinct washings—a pattern he followed in his own composition.

⁷⁴ Consider the following reasons: (a) F. Hauck, *TDNT* 4:946-947 draws a distinction between these two verbs where λουω=bathe and νίπτω=wash or rinse. Since νίπτω was used for footwashing in the earlier verses (13:6-9) it would be odd to suddenly switch to λουω to refer to the same event, particularly when it is contrasted with νίπτω in that very same verse. R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: Burns and Oates, 1982) admits: "λουεσθαι, however, cannot simply point to the washing of feet that had just taken place. Almost always this verb is used to indicate a complete bath, whereas νίπτεσθαι is employed in the case of partial washing" (21). (b) According to Thomas, *Footwashing*, 99, the verb λουω was never used to refer to footwashing in either Jewish or Greco-Roman contexts. (c) In the O.T. cult full baths (λουω) (Ex 29:4; Lev 8:6) were often followed by partial washings (νίπτω) (Ex 30:17-21; 40:30-32; 1 Kgs 7:38; 2 Chron 4:6). (d) John 13:10 fits with the custom of the day where a traveler or guest would bathe at home before his departure and then wash his feet upon arrival to clean off the dirt acquired during the course of the journey. There would be no need for a second full bath at this point, but only a washing of the body parts that were dirty (Thomas, *Footwashing*, 99-100). For more see Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 453-462.

⁷⁵ Oscar Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship* (London: SCM, 1953), 108-109; See details in Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 566-567. For a massive survey of the historical interpretation of this verse see the classic work Georg Richter, *Die Fusswaschung im Johannesevangelium: Geschichte ihrer Deutung* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1967); and also N.M. Haring, "Historical Notes on the Interpretation of John 13:10," *CBQ* 13 (1951): 355-380. Although some Fathers saw the "bathing" as a reference to baptism and the "washing" of the feet as a reference to the cleansing of subsequent sin, other Fathers—Tertullian, Cyprian, Cyril of Alexandria—viewed the footwashing itself as a reference to baptism. This latter view is shared by many modern commentators such as Campenhausen, "Zur Auslegung von Joh 13,6-10," 259-271; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 401; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John* (London: SPCK, 1978), 436; Sanders and Mastin, *John*, 308.

three, the distinction between these two washings presents some perplexing difficulties for P.Oxy. 840. However, the origin of these difficulties may be explained if they were due to the influence of John 13:10, which also juxtaposes these two washings.

- d) In addition to *τους ποδας*, the two texts share a number of other words all related to ceremonial washings: (i) The rare verb *λουω* occurs only once in the canonical gospels, here in John 13:10, and also five times in P.Oxy. 840 (l.14,19,24,32,37); (ii) The verb *νιπτω*—appearing only once in Mark, twice in Matthew, and never in Luke—is found ten times in John and appears in 13:10 and P.Oxy. 840 l.34; (iii) The adjective *καθαρος*, so common in passages on ceremonial cleansing, appears here in 13:10 and in P.Oxy. 840 l.18,28; (iv) The rare verb *βαπτω* (elsewhere only in Luke 16:24) is found in 13:26 and also P.Oxy. 840 l.43.

All of these connections make it probable that the author of P.Oxy. 840 was influenced by John's gospel. However, one could still argue that the connections shared between these two texts can be accounted for by P.Oxy. 840 knowing the sources behind John 13, whatever those sources may have been. The issue of Johannine sources is heavily debated and there will be no attempt here to fully resolve that question in John 13.⁷⁶ However, let us consider some reasons why 13:10 is Johannine and not from another source: (i) The combination phrase *ἔχει χρείαν* is notably Johannine and appears also in 2:25, 13:29, and 16:30;⁷⁷ (ii) The verb *νιπτω* is abundant throughout the gospel of John, but rare in the other gospels (9:7,11,15; 13:5,6,8,10,12,14); (iii) The entire section of vv.6-11 is seen by the majority of scholars as Johannine, with v.12-20 coming from another source.⁷⁸ Furthermore, it must be noted that the links with P.Oxy. 840 extend beyond just 13:10 and include verses supposedly from other sources (e.g., v.5 and v.26 as seen

⁷⁶ Rudolph Bultmann, "Johannesevangelium," *RGG* 3 (1959): 840-850; R.T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); W. Nicole, *The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972); D. Moody Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

⁷⁷ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 469, n.1.

⁷⁸ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 560-562; Schnackenburg, *St. John*, 10-15; Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, declares "It ought to be clear that the first [section] is the specifically Johannine one, and marks of Johannine style bear this out" (462). For the opposing view see M.E. Boismard, "Le lavement des pieds," *RB* 71 (1964): 5-24.

above). This combination of connections—spread over multiple sources—strongly suggests that P.Oxy. 840 was influenced by the Gospel of John in (or close to) its final form.

5. MARK 7:1-23

Although the connections between P.Oxy. 840 and Mark 7:1-23 are less vivid than in the prior four passages, they should still be considered:

- a) Both texts share the fundamental setting of a controversy with the Pharisees over ceremonial washings. Furthermore, Mark, like P.Oxy. 840 (and John 13:10), distinguishes between *two* types of washings: full bodily immersion and washing of a particular body part (in this case the hands). As we noted above in Luke 11:38 the verb βαπτίζω naturally refers to immersion before the meal and does the same here: “and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they wash themselves (βαπτίσωνται)” (7:4).⁷⁹ Although some scholars understand the verb βαπτίσωνται as referring to the washing of hands (or of pots), the fact that it is in the plural middle form has caused many scholars, like Robert Guelich, to understand it as a clear reference to the washing of *persons*.⁸⁰ Such a conclusion is bolstered by the change in verb between νίψωνται in 7:3 and βαπτίσωνται in 7:4.⁸¹ William Barclay reflects this view in his translation of 7:4: “when they came in from the market-place they do not eat unless they immerse their whole bodies.”⁸² Since we have reason to think that certain Pharisaical groups (the *haberim*) sought to apply priestly standards of purity to

⁷⁹ There is a slight dispute about the textual variant βαπτίσωνται in 7:4 (Ⲡ, B, pc) but I will side again with the opinion of the UBS committee that βαπτίσωνται was original (A, D, K, W, X, θ). For a fuller argument for its inclusion see, C.E.B Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 234; Lane, *Mark*, 243.

⁸⁰ Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1:8:26* (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 365. Guelich goes on to say that 7:4, when taken with 7:3, moves “logically from the washing of hands before eating to the washing of one’s entire body.” Other scholars also recognize that the verb likely refers to the bathing of the Pharisees themselves: Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 442; Ezra Gould, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1932), 127; Sherman E. Johnson, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), 132; Allan Menzies, *The Earliest Gospel* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1901), 150; Cranfield, *Mark*, 234. For a full defense see Booth, *Purity*, 200-203.

⁸¹ Most scholars make a distinction between these two verbs as in John 13:10 above; e.g., H.B. Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1909), 144; Gould, *Mark*, 127.

⁸² William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 165.

their everyday lives (including meals), it would make sense for these Pharisees to immerse before the meal because they may have inadvertently contacted someone unclean while in the marketplace.⁸³ P.Oxy. 840 reflects this same standard of Pharisaical purity and even juxtaposes two different washings: full bodily immersion and the washing of a particular body part (the feet).

- b) Both texts emphasize the vivid contrast between internal and external cleanliness. Notice Mark 7:15: “Nothing *outside* a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean.’” Also Mark 7:23: “All these evil things proceed from *within* and defile the man.” In other words, Jesus is declaring that these external rites are limited in their ability to make a person clean; the real cleaning must be done internally. Likewise, the Jesus of P.Oxy. 840 contrasts a declaration about the outside, “you have wiped the *outer...*” (l.35), with a declaration about the inside, “but the *inside* of them...” (l.39). This contrast makes the same point as Mark 7:15 and 7:23: external water rituals also are not able to really clean someone, but a person must be cleaned internally by the “living water.”⁸⁴
- c) In both texts, Jesus refuses to participate in man-made traditions that are not consistent with the law of God. Mark 7:8: “Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men”; and Mark 7:13: “Thus you nullify the word of God by the tradition you have handed down.” Likewise, we learned above in chapter three that the washing requirements of the Pharisee in P.Oxy. 840 were not derived from the commands of God but were the result of an ever-expanding *halakah*. Furthermore, the focus upon the wickedness of men’s traditions is consistent with P.Oxy. 840’s focus on the wickedness of men in general. Consider the following parallels:

Mark 7:8: τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων; “the traditions of men”

Mark 7:21: τῆς καρδίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων; “the heart of men”

P.Oxy. 840 l.5: οἱ κακούργοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων; “the criminals of men”

P.Oxy. 840 l.38: ἐπιθυμίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων; “the lusts of men”

⁸³ For the view that Mark 7:4 is referring to Pharisees that were priests (Aaronites) see, Adolf Büchler, “The Law of Purification in Mark vii. 1-23,” *ExpT* 21 (1909-10): 34-38. Opposing Büchler is G. Margoliouth, “The Traditions of the Elders,” *ExpT* 22 (1910-11): 261-263.

⁸⁴ Johannes Leipoldt, *Jesu Verhältnis zu Griechen und Juden* (Leipzig: Verlag Georg Wigand, 1941), 46-53, also connects P.Oxy. 840 to Mark 7 and the rejection of Jewish purity laws.

- d) In both texts Jesus uses the occasion of man-made tradition to comment more broadly on the relevance of the categories of “clean” and “unclean.” In Mark 7:18 Jesus goes beyond critiquing the man-made tradition only and declares: “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside makes him ‘unclean?’” In P.Oxy. 840 l. 22-24 Jesus challenges the definition of “clean” by asking the Pharisee: “Are you therefore, being here in this temple, clean?” And later Jesus argues that external washings do not make a man “clean” or “unclean” (l.30-44), but instead a man must be washed by the “living water” (i.e., the Holy Spirit). Thus, it seems Mark 7:1-23 and P.Oxy. 840 are remarkably similar in that they both speak against the enforcement of “clean” and “unclean” categories within the New Covenant context.⁸⁵
- e) The two texts also share a number of other connections: (i) In v.3 we again find the uncommon verb *νιπτω* which is also in P.Oxy. 840 l.34; (ii) the verb *βαπτιζω* in v.4 and also P.Oxy. 840 l.15,43 (outside of P.Oxy. 840, only here in Mark 7:3-4 do we find *νιπτω* and *βαπτιζω* used together in the context of ceremonial cleansing); (iii) *παρέλαβον* in 7:4 compared to *παραλαβων* in P.Oxy. 840 l.7; (iv) *πορνεῖαι* in 7:21 compared to *πορναι* in P.Oxy. 840 l.36 (making the same point that a person can be “clean” on the outside, but have a sexually immoral character on the inside).

All of these connections raise the possibility that P.Oxy. 840 may have been influenced by Mark’s gospel. Again, however, one must consider whether such connections could be explained by a source behind Mark 7:1-23. This chapter in Mark has given rise to a variety of theories concerning its development, but the majority of scholars see v.1-2, 5, and 15 as containing the primitive story that has been combined with a variety of other material.⁸⁶ Virtually all agree that v.3-4—which contain a number of links with P.Oxy. 840—were added as a gloss by the final redactor.⁸⁷ Thus, we are faced with a situation where P.Oxy. 840 has literary

⁸⁵ In other words, both these texts seem to be against any “judaizing” tendency that would force clean and unclean distinctions still to be made between Jews and Gentiles in the New Covenant church.

⁸⁶ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 447-448 ; Guelich, *Mark 1:8:26*, 360-361.

⁸⁷ Booth, *Purity*, 35-53; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 335. The case for the redactory nature of v.3-4 is particularly enhanced in light of the parenthetical nature of these verses. It seems they were added by the final editor in order to explain Jewish customs to a predominantly Gentile readership. Booth also sees v.8, 13, and 23 as due to Markan redaction—verses that have further connections with P.Oxy. 840.

connections with parts that were certainly Mark's redaction (v.3-4) and also parts that may not have been (v.1-2, 15). These connections with a combination of sources suggest that P.Oxy. 840 would have been influenced by the Gospel of Mark itself, and not an earlier source.⁸⁸

6. SUMMARY

The above discussion has attempted to demonstrate that P.Oxy. 840 shares substantial verbal, structural, and thematic connections with these five canonical texts. Three summary observations are in order: (i) A large portion of the connections above are with the parts of the canonical gospels most likely due to final redactional activity. In order for the author of P.Oxy. 840 to reflect the redactional work of the evangelists, he must have been influenced by the gospels in their finished form.⁸⁹ (ii) Notice that P.Oxy. 840 has connections with all four of the canonical gospels. These connections are not just with Q material, but include Mark, M source, L source, and the Johannine tradition. When faced with this broad "spectrum" of connections we are forced to ask a simple question: Is it likely that P.Oxy. 840 could have been influenced by a source prior to the canonical gospels that contained material from such diverse branches of first-century Christianity? John P. Meier responds to such a question as it pertains to the *Gospel of Thomas*, but his answer applies to P.Oxy. 840 as well:

What were the source, locus, and composition of this incredibly broad yet early tradition? Who were its bearers? Is it really conceivable that there was some early Christian source that embraced within itself all these different strands of what became the canonical gospels? Or is it more likely that the *Gospel of Thomas* has conflated material from the gospels of Matthew and

⁸⁸ The *Gospel of Thomas* 14 has a saying that is similar to Mark 7:15: "For what goes into your mouth will not defile you, but that which issues from your mouth—that will defile you." This saying may suggest the possibility that P.Oxy. 840 could be dependent upon the Gospel of Thomas. However, as noted above, P.Oxy. 840 has connections with portions of Mark 7 that are both redactional and portions that may be traced back to an earlier source.

⁸⁹ Such redaction-critical evidence is commonly appealed to in order to establish relationships between two documents, particularly in the discussions about the problem of John and the Synoptics; see Norman Perrin and D.C. Duling, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 332-337; D. Moody Smith, "John and the Synoptics: Some Dimensions of the Problem," *NTS* 26 (1980): 425-444, 436; L. Kittlaus, "John and Mark: A Methodological Evaluation of Norman Perrin's Suggestion," in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 269-279.

Luke, with possible use of Mark and John as well? Of the two hypotheses I find the second much more probable.⁹⁰

Thus, even if P.Oxy. 840 shared no connections with specific redactional portions of the four gospels, the broad “spectrum” of P.Oxy. 840’s connections suggest that it did not draw upon a source behind the canonical texts but was influenced by the canonical texts themselves. (iii) When we look at these five texts as a whole we see that they are not a random sampling from the canonical gospels but each share three fundamental themes in common: (a) ceremonial washings, (b) inner vs. outer cleanliness, and (c) conflict with Jewish authorities.⁹¹ This combination of factors leads to the following question: If our author knew the canonical gospels and their content resided in his memory, is it not likely that the verbal connections with these five passages are due to the common themes they share with P.Oxy. 840? In other words, as our author constructed a story of Jesus that dealt with (a) ceremonial washings, (b) inner vs. outer cleanliness, and (c) conflict with Jewish authorities, would his mind not naturally return to the canonical stories that he was familiar with that touched on these same themes? If so, then the suggestion that P.Oxy. 840 was influenced by the content of the canonical gospels residing in his memory (indirect dependence view) has much explanatory power for helping us understand the author’s compositional method. Instead of merely a “catchword” theory of composition, this could almost be called a “catchtheme” theory of composition where the author recollects various passages that deal with the same general subject matter of his own composition.

Although the above considerations do not rule out the possibility that our author drew upon unknown sources earlier than the canonical gospels (independence view), it seems that the simpler explanation is that he knew the canonical gospels and was influenced by them in his composition of P.Oxy. 840. After all, even if we were to argue that P.Oxy. 840 used an unknown source, that source would still have to look a lot like the canonical gospels in order to account for the above connections.

⁹⁰ Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 137.

⁹¹ Although John 13 may not seem to mention conflict with Jewish authorities, Herold Weiss, “Foot Washing in the Johannine Community,” *NT 21* (1979): 298-325, has made a convincing case that the chapter deals directly with the upcoming persecution that the disciples (i.e., the church) would face from Jewish authorities. He declares, “We must interpret the scene of the washing of the disciples’ feet in the context of a community facing persecution and martyrdom” (310).

C.K. Barrett makes this same point concerning the relationship between John and Mark, but it also applies to P.Oxy. 840:

The fact is that there crops up repeatedly in John evidence that suggests that the evangelist knew a body of traditional material that either was Mark, or was something much like Mark; and anyone who after an interval of nineteen centuries feels himself in a position to distinguish nicely between 'Mark' and 'something much like Mark' is at liberty to do so. The simpler hypothesis, which does not involve the postulation of otherwise unknown entities, is not without attractiveness.⁹²

C. LITERARY FORM/STRUCTURE

As we continue to trace the origins of this second pericope, we must go beyond the detailed textual evidence and also consider the overall literary form/structure of the story. Such an examination will shed additional light upon the origins of P.Oxy. 840 by revealing more about the author's intentions and compositional choices.

1. CONTROVERSY DIALOGUE

The overall structure of the entire pericope seems to fit the literary form of the "controversy dialogue" as described by Rudolph Bultmann.⁹³ When we examine the structure and compare it with other such controversy dialogues from the canonical gospels we see substantial similarities. Controversy dialogues often share a fivefold structure: (a) *Narrative Setting*. The starting point of such dialogues is some action of Jesus or his disciples that causes a controversy.⁹⁴ (b) *Initial Question or challenge*. Jesus is often challenged by the Jewish leaders to account for such actions.⁹⁵ (c) *Jesus' initial response*. The first response of Jesus is often a counter-question to his opponents.⁹⁶ (d) *Response of the Jews*. In many instances, the Jewish leaders respond to Jesus' counter-question.⁹⁷ (e) *Jesus' final statement*. Jesus

⁹² C.K. Barrett, "John and the Synoptic Gospels," *ExpT* 85 (1974): 228-233, 232.

⁹³ Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 39-54.

⁹⁴ E.g., plucking grain on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28); failure to wash hands (Mark 7:1-23); and healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6). See Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 39.

⁹⁵ E.g., Mark 2:24, 7:5, 11:28.

⁹⁶ E.g., Mark 2:19, 3:4; Luke 14:3.

⁹⁷ E.g., Mark 10:4, 12:16.

usually concludes his dialogue with a key statement or core teaching.⁹⁸ The similarities to the canonical gospels can be seen when the overall structure of P.Oxy. 840 is compared with a typical controversy story, Mark 11:27-33:

<p>Narrative Setting</p>	<p>καὶ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ περιπατοῦντος αὐτοῦ</p> <p>And as He was walking in the temple, (Mark 11:27a)</p>	<p>καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτοὺς εἰσηγάγετο εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγνευτήριον καὶ περιεπάτει ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ</p> <p>And he took them and led them into the place of purification itself and was walking in the temple. (840, l. 7-9)</p>
<p>Initial Question or Confrontation</p>	<p>ἔρχονται πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ ἔλεγον αὐτῷ, Ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς; ἢ τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἵνα ταῦτα ποιῆς;</p> <p>the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and <i>began</i> saying to him, “By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do these things?” (Mark 11:27b-28)</p>	<p>καὶ προσ[λ]θὼν Φαρισαῖος τις ἀρχιερεὺς Λε[υ]εῖς τὸ ὄνομα συνετυχεν αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν τῷ σωτηρὶ, τίς ἐπέτρεψε σοὶ πατ[ε]ῖν τούτου τοῦ ἀγνευτήριου καὶ ἰδεῖν [ταυ]τὰ τὰ ἁγία σκευὴ μὴτε λουσα[μ]εν[ω] μ[η] τε μὴν τῶν μαθητῶν σου τοὺς π[ο]δας βαπτισθέντων; ἀλλὰ μεμολυ[μ]μενος ἐπάτησας τούτου τοῦ ἱεροῦ τ[ο]ποῦντα καθαρόν, οὐ οὐδεὶς ἀ[λλ]ος εἰ μὴ λουσαμένος καὶ ἀλλα[ξ]ας τὰ εἰδυῖα μάτα πατεῖ, οὐδε ο[ρ]αν τολμα ταυτὰ τὰ ἁγία σκευή.</p> <p>A certain Pharisee, a chief priest named Levi, came along and met them and said to the Savior, “Who allowed you to trample this place of purification and to see these holy vessels, when you have not bathed yourself nor have your disciples even washed their feet? But, being defiled, you trampled this temple place which is clean, where no one walks or dares to view these holy vessels except he who has bathed themselves and changed his</p>
<p>Jesus Responds with a Question</p>	<p>ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἐπερωτήσω ὑμᾶς ἓνα λόγον, καὶ ἀποκρίθητέ μοι καὶ ἐρῶ ὑμῖν ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιῶ· τὸ βάπτισμα τὸ Ἰωάννου ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἢ ἢ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων; ἀποκρίθητέ μοι.</p> <p>And Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question, and you answer me, and <i>then</i> I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer me.” (Mark 11:29-30)</p>	<p>καὶ σ[τα]θεὶς εὐθύς ὁ σωτὴρ συν τ[ο]ῖς μαθηταῖς [ε] ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ· σὺ οὖν εἰ ταυθα ὡν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, καθαρευεῖς;</p> <p>And then the Savior stood with the disciples and answered, “Are you therefore, being here in this temple, clean?” (840, l. 21-24)</p>
<p>Jews Respond</p>	<p>καὶ διελογίζοντο πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς λέγοντες, Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν, Ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, ἐρεῖ, Διὰ τί [οὖν] οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ; ἀλλὰ</p>	<p>λεγει αὐτῷ ἐκεῖνος καθαρευεῖ. ελουσα μὴν γὰρ ἐν τῇ λιμνῇ τοῦ Δαυειδ, καὶ δι' ἑστῶτος κλειμακῶς κατελθὼν δι</p>

⁹⁸ E.g., Mark 2:21, 7:15.

	<p>εἶπωμεν, Ἐξ ἀνθρώπων; ἐφοβοῦντο τὸν ὄχλον· ἅπαντες γὰρ εἶχον τὸν Ἰωάννην ὄντως ὅτι προφήτης ἦν. καὶ ἀποκριθέντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγουσιν, Οὐκ οἶδαμεν.</p> <p>They <i>began</i> reasoning among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’ But shall we say, ‘From men?’” -- they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet. Answering Jesus, they said, “We do not know.” (Mark 11:31-33a)</p>	<p>δι’ ἑτερας κλειμακος κατελθων δι ἑτερας α[ν]ηλων, και λευκα ενδυματα ενεδουσαμην και καθαρα και τοτε ηλθον και προσεβλεψα τουτοις τοις αγιοις σκευεσιν.</p> <p>He said to him, “I am clean. For I bathed in the Pool of David, and went down by one staircase and came up by another, and put on white and clean garments, and then I came and looked upon these holy vessels.” (840, l. 24-30)</p>
<p>Jesus Responds</p>	<p>καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς, Οὐδὲ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιῶ.</p> <p>And Jesus said to them, “Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” (Mark 11:33b)</p>	<p>ο σωτηρ προς αυτον αποκριθεις ειπεν, ουαι τυφλοι μη ορωντ[ε]ς. συ ελουσω τουτοις τοις χεομενοις υ[δ]ασι(ν) εν οις κυνες και χοιροι βεβλην[ται] νυκτος και ημερας, και νιψαμε[ν]ος το εκτος δερμα εσμηξω, σπερ [κα]ι αι πορναι και αι αυλητριδες μυρι[ζ]ου[σιν] και λουουσιν και σμηκουσι [και κ]αλλωπιζουσι προς επιθυμι[αν] των ανθρωπων, ενδοθεν δε εκει[ναι] πεπληρω[ν]ται σκορπιων και [πασης] κακ[ια]ς. εγω δε και οι [μαθηται μου] ους λεγεις μη βεβα[πτισθαι] βεβα[μμεθα] εν υδασι ζω[σιν] εκ του ουρανο[υ] ελθουσι(ν) απο [του] πατρος επανω. αλ[λα] ουαι τοις[...]</p> <p>The Savior answered him and said, “Woe to you blind men who do not see! You have bathed in only these natural waters in which dogs and pigs lay night and day, and having washed you have wiped the outer skin, which also prostitutes and flute-girls anoint and wash and wipe and beautify for the lust of men, but within they are full of scorpions and all wickedness. But, I and my disciples, who you say have not bathed, have been bathed in living waters [from heaven] which come from [the Father above]. But, woe to... (840, l.30-45)</p>

One quickly observes that the final response of Jesus in P.Oxy. 840 is quite lengthy and not typical of the canonical controversy dialogues which normally end with a brief saying of Jesus. It is clear that the author of P.Oxy. 840 has added a “woe statement” into the final portion of the controversy dialogue (a characteristic

which will be discussed more below). Aside from this one difference, the remaining structural similarities between P.Oxy. 840 and Mark 11:27-33 are intact, making it clear that the author of P.Oxy. 840 was familiar with the form of a typical controversy dialogue. Of course, this factor alone does not necessitate that he used the canonical gospels as his source. Controversy dialogues must have been a popular medium for conveying stories of Jesus in the early church and our author may have been exposed to such stories from a variety of sources (either oral or written). However, in light of the connections with the canonical gospels already noted above, and in light of the fact that P.Oxy. 840 stands as the only controversy dialogue known outside the canonical gospels,⁹⁹ the probability that P.Oxy. 840 modelled its dialogue on the canonical gospels is substantially increased—making the indirect dependence view the preferred choice.¹⁰⁰

2. "LAYERED" TRADITIONS WITHIN THE CONTROVERSY DIALOGUE

Although the overall form of this pericope is a controversy dialogue, closer examination reveals that other traditions are woven into its structure. Thus, as a whole, we have three interlocking traditions or "layers": (a) the entire pericope is a controversy dialogue, (b) the final response of Jesus in the controversy dialogue (l. 30-45) takes the form of a "woe statement", and (c) embedded within the woe statement in lines 41-45 are distinctive Johannine elements. Rather than taking these distinctive traditions and simply placing them side by side, the author has accomplished the more intricate (and unique) task of layering them *within* one another. So, one could understand the different layers of tradition like concentric circles; although each is distinct, they are contained within one another. Such a three-fold structure is unique to P.Oxy. 840 and not found in any other gospel, including the canonical gospels.

In essence, this "layering" makes P.Oxy. 840 different from the canonical texts in two important ways:

⁹⁹ To my knowledge, there is no controversy dialogue (except P.Oxy. 840) outside the canonical gospels that fits the format discussed above.

¹⁰⁰ Keep in mind that choice "a" (dependence view) was ruled out above in our discussion of vocabulary and grammar. With such a lack of exact verbal connections, combined with a high proportion of divergent vocabulary, it is difficult to argue for direct literary dependence.

- (a) *It is lengthier and more highly developed than the comparable elements in the canonical gospels.* We have already examined the traditional form that the “controversy dialogues” take in the canonical gospels. Typically these dialogues conclude with a succinct statement of Jesus that encapsulates the debate; e.g., “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). However, P.Oxy. 840 concludes not with a succinct statement but with a lengthy set of woe statements, making the final statement of its controversy dialogue abnormally more developed than its canonical counterparts. Thus, we must ask the following question: Is it more likely that the more developed controversy dialogue was later than the canonical gospels, or that the canonical gospels were an abridgment of the more developed sort of controversy dialogue? The debate over whether the tendency of gospel tradition in the early church is to lengthen or shorten is a vigorous one that we will not attempt to resolve here (certainly both expansion and contraction happened to gospel tradition).¹⁰¹ However, Sanders’ erudite study demonstrates that as one moves from the canonical period to the period of the apocryphal gospels there is a marked tendency to add speeches and dialogues rather than to contract them:

There is a clear tendency in the Apocryphal Gospels to create new speeches...The Apocryphal Gospels also show a clear tendency to create new dialogues. This includes the tendency to make what was previously a speech into dialogue by the insertion of a new speech.¹⁰²

Although this trend does not guarantee that P.Oxy. 840 is later than the canonical gospels, it certainly makes such a scenario the more plausible one.

- (b) *It is a conflation of elements that are typically kept separate within the canonical gospels.* At the core of this “layering” in P.Oxy. 840 is a mixture of traditions normally kept separate in the canonical texts. Is it more likely that

¹⁰¹ Some key works on the trends in synoptic traditions, particularly as it pertains to form criticism and textual criticism, include: Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: J. Clarke, 1971); Vincent Taylor, *Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1933); L.J. McGinley, *Form-Criticism of the Synoptic Healing Narratives: A Study in Theories of Martin Dibelius and Rudolph Bultmann* (Woodstock, Md: Woodstock College Press, 1944); F.C. Grant, “Where Form Criticism and Textual Criticism Overlap,” *JBL* 49 (1940): 11-21; Leon E. Wright, *Alterations of the Words of Jesus: As Quoted in the Literature of the Second Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952); C.S.C. Williams, *Alterations to the Text of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1951).

¹⁰² Sanders, *Tendencies*, 66-67.

these three elements were originally combined and then separated later by the canonical writers, or is it more likely that they were originally separate and combined by a writer later than the canonical gospels? Sanders again documents how the move from the period of the canonical gospels to the period of the apocryphal gospels is marked by an increased tendency to conflate gospel stories.¹⁰³ Not only is this trend evident in the citations of the early church fathers,¹⁰⁴ and also in textual tradition itself (as scribes conflated texts), but it is particularly noteworthy in the mixing of Synoptic and Johannine material in second-century apocryphal texts. In addition to Tatian's *Diatesseron*,¹⁰⁵ this phenomenon is found in Papyrus Egerton 2,¹⁰⁶ the *Gospel of Peter*,¹⁰⁷ the *Gospel of Thomas*,¹⁰⁸ the Secret Gospel of Mark,¹⁰⁹ and the long ending of Mark.¹¹⁰ These examples demonstrate that the second century was the ideal climate for

¹⁰³ Sanders, *Tendencies*, 267-268.

¹⁰⁴ See references in footnote 6 above. The citations of Justin Martyr from the gospels were often conflations of the three Synoptics and even may have been drawn from the *Gospel of the Hebrews*—yet another source that conflated the synoptic texts in the second century. For more, see W.L. Petersen, “From Justin to Papyrus: The History of the Harmonized Gospel Tradition,” in *Studia Patristica*, ed. Elizabeth Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 71-96, 71-73; and A.J. Bellinzoni, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967).

¹⁰⁵ There are good reasons to think that the harmony which Tatian popularized may have been developed by Justin earlier in the second century (c.150). See William L. Petersen, “Textual Evidence of Tatian’s Dependence upon Justin’s ΑΠΟΜΝΗΜΟΝΕΥΜΑΤΑ,” *NTS* 36 (1990): 512-534. It seems evident that there were other attempts at harmonizations in the early church; see F.C. Burkitt, “The Dura Fragment of Tatian,” *JTS* 36 (1935): 255-259, and also Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 99, who argues that the Latin harmonization of Victor of Capua (Codex Fuldensis) can be traced back to the time before Tatian.

¹⁰⁶ Jeremias in Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1: 95. Others in agreement include, F. Neiryck, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” 153-160, and David F. Wright, “Papyrus Egerton 2 (the Unknown Gospel): Part of the Gospel of Peter?,” *SecCent* 5 (1985-86): 129-150. Of course, some scholars have disagreed with this conclusion: Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 207; and Daniels, *Egerton Gospel*, 75-138.

¹⁰⁷ Wright, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” 134-145; Raymond Brown, “The Gospel of Peter and Canonical Authority,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 321-343

¹⁰⁸ Raymond Brown, “The Gospel of Thomas and St. John's Gospel,” 155-177.

¹⁰⁹ F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 306; for similar views see also F. Neiryck, “La fuite du jeune homme en Mc 14, 51-52,” *ETL* 55 (1979): 43-66; Helmut Merkel, “Auf den Spuren des Urmarkus,” *ZTK* 71 (1974): 123-144; Raymond Brown, “The Relation of the ‘Secret Gospel of Mark’ to the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 36 (1974): 466-485. For the opposing view see Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); and his response to Merkel: “Merkel on the Longer Ending of Mark,” *ZTK* 75 (1975): 133-150.

¹¹⁰ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 137-150; For a similar view see Theo K. Heckel, *Vom Evangelium des Markus zum viergestaltigen Evangelium* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1999), esp. 32-104; and C.B. Amphoux, “La Finale Longue de Marc: Un Epilogue des Quatre Évangiles,” in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*, ed. Camille Focant (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 548-555.

the production of texts (gospels or harmonies) that exhibited a mix of Johannine and synoptic material. Neiryneck declares, “‘Harmonization’ is a general characteristic of the extracanonical gospel literature in the second century.”¹¹¹ Thus, P.Oxy. 840’s conflation and harmonization suggests that it most likely fits into a time period after the canonical gospels.

3. SUMMARY

How can this discussion of form/structure help us choose between the various views on the origin of P.Oxy. 840? By now it seems evident that the dependence view is not an option due to the overwhelming lack of direct textual copying as noted in prior sections above. Thus, in the end, we must choose between the independence view and the indirect dependence view. Although such a choice is difficult, the decisive issue here is that the form/structure of P.Oxy. 840 appears to be a later development than the canonical gospels. If this is correct, then the probability is increased that our author would have been exposed to the canonical material (directly or indirectly) by the time that he wrote, making it more unlikely that he would have been drawing on a source behind the canonical gospels. Thus, it appears that the indirect dependence view (option “b”) is the more likely choice.

D. ORIGINS OF THE TRADITION

So far we have evaluated both the textual connections and literary form of the second pericope, and consequently established that P.Oxy. 840 was likely influenced by the canonical gospels, specifically the five passages discussed above. As we continue to explore the origins of P.Oxy. 840, we now turn our attention to other factors in the text that suggest P.Oxy. 840 was written after the canonical gospels. Of course, these factors will not directly demonstrate that P.Oxy. 840 was

¹¹¹ F. Neiryneck, “The Apocryphal Gospels and the Gospel of Mark,” in *The New Testament in Early Christianity: La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif*, ed. J.-M. Sevrin (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 123-175; 169. On this same point see also, Peter M. Head, “Tatian’s Christology and its Influence in the Composition of the Diatesseron,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 43 (1992): 121-137; esp.121.

influenced by the canonical gospels. But, again, if it can be shown that P.Oxy. 840 is later than the canonical gospels, then it will add further impetus to reject the independence view, because there is an increased probability (although no guarantee) that our author would have been exposed to the canonical gospels by the time that he wrote.

1. MORE SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION OF JESUS' OPPONENT

A particularly striking feature of P.Oxy. 840 is the naming of the Pharisaic chief priest challenging Jesus. When we turn to the canonical gospels we quickly realize that no controversy dialogues include the name of the opponent of Jesus, instead they remain characteristically anonymous.¹¹² This feature forces us to ask whether the inclusion of specific names may be evidence of a later stage in gospel development. Although the existence of such specific names does not *prove* that a tradition is later—after all, Mark often includes names when the other Synoptics do not¹¹³—most scholars agree that the general trend of later gospel traditions was to add greater detail. While acknowledging that this trend is not absolute, Sanders declares:

The manuscripts show a clear tendency to make characters and places more explicit by the addition of proper names. The Apocryphal Gospels, as is well known, show a clear tendency to create names for unnamed Gospel characters and to name new characters whom they introduce.¹¹⁴

This conclusion is confirmed when we examine the gospel manuscripts and apocryphal traditions. Bruce Metzger has catalogued a number of scribal modifications in the manuscripts of the New Testament showing the tendency to add names to anonymous individuals in the gospel stories at later stages of the tradition.¹¹⁵ This trend is played out in numerous apocryphal texts. For example, in the *Gospel of Peter* (8:31) the name of the centurion at the crucifixion is given as

¹¹² Although, we do possess the names of Pharisees and priests in other contexts; e.g., Nicodemus (John 3:1ff.), Simon (Luke 7:45), Annas and Caiaphas (John 18:13ff.).

¹¹³ Sanders, *Tendencies*, 24, 168-172.

¹¹⁴ Sanders, *Tendencies*, 145.

¹¹⁵ Bruce M. Metzger, "Names for the Nameless in the New Testament: A Study in the Growth of Christian Tradition," in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. P. Granfield and J.A. Jungmann, vol. 1 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), 79-99.

Petronius. In the *Acts of Pilate* (7:1), the woman who touched the cloak of Jesus is given the name Bernice. The *Gospel of the Nazarenes* notes that the man with the withered hand in Matt 12:9 ff. is named Malchus.¹¹⁶ The *Apocryphon of John* tells the story of the apostle John confronted in the temple by a Pharisee named Arimanius.¹¹⁷

When one considers this historical pattern in conjunction with the fact that (a) all the controversy stories of the canonical gospels have anonymous opponents, and (b) P.Oxy. 840 is the only known extra-canonical controversy story and supplies a specific name for Jesus' opponent, then we are strongly inclined to think that P.Oxy. 840 is likely a later development than the canonical gospels.

2. USE OF THE TERM σωτηρ FOR JESUS

One cannot help but immediately notice in P.Oxy. 840 that in place of the common terms "Jesus" or "Lord" the term "Savior" is used exclusively. Such a trend is quite foreign to the canonical gospels where the word itself (σωτηρ) only appears three times (Luke 1:47, 2:11; John 4:42). Of these instances, only once is σωτηρ used as the subject of the sentence (Luke 2:11) and even then it lacks the definite article. In contrast, σωτηρ in P.Oxy. 840 is used not only in place of "Jesus" or "Lord" as the subject of the sentence, but it always appears with the definite article ("the Savior"). This marked difference from the canonical gospels may be able to shed further light upon the date and origins of our gospel fragment.

Of primary concern here is not the origin of the term σωτηρ and its Hellenistic background,¹¹⁸ rather we will focus upon when this term began to

¹¹⁶ Because of the confusion over the Jewish-Christian gospels, many of the older works considered this citation to be from the *Gospel of the Hebrews*; e.g., Sanders, *Tendencies*, 131. For the details, see Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1:163. For the various spellings of "Nazarenes" and the justification for my choice, see chapter five below.

¹¹⁷ *Ap. John* 1.5. This incident bears an uncanny resemblance to P.Oxy. 840 as one of the disciples are confronted in the temple by a named Pharisee. However, the *Apocryphon of John* as a whole is unlike P.Oxy. 840, bears no resemblance to the canonical gospels, and is considered mythological Gnosticism; see, James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), 98-116.

¹¹⁸ The Hellenistic background of this term has been well documented elsewhere; see F.J. Dölger, *Ichthys* (Münster in Westf.: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1928), esp. 406-422; Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), esp. 310-317; David Stanley, "Jesus, Saviour of Mankind," *Studia Missionalia* 29 (1980): 57-84; Craig R. Koester, "The Savior of the World (John 4:42)," *JBL* 109 (1990): 665-680.

infiltrate Christian documents in a more substantial manner. It is well known that σωτηρ began to appear with more regularity during the time of the Pastoral Epistles and 2 Peter, most likely towards the end of the first century.¹¹⁹ Despite the abundance of the term in the Pastorals and 2 Peter, it is quite rare in the Apostolic Fathers. It does not appear at all in the Didache, Barnabas, or Hermas; only once each in 1 and 2 Clement, Diognetus, and the Martyrdom of Polycarp; and four times in Ignatius.¹²⁰ However, as we move further into the second century, we see the term used more frequently again in a number of gnostic Christian documents: *Gospel of Philip*, *Apocryphon of James*, *Dialogue of the Savior*, *Gospel of Mary*, and the *Gospel of Truth*.¹²¹ In particular, Irenaeus berates the gnostic Valentinians for always preferring the term σωτηρ for Jesus rather than κυριος.¹²² Although the term was popular in gnostic circles, it by no means was restricted to them and also appeared in a number of non-gnostic texts such as *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the *Epistula Apostolorum*, the *Gospel of Peter*, and in church fathers such as Origen and Clement of Alexandria.¹²³ In addition, Longenecker notes that the title was also part of “the biblical heritage of early Jewish-Christians” and should not necessarily be connected to a Greco-Roman or gnostic source.¹²⁴ Overall, these historical considerations allow us to agree with Swete’s conclusion: “The use of σωτηρ for Ἰησους or κυριος makes for a second century origin.”¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Five times in Titus (1:3,4; 2:10,13; 3:4,6); once in 2 Tim 1:10; 3 in 1 Tim (1:1; 2:3; 4:10); five times in 2 Peter (1:1,11; 2:20; 3:2, 18).

¹²⁰ W. Foerster, *TDNT* 7.1013-1022.

¹²¹ Although dates for such documents are always in dispute, the majority of scholars place the origins of these gospels sometime in the second century. For the details see Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1:179-208, 285-312, 358-359, 391-394.

¹²² *Haer.* 1.1.3.

¹²³ Again, see Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1:209-227, 249-284. Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 2.12; Clement, *Strom.* 3.91ff.; *Exc.* 67.

¹²⁴ Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1970, reprint 2001), 143. Longenecker also observes that this title of Jesus is indicative of “later writings” (143) of the Jewish-Christian church, thus supporting our contention that P.Oxy. 840 is later than the canonical gospels.

¹²⁵ Henry Barclay Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1908), 1. See also, Hans Lietzmann, “Das neugefundene Evangelienfragment und seine Vorgänger,” *Beilage zur allgemeinen Zeitung* 31 (1908): 662-672.

3. JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES VIEWED TOGETHER AS A UNIT

In lines 41-45 Jesus speaks of how both he and his disciples have been “bathed” (βεβαμμεθα) in the “living waters” (υδασιν ζωσιν). The fact that Jesus includes himself in the same spiritual cleansing of his disciples is noteworthy on two grounds: (a) linguistically, we have very few examples in the canonical gospels where Jesus includes himself collectively with his disciples (e.g., “we...” or “my disciples and I...”) and no instances of Jesus doing this as he addresses a third party;¹²⁶ and (b) theologically, Jesus including himself with the “spiritual cleansing” that his disciples received seems to imply that he also might have needed such cleansing. Jeremias refers to this problem as “the first really weighty objection” against the authenticity of P.Oxy. 840 and declares, “we have no alternative but to take lines 41-45 as a later stylization.”¹²⁷ Likewise, Riggenschach seems to think this language betrays the story’s later date:

In dem leider nur unvollständig erhaltenen Schlußsatz faßt sich Jesus mit den Jüngern zusammen als einer wahren Reinigung bedürftig und teilhaftig. Dergleichen begegnet uns in den kanonischen Evangelien nirgends. Dort redet Jesus wohl von der Leidenstaupe, der er sich unterziehen muß, aber von einem Reinigungsbad oder auch nur von einer ihm behufs Reinigung verordneten Geistestaupe hören wir ihn niemals reden. Hier bekundet das Bruchstück unverkennbar seinen apokryphen Charakter.¹²⁸

Let us examine these concerns in order:

a) In regard to the linguistic observations made by Jeremias and Riggenschach, it is certainly evident that P.Oxy. 840 and the canonical gospels stand in contrast to one another.¹²⁹ What can such differences tell us about the origins of P.Oxy. 840? In essence, the express use of “we” language in P.Oxy. 840 serves to establish a greater solidarity between Jesus and his disciples than is explicitly evident in the

¹²⁶ The only examples I could find of the collective “we” were Mark 10:33 and Luke 22:8. Jeremias does not consider the Lord’s Prayer to be a relevant example because it was intended to be prayed by the disciples and not by the disciples and Jesus together.

¹²⁷ Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 57.

¹²⁸ E. Riggenschach, “Das Wort Jesu im Gespräch mit dem pharisäischen Hohenpriester nach dem Oxyrhynchus Fragment v. 840,” *ZNW* 25 (1926): 140-44, 143-144.

¹²⁹ Although this contrast is real, it should not be overemphasized. We do possess some canonical texts that reveal solidarity between Jesus and his disciples; e.g., in John’s resurrection account Jesus refers to the disciples as “my brothers” (John 20:17). Even though this passage does not use “we,” it does communicate a unity between Jesus and his disciples that must be recognized.

canonical texts. Rather than simply defending the actions of his disciples as a third party (e.g., Mark 2:19ff.), the Jesus of P.Oxy. 840 joins himself with them and unites his fate with theirs. Thus, there is a heightened contrast between the Jews on one side and Jesus and his disciples (as one unit) on the other side. This contrast is further established by two other considerations: (i) Jesus directly contrasts his own actions (and the disciples') with the actions of the Pharisees. In the canonical woe statements (Matt 23:1-39; Luke 11:37-52) Jesus simply busies himself with condemning the Pharisees but speaks nothing about how he or his disciples are different. However, in the middle of P.Oxy. 840's woe statement Jesus describes his own behavior ("But I and my disciples...") which serves to accentuate the difference between the way Jesus does things and the way the Jewish leaders do things. (ii) The use of the phrase *καὶ σ[ταθεις εὐθὺς ὁ σωτὴρ σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῶ* ("then the Savior stood with the disciples and answered") in l.21-22. The use of *σ[ταθεις* here in conjunction with *σὺν* can mean more than just physically standing up but can have the connotations of "take a stand." The NASB translation picks up this nuance when it translates a very similar construction in Acts 2:14: *σταθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος σὺν τοῖς ἑνδεκά ἐπήρην τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπεφθέγγετο αὐτοῖς;*; "But Peter, *taking his stand* with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them." When Jesus "takes his stand" with the disciples in P.Oxy. 840 it serves the same purpose as the switch to the "we" language: it heightens the conflict between Jesus and the Jews by more explicitly showing that Jesus has chosen to align himself with his disciples over and against the Jewish leadership.

If the polarization between Jesus and the Jews in P.Oxy. 840 is more severe than the canonical texts (as it seems to be), then it suggests that P.Oxy. 840 reflects a time period where the rift between Judaism and Christianity is wider than in the canonical texts. P.Oxy. 840's portrayal of Jesus would fit well with the needs of early Christians who continued to suffer all forms of persecution—particularly from Jewish groups—and would need reassurance that Jesus is willing to identify himself with them in their cause as he identified with the disciples.¹³⁰ The implication of this feature on the historical context of P.Oxy. 840 will be taken up in the next chapter.

¹³⁰ Bultmann notes that as the gospel tradition developed in the first generations of Christianity, Christians saw the disciples as representative (or symbolic) of the church (Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 48). Thus, for Christ to identify with his disciples in P.Oxy. 840 is really to identify with

A further hint that such “we” language may represent a time later than the canonical gospels comes from the fact that in other apocryphal works we see the disciples using the collective “we.” In the *Gospel of Peter*, we see Peter speaking on behalf of all the disciples in the first person plural (7.26; 14.59), in the *Apocryphon of James* we see James speaking on behalf of the twelve (2.15-20; 11.5; 12.15; 15.5-25), and in the *Epistula Apostolorum* all twelve of the disciples write the letter in the first person plural (1-2). Although these considerations are not definitive, they raise the possibility that such collective language was characteristic of later apocryphal works.

b) Although the language of 1.41-45 seems to be a later development than the canonical texts, it is not certain that it necessarily represents a significant theological departure from the way Jesus viewed his own need for spiritual cleansing in the canonical gospels. In the canonical gospels Jesus submits himself to the same water baptism that the disciples underwent at the hands of John the Baptist (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22), and it is clear that this water baptism was symbolic of the greater spiritual cleansing that the Holy Spirit would accomplish (Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16).¹³¹ So, even in the canonical gospels there is a sense in which Jesus shares in the same spiritual cleansing of his disciples. Rather than diverging from the canonical gospels on this point, P.Oxy. 840 actually draws a similar parallel: both contrast a cleansing by water with a cleansing by the Holy Spirit (i.e., “living water”).¹³²

In the end, we can agree with Jeremias and Riggerbach that the stylization of these lines—Jesus speaking of his cleansing along with the disciples in the first person plural—is later than the canonical gospels, while the theological point is consistent with what the canonical gospels previously taught in a more subtle fashion. Therefore, P.Oxy. 840 does precisely what we would expect a later

the church as they too suffered persecution at the hands of the Jews. More on this below in chapter five.

¹³¹ Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 57.

¹³² The parallel is strengthened when we realize that John's baptism was also in “running” water (the Jordan river) and may have its origins in various Jewish ritual baths. For an up-to-date review of John the Baptist's possible connections to the Essenes, see Chapter 8 of Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

apocryphal gospel to do: it makes explicit what the canonical gospels have as implicit.¹³³

4. CHANGES IN THE STYLE AND CONTENT OF THE WOE STATEMENT

When we examine the woes in P.Oxy. 840 in greater detail we realize that some features point to a date later than the canonical gospels. Let us consider two:

- a) In the woes of Matt 23:25,27 and Luke 11:39, Jesus uses physical, inanimate objects (e.g., cups, plates, tombs) as an illustration of how the Pharisees are clean on the outside, but wicked on the inside. However, when we turn to P.Oxy. 840 we see that Jesus is now using *people*—harlots and flutegirls—as an illustration of the inner/outer distinction. Such a shift seems uncharacteristic of the Jesus of the canonical gospels who not only had compassion on the “sinners” of society (Matt 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 7:36-50), but told the Pharisees that “the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the Kingdom of God ahead of you” (Matt 21:31). Why then would the author of P.Oxy. 840 have Jesus use prostitutes as the core illustration of hypocrisy? It is well known that the orthodox communities of the second (and third) century frequently vilified their heretical opponents by bringing charges of sexual impropriety against them.¹³⁴ Irenaeus was typical of such activity: (i) he claims that the Valentinians’ distinction between flesh and spirit leads them to engage in licentious sexual practices;¹³⁵ (ii) he claims that the Carpocrations have a theology that compels them to violate all ethical laws, and thus engage in indiscriminate sexual activity;¹³⁶ (iii) he claims that the heretic Marcus seduces women by having them speak in tongues to the point where they are susceptible to his advances.¹³⁷

¹³³ Metzger summarizes this trend of apocryphal literature in Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 166-167.

¹³⁴ For fuller discussion, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15-16; Gérard Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University, 1981); Robert M. Grant, “Charges of Immorality Against Various Religious Groups in Antiquity,” in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions*, ed. R. van der Broek and M.J. Vermaseren (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 161-170; and Luke T. Johnson, “The New Testament’s Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 419-441.

¹³⁵ *Haer.* 1.6.3-4.

¹³⁶ *Haer.* 1.25.4; for more against the Carpocrations see Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.2.10-16.

¹³⁷ *Haer.* 1.15.3.

John Chrysostom uses the exact phrase “harlots and flutegirls” as a means of degrading the Jewish opponents of his day: “So, too, the tents which at this moment are pitched among them are no better than the inns where harlots and flute girls ply their trades.”¹³⁸ Frederik Wisse argues that such a strategy can be traced back to the later period of the New Testament when books like Jude accuse the heretics of being “licentious” (v.4), “immoral” (v.7), and those who “defile the flesh” (v.8).¹³⁹ Although this sort of language was present even during later New Testament times, explicit accusations of sexual impropriety on the lips of Jesus is foreign to the canonical gospels and suggests that P.Oxy. 840 may fit better within the polemical context of the early (post-New Testament) church when conflict with Jewish opponents would have reached severe levels and charges of sexual immorality would have been more effective and commonplace. Such an argument will be developed further in the next chapter.

- b) A distinctive characteristic of the woes of P.Oxy. 840 is their extensive detail and over-elaboration when compared to the canonical gospels. While each woe of the canonical gospels makes a comparison to *one* group of items (e.g., cups and plates or whitewashed tombs), P.Oxy. 840 makes a comparison to *two* groups of items: prostitutes and flutegirls and dogs and pigs.¹⁴⁰ Even more detail is added by the extensive, and overly verbose, chain of verbs that describe the actions of the prostitutes and flutegirls: cleanse...wipe...anoint ...wash...wipe...beautify (l.34-39). As noted above, such added detail and elaboration is generally characteristic of later stages in the development of gospel stories.¹⁴¹ Moreover, we see similar examples in other apocryphal works. For example, in the *Acts of Andrew*, we find Andrew exhorting Maximilla with a similar type of verbose word chain:

So from now on keep yourself chaste and pure, holy, unsullied, unalloyed, unadulterated, separated from anything foreign to us, unbroken, undamaged,

¹³⁸ *Adv. Jud.* 7.1.2; English translation from, *Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, trans. Paul W. Harkins (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1979). There will be more discussion on this phrase below.

¹³⁹ Frederik Wisse, “The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology,” in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honor of Alexander Böhlig*, ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 133-143.

¹⁴⁰ A similar “doubling” effect can be found in other apocryphal works; e.g., the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* has two rich men, in the story of the rich young ruler. Vielhauer declares, “such doublings...are signs of a later stage of the tradition” (Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1:157).

¹⁴¹ Sanders, *Tendencies*, 66-67.

unweeping, unwounded, unvexed by storms, undivided, unfalling, unsympathetic to the works of Cain.¹⁴²

We also see such over-detailing in other apocryphal narratives.¹⁴³ Although the over-detailing is not as extensive in P.Oxy. 840 as other apocryphal works, it does exist in the woe statements and thus is a further indication of a possible later stage of development.

III. CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the relationship between P.Oxy. 840 and the canonical gospels. We have considered three possibilities: (a) The dependence view: P.Oxy. 840 intentionally and directly used the canonical gospels; (b) The indirect dependence view: P.Oxy. 840 was influenced by the cadence and language of the canonical gospels and they found their way into his own composition; and (c) The independence view: P.Oxy. 840 did not know the canonical gospels but drew upon a common source. Choice (a) was quickly eliminated due to the unique content of the story, the lack of obvious textual dependency, and the high proportion of divergent vocabulary. In the end, therefore, we were left to decide between choices (b) and (c). The following reasons have led us to choice (b):

- 1) P.Oxy. 840 seems to demonstrate knowledge of the redactional portions of five key texts from the canonical gospels: Luke 11:37-52; Matt 23:1-39; John 7:1-52; John 13:1-30; and Mark 7:1-23.
- 2) Even if one suggested that P.Oxy. 840 drew upon the tradition behind these five texts, what is the probability that the author had access to such a wide “spectrum” of early Jesus tradition? It is more probable that he knew the four canonical gospels themselves.
- 3) All five of these gospel passages have three fundamental themes in common: (i) ceremonial washings, (ii) inner vs. outer cleanliness, and (iii) conflict with Jewish authorities. The remarkable thematic connections shared by these five texts and P.Oxy. 840 are best explained by suggesting the author of P.Oxy. 840,

¹⁴² *Acts of Andrew*, 40.

¹⁴³ See Brown, “The Gospel of Peter and Canonical Authority,” 336. A similar phenomenon can also be seen in the *Epistula Apostolorum*, 3.

- as he was composing his story, recalled those canonical passages that contained the same themes and ideas; i.e., a “catch-theme” theory of composition.
- 4) The form/structure of P.Oxy. 840 has a threefold “layering” of traditions typically kept separate in the canonical gospels, indicating that it was likely a later development than the canonical gospels.
 - 5) There are numerous other reasons to think that P.Oxy. 840 is a composition later than the canonical gospels (e.g., identification of Jesus’ opponent, use of $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho$, etc.). If this conclusion is correct, then there is a greater probability (though no certainty) that the author of P.Oxy. 840 would have been exposed to the canonical texts by the time that he wrote.

Although each of these points, taken independently, may not be sufficient to establish choice (b), the combination of all of them makes choice (b) the most probable option. However, it must be remembered that the limited data we possess does not allow certainty on this point. In summary, it seems safe to suggest that P.Oxy. 840 was composed by an author who intended to write his own original “gospel” story and was influenced by the memories of canonical stories that he had heard over the years.

If our conclusions prove true, then we must reject some of the theories of prior scholars who have argued that P.Oxy. 840 is earlier or contemporary with the canonical texts. Büchler proclaimed, “I am already convinced that we have here more original materials than are to be found in the Synoptics.”¹⁴⁴ Preuschen argued it was the source for the gospel of John,¹⁴⁵ and Jeremias believed it could be traced back to Jesus himself.¹⁴⁶ All of these scholars failed to offer any detailed textual comparison between P.Oxy. 840 and the canonical gospels, but instead relied upon a demonstration of the document’s historical accuracy. Although chapter three agrees that P.Oxy. 840 is historically accurate, that fact alone is not sufficient to place the story as early as the canonical texts.

In addition to exploring P.Oxy. 840’s connection to the canonical gospels, this chapter also uncovered much data about the possible *purpose* of the author.

¹⁴⁴ Adolf Büchler, “The New ‘Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel,’” *JQR* 20 (1908): 346.

¹⁴⁵ E. Preuschen, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 11.

¹⁴⁶ Joachim Jeremias, “Der Zusammenstoß Jesu mit dem pharisäischen Oberpriester auf den Tempelplatz. Zu Pap. Ox V 840,” *Coni. Neotest.* 2 (1947): 97-108.

Several factors suggest P.Oxy. 840 was written in a highly polemical context centered around the Jewish opposition to the Christian church. Let us review some of these factors:

- 1) The genre of both pericopes—“warning story” and “controversy dialogue”—and the use of “woe statements” all indicate a judgment on the Jewish authorities and a desire to defend the church against Jewish attacks.
- 2) The changes made in the first pericope that seek to increase God’s judgment on the wicked by changing the “who” and the “when.”
- 3) All five gospel passages connected to P.Oxy. 840 refer to Jewish opposition and the challenge that Jesus makes to it.
- 4) The linguistic change to “we” language serves to establish a greater solidarity between Jesus and his disciples as they argue with Jewish authorities.
- 5) The harsh and overly-detailed woe statement that compares Jewish leaders to the sexually immoral (prostitutes and flutegirls).

All of these factors lead us to conclude that the author of P.Oxy. 840 composed his gospel with a clear polemical purpose in mind, to argue against the Jewish authorities of his day and to declare the power and imminence of God’s judgment on them.

CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS PLACING P.OXY. 840 WITHIN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

In light of the foundation laid by the prior four chapters, we are now at a place where we can address the crucial issue of P.Oxy. 840's place within early Christianity. This chapter will be divided into two sections. First, we will explore the theological and practical concerns of P.Oxy. 840—i.e., its “religious ethos”—in hopes of discovering more about the kind of community that produced it. This will allow us to propose a plausible historical scenario for the date and geographical provenance of P.Oxy. 840's initial composition. Second, we will briefly compare P.Oxy. 840 to other analogous apocryphal gospel material. This comparison will allow us to see how P.Oxy. 840 is both similar to and distinctive from other comparable texts, thus revealing its place within the sweep of second-century gospel production.

In all the prior studies on P.Oxy. 840 the questions of community, date, and provenance have received exceptionally little attention. The few studies that even address these issues give a brief one or two sentence suggestion, often focused upon linking P.Oxy. 840 to other known (or unknown) apocryphal gospels. For example, M.R. James suggested P.Oxy. 840 was from the *Gospel of Peter* or the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, Goodspeed and Harnack argued for the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, Lagrange and Waitz mentioned the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*, Swete decided it was not from any known gospel, and Preuschen suggested it may be a source behind the gospel of John.¹ In contrast to these prior studies, this chapter will not be concerned so much with linking P.Oxy. 840 to other apocryphal gospels. Instead it will focus upon developing a more comprehensive picture of the type of theological and

¹ M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924), 30; Edgar J. Goodspeed, “The New Gospel Fragment from Oxyrhynchus,” *BW* 31 (1908): 142-146, 146; Adolf von Harnack, “Ein neues Evangelienbruchstück,” in *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben, Band II* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1911), 239-250, 250; M. -J. Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment non canonique relatif a l'Évangile,” *RB* 5 (1908): 538-553, 553; H. Waitz, “Das Matthäusevangelium der Nazaräer (Nazaräerevangelium),” in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, ed. Edgar Hennecke (2nd ed.; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1924), 17-32; 18-19. Henry Barclay Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1908), 4; E. Preuschen, “Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchus,” *ZNW* 9 (1908): 1-11, 11.

circumstantial environment that would have given rise to such a gospel—something that no study has attempted thus far. With such a scenario in hand, we can then begin to suggest a plausible date for P.Oxy. 840's composition and narrow down a probable geographical provenance.

Of course, as we engage in this final stage of the study, it is important to recognize the limitations of what can be accomplished here. Although this chapter includes an attempt to construct a plausible scenario concerning the origins of P.Oxy. 840, the brevity of our text and the paucity of information available to us make any certain conclusions impossible. Our efforts, therefore, will focus upon developing the scenario which is consistent with the prior conclusions of this study and the one which is the most historically probable given the evidence at our disposal.

I. THE COMMUNITY OF P.OXY. 840

In this section we will explore the theological characteristics and tendencies of P.Oxy. 840 in an effort to reconstruct, as much as possible, the broad parameters of the early Christian community² that may have produced it. If such parameters can be matched with known historical sects or movements, then much can be learned about the purpose of our text and the function it may have served within early Christianity.

A. EARLY "HERETICAL" GROUPS

One of the remarkable characteristics of P.Oxy. is that contains no apparent "heretical"³ theology or agenda that would allow us to identify it with known

² I recognize that the term "community" must be given a more precise definition. One option is to use the term more narrowly to mean a geographically defined group of people such as the Qumran community. Such a usage obviously refers to a finite group in a fixed location. However, I am using the term more broadly throughout this chapter to refer to the intended audience (or provenance) of P.Oxy. 840, which may extend beyond any particular geographical locale. The characteristics of this "community" can include items such as its historical circumstances (e.g., banned from the synagogue) or its religious ethos (e.g., pro-Paul in their theology). Understanding these characteristics helps us understand the function of P.Oxy. 840 and the possible purpose for which the author created it.

³ I am not using the terms "orthodoxy" or "heresy" in any normative sense in this chapter. I am fully aware that since Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen:

heterodox sects within the early church. Indeed, from the beginning, scholars have noted this characteristic because it seems so rare among known apocryphal material.⁴ Grenfell and Hunt declared that heresy is “not discernible”⁵ in P.Oxy. 840, Goodspeed judged that, “the text exhibits no heretical bias,”⁶ and Swete said that it does not show “any trace of a docetic or gnostic tendency.”⁷ Furthermore, our study thus far has not revealed any doctrinal tendencies that would challenge such conclusions.

However, despite these opinions, Lagrange, Tripp, and Bovon have all argued that P.Oxy. 840 actually is “heretical” and contains gnostic anti-baptism (or anti-water) theology.⁸ Consequently, they attempt to link P.Oxy. 840 with those fringe

J.C.B. Mohr, 1934), the terms “heresy” and “orthodoxy” are considered by many to be anachronisms. The validity of Bauer’s thesis is not my concern here, although he has been challenged over the years: see H.E.W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations Between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church* (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1954); Thomas Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1989); and James McCue, “Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians,” *VC* 33 (1979): 118-130. For our purposes here, “orthodoxy”—or as some have suggested, “proto-orthodoxy” (Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1993])—is simply referring to the beliefs and practices that later came to be known as “traditional” Christianity. I will put the terms in quotations throughout this chapter to indicate their non-normative status.

⁴ E.g., the *Gospel of Thomas* has been acknowledged to contain a substantial amount of gnostic content (whether original or added later). On the gnostic or non-gnostic nature of this gospel see, Robert M. Grant, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), 186; A.J.B. Higgins, “The non-Gnostic Sayings in the Gospel of Thomas,” *NT* 4 (1960): 30-47; William K. Grobel, “How Gnostic is the Gospel of Thomas?,” *NTS* 8 (1962): 367-373; for a theory of two versions of Thomas see Gilles Quispel, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967). The *Gospel of Peter* betrays some possible gnostic trends with the cry of Christ from the cross and his lack of pain—a docetic image of Jesus according to some. However, such a notion has been challenged in recent years: J.W. McCant, “The Gospel of Peter: Docetism Reconsidered,” *NTS* 30 (1984): 258-273; and P.M. Head, “On the Christology of the *Gospel of Peter*,” *VC* 46 (1992): 209-224. The *Gospel of the Ebionites* demonstrates a clear Ebionite agenda by eliminating the birth of Jesus (because they denied the virgin birth) and eliminating locusts as John the Baptist’s food (they were vegetarian); see J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 6. The *Gospel of the Egyptians* also has an evident heterodox agenda: to promote Encratism (the rejection of marriage). Furthermore, this gospel also promoted the elimination of sexual distinctions between male and female (reminiscent of the androgynous theme of the *Gospel of Thomas*) and was used by some to defend the doctrine of the Naassenes and the Sabellians (Hippolytus, *Haer.* 5.2; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 62.4; Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 16).

⁵ Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908), 13.

⁶ Goodspeed, “The New Gospel Fragment,” 144.

⁷ Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments*, 4.

⁸ M. -J. Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment” 538-553; David Tripp, “Meanings of the Foot-washing: John 13 and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840,” *ExpT* 103 (1992): 237-239; and Francois Bovon, “Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840, Fragment of a Lost Gospel, Witness of an Early Christian Controversy Over Purity,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 705-728. In addition to these authors, Werner Bieder, *Die Verheissung der Taufe im Neuen Testament* (Zurich: Evz-Verlag, 1966), 95-103, gives indications that the Jesus of P.Oxy. 840 is rejecting all water rituals in favor of “spiritual” baptism; and Adolf Jülicher, “Ein neues

groups in early Christianity that held such beliefs; e.g., the Naassenes or Manicheans.⁹ Although, we have broadly addressed their proposals in prior chapters, let us consider the specific reasons they do not succeed:

- 1) We must begin by noting the obvious fact that the text of P.Oxy. 840 nowhere discusses Christian baptism. The setting of the story concerns first-century Jerusalem and the role of the *Jewish* bathing pool. Now, of course, Bovon would quickly answer that the setting is fictional and intended as a “picture” of baptismal controversies in the early church. Tripp takes a similar position, “What is attacked [by Jesus] is not Jewish lustration, but all baptism.”¹⁰ But, how do they know this? Tripp does not even offer a reason.¹¹ Bovon argues that the vast historical inaccuracies of the fragment hint to the reader that the story is not to be read in a straightforward manner. However, as was shown in chapter three above, P.Oxy. 840 is remarkably consistent with the practices and culture of first-century Judaism. Thus, the entire foundation for Bovon’s (and Tripp’s) argument is removed.
- 2) If P.Oxy. 840 could be construed as a denial of water-baptism, then so must similar texts from the canonical gospels. In both Mark 7:4 and Luke 11:38 Jesus rejects the “baptism” (both texts use βαπτίζω) required by the Pharisees before a meal. I argued above in prior chapters that this “baptism” is most likely referring to immersion in a *miqveh*. But, even if it refers to other types of Jewish lustration, how are the actions of Jesus in Mark 7:4/Luke 11:38 substantially different than those in P.Oxy. 840? In all these texts Jesus refuses to bathe according to the traditions of the Pharisees and the theological point he makes is

Jesuswort?,” *Christliche Welt* 8 (1908): 201-204, argues that P.Oxy. 840 reveals some gnostic tendencies.

⁹ Bovon suggests a Manichean milieu (“Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840,” 728), Tripp argues for another gnostic group, the Naassenes (“Meanings of the Footwashing,” 238); and Lagrange links it with the group behind the *Gospel of the Hebrews* (Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment,” 552).

¹⁰ Tripp, “Meanings of the Footwashing,” 238.

¹¹ Although Tripp does not make an argument, it is clear from his words that he considers P.Oxy. 840 to be historically inaccurate. E.g., Tripp believes that when the Jesus speaks of “water that flows” he means “water that belongs to the world of matter” rather than understanding it as a reference to the Pharisaical requirement that *miqva’ot* be filled with undrawn water (Tripp, “Meanings of the Footwashing,” 238). It is this crucial misunderstanding that contributes to his insistence that Jesus is rejecting all physical water.

always the same: washing the outside with water does not clean the inside.¹²

Does this mean that the canonical Jesus rejects Christian water-baptism? Not at all. Statements like this simply point out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees: they believe they can attain real purity by vigorously following external rites, while all along they are spiritually unclean.

- 3) Lagrange argues that it is the contrast between natural water and spiritual water that demonstrates P.Oxy. 840's anti-baptistic tendency:

Mais quand on proteste aussi énergiquement contre l'usage de l'eau dans les purifications, en l'opposant à l'action efficace d'une eau surnaturelle, cela peut signifier que l'eau est inutile à ceux qui sont purifiés par l'esprit.¹³

Tripp and Bovon make very similar arguments.¹⁴ In other words, according to these scholars, if one draws a contrast between spiritual water (“living water”) and physical water, then this implies a rejection of all water baptism. However, what would they say about John 7:37-39? In this text, Jesus contrasts the water poured out at the libation ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles with the “living water” he has to offer.¹⁵ This passage forms an uncanny parallel with P.Oxy. 840 which also contrasts a Jewish water ritual (bathing in a *miqveh*) with “living water.” If they reject P.Oxy. 840 as anti-baptistic then they must do the same for John 7:37-39.¹⁶ Furthermore, one also would have to argue that John 3:5 is against water baptism because Jesus declares that one must not only be born of “water” (external washing), but also born of the “Spirit” (internal washing).¹⁷ Lagrange, Tripp, and Bovon do not seem to recognize that the very contrast in P.Oxy. 840 that is appealed to—earthly washing vs. spiritual washing—is

¹² This theological tendency for P.Oxy. 840 was already demonstrated above in chapter three, section III.B.

¹³ Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment,” 552.

¹⁴ Tripp, “Meanings of the Footwashing,” 238; and Bovon, “Fragment,” 722.

¹⁵ For fuller discussion of this text see chapter four's discussion on John 7:1-52.

¹⁶ Of course, some scholars have argued that John's gospel is actually anti-sacrament; e.g. Rudolph Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971). However, the majority of scholars have taken issue with this view and argue that John's gospel is quite positive towards the sacraments; e.g., Oscar Cullmann, *Les sacrements dans l'Évangile johannique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1951); C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John* (London: SPCK, 1978); and Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), cxi-cxiv.

¹⁷ This passage was discussed above in chapter four. For more see, Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 141-145; and Rudolph Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 138-139.

actually a fundamental example of Johannine dualism.¹⁸ Thus, rather than supporting their argument, this contrast actually shows that P.Oxy. 840 shares close ties with John's gospel. According to their reasoning, they might as well argue that Jesus' contrast between the "bread of life" from heaven (John 6:35) and the physical bread of earth (6:34) is basically a rejection of all usage of physical bread and thus a rejection of the Lord's supper.

In the end, these scholars do not base their case upon any substantial argument that P.Oxy. 840 is anti-baptistic, nor do they perform any detailed exegesis of P.Oxy. 840 in order to bolster their case. Therefore, there seems to be no compelling reason to think that P.Oxy. 840 has an anti-baptistic tendency.

B. JEWISH-CHRISTIAN

Rather than looking to "heretical" groups as the background for P.Oxy. 840, it seems more fruitful to look in the direction of early Jewish-Christianity.¹⁹ We have already noted in the conclusion of the prior chapter that there seems to be a vigorous polemic against the Jews present in the text—even more vigorous than some aspects of the canonical gospels. Among other things, this was evident from the genre of the pericopes (warning story and controversy dialogue), the use of woe statements, the drawing on five canonical passages that all deal with Jewish opposition, Jesus' use of the first person plural, and the overly harsh comparison to

¹⁸ Again, see the discussion on John 7:1-52 in chapter four.

¹⁹ The broad issue of how to define Jewish-Christianity is extremely complex and cannot be fully solved here. Some efforts towards a more precise definition include, S.C. Mimouni, "Pour une définition nouvelle du judéo-christianisme ancien," *NTS* 38 (1992): 161-186; Raymond Brown, "Not Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity but types of Jewish/Gentile Christianity," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 74-79; Simon Marcel, "Problèmes du Judéo-Christianisme," in *Aspects du Judéo-Christianisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), 1-17; I. Howard Marshall, "Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity: Some Critical Comments," *NTS* 19 (1979-80): 271-287; Johannes Munck, "Jewish Christianity in Post-Apostolic Times," *NTS* 6 (1959-60): 130-116; A.F.J. Klijn, "The Study of Jewish Christianity," *NTS* 20 (1973-74): 419-431; Robert A. Kraft, "In Search of 'Jewish Christianity' and its 'Theology': Problems of Definition and Methodology," *RSR* 60 (1972): 81-92; Georg Strecker, "On the Problem of Jewish Christianity," in *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. R.A. Kraft and G. Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), Appendix 1, 241-285; S.K. Riegel, "Jewish Christianity: Definitions and Terminology," *NTS* 24 (1977-78): 410-415; Joan E. Taylor, "The Phenomenon of Early Jewish-Christianity: Reality or Scholarly Invention?," *VC* 44 (1990): 313-334; and R. Murray, "Defining Judeo-Christianity," *HeyJ* 15 (1974): 303-310. For the purposes of this study, a more precise description of P.Oxy. 840's Jewish-Christian community will be developed further below.

“prostitutes and flutegirls.” Such a dominant concern with Jewish opposition strongly suggests that P.Oxy. 840 originated from a Jewish-Christian milieu. Harnack proposed the same setting, “Sie stammt also wohl aus juden-christlichen Kreisen oder aus solchen, die sich noch immer mit dem Judentum praktisch auseinander setzen mußten.”²⁰

The probable Jewish-Christian origin for P.Oxy. 840 is most vividly seen by noting P.Oxy. 840’s most central concern: ritual purity. Numerous factors, many already noted above, corroborate this concern: (i) focus upon access to a holy place and holy objects (the temple and its vessels); (ii) description of ceremonial washings in a *miqveh* (which were only done for purity reasons); (iii) reference to footwashing which was also done for purity reasons; (iv) conflict centered around what kind of water (running or drawn) really makes one “clean”; (v) frequent use of the verb λουω which occurs five times in P.Oxy. 840 (l.14,19,24,32,37), hardly occurs in the New Testament, but is abundant in the Old Testament texts concerning cultic purity;²¹ (vi) frequent use of καθαρος²² and καθαρευω (l.18,23,24,28) to refer to ceremonial “cleaning”; (vii) reference to “dogs and pigs” which are the height of Jewish ritual impurity;²³ (viii) P.Oxy. 840 shows “indirect dependence”²⁴ upon five canonical passages which themselves deal with the issue of ritual purity and internal/external cleanliness: Luke 11:37-52; Matt 23:13-32; John 7:1-52; John 13:10; Mark 7:1-23. Of course, given that issues of ritual purity are a distinctively Jewish concern, it seems very likely that P.Oxy. 840 originated from a Jewish-Christian setting.

As we further explore the Jewish-Christian provenance behind P.Oxy. 840, we must keep in mind that early Jewish-Christianity was not a monolithic entity but,

²⁰ Harnack, “Ein neues Evangelienbruchstück,” 244.

²¹ E.g., In Leviticus alone: 8:6; 11:40; 14:8, 9; 15:5-8, 10-11; 15:13, 16, 18, 21, 22, 27; 16:4, 24, 26, 28; 17:15, 16; 22:6. For more complete discussion see A. Oepke, *TDNT* 4:295-307, where he even mentions P.Oxy. 840 as an example of such usage. For comparison to νιπτω see F. Hauck, *TDNT* 4:946-947.

²² The use of this word in O.T. cultic contexts is so abundant the verses are too many to mention. For more discussion, see F. Hauck, *TDNT* 3:413-417, and R. Meyer, *TDNT* 3: 418-423.

²³ The term “dog” is used to refer to Gentiles/pagans (Deut 23:18; Matt 15:26-27), wicked men in general (Rev 22:15), and a broad term of reproach (1 Sam 17:43; 24:14; 2 Sam 9:8; 16:9). Pigs, of course, were unclean food (Lev 11:7; Deut 14:18; Is 65:4), and generally seen as negative (Is 66:17; Matt 8:30ff.).

²⁴ See chapter four above for definition of this phrase.

in the words of Georg Strecker, “a complex thing.”²⁵ The historical evidence, in addition to being limited in scope, can be confusing and at times even seem contradictory.²⁶ For the purposes of this study we need not attempt to resolve such an enormous issue, rather we need to take such complexities into account as we continue our investigation. The inherent limitations and difficulties faced when examining the Jewish-Christian phenomenon, in conjunction with the brevity of P.Oxy. 840 itself, compel us to proceed with caution and to hold our conclusions tentatively. With these considerations in mind, let us briefly examine the characteristics of P.Oxy. 840’s Jewish-Christianity.

1. JEWISH CHRISTIANITY THAT IS “ORTHODOX”

As noted above, P.Oxy. 840 exhibits no trace of heterodox thinking, but seems very consistent with what could be called “orthodox” or “canonical” Christianity. Although this may not seem particularly noteworthy, it becomes more significant when one realizes that a number of Jewish-Christian sects in the early Church contained various sorts of heterodox teachings. For example, the Ebionites

²⁵ Strecker, “On the Problem of Jewish Christianity,” 243. General treatments of the subject of Jewish Christianity are numerous; a representative few include, H.J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1949); ET see H.J. Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969); F. Manns, *Bibliographie du Judéo-Christianisme* (Jerusalem: Franciscan, 1978); B. Gerhardsson, ed. *Judéo-Christianisme, Festschrift J. Daniélou* (Paris: Recherches de Science Religieuse, 1972); C. C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); B. Bagatti, *The Church from the Circumcision* (Jerusalem: Franciscan, 1971); J. Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity, vol. 1, The Development of Christian Doctrine Before Nicea* (London: Dartmon, Longman, and Todd, 1964); R.A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: From the End of the New Testament Period to Its Disappearance in the Fourth Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988); and S.C. Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancien: essais historiques* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998).

²⁶ A fundamental example of such complexity can be found in the discussion of the Jewish-Christian gospels. It is rather unclear whether we are dealing with one gospel in various editions, or three distinctive gospels. Matters are complicated further when one tries to decide which Jewish-Christian community used/produced which gospel and whether a particular gospel was originally in Greek or Hebrew. For more on this question see, A.F.J. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992); Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancien*, 207-225; Phillip Vielhauer and Georg Strecker, “Jewish Christian Gospels,” in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, transl. R. McL. Wilson, vol. 1 (5th ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 134-178; Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 83-94. Another example of the complexity is making clear distinctions between Palestinian Jewish-Christianity, Hellenistic Jewish-Christianity, and Hellenistic Gentile-Christianity. The relationship between these three is often oversimplified; for more on this see, Martin Hengel, “Zwischen Jesus und Paulus,” *ZTK* 72 (1975): 151-206; David R. Catchpole, “Tradition History,” in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 165-180; Marshall, “Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity,” 271-287; and Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews*, esp. 1-17.

had a Christology that said Jesus was merely a righteous man,²⁷ the New Testament “judaizers” insisted on circumcision for salvation,²⁸ Cerinthus was a Jewish Christian with gnostic tendencies and a low Christology,²⁹ and the Elkesaites rejected Paul’s epistles and advocated a law-based asceticism.³⁰ Indeed, as we examine the writings of the church fathers, they describe a number of different Jewish-Christian sects, most having heterodox theology.³¹ D.A. Hagner comments, “As we move into the second century we begin more and more to encounter a Jewish Christianity of a decidedly heterodox kind.”³² Thus, it seems that P.Oxy. 840 is somewhat of a rare combination. It is both Jewish-Christian and “orthodox” within the context of the second century.

2. JEWISH CHRISTIANITY WITH AN INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEMPLE CULT

Also in chapter three above, it was demonstrated that P.Oxy. 840 has an uncanny awareness of the details of Jewish purification practices, ranging from the “running” water that Pharisees required in a *miqveh* to the changing of clothes before entering the temple. Given that many of these practices were elaborations and expansions of the written law (and not contained in the Torah), this degree of awareness suggests P.Oxy. 840 was written within a Jewish-Christian milieu that would have known how these traditions developed in the first century. Blau concurs, “All dies beweist, daß der Verfasser unseres Bruchstückes in die jüdische Gesetzeskunde eingeweiht war und bestätigt die Behauptung, daß er ‘über eine

²⁷ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.27.2. For more on the Ebionites, see H.J. Schoeps, “Ebionite Christianity,” *JTS* 4 (1953): 219-224; J.L. Teicher, “The Dead Sea Scrolls--Documents of the Jewish-Christian Sect of the Ebionites,” *JJS* 2 (1950-51): 67-99; J.A. Fitzmyer, “The Qumran Scrolls, the Ebionites and Their Literature,” in *The Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 435-480; Georg Strecker, “Ebioniten,” *RAC* 4 (1959): 487-500; and David F. Wright, “Ebionites,” *DLNTD* 313-317.

²⁸ Acts 15:5; Gal 2:1-4. For a look at Paul’s Jewish opponents in Galatia see, Vincent M. Smiles, *The Gospel and the Law in Galatia: Paul’s Response to Jewish-Christian Separatism and the Threat of Galatian Apostasy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998).

²⁹ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.26.1; 3.11.1.; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.4. See discussion in A.F.J. Klijn and G.J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 3-18.

³⁰ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.38; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 19, 30.17, 53. See discussion in Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancien*, 287-316; Klijn, *Patristic Evidence*, 54-66.

³¹ Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 2002), 203; Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 55-85.

³² D.A. Hagner, “Jewish Christianity,” *DLNTD* 579-587, 586.

Kenntnis Jerusalemer Traditionen' verfügte."³³ Such specific knowledge makes it probable that the community of P.Oxy. 840 would have the following three characteristics: (i) It would likely be a community with origins in Palestinian Jewish-Christianity. Although it must be acknowledged that some Diaspora Jewish-Christian communities certainly would have understood much of the temple ritual from their annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem,³⁴ the subtle nuances of Pharisaic purity practices (e.g., "running water," changing clothes) would not have been at the forefront of their daily lives, nor would they have been enforced with the same degree of rigor.³⁵ Such Pharisaic influences were centered on Palestine and did not always translate directly into the practices (or knowledge) of the Diaspora Jews.³⁶ Even though post 70 A.D. rabbinic Judaism retained some of these Pharisaic concerns,³⁷ and could have passed them along to later Diaspora Jewish-Christians, it is more probable that P.Oxy. 840's community is connected to (or derived from) Palestinian Jews that would have understood these purity debates firsthand.³⁸ (ii) A

³³ Ludwig Blau, "Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos buch- und zaubergeschichtlich betrachtet nebst sonstigen Bemerkungen," *ZNW* 9 (1908): 204-215; 215.

³⁴ For more on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Diaspora, see Shmuel Safrai, *Die Wallfahrt im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 65-93; and Shaye D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 106ff.

³⁵ E.P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (London: SCM, 1990), notes that a practice like handwashing "does not necessarily show very extensive knowledge of Judaism" and thus more likely to reflect "Diaspora practice" (39). In contrast, he argues that discussion of something like "immersion pools" would be more distinctively Pharisaic and thus more Palestinian in origin (39). Enforcement of purity laws in the Diaspora was sporadic and, in general, was less strict than that of Palestine. E.g., Josephus recounts how Eleazar, coming from Palestine, required Izates to be circumcised, when Ananias, a Diaspora Jew, had already allowed him to convert without circumcision (*Ant.* 20.2.3-4). For more discussion, see J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 147.

³⁶ Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 258-271; E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE* (London: SCM, 1992), 223, 339. In this latter work, Sanders makes it clear that Pharisaic patterns for washing in a *miqveh* were not uniformly followed in the Jewish Diaspora. Of course, some Diaspora Jews seemed to follow such customs. Binder notes that many Diaspora synagogues, although not having *miqva'ot*, were built near "running" water such as rivers, streams, or the ocean: *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 395-398. However, even with such considerations in mind, there was still a lack of uniformity between the practices of Palestine and practices of the Diaspora concerning certain aspects of ritual purity.

³⁷ Cohen argues that the Pharisees are succeeded by the rabbis and that the "Pharisees represent the position that the rabbis themselves accept as correct" (Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 158). For more on the Pharisees and rabbinic Judaism, see Alan J. Avery-Peck, "Judaism without the Temple: The Mishnah," in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 409-431; and Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973).

³⁸ In a similar manner, John Thomas, "The Fourth Gospel and Rabbinic Judaism," *ZNW* 82 (1991): 159-182, analyzes John's precise understanding of ritual purity and concludes that its accuracy suggests that it "originated in Palestine" (182).

Jewish-Christian community that has origins in Palestinian Judaism, and an interest in the details of ritual purity in the temple, would likely be a community that has maintained an ongoing interest in, and observation of, the O.T. law. Of course, it is conceivable that such knowledge could be retained in a community that had abandoned the law as obsolete; but, from a historical perspective, this would be a highly unlikely scenario. (iii) Historical probabilities suggest such intimate and accurate temple knowledge is more likely to be preserved in a community closer to first century realities, rather than farther away. Although interest in the details of the temple cult were still prevalent in later Jewish communities,³⁹ and certainly may have been preserved accurately by them, one must still acknowledge that the probability of such accurate knowledge increases the closer we move towards the first century.

3. JEWISH CHRISTIANITY IN CONFLICT WITH PHARISAIC (RABBINIC) JUDAISM

The harsh polemics in P.Oxy. 840, as already noted above, are not directed towards Judaism in general, but particularly the Pharisaic brand of Judaism.⁴⁰ Jesus is confronted by a Pharisaic chief priest who is enforcing his concern over the Pharisaic prescription for “running water.” In a post 70 A.D. context, such an opponent suggests that the community of P.Oxy. 840 is likely engaged in conflict with rabbinic Judaism since rabbis are considered to be the “descendants of the Pharisees.”⁴¹ This conflict with rabbinic Judaism suggests a setting in P.Oxy. 840's

³⁹ Obviously, the Mishnah, the Talmud, and other rabbinic writings concerning the temple practices show that you do not have to live in the first century to have an interest in such things. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 71-82, demonstrates that Jewish-Christian communities survived well into the fourth century and thus may have preserved similar oral/written tradition concerning the temple.

⁴⁰ Daniel R. Schwartz, “Viewing the Holy Utensils (P. Ox. V, 840),” *NTS* 32 (1986): 153-159, has suggested that the reference to the Pharisaic Chief Priest is just another form of anti-Pharisee polemic. Although he is correct in general, it seems P.Oxy. 840's target is not so much pre-70 Pharisees but contemporary rabbinic Judaism which is represented by the Pharisees.

⁴¹ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 158. See also discussion in Avery-Peck, “Judaism without the Temple: The Mishnah,” 409-431. Although the Pharisees are understood to be the precursors to rabbinic Judaism, that does not mean that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the beliefs of the Pharisees and the beliefs of post-70 A.D. rabbis. Sanders rightly cautions us on the use of these rabbinic sources to read things back into the first century, E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 60-69.

community where the rift between Christianity and Judaism has reached a climax.⁴²

Consider the following:

(i) The opponent of Jesus, the Pharisaic chief priest, functions as a *segan*, or “Captain of the Temple” who could remove “unclean” people from the temple and forbid them to participate in the Jewish cultus (see chapter three above). The reference to such an opponent may imply that the Jewish-Christian community of P.Oxy. 840 may themselves have been “removed” or banned from their local synagogues.⁴³ This fits with the Pharisee's words in P.Oxy. 840, “Who *allowed* you to trample this place of purification?” Thus, the author of P.Oxy. 840 has chosen an opponent for Jesus who would most resonate with his community which has been persecuted by the Jews and kept from participating in the public aspects of the Jewish religion.⁴⁴

(ii) The Jesus of P.Oxy. 840 compares the Pharisees (rabbis) to αἱ πορναι και αἱ αυλητριδες (“prostitutes and flutegirls”). This combination of terms in the Greco-Roman world is a standard way to refer to the sexually immoral.⁴⁵ As noted above,

⁴² Ron Cameron, *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), agrees concerning the setting of P.Oxy. 840: “The discussion of Jewish rites of purification in connection with temple worship points to a milieu in which believers in Jesus were beginning to define themselves in relation to emerging Pharisaic Judaism” (53).

⁴³ Eric Meyers, “Synagogue,” *ABD* 6.251-260, notes that the term “synagogue” during the second temple period could refer to either a building or “a group or community of individuals who met together for worship and religious purposes” (6.251). Since we are concerned to examine when Christians were ostracized from Jewish religious life (and not necessarily a physical building), we will use the latter definition in this study. Kikuo Matsunaga, “Christian Self-Identification and the Twelfth Benediction,” in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 355-371, notes that the Gospel of John, like P.Oxy. 840, also has the Pharisee-Chief Priest combination which suggests that John was written after the excommunication of Christians from the synagogue: “The chief priests and the Pharisees often appear together in the fourth gospel. Though the chief priests no longer held power after the destruction of the Temple, they remain in this gospel because, from a post-Jamnia viewpoint, they are the Jewish authorities who had Jesus crucified. The position of the Pharisees became increasingly important after 70 CE because they were the bearers of rabbinic Judaism and replaced the scribes as interpreters of the Law. It is quite understandable, therefore, that in this gospel the chief priests and the Pharisees are the main figures who oppose Jesus and his followers” (361).

⁴⁴ Matsunaga states of the expulsion from the synagogue: “This decision had a tremendous influence on the Christian churches, especially on Jewish Christians, during the 80’s and succeeding decades, for these Christian Jews were no longer able to remain in Jewish society” (“Christian Self-Identification,” 356). For more on the persecution of Christians by Jews, see W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, reprint 1981), 178-209; Claudia Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians: History and Polemics, 30-150 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); and Douglas R.A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

⁴⁵ Athenaeus—who lived in Rome at end of second century and beginning of third and a native of Naucratis, Egypt—wrote the famous *Deipnosophistae* (or *The Sophists at Dinner*) which is the oldest

it was common in Judaism (and Christianity) to denigrate one's opponents by accusing them of overt sexual immorality.⁴⁶ Eventually, therefore, such language became synonymous with an "unbeliever" and was used to describe those who had abandoned God. For example, the term πορνῆ is used throughout the O.T. to speak of Israel's unfaithfulness to God (e.g., Hos 2:7,14; Is 1:21; Jer 3:1-4:4), and served the same general function in the N.T. as it refers to apostasy ("Babylon" in Rev 17-19; Rev 22:15). In Luke 15:30 the apostate brother is described as one who squandered his father's wealth on "prostitutes" (πορνῶν). We see the term πορνῆ combined with "flutegirls" in Eusebius' citation from the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*: "(The Master) had three servants: one who squandered his master's substance with harlots and flutegirls."⁴⁷ This Jewish-Christian gospel uses the phrase to condemn one servant as a "pagan" who squandered the master's money. In later Christianity, John Chrysostom uses the phrase in a similar manner to attack his Jewish opponents as apostates: "So, too, the tents which at this moment are pitched among them are no better than the inns where harlots and flutegirls ply their trades."⁴⁸ The phrase functions in a similarly polemical manner in P.Oxy. 840, designed to say that the Pharisees (rabbis) are not following the true faith; i.e., they are not really "Jews." The fact that P.Oxy. 840 uses the rare word καλλωπιζουσι to describe how the prostitute "beautifies" herself (1.38) demonstrates that its polemic is clearly directed toward the Jews of its day. Although this rare word occurs only four times in the LXX, it does appear in the well-known story of Tamar (Gen 38:14) when she poses as a prostitute and said to have "beautified" herself (ἐκαλλωπίσατο) for Judah. Even the term πόρνην is used to describe Tamar in Gen 38:15. This striking connection not only confirms that the author P.Oxy. 840 is steeped in a Jewish background, but that he is using language about prostitution that would have readily been recognized by his Jewish opponents as an accusation that they are as immoral (and deceptive) as Tamar. Such severe language is further evidence that we may be dealing with a time period shortly after the final split of Judaism and Christianity. If the community of

cookery-book that has come down to us. He mentions harlots and flutegirls together in 13.570 and 13.587. Most importantly, in 14.615 he cites the Greek historian Phylarchus from the 3rd cent. B.C. who also refers to harlots and flutegirls, demonstrating the widespread use of the terms.

⁴⁶ See discussion above in chapter four.

⁴⁷ *Theoph.* 4.22. Due to the confusion over the number of Jewish-Christian gospels, there is a dispute over whether Eusebius is citing the *Gospel of the Hebrews* or the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* (Elliot, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 10).

⁴⁸ John Chrysostom, *Adv. jud.* 7.1.2.

P.Oxy. 840 had suffered exclusion from the synagogue—and thus were no longer considered part of Judaism⁴⁹—then perhaps the language of “prostitutes and flutegirls” was designed to reverse the accusation and declare the Jews to be the real apostates.

(iii) The Jesus of P.Oxy. 840 compares the Pharisees (rabbis) to “dogs and pigs.” Although in a prior chapter we determined that he is referring to actual animals (like Prov 26:11; 2 Pet 2:22; Matt 23:33), the theological implications seem to go beyond the literal. The terms “dogs and pigs” often refer to actual individuals who are unclean in a manner that puts them outside the covenant community. For example, Jesus combines both these animals in Matt 7:6: “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs.”⁵⁰ This may be a reference to a known rabbinic saying which originally was designed to keep those outside the covenant community (Gentiles) from participating in eating the sacrificial meat or leaven.⁵¹ In Matt 7:6, Jesus broadens the applications of this saying and uses “dogs and pigs” not to refer to Gentiles, but to refer to hard-hearted and blind men who have abandoned themselves to wickedness.⁵² Consequently, the reference to “dogs and pigs” in P. Oxy. 840 serves the same function as the appeal to “prostitutes and flutegirls”: they both declare that the Pharisees (rabbis) are immoral and apostate.⁵³ Thus, the rabbis are now portrayed as the hard-hearted “unbelievers” and the community of P.Oxy. 840 is portrayed as the “true” Israel. Again, such a moral critique of rabbinic Judaism would also fit within the context of expulsion from the synagogue. The

⁴⁹ Lawrence H. Schiffman, “At the Crossroads: Tannaitic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E.P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 115-156, discusses how the most forceful polemic that Jews used against the Jewish Christians was to accuse them that they were not really Jews at all—which was precisely what the excommunication from the synagogue communicated (116).

⁵⁰ The terms are combined in various other places, several of which are distinctively Jewish: 1 Enoch 89.42; *b. Sabb.* 155b; Horace, *Ep.* 1.2.26.

⁵¹ *m. Tem.* 6:5; *b. Bek.* 15a; Ex 29:33; Lev 2:3; 22:6-7; Num 18:8-19.

⁵² W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 1.677; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 123.

⁵³ Given the similar function of these phrases, it should not be surprising that we often find connections between “dogs and pigs” and “prostitutes and flutegirls” in the same passages. For example, Rev 22:15: “Outside are the dogs (κύνες), those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral (πόρνοι), the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.” Likewise, in Deut 23:18 (LXX): “You shall not bring the hire of a harlot (πόρνη) or the wages of a dog (κυνός) into the house of the LORD your God.”

community of P.Oxy. 840, having been persecuted as apostates and ostracized by the Jews from religious life, would reverse the accusation of apostasy and declare the Jews to be morally corrupt and concerned only for external matters (cf. Matt 23:25-27; Luke 11:39).

(iv) The Jesus of P.Oxy. 840 rejects the ritual purity requirements of the Pharisee. After the Pharisee insists on bathing in “running water” (χεομενοις υδασι) in order to be clean, Jesus argues that he and his disciples have washed in the “living water” (υδασι ζωσι) and therefore are already clean. **The actions of Jesus suggest, among other things, a dispute between rabbinic Judaism and Jewish Christians over the issue of purity laws.**⁵⁴ Such a dispute may have caused the community of P.Oxy. 840 to suffer opposition and persecution from the surrounding Jewish community, and may have been a contributing factor to the eventual exclusion from the synagogue. This scenario would again explain why the story of P.Oxy. 840 is set in the temple: it demonstrates that followers of Jesus, despite being excluded from the synagogue, are genuinely “clean” even though they do not follow Pharisaic purity laws, and thus still have legitimate access to the God of Judaism. On the contrary, the Pharisees (rabbis), while washing externally, are not fit to access God due to their internal pollution.

All these factors make it evident that there was serious division and conflict between the community of P.Oxy. 840 and rabbinic Judaism. Although the causes of this conflict were surely multi-faceted, the above analysis suggests that **a decisive factor may have been the exclusion from the synagogue experienced by the community of P.Oxy. 840.** This marked the height of conflict between Jews and Christians and would explain (a) P.Oxy. 840's intensive focus on “access” to God and a defense of why Jesus' followers should have access; (b) the portrayal of the Jews as immoral and apostates from the people of God (“dogs and pigs,” “harlots and flutegirls”); and (c) the debate over the requirements of ritual purity. **If the community of P.Oxy. 840 had rejected the ritual purity requirements of rabbinic Judaism (more on this below), then this may have played a role in their expulsion**

⁵⁴ The substance of this dispute, and P.Oxy. 840's approach to purity laws will be taken up below in greater detail.

from the synagogue. Scholarship has traditionally traced the origins of synagogue expulsion to the activities at Yavneh concerning the *Birkhat ha-minim* (c.90 A.D.).⁵⁵ Although the nature of the rabbinic activities at Yavneh are disputed,⁵⁶ a number of scholars have provided further rationale for believing that it still plays a foundational role in the Jewish-Christian split.⁵⁷ Given that it would have taken some time for any decision at Yavneh to take hold and be enforced,⁵⁸ it seems plausible that its effects would have been felt by the community of P.Oxy. 840 within a generation or two after c.90.

4. JEWISH CHRISTIANITY WHICH OPPOSES THE KEEPING OF RITUAL PURITY LAWS AS A REQUIREMENT FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE COVENANT COMMUNITY

It is clear from the discussions above that P.Oxy. 840's central concern is ritual purity. In particular, the setting in the temple suggests that the concern is over what ritual purity laws must be observed for one to have legitimate access to God. Of course, this question was at the core of many of Jesus' conflicts with the

⁵⁵ Classic works on the banning of Christians from the synagogue include J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); and W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 256-315. For a more modern analysis see, Matsunaga, "Christian Self-Identification," 355-371.

⁵⁶ For views that challenge the Christian expulsion from the synagogue, see R. Kimelman, "Birkat Ha-Minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E.P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 226-244; Steven T. Katz, "Issues in the Separation of Judaism and Christianity after 70 C.E.: A Reconsideration," *JBL* 103 (1984): 43-76; and Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70-170 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 176-183. For an overview of the various opinions on Yavneh see, Shaye J.D. Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the end of Jewish Sectarianism," *HUCA* 55 (1984): 27-53.

⁵⁷ In particular, see A.F. Segal, "Ruler of this World: Attitudes about Mediator Figures and the Importance of Sociology for Self-Definition," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E.P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 245-268; W. Horbury, "The Benediction of the *Minim* and Early Jewish-Christian Controversy," *JTS* 33 (1982): 19-61; and W. Horbury, "Jewish-Christian Relations in Barnabas and Justin Martyr," in *Jews and Christians: The Partings of the Ways A.D. 70-135*, ed. J.D.G. Dunn (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1992), 315-345.

⁵⁸ The criticism of Katz ("Issues in the Separation of Judaism and Christianity," 43-76) and Kimelman ("Birkat ha-minim," 226-244) have highlighted the likelihood that even if there was an official banning of Christians from the synagogue in c.90, it would not have been immediately or universally effective. J.D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways* (London: SCM Press, 1991), comments, "It is important to realize, however, that the Yavnean authorities were not in any position to impose their will on the rest of Judaism immediately. Far from it. Yavneh marked the beginning of a long, slow process whereby the rabbis extended their authority and gained widening recognition—initially, no doubt, in Palestine itself, but only slowly through the diaspora.... Whatever the precise facts of the case, we can be sure that the Yavnean authorities did not establish their authority over the rest of Judaism overnight" (232).

Pharisees (Mark 7:1-23; Luke 11:37-39; Matt 23:25-26) and central to the church's earliest controversies (Acts 15:1ff.; Rom 14:1-5; Gal 2:4ff.; Col 2:16-22).⁵⁹ As noted above in chapter three, first-century Judaism was characterized by an ever-expanding oral tradition concerning laws of ritual purity (e.g., immersion before prayer, immersion before Torah reading, etc.), requiring early Jewish Christians to decide what role such laws played for followers of Christ.

As we consider the historical setting for P.Oxy. 840, we must ask what particular conflict over ritual purity may have given rise to this story of Jesus in the temple. One possibility, although there is no way to be certain, is that the Jewish-Christian community of P.Oxy. 840 may have been engaged in conflict over the proper limits of table fellowship.⁶⁰ The debate over table fellowship concerned how scrupulously the oral tradition (*halakah*) concerning ritual purity should be observed by participants at the common meal.⁶¹ Much was at stake in this debate because participation in table fellowship was, in one sense, indicative of full membership among God's covenant people.⁶² Consider the following connections that suggest P.Oxy. 840 may reflect the issue of table fellowship: (i) The Pharisees (*haberim*) in Jesus' day sought to apply the purity laws governing the temple to everyday meals in their homes.⁶³ In the post-70 A.D. context, the rabbinic Jews, much like their Pharisaical predecessors, continued this vigorous interest in ritual purity around

⁵⁹ James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Early Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 243.

⁶⁰ As noted above in chapter three, Pharisees in the first century were preoccupied with maintaining ritual purity at the common meal. For a detailed discussion of Pharisees and meal purity see, Roger P. Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 155-187; Thomas Kazen, *Jesus and the Purity Halakah. Was Jesus Indifferent to Purity?* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 2002), 44-88; Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*, 81-96; and Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 138-148.

⁶¹ The issue of unclean foods (although still taken seriously: Acts 10:14, 15:1-29; Josephus, *Life*, 3.13-14; *m. B. Qam.* 7:7) is a distinctive one from that of ritual purity at meals. The former has to do with O.T. food laws (Lev 11), whereas the latter refers to handling and eating food (*hullin* or *terumah*) in a state of purity.

⁶² Dunn comments on the seriousness of *halakah* disagreements among Jews: "The language [between groups] could be so fierce because the distinguishing issue was seen quite simply as a matter of life and death; personal and group identity was at stake; salvation was at stake; the meaning and character of God's covenant with Israel was at stake....to call a fellow 'Jew' a sinner was both to condemn that person as effectively outside the covenant and to defend one's own identity and boundaries, the group's interpretation of what walking within the covenant meant" (Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways*, 106, emphasis his). Moreover, since the Lord's supper was likely celebrated as an actual meal during this time, such ritual purity laws would have affected the manner in which Jewish Christians with differing opinions on ritual purity (not to mention Gentiles) would have been able to participate in the covenant meal together.

⁶³ Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*, 83.

meals—particularly in the absence of the temple.⁶⁴ Since proper table fellowship continued to be a preeminent concern of rabbinic Judaism, it is the most likely candidate for a post-70 A.D. area of disagreement over ritual purity. (ii) Since Pharisaic (rabbinic) table fellowship is designed to emulate the purity of the temple inside the home, then a story of Jesus rejecting the ritual purity of the temple itself would be particularly relevant and meaningful. If Jesus did not need to observe ritual purity *halakah* for the temple, then surely Jewish Christians do not need to do so for common meals that are patterned after the temple. (iii) The concern over meal purity was a distinctively Pharisaic (or rabbinic) one.⁶⁵ This fits well with the fact that in P.Oxy. 840 it is a Pharisee who is trying to enforce the ritual purity laws. (iv) The particular example of ritual purity in P.Oxy. 840 is bathing in a *miqveh* (with “running water”). Likewise, Pharisaic *halakah* required, among other things, bathing in a *miqveh* (with “running water”) prior to partaking in the meal.⁶⁶ (v) The ritual purity laws that Jesus rejected in P.Oxy. 840 were oral expansions of the O.T. law and not a rejection of the O.T. itself (see chapter three above). In the same way, Pharisaic requirements of ritual purity around meals were simply part of the ever-expanding oral tradition and not part of the O.T. itself. (vi) Many of the canonical gospel texts that P.Oxy. 840 was modeled after deal directly with the issue of purity at meals. In Luke 11:37-39 the Pharisee is shocked that Jesus does not bathe in a *miqveh* prior to eating. Likewise, in Mark 7:1-23, the Pharisees question why the disciples do not wash their hands before the meal.⁶⁷ And in Matt 23:25-26, Jesus expresses frustration with the Pharisees concerning their approach to cleaning cups and vessels—an issue of meal purity.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ See Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 214-231; Avery-Peck, *Judaism Without the Temple*, 421; Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*, 81-96; Jacob Neusner, “History and Purity in First-Century Judaism,” *HR* 18 (1978-1979): 1-17; esp. 12-15; S. Safrai and M. Stern, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976), 828-832. Dunn comments on the post-70 situation, “A key weapon used by the rabbis against Jewish Christians was ostracism. It was forbidden for rabbinic Jews to eat with Jewish Christians—the ruling achieved...by applying the dietary rules more tightly” (*The Partings of the Ways*, 237).

⁶⁵ See discussion above in chapter three.

⁶⁶ E.g., Luke 11:37-38 and discussion by Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity*, 200-201; and Kazen, *Jesus and the Purity Halakhah*, 67-72.

⁶⁷ For a full treatment of this text, as it pertains to ritual purity, see Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity*, esp. 189-203.

⁶⁸ For discussion of the ritual purity significance of Jesus’ discussion of cups and plates, see Jacob Neusner, “First Cleanse the Inside,” *NTS* 22 (1975-76): 486-495.

If this suggestion is correct (and we cannot be sure), then not only does P.Oxy. 840 reflect controversies over ritual purity at meals, but it takes a definitive stand against those groups that insist observance of ritual purity *halakah* is necessary for covenantal fellowship at these meals. This, of course, is the position of the canonical Jesus (Mark 7:1-23; Luke 11:37-39; Matt 23:25-27), and, in general, reflects that of the apostle Paul. Paul was opposed to groups that insisted that law-observance was necessary for entrance into the covenant community, particularly as it pertained to the Gentiles (Gal 2:1-11; 5:1; Rom 14:20-23; Col 2:13-17). In fact, the well-known controversy with Peter in Galatians 2:11-14 is likely an example of Paul rejecting the idea that ritual purity laws should be enforced during table fellowship with Gentiles.⁶⁹ However, at the same time, Paul remained positive towards Judaism, frequently participated in temple worship (Acts 20:16; 21:21-26; 24:11), and even had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3).⁷⁰

Likewise, P.Oxy. 840, while rejecting ritual purity laws as a basis for entering the covenant, still maintains a generally positive view of Judaism, particularly of the temple. In the story, it is Jesus who leads his disciples into the temple grounds to observe a key feast of the Jewish calendar (l. 7-8) and the reader gets the impression that they came to worship, view the holy vessels, and participate

⁶⁹ James D.G. Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-18)," *JSNT* 18 (1983): 3-57. Of course, there are a variety of opinions concerning what is happening at Antioch. E.g., D.R. Catchpole, "Paul, James, and the Apostolic Decree," *NTS* 23 (1976-77): 428-444, argues that the men from James are only concerned with upholding the decrees of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) and not the oral laws of ritual purity; G. Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), argues that the men from James are seeking to have the Gentiles circumcised and to become full proselytes; E.D.W. Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1952), argues that the dispute at Antioch is over Peter's willingness to eat unclean foods; Dieter Lührmann, "Abendmahlsgemeinschaft? Gal 2:11 ff.," in *Kirche: Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm*, ed. Dieter Lührmann and Georg Strecker (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1980), 271-286, argues that the meal in Gal 2:11-14 is really the Lord's supper. Those in agreement with Lührmann include, F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 129; and Ernst Haenchen, "Petrus-Probleme," *NTS* 7 (1961): 187-197. Of course, even if the Lord's supper is in view, this does not negate a concern of ritual purity at the meal. At this time, the Lord's supper would still have been part of a larger meal and thus there would have still been disputes about the degree of ritual purity to be maintained at that meal. See discussion on this point in Smiles, *The Gospel and the Law in Galatia*, 97-101.

⁷⁰ Arguments that Paul was still very Jewish in his Christianity can be found in Stefan Meissner, *Die Heimholung des Ketzers: Studien zur jüdischen Auseinandersetzung mit Paulus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996); Jacob Jervell, *The Unknown Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1984); H.J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in Light of Jewish Religious History*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961); Martin Hengel, "Early Christianity as a Jewish-Messianic Universalistic Movement," in *Conflicts and Challenges in Early Christianity*, ed. Donald A. Hagner (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 1-41; and Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 194-197.

in the festival as faithful Jews. Moreover, it is important to observe that Jesus is never depicted as breaking the Torah in P.Oxy. 840, but he simply refuses to keep a man-made tradition of the Pharisees.⁷¹

If our assessment of P.Oxy. 840's position on ritual purity is correct, then this goes a long way towards explaining the conflict with rabbinic Judaism we observed above. In the post-70 A.D. environment, Jews were particularly keen to protect and uphold their way of life from the pressures of a secular socio-political environment (Roman occupation) and from the influence of an increasingly Gentile Christianity.⁷² Thus, Jewish Christians would have been under pressure from their fellow Jews to maintain loyalty to their distinctive Jewish heritage, including the observation of the laws of ritual purity during meals. Inevitably, as the Jewish-Christian community of P.Oxy. 840 engaged in table fellowship with Gentiles, without forcing them to observe the laws of ritual purity, conflict would have arisen with their fellow Jews.⁷³

Perhaps P.Oxy. 840 is a defense of their approach to the Gentiles by arguing that they, and their Gentile converts, need not observe the Pharisaic ritual purity laws in order to have full covenantal standing. On the contrary, a good Jew (or Gentile) must receive internal washing by the Holy Spirit, in "living water," in order to have genuine access to God.⁷⁴ Dunn makes a similar suggestion that Mark 7:1-23, which has substantial connections with P.Oxy. 840, may also have been used to offer a "justification for missionary outreach without regard for questions of ritual purity."⁷⁵

However, it must also be acknowledged that concerns over laws of ritual purity would not only have generated conflict with external opponents (rabbinic Judaism), but also would have generated internal conflict within Jewish-Christian

⁷¹ Matthew is similar to P.Oxy. 840 in that it contains a very positive picture of the law and Judaism, but at the same time demonstrates serious opposition to the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders (e.g., 3:7-10; 5:20; 21:28-32; 23:1-36).

⁷² Avery-Peck, "Judaism without the Temple," 409-431; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 178-209; *m. Pesah*. 8:8 and *m. Ed*. 5:2.

⁷³ Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians*, 8-13. Schiffman highlights the mission to the Gentiles as one of the key reasons for Jewish hostility towards Christianity and division between the two groups; "Tannaitic Perspectives," 148-149. Dunn declares, "For others to live or teach in such a way as to call such Pharisaic halakah in question, or even to dispute it, would most likely be perceived by the Pharisees . . . as a threat to or even an attack on their own identity—something to be fiercely resisted and met with counter attack" (*The Partings of the Ways*, 111). Such a "counter attack" may have included exclusion from the synagogue, as suggested above.

⁷⁴ Perhaps this sheds some light upon why the Pharisee's name was "Levi." Such a name would certainly be an embodiment of the Old Covenant order, setting up a contrast between whether Jesus or Levi brings genuine access to God. There may be an allusion here, therefore, to the priesthood of Christ (Heb 7:1ff.).

⁷⁵ Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 47.

circles. Some Jewish Christians insisted that to be a follower of Christ, one must first be a part of God's covenant people (Israel), which not only included circumcision, but also the embracing of those distinctive practices which set apart God's chosen people from the rest of the world, namely food laws, ritual purity, and Sabbath observance.⁷⁶ Not only is such a position evident in the New Testament itself (Acts 15:1ff.; Gal 2:1-11), but continues well into the second century. In Justin's dialogue with Trypho, he describes Jewish Christians who insist on full law-observance for salvation.⁷⁷ Irenaeus describes a group of Jewish Christians who insist on law-keeping and attack the apostle Paul as an "apostate from the law."⁷⁸ In such a historical context, it seems possible (if not probable) that a Jewish-Christian community that followed Paul and did not insist on enforcing the laws of ritual purity during table fellowship (particularly with Gentiles), would not only receive opposition from rabbinic Judaism, but very likely would receive opposition from Jewish-Christian groups who *did* enforce ritual purity laws. Indeed, such a conflict among Jewish Christians was evident even in New Testament times as "men from James" opposed Peter's willingness to eat with Gentiles without enforcing ritual purity laws (Gal 2:11-14).

The above analysis has shed further light on the possible reasons for P.Oxy. 840's production. Rather than a concern over early Christian baptismal controversies as Bovon and others have suggested, it seems possible that P.Oxy. 840 reflects debate over the observation of ritual purity laws within early Jewish Christianity. In particular, the debate may center upon purity laws during table fellowship, particularly as it pertains to the Gentiles. On this point, P.Oxy. 840 may be designed to argue against both exterior attacks from rabbinic Judaism, and interior attacks from other Jewish-Christian groups.⁷⁹ If an early Jewish Christian

⁷⁶ Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 4.

⁷⁷ *Dial.* 47.

⁷⁸ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.26.2; Gal 2; 2 Cor 10-13; Acts 21. For more here see Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 252-257.

⁷⁹ There is no need to choose between Jews and Jewish Christians as the opponents of P.Oxy. 840. The central concern of P.Oxy. 840—that purity laws are not necessary to participate in the covenant community—is perfectly designed to argue against *both* opponents equally well. On one level, then, the Jewish and Jewish-Christian opponents are one and the same (and the Pharisee in P.Oxy. 840 can represent both). We see a similar situation in Dunn's analysis of Mark 2:1-3:6, which also deals with Jews and the law. On whether these passages reflect polemic against the Jews or deal with a debate within Jewish Christianity concerning the Gentiles, Dunn declares, "While the unit would serve as a Jewish Christian apologetic over against non-Christian Jews, it would *also* function as a crucial text in the Jewish Christians' attempt to formulate their own self-identity" (Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the*

wanted to combat these groups, then P.Oxy. 840 would be the ideal tool because it attacks what is arguably the most cherished example of Jewish ritual purity: immersion in a *miqveh* prior to entry into the temple.⁸⁰ Although the canonical gospels have other examples of Jesus rejecting water rituals that only concern external piety (e.g., Mark 7:1ff., Luke 11:37-39), a story of Jesus refusing external washings in regard to access to the temple itself (and its holiest vessels) would be particularly poignant. Moreover, since the Jewish table fellowship was designed to emulate the purity of the temple itself (and thus required bathing in a *miqveh*), then a story of Jesus rejecting ritual purity at the temple would be the penultimate story of how ritual purity laws were not necessary to access the God of Judaism.

5. SUMMARY

By way of summary, we have seen that P.Oxy. 840 best fits into a Jewish-Christian context with the following characteristics: (i) It is an “orthodox” Jewish-Christian community with no apparent heterodox tendencies; (ii) It has a deep awareness of pre-70 temple cult and thus likely (although not necessarily) has origins in Palestinian Judaism, maintains a keen interest in the law, and is not too far removed from the first century; (iii) It seems to be a community in serious conflict with rabbinic Judaism and thus likely at a time after the expulsion of Christians from the synagogue; (iv) It is a community that opposes keeping ritual purity laws as a requirement for entrance into the covenant community, which not only has led to conflict with rabbinic Judaism, but likely with other Jewish Christians as well.

C. WHICH JEWISH-CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY?

Now that we have outlined the broad characteristics of P.Oxy. 840’s Jewish Christianity, we can begin the process of comparing it to known Jewish-Christian

Law, 25; emphasis mine). In other words, Dunn is arguing that the text has both an external and an internal opponent.

⁸⁰ Here is where Bovon and others miss the point of P.Oxy. 840. The story of a *miqveh* was chosen not because P.Oxy. 840 is designed exclusively to attack baptismal practices, but because it’s a preeminent example of Jewish ritual purity. Thus, the concern is not directly with water, *per se*, but with any form of Jewish ritual purity being enforced as necessary for covenant fellowship.

groups within the early church. Of course, confidently linking P.Oxy. 840 with any particular community is extremely difficult given the limitations of our evidence and the complexities of Jewish Christianity. Indeed, one may wonder whether such an attempt should even be made. However, identifying the possible community of P.Oxy. 840 is a vital part of understanding its origins and function within early Christianity, and is therefore a step worth taking, as long as we proceed with caution and hold our conclusions tentatively.

When one looks at the spectrum of early Jewish Christianity, and compares it with the characteristics of P.Oxy. 840 noted above, the group that immediately stands out is the Nazarenes. Although the origins and beliefs of the Nazarenes have been fairly obscure due to lack of attention in prior scholarship,⁸¹ the recent study by Ray Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, has shed tremendous light on this Jewish-Christian community. Aided by Pritz's study, let us examine how the Nazarenes compare to the community of P.Oxy. 840.

1. THE NAZARENES WERE AN "ORTHODOX" JEWISH-CHRISTIAN GROUP

Pritz documents how the Nazarenes are the descendants of those original Jerusalem believers who fled to Pella and maintained "orthodox" theology (particularly Christology) well into the second and third centuries.⁸² Although the Nazarenes are often confused with the Ebionites (or other "heretical" groups) in certain writings of the early church fathers, it is evident that they stood apart from these other Jewish-Christian groups by their adherence to the full divinity of Christ.⁸³ In addition to a high Christology, Epiphanius tells us that the Nazarenes

⁸¹ S.C. Mimouni, "Les nazoréens. Recherche étymologique et historique," *RB* 105 (1998): 208-262. Mimouni reviews the history of research on the Nazarenes, particularly focusing upon the etymological and historical perspective, as opposed to the theological perspective. Other sources for information on the Nazarenes include, M.C. de Boer, "L'Évangile de Jean et le christianisme juif (nazoréen)," in *Le déchirement. Juifs et chrétiens au premier siècle*, ed. D. Marguerat (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1996), 184-200; W.F. Albright, "The Names 'Nazareth' and 'Nazarene'," *JBL* 65 (1946): 397-401; Stephen Goranson, "Nazarenes," *ABD* 4:1049-1050; Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancien*, 82-86; J.S. Kennard, "Nazoraean and Nazareth," *JBL* 66 (1947): 79-81; Klijn, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*, 44-52.

⁸² Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 10. See also, Taylor, "The Phenomenon of Early Jewish-Christianity," 326-327; Daniélou, *Jewish Christianity*, 56; and Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 560-561.

⁸³ Justin Martyr recognized a heretical Jewish-Christian sect (likely the Ebionites), and also an unnamed orthodox Jewish-Christian sect (likely the Nazarenes), *Dial.* 47-48. Origen referenced two kinds of Ebionites, one of which is orthodox and seems to be the Nazarenes (*Cels.* 5.61). By the time of Eusebius, the term "Ebionite" had become a catch-all for any kind of Jewish-Christianity (Taylor,

held other doctrines that were central to the life of the early church: (i) the resurrection of the dead (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10); (ii) God as the creator of all things (Acts 4:24); (iii) the idea that there is one God and his son Jesus Christ (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:17, 30); (iv) belief in both the Old Testament and New Testament as the Word of God (Acts 1:20; 2:16-21, 28-35, 42; 4:11, 25-26).⁸⁴

2. THE NAZARENES LIKELY HAD AN INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEMPLE CULT

Several items suggest that the Nazarenes would have had an intimate knowledge of the temple cult: (i) They were Jewish Christians who remained immersed in the Old Testament law and prophets;⁸⁵ (ii) Their origins can be traced back to the original Jerusalem congregation before the flight to Pella;⁸⁶ and (iii) They demonstrate an impressive awareness of the teaching of rabbinic Judaism in their “commentary” on Isaiah 8:14, which Jerome records in his own commentary on the book.⁸⁷ In fact, of

“The Phenomenon of Early Jewish-Christianity,” 321-325). But, Eusebius also mentions an orthodox “Ebionite” group which, again, seems to be a clear reference to the Nazarenes (*Hist. eccl.* 3.27.2). Joseph Thomas, *Le mouvement baptiste en Palestine et Syrie, (150 av. J.-C.-300 ap. J.-C.)* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1935), also agrees that these orthodox Ebionites were really Nazarenes. J.M. Magnin, “Notes sur l'ébionisme,” *Proche-Orient chrétien* 23 (1973): 233-265, disagrees and argues that the Nazarenes and Ebionites should not be distinguished. For full discussion of these texts and a defense of the “orthodoxy” of the Nazarenes, see Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 19-28.

⁸⁴ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.7.2-3; discussion in Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 44. It is well known that Epiphanius is not always a reliable source for our understanding of early Jewish Christianity. See, Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*, 8-12, 28-38, 44-46; G.A. Koch, “A Critical Investigation of Epiphanius’ Knowledge of the Ebionites: A Translation and Critical Discussion of Panarion 30” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1976); and Joan E. Taylor, “The Phenomenon of Early Jewish-Christianity: Reality or Scholarly Invention?,” *VC* 44 (1990): 313-334. Since the scope of this study prevents us from doing a thorough and original analysis of Epiphanius as a source, I depend upon Pritz’s fine assessment of Epiphanius as it pertains to his knowledge of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites (*Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 29-47).

⁸⁵ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.7.2-4.

⁸⁶ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.7.8. Most scholars accept the historicity of the flight to Pella: M. Simon, “La migration à Pella: Légende ou réalité?,” in *Judéo-Christianisme: Recherches historiques et théologiques offertes en hommage au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris: Recherches de Science Religieuse, 1972), 37-54; John J. Gunther, “The Fate of the Jerusalem Church,” *TZ* 29 (1973): 81-94; Sydney Sowers, “The Circumstances and Recollection of the Pella Flight,” *TZ* 26 (1970): 305-320; and Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 122-127. However, a number have objected: Johannes Munck, “Primitive Jewish Christianity and Later Jewish Christianity: Continuation or Rupture,” in *Aspects du Judéo-Christianisme*, ed. Colloque de Strasbourg (1964) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 77-93; Samuel G.F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London: SPCK, 1957); and Gerd Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 200-213.

⁸⁷ Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 8.14; For more on these Isaiah passages and Jerome as a source, A.F.J. Klijn, “Jerome’s Quotations from a Nazoraean Interpretation of Isaiah,” *RSR* 60 (1972): 241-255; Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 48-59; F.C. Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings* (London: University of London, 1924), 72-75.

this Nazarene commentary on Isaiah, F.C. Burkitt declares, “I do not think that there is another passage in any of the Church Fathers which betrays so much acquaintance with Talmudic Judaism.”⁸⁸ Pritz concludes that the Nazarenes must have remained on “intimate terms with rabbinic Judaism” and that there was “continuing contact between communities” well into the middle second century.⁸⁹ So, it is reasonable to think that the Nazarenes, being a Jewish-Christian community with roots in Palestinian Judaism and continued interest in the Old Testament law and rabbinic Judaism, would very likely have understood pre-70 practices concerning ritual purity. This provides an impressive fit with the situation of P.Oxy. 840 and its own awareness of such ritual practices.

3. THE NAZARENES WERE IN CONFLICT WITH PHARISAIC (RABBINIC) JUDAISM

The Nazarenes’ commentary on Isaiah not only reveals that they were aware of the teachings of rabbinic Judaism (as noted above), but also in serious conflict with it. Jerome’s record of the Nazarene commentary on Isaiah reveals that the Nazarenes saw the destruction and judgment of Isaiah 8:14 as applicable to the rabbinic houses of “Shammai and Hillel, from whom originated the scribes and the Pharisees”⁹⁰ because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. In their comments on Isaiah 8:20-22, the Nazarenes refer to ongoing conflict with the Pharisees (rabbis) and describe them as apostates who “do everything for the love of the belly and hiss during incantations in the way of magicians in order to deceive.”⁹¹ In contrast, the Nazarenes portray themselves as the true heirs of the Old Testament by saying, “God has given *us* the law.”⁹² In their commentary on Isaiah 9:14, the Nazarenes describe the teachings of the Pharisees as the “very heavy yoke of the Jewish traditions.”⁹³ Also, Jerome notes that the Nazarenes compare the Pharisees (rabbis)

⁸⁸ Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings*, 73.

⁸⁹ Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 62. Klijn argues that the Nazarene text “seems to point at acquaintance with Jewish exegetical tradition” (“A Nazoraean Interpretation of Isaiah,” 253).

⁹⁰ Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 8.14. All English translations of Jerome are taken from Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, unless otherwise stated.

⁹¹ Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 8.20-21.

⁹² Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 8.20-21; emphasis mine.

⁹³ Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 9.1-4.

to the “devil and his angels” and describe them as those “who earlier deceived the people with very vicious traditions.”⁹⁴

In summary, it is reasonably certain that the Nazarene Jewish-Christian community was engaged in some sort of ongoing conflict with the rabbinic Jews of its day and saw them as apostates from the true faith. Such a situation is consistent with the pattern of P.Oxy. 840 which itself reflects a Jewish-Christian community in sharp conflict with rabbinic Judaism and sees its opponents as now apostate and outside the covenant community. What is the source of the Nazarenes’ conflict with the Jews? Epiphanius describes a possible cause:

Yet [The Nazarenes] are very much the Jews’ enemies. Not only do Jewish people have a hatred of them; they even stand up at dawn, at midday, and toward evening, three times a day when they recite their prayers in the synagogues, and curse and anathematize them. Three times a day they say, ‘God curse the Nazoraeans.’ For they harbor an extra grudge against them, if you please, because despite their Jewishness they preach that Jesus is the Christ—the opposite of those who are still Jews, for they have not accepted Jesus.⁹⁵

Remarkably, the words of Epiphanius reveal that much of the conflict may be due to persecution from the Jews and expulsion of the Nazarenes from the synagogue, which is, again, just like the situation of P.Oxy. 840.⁹⁶ Moreover, it is possible that the Nazarenes’ approach to the purity laws may have been a contributing factor leading to this expulsion (see below).

⁹⁴ Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 29.20-21.

⁹⁵ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.9.2-3. Unless otherwise stated, English translations of Epiphanius are derived from, Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987).

⁹⁶ Pritz argues, convincingly I think, that the word נוצרִים (*nôzrîm*, or “Nazarene”) was originally included in the Twelfth Benediction cursing Christians and banning them from the Synagogue (*Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 102-107). In the quote above by Epiphanius it seems that the phrase “May God curse the Nazarenes” was part of the synagogue prayers. Jerome confirms this curse of the Nazarenes in numerous places: *Comm. Am.* 1.11-12; *Ep.* 112.13; *Comm. Isa.* 5.18-19; 49.7; 52.4-6. If correct, then it seems the Nazarenes are directly connected with the banning of Christians from the synagogues and is yet further evidence that connects the Nazarenes with P.Oxy. 840, which itself may allude to such a banning. For more on the Twelfth Benediction see, R.T. Herford, “The Problem of the ‘Minim,’” in *Jewish Studies in Memory of George A. Kohut* (New York: A. Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1935), 359-369; H. Hirschberg, “Once Again--The Minim,” *JBL* 67 (1948): 305-318; Katz, “Issues in the Separation of Judaism and Christianity after 70 C.E.,” 43-76; Matsunaga, “Christian Self-Identification,” 355-371.

4. THE NAZARENES OPPOSED THE KEEPING OF RITUAL PURITY LAWS AS A REQUIREMENT FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE COVENANT COMMUNITY

The historical accounts of the Nazarenes make it clear that, as Jewish Christians, they were by no means opposed to Judaism but kept the law and viewed it favorably. Epiphanius declares, “[The Nazarenes] were Jewish, were attached to the Law, and had circumcision.”⁹⁷ In light of such favor to the law, one might think that the Nazarenes would be opposed to the apostle Paul, since a number of other Jewish-Christian groups seemed to oppose his position on the law.⁹⁸ However, the Nazarenes are a remarkable community because they not only continue to keep the law but, at the same time, exhibit a highly favorable impression of Paul and the Gentile mission. Again, Jerome captures the Nazarene commentary on Isaiah 9:1-4, “Christ came and his preaching shone out... Later, however, the preaching became more dominant... through the Gospel of the apostle Paul who was the last of all the apostles. And the Gospel of Christ shone to the most distant tribes.”⁹⁹ The Nazarenes side with the ministry of Paul (instead of the Pharisees) and fully recognize his authority as the “last apostle,” thus vividly endorsing his mission to the Gentiles (“the most distant tribes”). Given Paul’s position on issues of ritual purity (Rom 14:19-21; Gal 2:1-11; Col 2:16-22), this is an impressive endorsement by a Jewish-Christian community and fits well with P.Oxy. 840’s approach to the laws of ritual purity. Due to their passion for the Gentile mission, it is reasonable to see the Nazarenes as being in opposition to those Jewish-Christian groups who insist that the laws of ritual purity must be kept in order for Gentiles to enjoy table fellowship and be considered members of God’s covenant community.

The position of the Nazarenes on the Pharisaic *halakah* (such as ritual purity laws) is also confirmed by their frequent negative assessment of the “traditions” of the Pharisees, as noted above.¹⁰⁰ This repeated criticism of the “tradition” of the Pharisees (while still defending “the Law”), is most plausibly understood to be a criticism of their oral laws (*halakah*) that they impose upon others. Pritz agrees,

⁹⁷ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.5.4.

⁹⁸ Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 252-257.

⁹⁹ Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 9.1-4. Emphasis mine.

¹⁰⁰ Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 8.14, 20-21; 9.1-4; 29.20-21.

“[The Nazarenes] rejected *halakah* as it was developing in rabbinic Judaism.”¹⁰¹

Although we have no specific Nazarene reference to ritual purity laws pertaining to table fellowship, it seems likely that a criticism of Pharisaic *halakah* would naturally include criticism of those ritual purity laws, particularly given the Pharisaic concern for eating meals in a state of purity.¹⁰²

Thus, the Nazarenes again present a remarkable parallel to the position of P.Oxy. 840 as noted above. Pritz sums up the Nazarene position well:

The Nazarenes...may themselves have continued to keep the Law of the Pentateuch, but they did not see it as binding on those who believed from among the Gentiles. Nor did they accept as binding on themselves (or on any Jews) the Oral Law as embodied in the Mishnah. These Jewish Christians viewed Paul and his mission favorably and evidently even accepted—in theory at least—the unity of the Church as composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ.¹⁰³

5. THE GOSPEL OF THE NAZARENES

As we assess the relationship between P.Oxy. 840 and the Nazarene community, we must also pause and comment on the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*.¹⁰⁴ Our purpose here is not to determine whether P.Oxy. 840 is a portion of the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*—there is simply too little information to confirm or deny such a claim.¹⁰⁵ Rather, our task is to assess whether the content of the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* supports the suggestion that P.Oxy. 840 may have originated within the Nazarene community. As we approach this task, we must keep in mind that the problem of identifying and distinguishing between the various Jewish-Christian gospels is enormously difficult. Vielhauer and Strecker describe this problem “as one of the most difficult which the apocryphal literature presents.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, we are not always certain whether the citations we have isolated really do belong to the

¹⁰¹ Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 110.

¹⁰² Given that Paul rejected such ritual purity practices at meals in the Antioch incident (Gal 2:11-14), it is reasonable to think that the Nazarenes, being pro-Paul, would share his view on meal purity.

¹⁰³ Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 70.

¹⁰⁴ There seems to be some variation concerning how to spell the title of this gospel (Nazarenes vs. Nazaraeans vs. Nazoraean). For the sake of simplicity, this study will use “Nazarenes.”

¹⁰⁵ Such an idea is put forth by Goodspeed, “The New Gospel Fragment from Oxyrhynchus,” 146; Harnack, “Ein neues Evangelienbruchstück,” 250; Lagrange, “Nouveau Fragment non canonique relatif à l’Évangile,” 553.

¹⁰⁶ Vielhauer and Strecker, “Jewish-Christian Gospels,” 135. For more on the subject see, Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, 1-43; and Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 3-16.

Nazarene community. For the sake of this discussion, we will build upon the conclusions of Vielhauer and Strecker concerning the content and parameters of the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*. Let us consider the following points of similarities between these two gospels:

- (i) Both gospels use the very distinctive phrase “harlots and flutegirls.”¹⁰⁷ Again, this connection is not mentioned to prove that P.Oxy. 840 is part of the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*. Rather, it is mentioned simply to show that each community knew and used this phrase in its production of gospel stories, thereby providing further reasons to think that P.Oxy. 840 may have originated within the Nazarene community.
- (ii) Both gospels provide expansion and elaboration on biblical characters. The *Gospel of the Nazarenes* tells us that the man with the withered hand was a mason and that his name was “Malchus,”¹⁰⁸ and that there were two rich men instead of one.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, P.Oxy. 840 tells us not only that there was a Pharisee, but we also learn the additional details that he is a chief priest and his name was “Levi.”
- (iii) Both gospels seem to have a concern with the temple. The *Gospel of the Nazarenes* adds the detail that, in addition to the temple veil being torn at the death of Christ, the lintel of the temple also collapsed.¹¹⁰
- (iv) Both gospels exhibit the influence of multiple canonical gospels. The influence of Matthew on the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* is well-attested, but there also seems to be the influence of at least Luke,¹¹¹ and John.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Eusebius, *Theoph.* 4.22. See discussion on this phrase above.

¹⁰⁸ Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 12.13; Würzburg, M. p. th. fol. 61; see Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1:163.

¹⁰⁹ Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 15.14. Jeremias notes that this latter pericope in the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* is quite similar in language style with P.Oxy. 840: Joachim Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1964), 35.

¹¹⁰ Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 27.51.

¹¹¹ Eusebius, *Theoph.* 4.22, on Matt. 25:14ff. Of this text, Klijn declares, “We wonder whether [this passage] does not show the influence of Luke” (*Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, 62). On the citation from Jerome, *adv. Pelag.* 3.2, Klijn declares, “We assume that the author has used both Matthew and Luke” (106).

¹¹² Eusebius, *Theoph.* 4.12, on Matt. 10:34-36, “[Christ] himself taught the reason for the separation of souls that take place in the houses, as we have found somewhere in the Gospel that is spread abroad among the Jews in Hebrew tongue, in which it is said: ‘I choose for myself the most worthy: the most worthy are those my Father in heaven has given me.’” Vielhauer and Strecker note that this saying “contains two Johannine expressions: ‘I choose’ (cf. Jn 6:70; 13:18; 15:16, 19) and ‘whom my father has given me’ (cf. Jn 6:37, 39; 17:2, 6, 24)” (“*Jewish Christian Gospels*,” 159). See also discussion of this text and its links to John in Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, 67-68. An outside possibility of another Johannine connections is the medieval manuscript that Vielhauer and Strecker mention, which comments on John 13:5, “And [Jesus] wiped their feet. And as it said in the Gospel

(v) Both gospels are concerned with issues of law and also exhibit polemic against Jewish leaders. Klijn declares that the Gospel of the Nazarenes is “preoccupied with the Jewish law and the Jewish people.”¹¹³ He goes on to say, “The entire Gospel breathes the spirit of Judaism with which it seems to be in constant debate.”¹¹⁴

It seems possible that the communities behind the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* and P.Oxy. 840 produced their gospel stories in a similar fashion and with similar themes. This conclusion continues to support the contention that P.Oxy. 840 may have originated from the Nazarene community.

One objection that can be raised at this point is that the patristic evidence indicates that the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* was composed in Hebrew (or Aramaic), whereas P.Oxy. 840 was composed in Greek. Does this mean they could not have come from the same community? Not necessarily. First, it is not at all certain that the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* was originally composed in Hebrew. Waitz argued that it was originally composed in Greek, and only later translated into Hebrew, similar to the way that Matthew was originally written in Greek and later translated into Hebrew.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the linguistic connections between the Gospel of the Nazarenes and Matthew, Luke, and John (noted above) are best explained if it was originally composed in Greek. Second, this study has not argued that P.Oxy. 840 is a portion of the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*. So, even if the latter was composed in Hebrew, there is no reason to think the same community could not compose a later writing in Greek. Many Jewish-Christian communities were multi-lingual and could operate in several languages as the situation warranted.¹¹⁶ Perhaps the Nazarenes thought Greek was the best language for P.Oxy. 840 to win acceptance in the broader Christian communities, particularly those Diaspora Jewish-Christian communities that would have struggled with how the laws of ritual purity applied to

of the Nazaraeans: He kissed the feet of each one of them” (*Historia passionis Domini*, fol. 25; “Jewish Christian Gospels,” 163). This citation, if reliable, seems to be an obvious instance where the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* may have used John.

¹¹³ “Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition,” 40.

¹¹⁴ “Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition,” 40.

¹¹⁵ Waitz, “Das Matthäusevangelium der Nazaräer (Nazaräerevangelium),” 17-32.

¹¹⁶ For more on Greek usage among Palestinian Jews see, James Barr, “Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 2, ed. W.D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 79-114; A.W. Argyle, “Greek among the Jews of Palestine in New Testament Times,” *NTS* 20 (1973-74): 87-90; and S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Feldheim, 1965).

Gentile converts.¹¹⁷ Either way, it does not seem the language of the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* means that P.Oxy. 840 could not have come from that same community.

6. SUMMARY

By way of summary, the Nazarenes exhibit remarkable parallels with the characteristics of P.Oxy. 840's community: (i) both are "orthodox" Jewish-Christian communities, (ii) both have origins in Palestinian Judaism and awareness of the pre-70 temple cult, (iii) both exhibit ongoing polemical interaction with rabbinic Judaism, consider them apostates, and likely have suffered persecution and expulsion from the synagogue, and (iv) both favor Paul's view on the law and the Gentile mission, which implies they reject those who insist the laws of ritual purity must be kept to participate in the covenant. In addition, the fragmentary remains of the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* are consistent with the idea that P.Oxy. 840 arose from the Nazarene community. Of course, due to the limitations of our evidence and the complexity of the Jewish-Christian phenomenon, there is no way to be certain of this conclusion. However, at the same time, it must be noted that the theological position of the Nazarene sect—positive towards the law and also positive towards Paul—is out of step with the dominant anti-Paul position of other Jewish-Christian groups.¹¹⁸ The fact that P.Oxy. 840, clearly a Jewish-Christian gospel, also exhibits such a theological combination makes the connection between the two a bit more probable.

D. WHO WERE THE OPPONENTS OF P.OXY. 840?

We noted above that in addition to arguing against the rabbinic Judaism of its day, P.Oxy. 840 likely betrays an internal struggle within Jewish Christianity over the observation of ritual purity laws. If P.Oxy. 840 has its origins in the Nazarene

¹¹⁷ The Nazarenes would have known that Matthew, and the other gospels, were originally known in Greek and then later translated to Hebrew. Perhaps, in order to generate authenticity, they wanted to follow the same order for P.Oxy. 840.

¹¹⁸ Dunn notes that one of the prevailing features of some forms of early Jewish Christianity is animosity towards Paul and love towards James, the brother of Jesus (*Unity and Diversity*, 252-257). Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 16-21, makes a similar observation about the Ebionites, whom he considers to be the dominant Jewish-Christian group.

community, then we have the opportunity to explore what other Jewish-Christian group may have been its primary opponent. Although the limitations of our evidence make any suggestion uncertain, the most obvious candidate for such a role is the Jewish-Christian group known as the Ebionites.¹¹⁹ The Ebionites were a sect that was widely considered “heretical” by the early fathers, flourished from the second to the fourth centuries, and likely had its origins in Palestinian Judaism.¹²⁰ The group becomes so well-known among the church fathers, that they began to lump all Jewish-Christian heresies under the name “Ebionite.”¹²¹ Let us review some of its characteristics relevant for our discussion here.

1. The Ebionites were extremely zealous for the Jewish law and had a “strict, even rigorous, legalism.”¹²² Irenaeus comments on the Ebionites, “They practice circumcision, persevere in those customs which are enjoined by the law, and are so Judaic in their style of life, that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God.”¹²³ Several specifics are worth noting: (i) Distinctions between ritual cleanness and uncleanness played a central role among the Ebionites. Schoeps declares, “Failure to distinguish between the clean and unclean was for them a mark of a life alienated from God.”¹²⁴ Epiphanius declares, “If [an Ebionite] meets anyone while returning from his plunge and immersion in the water, he runs back again for another immersion, often with his clothes on too!”¹²⁵ This would be an impressive parallel to the Pharisee in P.Oxy. 840 who is insistent that a person must be ritually “clean” in order to access God. (ii) The Ebionites engaged in regular ritual washings in order to maintain this degree of purity.¹²⁶ Schoeps comments again, “Their purification practices, especially the ritual immersion-bath, went

¹¹⁹ General treatments of this group include, Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancien*, 257-286; Schoeps, “Ebionite Christianity,” 219-224; Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, esp. 38-117; Fitzmyer, “The Qumran Scrolls,” 435-480; Teicher, “The Dead Sea Scrolls--Documents of the Jewish-Christian Sect of the Ebionites,” 67-99; Strecker, “Ebioniten,” 487-500; and Wright, “Ebionites,” 313-317.

¹²⁰ Fitzmyer, “The Qumran Scrolls,” 440. See *Dial.* 47; Origen, *Cels.* 5.61.

¹²¹ E.g., Origen, *Cels.* 5.61. See Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 21.

¹²² Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 75.

¹²³ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.26.2.

¹²⁴ Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 103. Pseudo-Clem, *Hom.* 2.19-20; 11.30.1; 11.33.4; 13.4; 13.9-10. For more about the Pseudo-Clementines and their relationship to Jewish Christianity, see F. Stanley Jones, *An Ancient Jewish-Christian Source on the History of Christianity: Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions 1.27-71* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), especially the review of prior research on p. 1-38; and Strecker, “On the Problem of Jewish Christianity,” 257-271.

¹²⁵ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.2.5.

¹²⁶ Pseudo-Clem, *Hom.* 11.28.1-2; 11.30.1; 11.33.4. These latter two mention that such bathing rituals were used to be rid of impurity contacted through sexual intercourse, among other things. Of course, such concerns are very Jewish in nature.

beyond what was prescribed by the Pharisees and thus represented also a radicalization of the understanding of purification prevalent in rabbinic Judaism."¹²⁷ Their emphasis on water lustrations is evident also in the fact that their gospel, which is very similar to Matthew, eliminates the virgin birth and begins with the baptism of Jesus.¹²⁸ They even insisted on the requirement for “running” or “living water” to be used in such practices, which of course matches the rabbinic (Pharisaic) requirements.¹²⁹ (iii) They were very concerned with proper food laws, particularly the avoidance of impure meats. Consequently, to ensure that such laws were never violated, they insisted on a strict vegetarian diet.¹³⁰ The language of the impure “dogs and pigs” in P.Oxy. 840 (with connotations of impure food), would have been particularly effective in rebuking a group like the Ebionites. Such concerns (along with their ritual washing) strongly imply they would have observed strict ritual purity laws during their common meals. This is confirmed by the fact that the Ebionites use the Gal 2:11-14 incident as an opportunity to further malign the apostle Paul—presumably because they supported the “men from James” and agreed with their insistence that Peter should separate from the Gentiles during meals.¹³¹

2. The Ebionites not only vigorously kept the Jewish law, but required others (including Gentiles) to do the same in order to be saved. Although Justin Martyr does not mention the Ebionites by name, most agree that he refers to their beliefs in his dialogue with Trypho:

And Trypho inquired again, ‘But if someone...recognizing that this man is Christ, and has believed and obeys him, wishes, however, to observe these institutions, will he be saved?’ I said, ‘In my opinion, Trypho, such a one will be saved, *if he does not strive in every way to persuade other men... to*

¹²⁷ Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 103.

¹²⁸ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.13. See Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 19-20.

¹²⁹ Pseudo-Clem, *Contestatio* 1.2; Pseudo-Clem, *Hom.* 11.26.2; See discussion in Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 103-106. The Ebionites were not the only Jewish-Christian group that insisted on Jewish/Pharisaic standards for water rituals. The *Didache* 7.1-3 declares that baptism should be in *υδωρ ζων* (“running water”), revealing an ongoing concern to conform to Jewish bathing practices. For more on baptism in the *Didache* see, Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 281-283.

¹³⁰ Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 99-100; Pseudo-Clem, *Hom.* 2.19-20.

¹³¹ Pseudo-Clem, *Hom.* 17.19; see discussion in Richard Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1990), 64.

observe the same things as himself, telling them they will not be saved unless they do.’¹³²

This is remarkably close to the language of the Pharisaic Christians described in Acts 15:1: “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” Eusebius describes them in a similar manner, “[The Ebionites] insisted on the complete observation of the Law, and did not think that they would be saved by faith in Christ alone.”¹³³ Consequently, the Ebionites are generally viewed as the later manifestation of this early group of Pharisaic Christians described in Acts.¹³⁴ Again, this presents an impressive parallel to the position of the Pharisee in P.Oxy. 840.

3. One of the primary teachings of the Ebionites is the rejection of the ministry and teaching of the apostle Paul, particularly his views concerning the law. In the Pseudo-Clementine work *Epistula Petri*, Peter refers to Paul as “the man who is my enemy” who holds to a “lawless and trifling” doctrine.¹³⁵ In another work he accuses Paul’s vision of the risen Christ as being a sign of judgment on him rather than an apostolic commission.¹³⁶ Epiphanius notes that the Ebionites called Paul a “*pseudoapostolos*.”¹³⁷ Teicher sums it up well, “The abhorrence of St. Paul is the other distinguishing feature of the Ebionites.”¹³⁸ Such animosity towards Paul is a vivid contrast with the pro-Paul position being promoted by P.Oxy. 840 and the Nazarenes.

4. The Ebionites may have developed from a split with the Nazarenes. We have already noted above that the Nazarenes have their origins in the group of Jewish Christians that fled to Pella before the destruction of the temple. Epiphanius

¹³² *Dial.* 47; emphasis mine. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 240.

¹³³ Eusebius, *Hist.eccl.* 3.27.2. English translation from Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1926).

¹³⁴ Fitzmyer, “The Qumran Scrolls,” 440. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 242-245. Schoeps declares, “The Ebionites of the second and third century were, like their fathers, the ‘certain sect of the Pharisees who believed’ (Acts 15:5), plain (sic) and professed ‘enthusiasts for the law’ (Acts 15:5)” (“Ebionite Christianity,” 222).

¹³⁵ *Epistula Petri*, 2.3. In this work, “Peter” goes on to uphold the abiding validity of the law and the preeminent role of Moses as the law-giver.

¹³⁶ Pseudo-Clem., *Hom.* 17.19.

¹³⁷ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.16.8. Origen also confirms that the Ebionites opposed the apostle Paul in *Cels.* 5.65 and *Hom. Jer.* 17.2

¹³⁸ Teicher, “The Dead Sea Scrolls--Documents of the Jewish-Christian Sect of the Ebionites,” 98.

contributes the additional fact that “Ebion” came out of the Nazarenes at a later date.¹³⁹ Although the reference to an individual named “Ebion” is almost certainly mistaken,¹⁴⁰ Pritz suggests that this piece of historical information may reflect a split between the two groups, implying that the Ebionites arose out of the Nazarenes.¹⁴¹ Mimouni agrees with this assessment, “Après, à la suite de la formation des mouvements ébionite et elkasaïte, qui en sont issus [les nazoréens], il conviendrait de réserver ce terme au seul groupe que les Pères de l'Église auront tendance à considérer comme «orthodoxe».”¹⁴² Such a division among Jewish Christians over the law—one group pro-Paul and one group anti-Paul—fits remarkably well with the content of P.Oxy. 840 and provides a plausible historical scenario. The community of P.Oxy. 840 would have wanted to respond to the Jewish Christians that have attacked it and departed from it. If the Nazarene-Ebionite split could be linked to the expulsion of Christians from the synagogue, then this further explains the additional hostility in P.Oxy. 840 towards rabbinic Judaism. The Nazarenes would have viewed the Ebionites as siding with the Jews, and collaborating against them.

In summary, we must again recognize that these connections to the Ebionites are tentative and cannot provide any certainty that we have rightly identified P.Oxy. 840's opponents. At the same time, it seems the Ebionites are, both theologically and historically, a plausible candidate for P.Oxy. 840's Jewish-Christian opponents. They are zealous law-keepers with concern for clean/unclean distinctions, ritual lustrations, and food purity, combined with an insistence that such laws are necessary for true conversion to Christianity.¹⁴³ It is no surprise, then, that they are

¹³⁹ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.2.1.

¹⁴⁰ It was common for heresiologists (e.g., Tertullian) to assume that every heresy begins with a heretic that can be named. For more discussion on this point, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths we Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 99-100; Strecker, “On The Problem of Jewish Christianity,” 280-281; and Wright, “Ebionites,” 314-315.

¹⁴¹ Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 37-38. Although some *views* of the Ebionites can be traced back to the book of Acts (see above), that does not necessarily mean that the Ebionites, as a sect, can be traced back to pre-70 Jerusalem.

¹⁴² Mimouni, “Les nazaoréens,” 208; see also his discussion on 261-262.

¹⁴³ It must be noted here that part of the reason the Ebionites fit so well as an opponent of P.Oxy. 840 is because they are so similar to the Essenes discussed above in chapter three. In fact, many scholars have engaged the question of whether the Ebionites arose out of the Essene community: Oscar Cullmann, “Die neuentdeckten Qumrantexte und das Judenchristentum der Pseudoklementinen,” in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann zu seinem 70.*, ed. Walther Eltester (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1954), 35-51; H.J. Schoeps, “Handelt es sich wirklich um ebionitische Dokumente?,”

antagonistic to the apostle Paul and his approach to the laws of ritual purity. The Ebionites' historical proximity to the Nazarenes, and the likely split in their ranks, makes them a good fit with the position of the Pharisee in P.Oxy. 840. Thus, it is now easier to see how the Pharisee in P.Oxy. 840 could be representative of both rabbinic Judaism and Ebionite-like Jewish Christianity—in essence, they are one and the same.

E. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

If the above analysis is correct, then we can, tentatively, begin to put together the following picture: The issue of the laws of ritual purity and their relationship to believers in Christ was central in the life of the early church. The Nazarenes were part of the original pre-70 Palestinian Jewish-Christian community that continued to take the law seriously, but did not enforce it as a requirement for Gentile converts, particularly as it pertained to table fellowship. This would have been consistent with the views of the apostle Paul. After the flight to Pella and the destruction of the temple, tensions with the Jews worsened—possibly due, in part, to further conflict over ritual purity laws—and eventually the Jewish Christians were banned from the synagogue (via the decisions at Yavneh in c.90). The impact of this decision eventually affected the Nazarenes as they were expelled from their local synagogues. This expulsion led to an internal conflict within the Nazarene camp concerning the role of the law, leading to the departure of the Ebionites who desired to maintain and enforce a rigid standard of ritual purity (even for Gentile converts). The severity of this split, in conjunction with the expulsion from the synagogue, created a serious crisis within the Nazarene camp concerning the role and function of the laws of ritual purity and their Jewish self-identity. Thus, there was a need for the creation of P.Oxy. 840. Designed to combat both the Ebionites' position and the criticisms of the rabbinic Jews, P.Oxy. 840 employed what is arguably the preeminent example of ritual purity: bathing in a *miqveh* prior to entering the holy temple. This would serve not only to refute the theological error of the Ebionites (who themselves continued such ritual baths and other purity laws), but would also

ZRGG 3 (1951): 322-336; Fitzmyer, "The Qumran Scrolls," 435-480; Teicher, "The Dead Sea Scrolls--Documents of the Jewish-Christian Sect of the Ebionites," 67-99.

provide a rebuttal to the rabbinic Jews, arguing that the Nazarenes were still “clean” and had access to God via Jesus Christ, and that, in fact, it was the Jews who were “unclean,” immoral, and should be considered apostates. The author, realizing that the impact of the story depended upon its perceived authenticity, wanted to make his story (a) sound like the Jesus that everyone knew from the canonical gospels, and (b) reflect the ritual practices of the Jews accurately and correctly. Thus, as the author composed his story, he drew upon his memories and knowledge of those canonical texts which shared the theme of ritual purity (without directly copying them), and also drew upon his community’s knowledge of pre-70 purity practices, particularly pertaining to the temple.

With such a scenario now in hand, we can begin to draw more definitive implications on date and geography.

1. DATE OF P.OXY. 840'S COMPOSITION

The above scenario suggests a time period within a generation or two after the Yavneh decision to expel Jewish Christians from the synagogue (c.90 A.D.), putting the composition of P.Oxy. 840 roughly 125-150 A.D. Several factors we have already discussed seem to converge on this date:

- (i) Intimate awareness of the pre-70 temple practices suggests a date not too far removed from the first century.
- (ii) Expulsion from the synagogue must be relatively recent in the memory of the community for it to be addressed by P.Oxy. 840.
- (iii) The Nazarenes and Ebionites must have split sometime between 66 A.D. (flight to Pella) and c.150 A.D. (Justin Martyr distinguishes between the views of the Ebionites and Nazarenes).
- (iv) P.Oxy. 840 demonstrates awareness of the four canonical gospels, suggesting a time after their collection into a fourfold unit, which both prior studies and more recent studies place around 150 A.D. or earlier.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Recently, Theo K. Heckel, *Vom Evangelium des Markus zum viergestaltigen Evangelium* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1999), (c.110-120); C.B. Amphoux, “La finale longue de Marc: un épilogue des quatre évangiles,” in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*, ed. Camille Focant (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 548-555, (early second century); T.C. Skeat, “The Origin of the Christian Codex,” *ZPE* 102 (1994): 263-268, (early second century); Graham Stanton, “The Fourfold Gospel,” *NTS* 43 (1997): 317-346, (c.150); James A. Kelhoffer,

(v) The mixing of synoptic and Johannine material is characteristic of the apocryphal gospels seen in the early to middle second century (see chapter four above). P.Oxy. 840 fits best within this second-century matrix.

Of course, none of these factors in and of themselves is decisive, and none of them *requires* a date of 125-150 A.D. (particularly in light of our limited data). However, when their cumulative effect is weighed, the 125-150 A.D. date remains the most plausible option.

2. THE GEOGRAPHY OF P.OXY. 840'S COMMUNITY

If we are correct in linking P.Oxy. 840 with the Nazarenes, then we have a fairly direct approach to the location of that community. Epiphanius tell us the Nazarenes existed “in Beroea near Coelesyria in the Decapolis near Pella and in Bashanitis at the place called Cocabe, Khokhabe in Hebrew.”¹⁴⁵ After the destruction of Jerusalem it seems reasonable that a number of Nazarenes remained in Pella, while some would have tried to return to Jerusalem. This latter group would surely have been driven back out during the aftermath of the Bar-Kochba revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem by Trajan (c.132-135).¹⁴⁶ Thus, by the time of P.Oxy. 840's composition it seems the Nazarenes would have been pushed further and further north into Galilee and Syria. The location of Beroea in Syria (modern day Aleppo) is given greater plausibility for a Nazarene Jewish-Christian settlement because (a) such a location was confirmed by Jerome as a Nazarene dwelling,¹⁴⁷ and (b) Beroea was not far from Antioch which was another key Jewish-Christian

Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), (early second century). Older works include, Theodor Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1888-92), (early second century); Adolf von Harnack, *Origin of the New Testament and the Most Important Consequences of a New Creation* (London: Williams & Northgate, 1925), 68-83 (early second century); and Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926), 33-41 (c.125).

¹⁴⁵ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.7.7.

¹⁴⁶ James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue* (New York: World Publishing, 1961), 91-95. It is interesting to note that the second Jewish war (132-135 A.D.) would have led to a greater interaction of Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles, perhaps precisely the environment that would create the need for P.Oxy. 840; Bagatti, *The Church from the Circumcision*, 78.

¹⁴⁷ Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 3.2.

community in Syria. Consequently, it seems best to suggest that P.Oxy. 840 was composed in Syria.¹⁴⁸

The fact that the manuscript of P.Oxy. 840 was discovered in Egypt does not present difficulty for a Syrian origin. The manuscript we possess would have been copied nearly two centuries after the original composition of P.Oxy. 840 in Syria, giving the story adequate time to circulate into other regions.¹⁴⁹ Apparently there were well-established Christian and Jewish communities in Oxyrhynchus, including a vibrant intellectual environment, which may have found the content of P.Oxy. 840 particularly useful or edifying.¹⁵⁰ In particular, we have knowledge of several anti-Jewish dialogues in Oxyrhynchus, which may indicate an environment suitable for the reception of P.Oxy. 840.¹⁵¹

II. COMPARISON OF P.OXY. 840 TO ANALOGOUS APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS

Now that we have a working hypothesis for P.Oxy. 840, we can begin to place it within the scope of other early apocryphal works. Despite the fact that a

¹⁴⁸ Ron Cameron has suggested Syria as well (*The Other Gospels*, 53). Connections with other apocryphal texts from Syria seem to corroborate this location. The rare verb καθαρεύω in P.Oxy. 840 (l.23-24) appears in other early Christian literature only in the *Gospel of Peter* 11:46 where Pilate washes his hands and declares himself to be “clean” (καθαρεύω) of the blood of Christ. The *Gospel of Thomas*, also thought to be composed in Syria, is the only other apocryphal gospel text I could find that uses a “woe” statement with a Pharisee: “Woe to the Pharisees, for they are like a dog lying in the manger of the cattle; for he neither eats nor lets the cattle eat” (102). Note also the use of “dog.” Other connections to the *Gospel of Thomas* include a reference to Mark 7:18 (14), and Luke 11:39/Matt 23:25 (89). In addition, *Gospel of Thomas* 28 (P.Oxy. 1) has Jesus say that his opponents are “blind...and do not see” (τυφλοι... και ου βλέπει), and the Jesus of P.Oxy. 840 (l.31) says that his opponents are “Blind who do not see” (τυφλοι μη ὁρωντες). Of course, such connections can be explained in other ways besides common provenance, but they still lend more weight to the idea that P.Oxy. 840 arose in Syria.

¹⁴⁹ As noted in a prior chapter, rapid circulation of manuscripts was common during this time period. For example, P.Oxy. 405, a late-second-century copy of *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus, was discovered in Egypt about 20 years after its initial composition in Gaul in c.180. For more on the issue of rapid transfer of documents in the ancient world see, Eldon J. Epp, “New Testament Papyrus Manuscripts and Letter Carrying in Greco-Roman Times,” in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, ed. B.A. Pearson, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 35-56.

¹⁵⁰ Eldon J. Epp, “The New Testament Papyri at Oxyrhynchus in Their Social and Intellectual Context,” in *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical*, ed. William L. Petersen (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 47-68; C.H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1-25.

¹⁵¹ E.g., P.Oxy. 2070 dated late third century A.D. This manuscript, and others, caused C.H. Roberts to declare Oxyrhynchus to be “something of a Christian intellectual center” (*Manuscript and Society*, 24, n.5).

number of prior studies have tried to identify P.Oxy. 840 with other ancient gospels, that will not be the purpose here. Rather, we will compare P.Oxy. 840 to other early Jewish-Christian gospels for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the broader milieu that gave rise to such texts in the early church. For obvious reasons, we will limit our discussion to those texts that exhibit characteristics most similar to P.Oxy. 840.

A. GOSPEL OF PETER

The *Gospel of Peter* is certainly one of the best-known apocryphal gospels that we possess and is primarily preserved in the 8th/9th century “Akhmîm Fragment.”¹⁵² Although we have fragmentary remains dating from c.200 (P.Oxy. 2949), they are so incomplete that they offer little to our extant text.¹⁵³ The Gospel of Peter is a narrative style gospel account, mainly focused upon the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (but may have contained more than that). Its composition dates from the middle of the second century, most likely in Syria.¹⁵⁴

Let us highlight several characteristics of this gospel. First, as noted in a prior chapter, the *Gospel of Peter* contains a mix of Johannine and synoptic materials likely drawn from the canonical gospels. Although the relation of the *Gospel of Peter* to the canonical texts is an ongoing debate, it seems a majority of scholars recognize its dependence on the canonical material.¹⁵⁵ Second, the *Gospel of Peter* exhibits a sharp polemic against the Jews. For example, Pilate is

¹⁵² M.G. Mara, *Évangile de Pierre: Introduction, text critique, traduction, commentaire, et index* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1973); and H.B. Swete, *The Akhmîm Fragment of the Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter* (London: MacMillan, 1893).

¹⁵³ For a discussion of this fragment see R.A. Coles, “Apocryphal Gospel (?)” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, ed. G.M. Browne et al., vol. 41 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1972), 15-16; and Dieter Lührmann, “P.Oxy. 2949: EvPet 3-5 in einer Handschrift des 2/3 Jahrhunderts,” *ZNW* 72 (1981): 216-226. In a more recent study, Lührmann proposed a new fragment of the *Gospel of Peter*: “P.Oxy. 4009: Ein neues Fragment des Petrus-evangeliums?,” *NT* 35 (1993): 390-410.

¹⁵⁴ See analysis of Maurer and Schneemelcher in *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1:216-222.

¹⁵⁵ David F. Wright, “Apocryphal Gospels: The ‘Unknown Gospel’ (Pap. Egerton 2) and the *Gospel of Peter*,” in *Gospel Perspectives: The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels*, ed. David Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 207-232; Raymond E. Brown, “The Gospel of Peter and Canonical Authority,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 321-343; and L. Vaganay, *L’Évangile de Pierre* (Paris: Librairie LeCoffre, 1930). Others have argued for its independence: Jürgen Denker, *Die theologiegeschichtliche Stellung des Petrus-evangeliums: Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des Doketismus* (Bern and Frankfurt: Lang, 1975); and Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 216-230.

exonerated of his responsibility and the blame for Jesus' death is given to the Jewish people.¹⁵⁶ Although some have taken this to mean the *Gospel of Peter* is anti-Jewish,¹⁵⁷ others have suggested this polemic is evidence that it derives from a Jewish-Christian milieu.¹⁵⁸ Third, the *Gospel of Peter* has expanded the narrative and added a variety of new details. For example, people carried lamps during the darkness of the crucifixion (5.18), there was an earthquake when the nails were taken from Jesus' hands (6.21), and the name of the guard at the tomb was Petronius (8.31).

When the *Gospel of Peter* is compared with P.Oxy. 840 the similarities are readily apparent. P.Oxy. 840 is a conglomeration of the canonical texts, is Jewish-Christian and engaged in polemic with the Jews, and shows signs of over-detailing (e.g., Pharisee named "Levi"). Indeed, it seems that there is a common compositional methodology (and theology) shared by these two apocryphal gospels, in addition to some minor linguistic overlap.¹⁵⁹ Of course, such connections are inadequate to suggest any sort of relationship between the two gospels, particularly given the differences that remain,¹⁶⁰ but they do suggest that these two gospels are in the same "trajectory" of apocryphal texts in the early church. The possibility that they may both derive from Syria provides added weight to such a conclusion.

¹⁵⁶ *Gospel of Peter*, 5.17; 11.46-48.

¹⁵⁷ Alan Kirk, "Examining Priorities: Another Look at the Gospel of Peter's Relationship to the New Testament Gospels," *NTS* 40 (1994): 572-595; Cartlidge and Dungan comment: "this Gospel is significant in the way it reflects the rising tide of militant anti-Semitism in the second-century church" (David R. Cartlidge and David L. Dungan, eds., *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980] 83).

¹⁵⁸ David F. Wright, "Papyrus Egerton 2 (the Unknown Gospel): Part of the Gospel of Peter?," *SecCent* 5 (1985-86): 129-150; Denker, *Die theologieggeschichtliche Stellung des Petrusevangeliums*; Daniélou, *Jewish Christianity*, 20-21; and even John Dominic Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), argues for a Jewish-Christian origin.

¹⁵⁹ Recall discussion above under "provenance" where such similarities were noted. There are other textual connections: (i) the exact phrase *νυκτος και ημερας* appears in both (1.34, 7:27); (ii) the word *κακουργοι* appears in both (1.5; 4:10; 7:26); (iii) the verb *νιπτω* (rare in the Synoptics) is found in both (1.34; 1:1).

¹⁶⁰ Three issues are worth mentioning: (i) The use of "Lord" in the *Gospel of Peter*, whereas P.Oxy. 840 uses "Savior"; (ii) The *Gospel of Peter* does not demonstrate the same zealous interest in issues of ritual purity as we find in P.Oxy. 840; (iii) P.Oxy. 840 is decidedly "orthodox," whereas the *Gospel of Peter* may still have some docetic tendencies, although this is disputed by some (see discussion above).

B. P. EGERTON 2

P. Egerton has been dubbed the “Unknown Gospel” and has also generated a large amount of scholarly attention.¹⁶¹ Although the fragment was originally dated to the middle of the second century, the discovery of P. Köln 255 has moved the dating to the end of the second century.¹⁶² The papyrus contains the fragmentary Greek text of five pericopes of Jesus: two controversies between Jesus and the Jews, the healing of the leper, controversy over paying taxes, and a miracle story at the river Jordan. The composition of the stories contained in P. Egerton 2 are generally dated to the early second century and given a provenance of Egypt, though no one knows for sure.¹⁶³

Several characteristics of P. Egerton 2 are worth noting. First, as discussed above, it contains a decided mixture of synoptic and Johannine material. So much so, that Jeremias declared that the “Johannine material is shot through with Synoptic phrases.”¹⁶⁴ Second, like the *Gospel of Peter* and P.Oxy. 840, P. Egerton 2 exhibits a significant amount of polemic with the Jews. As Wright notes, “All but one of its pericopes (the exception is the healing of the leper) are concerned with confrontations between Jesus and critical or hostile Jews.”¹⁶⁵ Third, there are no hints of “heretical” or heterodox theology in this gospel, but instead a portrayal of Jesus that is quite consistent with the canonical texts.¹⁶⁶ Fourth, there is a concern for ritual purity in Egerton’s third story, the healing of the leper, when Jesus tells the leper, “Go and show thyself to the priests and offer for thy purification as Moses commanded.” Daniels comments that this story’s “terms of reference are exclusively Jewish, especially its reflective interest to have Jesus endorse Jewish

¹⁶¹ The key works on this gospel include G. Mayeda, *Das Leben-Jesu-Fragment Papyrus Egerton 2 und seine Stellung in der urchristlichen Literaturgeschichte* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1946); Jon B. Daniels, “The Egerton Gospel: Its Place in Early Christianity” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1990); C.H. Dodd, “A New Gospel,” *BJRL* 20 (1936): 56-92; and H.I. Bell and T.C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1935).

¹⁶² Michael Gronewald, “Unbekanntes Evangelium oder Evangelienharmonie (Fragment aus dem ‘Evangelium Egerton’),” in *Kölner Papyri (P. Köln)* (Cologne: Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademischer Wissenschaften u. Universität Köln, 1987), 136-145.

¹⁶³ Wright, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” 130. The issue of provenance is complicated by the fact that no one is sure of where the fragments were discovered. Since Oxyrhynchus is the assumed place of discovery, most place the provenance in Egypt.

¹⁶⁴ Jeremias, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” in *New Testament Apocrypha*, 95.

¹⁶⁵ Wright, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” 137-138.

¹⁶⁶ See further discussion along these lines in Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 440-441.

purity regulations.”¹⁶⁷ Fifth, P. Egerton 2 exhibits knowledge of a story entirely unknown to the canonical gospels. The final pericope, although very fragmentary, tells the story of Jesus performing a rather “bizarre”¹⁶⁸ miracle at the Jordan river where he casts the seeds upon the waters.¹⁶⁹

Remarkably, P.Oxy. 840 shares all five of these characteristics with P. Egerton 2. Although we are not arguing that these texts are from the same gospel, it seems evident that they are both part of the larger phenomenon of gospel production in the middle of the second century. However, some key differences remain, such as P. Egerton’s lack of a distinctive knowledge of Palestinian traditions.¹⁷⁰

C. JEWISH-CHRISTIAN GOSPELS

In prior sections of this study we have already reviewed the difficulties associated with the identification of the Jewish-Christian gospels in early Christianity, and have taken a detailed look at the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*. Thus, we will focus on the other two Jewish-Christian gospels.

1. *The Gospel of the Hebrews*. This gospel was written in Greek and was thought to have originated in the early second century among Jewish Christians living in Egypt.¹⁷¹ Our knowledge of it is very fragmentary, but we will note two characteristics. First, the gospel contains stories that are completely unknown in the canonical texts. For example, there is an account of Jesus appearing to James after the resurrection (1 Cor 15:7) and also a story of Jesus giving a piece of the burial clothes to one of the priest’s servants. However, unlike P.Oxy. 840, these stories are described by Vielhauer and Strecker as “mythological” and “legendary” and substantially more embellished and colorful than the canonical gospels.¹⁷² Second,

¹⁶⁷ Daniels, *The Egerton Gospel*, 154.

¹⁶⁸ Dodd, “A New Gospel,” 83.

¹⁶⁹ See discussion by Wright, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” 139-140.

¹⁷⁰ Jeremias, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” 97; see also Wright, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” 136-137. Daniels generally agrees with these assessments but disputes whether it should affect the early dating of P. Egerton 2 (*The Egerton Gospel*, 54).

¹⁷¹ For general works, see A.F.J. Klijn, “Das Hebräer- und das Nazoräerevangelium,” *ANRW* 2.25.5: 3997-4033; Dieter Lührmann, “Das Bruchstück aus dem Hebräerevangelium bei Didymos von Alexandrien,” *NT* 29 (1987): 265-279; M.-J. Lagrange, “L’Évangile selon les Hébreux,” *RB* 31 (1922): 161-181; R. Dunkerly, “The Gospel According to the Hebrews,” *ExpT* 39 (1927-28): 437-442; and A.A.T. Ehrhardt, “Judeo-Christians in Egypt, the Epistula Apostolorum and the Gospel to the Hebrews,” in *Studia Evangelica* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 360-382.

¹⁷² Vielhauer and Strecker, “Jewish-Christian Gospels,” 172-173.

although the *Gospel of the Hebrews* bears clear marks of a Jewish-Christian character,¹⁷³ it is not the same sort of Jewish Christianity as exhibited in P.Oxy. 840. It exhibits vivid “syncretistic-gnostic elements” that are similar to Egyptian magical texts and the Coptic Epistle of James.¹⁷⁴ Third, there is no clear evidence in the limited text we possess of any usage/influence of the four canonical gospels. Thus, it lacks the typical synoptic-Johannine mix that we have witnessed above. In the end, there is a rather wide divergence between P.Oxy. 840 and the *Gospel of the Hebrews* and no reason to think they have a relationship with one another.

2. *The Gospel of the Ebionites*. This Jewish-Christian gospel was composed in Greek and derives from the sect of the Ebionites in the early second century.¹⁷⁵ Two characteristics should be observed. First, this gospel draws heavily upon the Synoptic gospels.¹⁷⁶ In fact, it contains such an obvious mixture of three Synoptic gospels that it has been called a “harmonie évangélique.”¹⁷⁷ Second, many scholars have noted that the *Gospel of Ebionites*, although Jewish-Christian in nature, likely reflects the Ebionite “heresies.” The lack of a birth account may be due to their rejection of the virgin birth, the focus on the baptism of Jesus may show their concern for water lustrations, and the elimination of locust from the diet of John the Baptist may be due to their vegetarianism.¹⁷⁸ Although P.Oxy. 840 shares a similar compositional method with the *Gospel of the Ebionites*—drawing upon multiple canonical gospels and adding its own details—it differs in its theological focus which is decidedly more “orthodox.”

¹⁷³ E.g., the keen focus on the person of James (Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 2) and the reference to the Holy Spirit as female (Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 2.12).

¹⁷⁴ Vielhauer, “Jewish-Christian Gospels,” 173-174.

¹⁷⁵ For more see, Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancien*, 257-276; M.-E. Boismard, “Évangile des Ébionites et problème synoptique,” *RB* 73 (1966): 321-352; G. Howard, “The Gospel of the Ebionites,” in *ANRW* 2.25.5, 4034-4052; and H. Waitz, “Das Evangelium der zwölf Apostel (Ebioniten-evangelium),” *ZNW* 13 (1913): 338-348.

¹⁷⁶ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.13.6-8, reflects usage of all three Synoptics. See discussion in F. Neirynek, “The Apocryphal Gospels and the Gospel of Mark,” in *The New Testament in Early Christianity: La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif*, ed. J.-M. Sevrin (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 123-175, 157-160.

¹⁷⁷ D.A. Bertrand, “L’Évangile des Ebionites: une harmonie évangélique antérieure au Diatessaron,” *NTS* 26 (1980): 548-563. However, some have differed with this conclusion. See W.-D. Köhler, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums in der Zeit vor Irenäus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), 272-278.

¹⁷⁸ Elliott, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 6; Vielhauer and Strecker, “Jewish-Christian Gospels,” 168.

D. LONG ENDING OF MARK

Although often overlooked as an apocryphal account of Jesus, the long ending of Mark (16:9-20) presents an intriguing picture of how Jesus texts were produced in the early second century, particularly resurrection narratives.¹⁷⁹ Let us consider several characteristics of the long ending. First, and most significantly, the long ending is considered by many to be a conglomeration of the resurrection accounts of the other three canonical gospels.¹⁸⁰ Heckel declares, “Der Verfasser entnimmt fast alle Motive kanonischer Überlieferung.”¹⁸¹ Second, some features of the long ending of Mark are unknown in any canonical literature. Although the majority of Mark 16:9-20 seems derivative from the other canonical texts, the author of the long ending adds the original material dealing with drinking poison and handling snakes (Mark 16:18). Third, the long ending of Mark is apocryphal material that is quite “orthodox” and appears to be intended as an “edifying addition” to the canonical gospels. Although the portion on snakes and poison seems somewhat odd, it does not constitute a “heretical” teaching that would have been rejected by the mainstream ecclesiastical community.

This very cursory glance at the long ending of Mark reveals that it is an apocryphal account with much in common with P.Oxy. 840. It is a second-century, “orthodox,” and harmonistic story of Jesus with original material added by the author. Thus, it is quite consistent with the pattern of the production of Jesus stories in the early second century. At the same time, however, there is no linguistic or textual overlap with P.Oxy. 840 that would suggest it bears a relationship with this apocryphal material.

¹⁷⁹ The studies on the long ending of Mark are too many to mention here; some helpful reviews of scholarship can be found in, Joseph Hug, *La finale de l'évangile de Marc: Mc 16, 9-20* (Paris: Gabalda, 1978), 11-32; Paul Mirecki, “Mark 16:9-20: Composition, Tradition, and Redaction” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1986), 1-23; Vitrus E. Gideon, “The Longer Ending of Mark in Recent Study,” in *New Testament Studies: Essays in Honor of Ray Summers in his Sixty-Fifth Year*, ed. H.L. Drumwright and C. Vaughn (Waco, TX: Markham Press Fund, 1975), 3-12, and of course, Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 5-47.

¹⁸⁰ Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 544-545.

¹⁸¹ Heckel, *Vom Evangelium des Markus zum viergestaltigen Evangelium*, 283.

E. PERICOPE OF THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

The text of John 7:53-8:11 is another apocryphal story that is often overlooked in discussion of extra-canonical material.¹⁸² Although this pericope is not original to John's gospel, it does seem to have an ancient pedigree and at least some version of the story can be traced back to the time of Papias in the early second century.¹⁸³ If Papias knew the story, then that suggests an early Palestinian origin.¹⁸⁴ The pericope is alluded to in the early third-century *Didascalia Apostolorum*¹⁸⁵ which has led Brown to suggest it was also known in Syria by the middle of the second century.¹⁸⁶

Eusebius attributes the story to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*,¹⁸⁷ but it is not clear that Eusebius knew the content of this gospel, leading Klijn to suggest that it could have come from any of the known Jewish-Christian gospels.¹⁸⁸ Is it possible that this pericope was part of the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*, or perhaps derived from the community of the Nazarenes like P.Oxy. 840? There are a number of characteristics that John 7:53-8:11 shares with P.Oxy. 840 which suggests this is at least a possibility: (i) both texts contain a completely original story of Jesus

¹⁸² Some noteworthy studies include, U. Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1963); Hans von Campenhausen, "Zur Perikope von der Ehebrecherin (Joh 7:53-8:11)," *ZNW* 68 (1977): 164-175; J.D.M. Derrett, "Law in the New Testament: The Story of the Woman Taken in Adultery," *NTS* 10 (1963-64): 1-26; J. Jeremias, "Zur Geschichtlichkeit der Verhörs Jesu vor dem Hohen Rat," *ZNW* 43 (1950-51): 148-150; T.W. Manson, "The Pericope *de Adultera* (Joh 7,53--8,11)," *ZNW* 44 (1952-53): 255-256; and William L. Petersen, "John 8:11, The Protevangelium Iacobi, and the History of the Pericope Adulterae," in *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical*, ed. William L. Petersen, Johan S. Vos, and Henk J. de Jonge (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 191-221.

¹⁸³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.17. For a full discussion on the different versions of the pericope circulating in the early church, see Bart D. Ehrman, "Jesus and the Adulteress," *NTS* 34 (1988): 24-44. Although Ehrman thinks Papias knew a different version, Becker disagrees (*Jesus und die Ehebrecherin*, 92-93), and Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, says, "we cannot be certain" (335). It is interesting to note that Rufinus understood Eusebius to be referring to the story of the adulterous woman in John when he translated Eusebius' work into Latin (Petersen, "John 8:11," 199).

¹⁸⁴ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 335.

¹⁸⁵ *Didascalia Apostolorum* 8.2.24.

¹⁸⁶ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 335. Petersen argues that *Protevangelium of James* knew of the pericope. He compares οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω in Jn 8:11 to οὐδὲ ἐγὼ κατακρίνω ὑμᾶς in the *Protevangelium* (16:3). Such a connection, if valid, would confirm the pericope of the adulterous woman was certainly present by the middle of the second century ("John 8:11," 191-221).

¹⁸⁷ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.17.

¹⁸⁸ See discussion in Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, 118-119. Although Elliott includes the quotation under the heading for the "*Gospel of the Hebrews*" (*Apocryphal New Testament*, 10), Klijn includes it under the heading of "Spurious and Doubtful Texts" (116).

unknown in any other gospel;¹⁸⁹ (ii) both texts have origins in Palestinian Christianity and Syria; (iii) the settings of both stories occur in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles;¹⁹⁰ (iv) each story centers around a controversy with the Jews over the proper application of the Mosaic law; (v) thus, each story fits best within a Jewish-Christian context where issues of the law are being debated;¹⁹¹ (vi) both exhibit a mixture of material from the canonical gospels;¹⁹² and (vii) both texts are essentially “orthodox” in nature.¹⁹³

Of course, there is no way to know whether John 7:53-8:11 derives from the Nazarene community, but it does seem to share common traits with P.Oxy. 840. Although the substantial lack of textual overlap between the two stories prevents us from suggesting that they originated from the same gospel text, they do seem to fit into the same “trajectory” of second-century gospel production.

In summary, we have drawn general comparisons between P.Oxy. 840 and analogous apocryphal gospels from the same time period. Although there is no definitive evidence that P.Oxy. 840 is to be identified with one of these gospels, it is evident that it fits quite well with the larger pattern of apocryphal gospel production. Most of these gospels share the following features: (i) date to the early or middle second century; (ii) mixing of material from the canonical gospels; (iii) engaged in polemics with the Jews; and (iv) generally “orthodox” in character. Moreover, when one considers the extant sources available, P.Oxy. 840 fares rather well by

¹⁸⁹ Of course, the story of the adulterous woman seems to have appeared in both the “Gospel of the Hebrews” (whatever is meant by that) and also in John’s gospel; however our only extant copy appears in John.

¹⁹⁰ This is derived from the location that 7:53-8:11 has in the book of John (Ehrman, “Jesus and the Adulteress,” 27).

¹⁹¹ Ehrman goes as far as to declare that a version of the pericope of the adulterous woman “would have circulated in Jewish-Christian circles struggling with the issue of the continuing relevance of the Torah in the life of the Christian community” (“Jesus and the Adulteress,” 35).

¹⁹² It is well known that the pericope of the adulterous woman most resembles Luke’s style, but there are also reasons to see Mark’s influence (Barrett, *The Gospel According to John*, 591). Johannine elements have also been noted; e.g., the τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγον πειράζοντες αὐτόν of 8:6 with τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν πειράζων αὐτόν of 6:6. On Johannine elements in the pericope see Zane C. Hodges, “The Woman Taken in Adultery (7:53-8:11): Exposition,” *BibSac* 137 (1980): 41-53.

¹⁹³ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), declares the pericope to have “all the earmarks of historical veracity” (188) and Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) notes the throughout the early church the pericope was seen as “authentic” (883). Campenhausen, *Zur Perikope von der Ehebrecherin*, 164-175, disagrees and argues that it is a non-historical production of second-century communities.

comparison. The *Gospel of Peter* is known primarily from an eighth-century Akhmîm MS (P.Oxy. 2949 is too fragmentary to be of much use). The Jewish-Christian gospels are all drawn from citations in various patristic works, many of which are not in Greek and very complicated to extract.¹⁹⁴ Although we have the Greek text of the long ending of Mark and the pericope of the adulterous woman, the earliest complete copies we have are 5th century or later.¹⁹⁵ Of the apocryphal gospels examined above, only P. Egerton 2 (late 2nd /early 3rd century) has a substantive extant Greek text earlier than P.Oxy. 840 (early 4th century). Although P. Egerton 2 is slightly longer than P.Oxy. 840, the latter is more well-preserved. With these considerations in mind, it is a bit of a mystery why the *Gospel of Peter* and P. Egerton 2 have received such a disproportionate amount of scholarly attention when compared to P.Oxy. 840.

In the end, the primary factor that distinguished P.Oxy. 840 is its vivid interest in issues of ritual purity. Although these other gospels are Jewish-Christian (or anti-Jewish) in nature, only P.Oxy. 840 places importance on the specific question of what purity practices are necessary to access the God of Judaism.

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter has been to set P.Oxy. 840 in its place within gospel production in early Christianity. In the first section we raised the very difficult question of P.Oxy. 840's date of composition and provenance. While recognizing that our certainty on such issues must be restrained due to the limited nature of the evidence, we proceeded to examine the theological context from which P.Oxy. 840 was born. It became immediately apparent that the content and concerns of P.Oxy. 840 best fit not within the context of Christian baptismal practices as Bovon and others maintain, but within the context of early Jewish Christianity. Such a conclusion was warranted by the steep polemic directed toward

¹⁹⁴ See Gordon D. Fee, "The Text of John in Origen and Cyril of Alexandria: A Contribution to Methodology in the Recovery and Analysis of Patristic Citations," *Bib* 52 (1971): 357-373, and M.J. Suggs, "The Use of Patristic Evidence in the Search for a Primitive New Testament Text," *NTS* 4 (1957-1958): 139-147.

¹⁹⁵ Although echoes of the long ending of Mark can be found in Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.10.6) and Justin (*Apol.* 45.5.), and portions in the Diatesseron (in Arabic), these are obviously not complete, extant Greek texts.

the Jews, combined with a fundamental interest in the laws of ritual purity. While noting that Jewish Christianity is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon, we proceeded to argue that P.Oxy. 840's Jewish-Christian context was composed of four characteristics: (i) it was "orthodox;" (ii) it was intimately aware of first-century temple purity practices; (iii) it was engaged in severe conflict with Pharisaic (rabbinic) Judaism; and (iv) it opposed the keeping of ritual purity laws as a requirement for entrance into the covenant community. As these four characteristics were compared with known Jewish-Christian groups, there seemed to be a possible (although by no means certain) match with the Nazarenes. This "orthodox" Jewish-Christian group was distinctive in its adherence to the law but also in its favor towards the apostle Paul and the Gentile mission. Once a plausible historical community was identified, a possible Jewish-Christian opponent of P.Oxy. 840 came into clearer focus: the Ebionites. This was a heterodox Jewish-Christian group that was zealous for ritual purity and clean/unclean distinctions, matching the description of the Pharisee in P.Oxy. 840. This entire historical reconstruction led to a composition date of c.125-150 for P.Oxy. 840, with a likely origin in Syria.

The second section of this chapter was concerned to offer a brief comparison between P.Oxy. 840 and analogous apocryphal gospel material. Comparisons were made with the *Gospel of Peter*, P. Egerton 2, the Jewish-Christian gospels, the long ending of Mark, and the pericope of the adulterous woman. Such a comparison allowed us to see how P.Oxy. 840 fits remarkably well within early second-century gospel production, thus providing confirmation for the date of 125-150 A.D. already arrived at on other grounds. Moreover, we learned that P.Oxy. 840 stands out in two ways. First, it surpasses most of these other gospels in regard to the value of its extant manuscript—a fact which is surprising in light of the limited scholarly attention P.Oxy. 840 has received. Second, it stands out as the only one of these apocryphal gospels with a substantial interest in the issue of ritual purity.

If the conclusions in this chapter prove to be correct, then P.Oxy. 840 emerges as a valuable source of early Christian history in the following ways: (i) It provides a window into "orthodox" Jewish-Christianity in the early second century. Our sources for understanding Jewish-Christianity are severely limited (not to mention sources for "orthodox" Jewish-Christianity), making P.Oxy. 840 a critical component in our understanding of these groups.

(ii) It demonstrates that not all Jewish-Christian communities were opposed to the apostle Paul, as is so commonly thought. P.Oxy. 840 is a historical example of how certain groups could be both zealous for the law, and yet not willing to enforce ritual purity *halakah* on Gentiles. This can shed valuable light on our understanding of the frequent law-gospel debates in early Christianity.

(iii) Although the limitations of our evidence prevent us from being certain of P.Oxy. 840's connections to the Nazarenes (and Ebionites), this study has provided a number of considerations that suggest such connections are possible. Thus, P.Oxy. 840 may offer a new perspective on these historical communities and the issues that they faced. Given that our understanding of the Nazarenes and Ebionites is limited by the paucity of historical sources, P.Oxy. 840 may be an important new component in future discussions.

(iv) It confirms that not all apocryphal material was produced out of heterodox motives. Some apocryphal material was designed to be an "edifying addition" to uphold and support the canonical conception of Jesus. This has substantial implications for how early Christians viewed Jesus material and the production of new Jesus material.

(v) It is yet another important witness to the trends of gospel production in the early/middle second century—a critical time in the life of the early Church. Thus, P.Oxy. 840 is not, as some have suggested, merely a witness for later Christian controversies over baptism, veiled in unreliable and spurious references to temple bathing rituals.

All of these factors suggest that it may be time for the scholarly community to reconsider the value that P.Oxy. 840 brings to our understanding of early Christianity and the gospel texts that it produced.

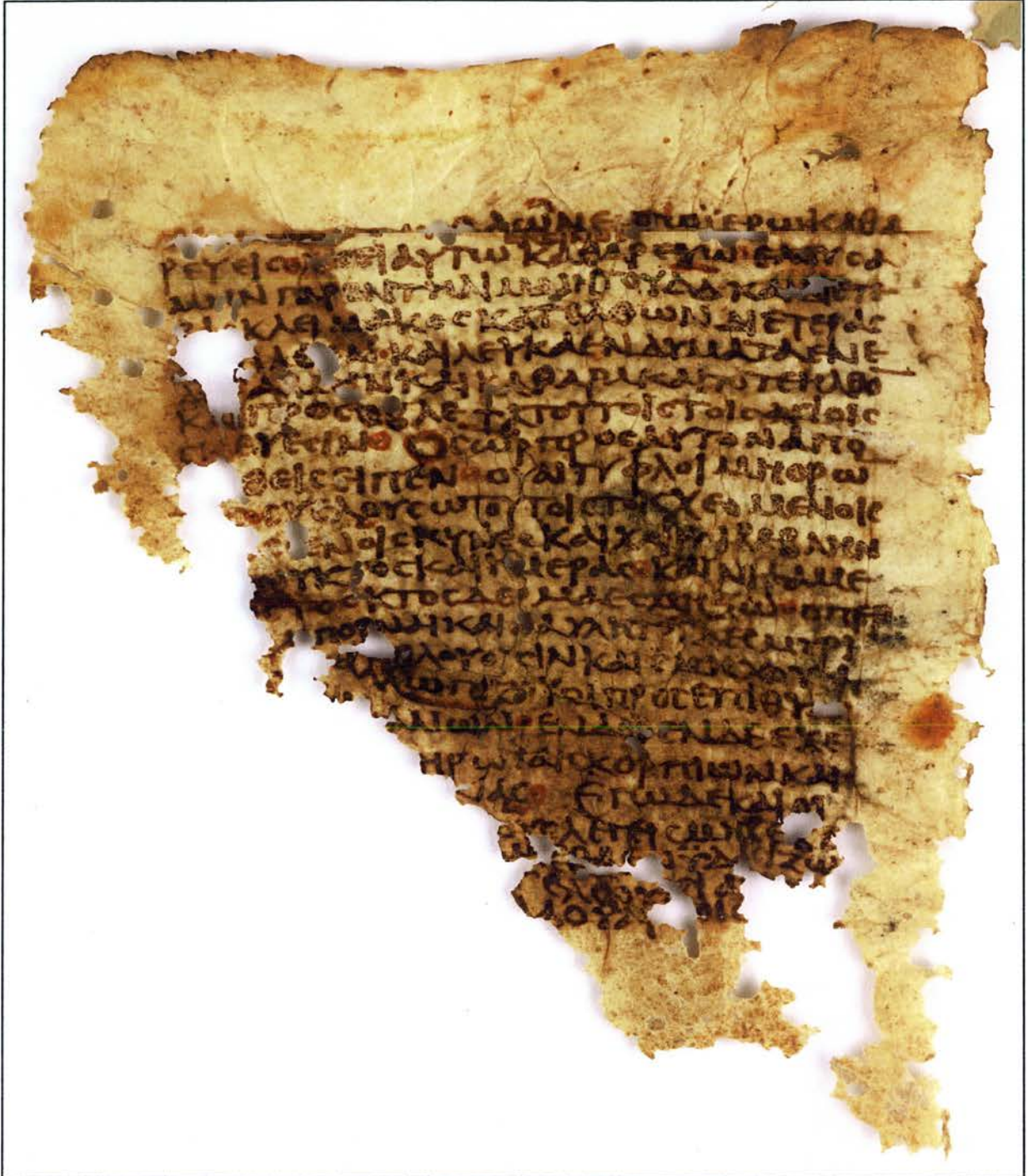
Appendix

Figure 1
MS.Gr.th g.11 (P.)
Recto



Used by permission of the Bodleian Library,
University of Oxford.
Image has been enlarged for detail.

Figure 2
MS.Gr.th g.11 (P.)
Verso



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IS P.OXY. 840 A REDACTION OF AN EARLIER APOCRYPHAL STORY?

If the analysis above has been correct, then we have good reasons to believe that P.Oxy. 840 was a later development than the canonical gospels and that the author was influenced by them during his composition (the indirect dependence view). A further question to consider is whether P.Oxy. 840—in its current form—was constructed from an earlier source (oral or written) that was later redacted to look more like the canonical gospels, or whether it was the original creation of an author who simply was influenced by the canonical gospels. Of course, making such a fine historical distinction is notoriously difficult, particularly if the redactor is skilled in his craft and leaves no obvious indicators that two (or more) sources have been meshed into one. However, the more unified a document appears to be—both thematically and grammatically—the more reason there is to consider it to be the original creation of its author and not a reworking of an earlier source. Bultmann comments:

This individual analysis of the Synoptic controversy dialogues has further shown that we must always raise the question of whether we are dealing with an unitary composition, or whether the scene is a secondary construction for a saying originally in independent circulation. If the saying is comprehensible only in terms of its contextual situation, then it clearly has been conceived together with it.¹

Let us consider the following indications that P.Oxy. 840 is a unitary composition:

- (a) If redactional “seams” were to be found, we would expect it to be precisely at the points where different traditions are layered within one another; e.g., we might expect evidence that the Johannine elements were just “tacked on” to the end of the woe statements by the redactor. However, there is a fundamental thematic connection (and a play on words) between the “running waters” used by the Pharisee (l.32-33) and the “living waters” used by Jesus and his disciples (l.41-45), revealing substantial unity between these two sections. Furthermore, the final line of P.Oxy. 840 (l.45) indicates that there is another woe statement following this discussion of “living water” (οὐαὶ τοις. . .), suggesting that the

¹ Rudolph Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 47.

section on the living waters was not “tacked on” but fits naturally within the larger section on woes.

- (b) One might also expect to find a redactional “seam” between the controversy dialogue and the woe statements themselves, as if the redactor arbitrarily mashed these two separate traditions together. But, again, we see that the content of the woes is not generic but particularly suited to respond to the claims of the Pharisee made earlier in the controversy dialogue. The Pharisee boasts of bathing in the “Pool of David” (l.25)—which was likely a *miqveh*—and then Jesus responds with a woe statement that challenges the precise type of water a *miqveh* would contain: $\chi\epsilon\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\upsilon\delta\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ (“running water”) in lines 32-33. According to Bultmann’s criteria mentioned above, it seems that Jesus’ woe statement is only comprehensible given the larger controversy dialogue that P.Oxy. 840 provides.
- (c) The rare verb $\lambda\omicron\upsilon\omega$ is used throughout the text of P.Oxy. 840 connecting the various traditions together. It is used by the Pharisee in lines 14 and 19 when he declares to Jesus the necessary requirements for purity; the Pharisee uses it again in line 24 to show that he has met the requirements for purity; Jesus employs the term in his response in line 32 to when comparing the Pharisee to dogs and pigs, and then again in line 37 when comparing the Pharisee to the prostitutes and flute-girls.
- (d) The consistent use of $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho$ for Jesus (l.12, 21, 30) throughout the document provides further evidence for unity within this story. In other well-known apocryphal gospels, such as the *Dialogue of the Savior*, the title $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho$ is used inconsistently and thus thought to be evidence of distinctive sources being combined into one document.² Although the brevity of P.Oxy. 840 makes any definitive conclusion impossible, the consistent use of $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho$ is noteworthy.
- (e) The use of the odd construction $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ occurs in both the controversy dialogue on the lips of the Pharisee (l.29-30) and in the woe statement on the lips of Jesus (l.32).³ The fact that such a rare grammatical construction would be

² Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. McL. Wilson, vol. 1 (5th ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 301; S. Emmel, H. Koester, and E. Pagels, eds., *Nag Hammadi Codex III, 5: The Dialogue of the Savior* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 2ff.

³ Construction does not occur at all in the NT; is found in the LXX only twice: Josh 23:12, Job 2:10.

found in two different “layers” of P.Oxy. 840, suggests that the same author is responsible for the composition of the entire story.

- (f) There is also a consistent use of the aorist participle followed by aorist indicative at the start of a sentence (one exception is the perfect participle in line 16).⁴ This construction occurs throughout the fragment.

Lines 7-8: παραλαβων...εισηγαγεν; “taking them...he led them”

Lines 9-11: προε[λ]θων...συνετυχεν; “coming by...he met them”

Lines 16-17: μεμολυ[μμενος]...επατησας; “being defiled...you trampled”

Lines 21-22: σ[ταθεις]...απεκριθη; “standing...he answered.”⁵

Lines 26-27: κατελθων...α[ν]ηλθον; “having gone down...I came up”

Lines 30-31: απο[κρι]θεις...ειπεν; “answering...he said”

Lines 34-35: νιψαμε[ν]ος...εσμηξω; “having dipped...you wiped”

In summary, there are good reasons to think that this story in P.Oxy. 840 was not a reworking of an earlier story, but an original composition of the author. If he had used earlier sources directly and pasted them together into a larger story, we might expect to find more evidence of redaction than we actually do; e.g., we would expect to note more obvious grammatical and vocabulary differences between sections.⁶ However, if our author composed an original story—using only *memories* of the canonical gospels—then we should not be surprised that the story flows more naturally and maintains a higher degree of coherence, while at the same time shows traces of influence from the canonical texts. And this is precisely what we find in the case of P.Oxy. 840. Of course, such conclusions are tentative in light of (a) the fragmentary nature of P.Oxy. 840, and (b) the possibility that our author was a skilled redactor who could weave his sources together without noticeable “seams.”

⁴ It is sometimes difficult to determine the “start” of a sentence because we are not always sure when the middle points used by the scribe were designed for periods or commas. But, in each of these cases there is a natural stopping place before the verb that could be construed as the beginning of a new sentence or at least the beginning of an independent clause.

⁵ Obviously, this is based on the reconstructed text so there is no way to be sure of the exact wording. However, as noted above in chapter 2, there are good reasons to think this construction is likely.

⁶ Of course, this does not rule out the possibility that the author of P.Oxy. 840 drew upon sources behind the canonical gospels by *memory*. If he had done this, then we might see a similar degree of coherence and unity.

P. OXY. 840: AMULET OR MINIATURE CODEX?

IN December 1905, in a rubbish heap at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, a small fragment was discovered containing forty-five well-preserved lines from an uncanonical gospel.¹ The manuscript—commonly dated third or fourth century²—consists of one miniature vellum leaf that contains the remains of a discourse between Jesus and his disciples and also a confrontation between Jesus and a Pharisee in the Temple. One of the most striking features of the fragment, designated P. Oxy. 840, is its miniature size. The leaf is virtually complete with writing on the front and back, but measures just 7.4 × 8.8 cm.³ Upon discovery, the tiny dimensions of this manuscript sparked an ongoing debate among scholars over whether it was originally an amulet or a miniature codex.⁴ Nearly a century later the debate remains unresolved.

¹ The primary works on this fragment include, Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908); Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. V (Oxford: Horace Hart, 1908), pp. 1–10; Henry Barclay Swete, *Two New Gospel Fragments* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1908); E. Preuschen, 'Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos', *ZNW* 9 (1908), pp. 1–11; Adolf Büchler, 'The New "Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel"', *JQR* 20 (1908), pp. 330–46; A. Sulzbach, 'Zum Oxyrhynchus Fragment', *ZNW* 9 (1908), pp. 175–6; Ludwig Blau, 'Das neue Evangelienfragment von Oxyrhynchos buch- und zaubergeschichtlich betrachtet nebst sonstigen Bemerkungen', *ZNW* 9 (1908), pp. 204–15; M.-J. Lagrange, 'Nouveau fragment non canonique relatif à l'Évangile', *RB* (1908), pp. 538–53; Adolf von Harnack, 'Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück', in *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben, Band II* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1911), pp. 239–50; and Joachim Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1964), pp. 47–60, 104–5.

² For a third-century date see J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 31; and M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924), p. 29. For the fourth-century date see Grenfell and Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, p. 9.

³ Grenfell and Hunt, *Uncanonical Gospel*, p. 9 (width × height). I arrived at slightly different numbers, 7.2 × 8.6 cm.

⁴ Those who consider P. Oxy. 840 to be an amulet include Preuschen, 'Das neue Evangelienfragment', p. 1; Blau, 'Das neue Evangelienfragment', p. 207; Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, p. 47; and Robert J. Miller (ed.), *The Complete Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992), p. 413. Those who consider it to be a miniature codex include Harnack, 'Ein Neues Evangelienbruchstück', p. 240; E. G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), p. 30; J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires Juifs et Chrétiens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976), #585; and C. H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford

This controversy over P. Oxy. 840 raises a valuable question for the study of early Christian literature: How does one distinguish between amulets and miniature codices?

The answer to this question would shed much-needed light on early Christian book production and allow us to better understand how texts with small formats may have functioned within early Christian communities. Thus, the purpose of this article is to explore the detailed characteristics of amulets and miniature codices in hopes of establishing trends within each category. Not only will this help resolve the debate over P. Oxy. 840, but hopefully (and more importantly) it will reveal broader historical trends that can be applied to future manuscripts discoveries.

As this discussion proceeds, it is important to remember two items: (a) Any conclusions reached must be held cautiously in light of the fortuitous preservation of manuscript evidence. Nearly all our texts derive from Egypt and it is difficult to determine whether they accurately reflect overall trends in the Greco-Roman world. It is reassuring however, to note the relatively rapid circulation of literature during this time period, which suggests that literary practices in Egypt might not have been that divergent from the rest of the Empire.⁵ (b) The boundaries between the categories of miniature codex and amulet are not absolute. The function of literature in the ancient world was fluid and ever-changing and we should not be surprised, therefore, if we occasionally find miniature codices that are amulets, or amulets that are in the form of miniature codices. Nevertheless, I will argue that the two groups, despite their occasional overlap, form distinct literary categories.

University Press, 1979), p. 11. Blau and Preuschen are the only scholars I am aware of who actually make any specific arguments for believing that P. Oxy. 840 was an amulet. Unfortunately, space prevents me from exploring their arguments here; however, they are answered in general by the discussion below.

⁵ Several manuscript discoveries have revealed the rapidity of circulation in the first few centuries of Christianity. P. Oxy. 405, a copy of *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus dated to the late second century, was discovered in Egypt only about twenty years after its initial composition in Gaul in c. 180. Likewise, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which was composed in Rome in the mid-second century, was discovered in Egypt in a late second-century manuscript (P. Mich. 130). For more on this text, see Campbell Bonner, 'A New Fragment of the Shepherd of Hermas, Michigan Papyrus 44', *HTR* 20 (1927), pp. 105-16. The famous Ψ^{52} , dated at the beginning of the second century, was discovered in Egypt only a few years after the original composition of John's gospel in the late first century. The primary discussion of Ψ^{52} is in C. H. Roberts, 'An Unpublished Fragment of the Fourth Gospel in the John Rylands Library', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 20 (1936), pp. 45-55.

I. AMULETS

The Greek term for amulet, *περίαμμον* or *περίαπτον*, comes from the term *περιάπτειν* ('to tie on') and refers to an object or device that is attached to a person.⁶ Objects hung around the neck—such as pendants, medals, and figures—were often used as amulets and assigned magical power in various cultures of antiquity.⁷ Many had inscriptions that were thought to offer protection from things such as sickness, bad dreams, or wild animals.⁸ Some inscriptions were meant to be chanted or repeated in order to have their affect.⁹ Christian amulets often, though not exclusively, were written on parchment or papyrus and were connected with the magical use of books that was so common in the ancient world.¹⁰ Since Christians already believed scripture

⁶ Roy Kotansky, 'Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets', in Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 107–37; 107.

⁷ For extensive detail of magical amulets in the ancient world see Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1950), especially pp. 208–28; E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions* (London: Oxford, 1930); A. Wiedemann, *Die Amulette der alten Aegypter* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1910); and Roy Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper and Bronze Lamellae* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1994).

⁸ Pendants or carvings depicting a bird eating a snake or other reptiles were supposed to protect a person from such things (Bonner, *Studies*, pp. 213–15). For specific examples of this type of amulet see H. J. Rose, 'A Blood-Staunching Amulet', *HTR* 44 (1951), pp. 59–60. Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith (eds.), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), provide useful examples of Christian amulets designed to heal eye pain (Berlin 21911), protect from a fever (Cologne 851), and guard against pain and distress caused by demons (P. Vindob. G. 13b).

⁹ Bonner, *Studies*, pp. 11–12, 216–17. Metzger describes how P. Princeton 159, a magical amulet designed to cure fevers, contained a triangular pattern of meaningless syllables that was to be chanted aloud. As the lines got shorter the fever was supposedly lessened:

ζαγουρηπαγουρη
 αγουρηπαγουρ
 γουρηπαγου
 ουρηπαγο
 υρηπαγ
 ρηπα
 ηπ
 π

For full discussion see Bruce M. Metzger, 'A Magical Amulet for Curing Fevers', in Boyd L. Daniels and M. Jack Suggs (eds.), *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1967), pp. 89–94.

¹⁰ For a discussion of magical texts in Christianity see Patrick Crasta, 'Graeco-Christian Magical Papyri', *SPap* 18 (1979), pp. 31–40; E. A. Judge, 'The Magical

to contain authority and power, it is not hard to imagine that they, being influenced by their culture, would also begin to use it in a magical sense.¹¹ Chrysostom said that some women and children 'suspend [excerpts from?] Gospels from their necks as a powerful amulet and carry them about in all places wherever they go'.¹² Indeed, he even suggested that hanging gospels by one's bed offered protection from harm.¹³ In another place, he referred to the scriptures as 'divine charms' and said, 'the devil will not dare to approach a house where a Gospel is lying'.¹⁴ In the *Acts of Andrew*, Trophima is protected from evil because she wore 'the Gospel on her bosom'.¹⁵ The apocryphal *Epistle of Christ to Agbar* was often fixed on the doors of houses or on the

Use of Scripture in the Papyri', in E. W. Conrad and E. G. Newing (eds.), *Perspectives on Language and Text* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), pp. 339-49; Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith (eds.), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994); and A. Biondi, 'Le Citazioni Bibliche nei Papiri Magici Cristiani Greci', *SPap* 20 (1981), pp. 93-127. For an overview of magic in early Christianity and the ancient world see D. E. Aune, 'Magic in Early Christianity', in *ANRW* (1980), pp. 1507-1557; Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); N. Brox, 'Magie und Aberglaube an den Anfängen des Christentums', *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 83 (1974), pp. 157-80; J. Engemann, 'Zur Verbreitung magischer Übelabwehr in der nichtchristlichen und christlichen Spätantike', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 18 (1975), pp. 22-48; E. M. Yamauchi, 'Magic in the Biblical World', *TynBul* 34 (1983), 169-200; Stephen Benko, 'Early Christian Magical Practices', in Kent H. Richards (ed.), *Society of Biblical Literature 1982 Seminar Papers* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), pp. 9-14; and Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg (eds.), *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997). These latter studies devote little space to discussion of the magical use of books, but are useful for establishing the broader historical context of the way magic functioned around and within early Christianity.

¹¹ Bonner declares, 'It is well known that the old religions held out for a long time after Christianity dominated the empire and, furthermore, professed Christians often clung to magic and had no scruples about using pagan figures and symbols' (*Studies*, p. 221). C. H. Roberts concurs, 'Christians in Egypt in the third and early fourth centuries were not above using amulets much as their pagan contemporaries did' (Roberts, *Manuscript*, p. 82). Aune adds: 'As Christianity emerged from Judaism in consequence of its paganization, it continued to absorb magical traditions from the surrounding Greco-Roman world' ('Magic', p. 1521).

¹² Chrysostom, *Stat.* 19.14. See also *Hom. in Mat.* 72.2. For discussion on whether these might have been complete gospels or simply excerpts from the gospels, see E. Nestle, 'Evangelien als Amulet am Halse und am Sofa', *ZNW* 7 (1906), p. 86.

¹³ *Hom. in I Cor.* 43.7.

¹⁴ *Hom. in Joh.* 32.3.

¹⁵ Gregory of Tours' *Epitome*, 23, cited in Elliott, *Apocryphal*, p. 280.

gates of a city to ward off attacks.¹⁶ Augustine believed a headache could be cured by placing a copy of the Gospel of John under one's head.¹⁷ Despite the general use of amulets, they were readily condemned in official church declarations. The Synod of Laodicea (c.360) declared in canon 36 that 'those who wear such, we command to be cast out of the church'.¹⁸

Since we are primarily concerned with Christian amulets, the most appropriate source for our study is J. van Haelst's *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens*.¹⁹ It records 118 known Christian amulets on a variety of materials, but we will focus in upon the ninety-three on papyrus or parchment.²⁰ Although there inevitably will be some dispute about whether some of these are indeed amulets, van Haelst's catalogue is exhaustive enough to be a fair representation of the situation in early Christianity. Let us examine some general trends within this group.

1. A substantial majority of the amulets are written on papyrus and not parchment. Only twenty of the amulets are on parchment, and seventy-three on papyrus.²¹ Thus, papyrus

¹⁶ E. von Dobschütz, 'Charms and Amulets (Christian)', in James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1910), pp. 413-30; 425.

¹⁷ *Joh. Tr.* 7.12.

¹⁸ *Synod of Laodicea*, Canon 36.

¹⁹ Other helpful catalogues include Kurt Aland (ed.), *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri, I, Biblische Papyri* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976); Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1973); Hans Dieter Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), which reproduces and supplements Preisendanz; Biondi, 'Le citazioni Bibliche nei papiri magici cristiani greci', pp. 100-102; and Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, pp. 27-56. There is a significant degree of overlap among the amulets in these volumes, and van Haelst seems to be the most complete. The original Preisendanz was known and incorporated by van Haelst, and the vast majority of the new papyri described in Betz are either not Christian or were already known by van Haelst (e.g., PGM C is V.H. 902; and PGM LXXXVIII is V.H. 968). Virtually every Greek amulet in Meyer's volume is already known by van Haelst (e.g., note #s 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 25, 26), and the very few new amulets are mostly in Coptic. Virtually every papyrus listed in Biondi occurs in van Haelst (pp. 100-102). Aland's volume has limited usefulness because it does not catalogue texts on any other material but papyrus, thus excluding many of the amulets that may be most like P. Oxy. 840. For more detail on the difference between Aland and van Haelst see T. C. Skeat's review in *JTS* 29 (1978), pp. 175-92.

²⁰ The figure of 118 is derived from the index of van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens*, p. 414.

²¹ The parchment amulets include the following: 88, 94, 169, 197, 199, 200, 225, 227, 240, 341, 386, 532, 727, 731, 732, 733, 848, 938, 976, 1050.

outnumbers parchment almost four to one. This fact takes on greater significance when one considers that virtually all the amulets date from the fourth century or later (with some exceptions), and a majority of these are concentrated around the fifth and sixth centuries, well after parchment had become the material of choice.²² There are even examples of papyrus amulets as late as the eighth century (V.H. 245). Only two parchment amulets could possibly be dated as early as the fourth century (V.H. 731, V.H. 1050) and each are likely to be fifth century or later. Since P. Oxy. 840 is parchment and commonly dated fourth century, it would be a rare amulet according to the trends observed here. Although these statistics certainly do not rule out parchment amulets, they suggest that the material of choice was overwhelmingly papyrus.

2. A large portion of the amulets have no writing on the back side (the verso). In at least forty-seven amulets (and perhaps more) the writing stops on the front page.²³ This constitutes over fifty per cent of the known amulets according to van Haelst. Thus, the majority of amulets could not have come from a codex and were probably constructed out of a single sheet for the sole purpose of being used as an amulet. Furthermore, of the forty-six amulets with writing on both sides, at least twenty-four of them have writing on the reverse side that is completely unrelated to the front side.²⁴ In other words, the amulets were probably constructed out of papyrus that had been used previously for a different purpose (or vice-versa). For example, V.H. 3 is an amulet with the text of Gen. 1:1-5 on the verso. On the recto is an unrelated Christian letter detailing the correspondence between Christians in Arsinoïte and Rome. V.H. 899 has a Byzantine text on one side and Christian

²² Parchment began to dominate by the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century. For more discussion see Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 46-7; Turner, *Typology*, pp. 37-9; and Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989²), p. 76.

²³ Amulets with blank versos include: 84, 88, 105, 124, 152, 195, 197, 199, 201, 220, 341, 345, 423, 532, 558, 720, 721, 731, 754, 757, 771, 848, 849, 865, 881, 893, 895, 896, 902, 917, 933, 948, 951, 957, 959, 960, 965, 968, 971, 972, 984, 1006, 1017, 1019, 1050, 1132, 1136.

²⁴ Amulets with unrelated material on reverse side: 3, 94, 121 (for discussion of this particular example see Robert Kraft and Antonia Tripolitis, 'Some Uncatalogued Papyri of Theological and Other Interest in the John Rylands Library', *BYRL* 51 [1968], pp. 137-49), 183, 196, 202, 221, 232, 240, 242, 245, 275, 490, 536, 613, 732, 733, 898, 899, 900, 952, 955, 956, 976.

symbols on the other. V.H. 900 has a documentary text on the recto and a prayer against fever on the verso. When these factors are considered, approximately seventy out of ninety-three (seventy-five per cent) of all the amulets do not have continuous text on the front and back. Thus, a codex form of an amulet seems to be quite rare.²⁵

3. The type of content found in these amulets fit into relatively clear categories. At least thirty-one of the amulets (about one third) quote from the Psalms, most of them from Psalm 90 or Psalm 1.²⁶ Rarely are other Old Testament passages quoted.²⁷ Prayers, both biblical and private, are a second significant category.²⁸ These are often citations from the Lord's prayer, the doxology, incantations, and prayers to various saints. At least forty-seven of these ninety-three amulets consist of such prayers, making up over fifty per cent of the known amulets.²⁹ New Testament citations make up a third category, which tends to be relatively small if the New Testament prayer passages (e.g. the Lord's prayer) are not counted. Most of these tend to be short snippets that are easy to remember and brief enough to fit on an amulet; e.g., 2 Cor. 13:13 (V.H. 345), John 1:1 (V.H. 423), 1 Tim. 1:15-16 (V.H. 532). It was also common in amulets to cite the beginning of each of the four Gospels (e.g., V.H. 386, 423, 731, 897).³⁰ Symbols and drawings form the fourth category of content for amulets. Christograms (V.H. 757, 849, 971), crosses (V.H. 423, 899), signs such as $\text{A}\Omega$ (V.H. 731, 899), and magic symbols (V.H. 901, 902) were common. These are

²⁵ Even amulets with *related* writings on both sides do not necessarily come from a miniature codex. For example, P. Oxy. 34.2684 (V.H. 558) is an amulet containing some verses from Jude on the front and back. Although Turner lists this text as a miniature codex, Roberts declares that this text was simply 'a small single folded sheet rather than part of a miniature codex' (*Manuscript*, p. 82).

²⁶ Amulets that cite the psalms: 84, 85, 88, 93, 94, 105, 121, 124, 152, 160, 169, 183, 195, 196, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 220, 221, 225, 227, 232, 240, 345, 386, 423, 731, 771, 938. Gamble found forty-two citations from the Psalms (*Books and Readers*, p. 238).

²⁷ A few examples include 3, 242, 275, 359.

²⁸ See Crasta, 'Graeco-Christian Magical Papyri', pp. 39-40.

²⁹ Amulets consisting primarily of prayers: 720, 721, 727, 731, 732, 733, 754, 767, 771, 848, 849, 865, 881, 893, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 917, 933, 938, 948, 951, 952, 953, 955, 956, 957, 959, 960, 965, 968, 971, 972, 976, 984, 1006, 1017, 1019, 1050, 1100, 1132, 1136.

³⁰ See also P. Vindob. G 348 which gives incipits of the four Gospels and also Ps. 90. Its verso is blank. For more discussion see R. W. Daniel, 'A Christian Amulet on Papyrus', *VC* 37 (1983), pp. 400-404.

frequently found interspersed among prayers or scriptural quotations.

4. It is clear from the above categories that psalms and prayers dominate the content of amulets. Out of ninety-three amulets, I found only fifteen that contain neither a psalm nor a prayer.³¹ Put another way, five out of every six amulets have a psalm, a prayer, or both. Consequently, we should be rather surprised to find, for example, an amulet that contains a continuous New Testament text and nothing else.³² Amulets rarely have long citations from a single biblical passage that are uninterrupted by prayers, psalms, symbols, or other biblical passages.³³ The content of amulets are usually a conglomeration, composed of short portions of Scripture from many different sources, often intermingled with prayers, symbols, and drawings. For example, V.H. 386 contains the beginning verses of Mark, Luke, and John, the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:9-13), the Nicene Creed, and Psalm 68. V.H. 731 contains a symbol of a cross, the Trinitarian formula, Ps. 90:1, Ps. 117:6-7, the beginning verses of the four Gospels, a liturgical formula, and the symbols ΑΩ. Thus, amulets are normally a mish-mash of many different types of content. P. Oxy. 840 has difficulty fitting into any of these four categories of content. It is neither a prayer, nor a psalm. It has no symbols or drawings. Its theme does not fit well with magic or healing. It is a continuous and unbroken

³¹ Amulets with neither a Psalm nor a prayer: 3, 242, 245, 275, 341, 347, 359, 482, 490, 532, 536, 558, 591, 613, 1138.

³² We do find a few examples of this: 490, 532, 536, 558. However, sometimes the existence of a continuous text can be a clue that the fragment may have been something other than an amulet. For example, P³¹ (V.H. 500) exhibits some characteristics of an amulet (parchment, blank verso), but it also contains a continuous text of Romans 12:3-8. Further investigation reveals that (a) the fragment originally would have been quite large (23 × 24 cm), (b) the individual lines are very long, and (c) the text contains evidence of reading aids; all of which suggest the document was designed for public reading. In addition, the fragment lacks indications that it was folded and carried on the body (see below under point 5, and footnote 34). The combination of these factors has led most scholars to consider P³¹ to be a fragment of a lectionary and not an amulet. For more on P³¹ see Aland, *Repertorium*, 252 (NT31); A. S. Hunt (ed.), *Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. 1, Literary Texts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 1911-52), 9; G. Maldfeld, 'Die griechischen Handschriftenbruchstücke des Neuen Testamentes auf Papyrus', *ZNW* 42 (1949), 228-53, 247; Kurt Aland, 'Zur Liste der Neutestamentlichen Handschriften VI', *ZNW* 48 (1957), pp. 141-91, 153.

³³ There are, of course, exceptions. V.H. 183 provides all of Psalm 90 with no other texts or prayers.

text from the same source. If P. Oxy. 840 were an amulet, it would be a strange one indeed.

5. External factors can also indicate whether a document was an amulet. Out of the ninety-three amulets, twenty-one were folded so that they could be small enough to carry on the body.³⁴ Thus, folding occurs in about one quarter of all amulets and is a strong indication that a text was used in a magical way. Occasionally even a cord is found with an amulet (V.H. 169) or a hole for a cord (V.H. 558, 900).³⁵

There is only one characteristic that fits with P. Oxy. 840 being an amulet: its size. Other than this one factor, all other considerations seem to point in the opposite direction. Let us move to the next section where we can examine some trends among miniature codices.

II. MINIATURE CODICES

The codex, in contrast to the roll, was created by taking a stack of papyrus or parchment leaves, folding them in half, and binding them at the spine.³⁶ This format allowed for the traditional leaf book with writing on both sides of each page. Small codices were not rare in the ancient world and most likely were designed for private use.³⁷ Despite their small size, some could contain a surprising number of pages.³⁸ The advent of miniature parchment codices in secular literature can be dated back to the time of

³⁴ Amulets that were folded: 93, 195, 199, 490, 532, 731, 848, 865, 901, 917, 948, 951, 959, 968, 971, 976, 984, 1006, 1017, 1019, 1136.

³⁵ A recently published amulet, P. Oxy. 4406, containing the Gospel of Matthew, also has a cord attached. See E. W. Handley and U. Wartenberg (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. LXIV (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1997), pp. 12-13.

³⁶ Relevant works on the codex include A. Blanchard (ed.), *Les début du codex* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989); C. H. Roberts and T. C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987); T. C. Skeat, 'The Origin of the Christian Codex', *ZPE* 102 (1994), pp. 263-68; H. A. Sanders, 'The Beginnings of the Modern Book', *University of Michigan Quarterly Review* 44 (1938), pp. 95-111; C. C. McCown, 'Codex and Roll in the New Testament', *HTR* 34 (1941), pp. 219-50; and S. R. Llewelyn, 'The Development of the Codex', in S. R. Llewelyn and R. A. Kearsley (eds.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, Vol. 7: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1982-83* (North Ryde, NSW: Macquarie University Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1994), pp. 249-56.

³⁷ Roberts, *Manuscript*, pp. 10-11.

³⁸ The Mani Codex is the smallest known miniature codex and is about the size of a matchbox (3.5 × 4.5 cm.), yet still contains 192 pages. For more discussion see

Martial where classical authors (e.g., Homer, Virgil, Cicero) were put in the format of *pugillaribus membraneis* for the private use of the literate upper class.³⁹ However, this innovation did not appear to meet with much success and in the later years of Martial's publishing there are no more references to the miniature parchment codex. The popular return of the pocket codex in the fourth century can be attributed in large part to early Christian communities. The fact that forty-seven out of the fifty-five miniature codices collected by Turner are Christian demonstrates that it was a favoured format among private Christian book-owners.⁴⁰ All of these miniature codices are third century or later, with most being from the fourth century. These tiny books were often quite elegant and provided convenient and portable access to various forms of Christian literature. Roberts sums it up well, 'They are best regarded not as amulets but as devotional handbooks for the well-to-do'.⁴¹

Since our study will employ Turner's list of fifty-five miniature codices, some observations must be made before we proceed: (a) It must be remembered that any such list, like van Haelst's, is undoubtedly incomplete in some way. For example, Turner does not include P. Ryl. 3.463 which is a page from a third-century miniature codex (9.9 × 8.9 cm.) containing the *Gospel of Mary* (V.H. 1065).⁴² But, even with such limitations in mind, Turner's catalogue is an unmatched resource for evaluating the characteristics of miniature codices and is quite sufficient for our purposes here.⁴³ (b) Four of the codices included by Turner are known to be amulets and are included in the list mentioned above by

A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, 'Ein griechischer Mani-Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780)', *ZPE* 5 (1970), pp. 97-216. Other miniature codices also contained an impressive number of pages. The *Acts of Peter*, P. Oxy. 849 (early fourth century), contains the page numbers 167 and 168 in the top margin.

³⁹ Roberts and Skeat, *Birth*, p. 27.

⁴⁰ Turner, *Typology*, p. 30 ('miniature' is defined as 10 cm or less in width). These numbers have even spurred speculation that the miniature codex was a distinctively Christian invention. Roberts declares, 'On present evidence the miniature codex would seem to be a Christian invention' (*Manuscript*, p. 12). Gamble takes a more moderate approach, 'The miniature format was if not a uniquely Christian phenomenon, one heavily favored by Christians' (*Books and Readers*, p. 236).

⁴¹ Roberts, *Manuscript*, p. 11.

⁴² A possible reason for its omission is the ambiguity about its original size. The width of the fragment is measured at 9.9 cm and some of the margins are missing. This may, in the eyes of Turner, have pushed it past the 10 cm limit for what he considers a 'miniature' codex (Turner, *Typology*, p. 25).

⁴³ Although the vast majority of Turner's list is also included in van Haelst, he casts a wider net and supplies details on some Latin and Coptic codices.

van Haelst.⁴⁴ Since some of these amulets have a blank verso (e.g., P. Oxy. 2065) it is unclear why he included them in the list at all. Nevertheless, it is a good reminder that these two categories are not mutually exclusive—it is possible (though rare) for a document to be both a codex and an amulet at the same time. (c) Turner does include some codices from non-Christian literature in his list, whereas van Haelst focuses primarily on Christian. However, these non-Christian miniature codices are very few and the overwhelming majority of the codices (forty-seven out of fifty-five) contain Christian texts. Thus, this difference between Turner and van Haelst should not affect our conclusions.

With all these considerations and qualifications in mind we will use Turner's list as it currently stands without attempting to administer a series of complicated modifications. Let us now observe some characteristics of miniature codices.

1. The most obvious characteristic of miniature codices is that they all have writing on the back of the page. In contrast, over fifty per cent of amulets have a blank verso. The one miniature 'codex' listed by Turner which does not have writing on the back, P. Oxy. 2065, is (not surprisingly) an amulet.⁴⁵ In the case of P. Oxy. 840, not only does it have continuous writing on both sides but the story it contains began on a previous page and continued onto further pages. Thus, we can be virtually certain it was part of a codex.
2. The majority of the miniature codices are on parchment and not on papyrus. Of the fifty-five codices Turner catalogues, forty-five are on parchment, composing over eighty per cent of the known miniature codices. This figure is nearly the exact opposite of the amulets above, where seventy-three out of ninety-three are on papyrus (seventy-eight per cent). This trend seems to have little to do with the dates of these texts. As noted above, virtually all amulets are fourth century or later, and the majority of these are concentrated in the fifth and sixth centuries—which would have been a quite natural time to use parchment. Thus, it seems possible that early Christians viewed amulets and miniature codices as distinct literary forms requiring different materials.

⁴⁴ P. Oxy. 2684 (V.H. 558); P. Ant. 2.54 (V.H. 347); P. Lit. Lond. 239 (V.H. 938); P. Oxy. 2065 (V.H. 200).

⁴⁵ As noted above, it is unclear why Turner felt compelled to include this particular example. One of the other amulets, P. Ant. 2.54 (V.H. 347), also has a blank page, but it is probably a codex because it is preceded by three pages that all have writing. For more, see the entry in van Haelst, p. 347.

3. The content of these miniature codices also differs substantially from amulets. First, they preserve a surprising number of extra-canonical texts: the *Shepherd of Hermas*,⁴⁶ the *Acts of Peter*,⁴⁷ *Acts of Paul and Thecla*,⁴⁸ an apocryphal gospel,⁴⁹ *Protevangelium of James*,⁵⁰ *Didache*,⁵¹ the *Apocalypse of Peter*,⁵² the *Life of Mani*,⁵³ *Bel and the Dragon*,⁵⁴ the *Gospel of Mary*,⁵⁵ IV Ezra,⁵⁶ Tobit,⁵⁷ and the Apocalypse.⁵⁸ These types of texts are virtually non-existent in amulet form.⁵⁹ Second, nearly all these miniature codices produce continuous texts, rather than a conglomeration of texts from various sources.⁶⁰ As noted above, a typical amulet may consist of citations from the Gospels, a psalm, the doxology, and various symbols. Third, although there are a few miniature codices containing psalms, prayers on miniature codices are practically non-existent. This stands in stark contrast to amulets, where prayers constitute more than fifty per cent of the known texts.

In light of these observations, it is remarkable how well P. Oxy. 840—as a tiny parchment codex containing an apocryphal story of Jesus—fits within the general pattern of other miniature books.

⁴⁶ P. Oxy. 1783 (V.H. 659).

⁴⁷ P. Oxy. 849 (V.H. 603).

⁴⁸ P. Ant. 1.13 (V.H. 610), and P. Ant 1.6 (V.H. 609).

⁴⁹ P. Oxy. 840 (V.H. 585).

⁵⁰ P. Grenf. 1.8 (V.H. 601).

⁵¹ P. Oxy. 1782 (V.H. 642). See also R. H. Connolly, 'New Fragments of the *Didache*', *JTS* 25 (1924), pp. 151–3.

⁵² V.H. 619. See also K. Prümm, 'De genuino Apocalypsis Petri textu', *Biblica* 10 (1929), pp. 62–80 and M. R. James, 'The Rainer Fragment of the Apocalypse of Peter', *JTS* 32 (1931), pp. 270–9.

⁵³ P. Colon. inv. 4780 (V.H. 1072).

⁵⁴ Bodl. gr. bib. d2 (V.H. 323, 1083, palimpsest).

⁵⁵ P. Ryl. 3.463 (V.H. 1065).

⁵⁶ P. Oxy. 1010 (V.H. 574). There appears to be a typographical error in Turner which reads VI Ezra (*Typology*, p. 30) because when we turn to Van Haelst (p. 574), Roberts (*Manuscript*, p. 11), and Gamble (*Books and Readers*, p. 236), they all have IV Ezra.

⁵⁷ P. Oxy. 1594 (V.H. 82).

⁵⁸ P. Oxy. 1080 (V.H. 561). To some, Revelation was seen as extra-canonical.

⁵⁹ Among those amulets listed by van Haelst, there appear to be only two apocryphal texts (591, 613) but there may be some that I have missed.

⁶⁰ Examples include P. Oxy. 1782, P. Mich. 3.132, V.H. 289, P. Oxy. 1010, V.H. 545, P. Grenf. 1.6, and P. Grenf. 1.8.

III. SUMMARY

By way of conclusion it seems clear that amulets and miniature codices form distinct literary categories that may occasionally overlap. There are certain characteristics unique to each category that can indicate the purpose for which the document was created. In the case of P. Oxy. 840, it seems evident that it was created to be a miniature codex and not an amulet. However, these characteristics can only reveal what a document was *created* to do and cannot speak about how it may have been *used* by various owners. As the citations above from Augustine and Chrysostom made clear, the magical use of books was quite common in early Christianity and even books that were not created with a magical purpose could have been used by a later owner to cure a fever or protect a house.⁶¹ For the most part, we simply cannot know whether a particular book ever was used in this way.⁶² Thus, the only relevant and meaningful question to ask is whether P. Oxy. 840 was *created* with such purposes in mind, and the answer clearly seems to be no.

As for the implications of this study on larger historical questions, two observations are in order. First, the trends observed above should encourage a more careful and precise use of the term 'amulet' in scholarly works on the subject. Rather than simply lumping all tiny documents into this category, it should be reserved for those texts that were clearly *designed* for magical use and not for documents that simply may have been used in a magical way. Second, it is my hope that this study will bring greater clarity and definition to the category of miniature codex. It represents a vital stage in the development of the Christian book and reveals how literate Christians often preferred small formats for their private reading. In contrast to larger codices designed for public use, the tiny size of these books allowed them to be easily carried on journeys, quickly referred to in the context of conversations (perhaps evangelistic discussions), and conveniently hid during times of persecution (e.g. Diocletian). Furthermore, the abundance of apocryphal literature in these

⁶¹ Thus, in the same way, I freely grant that P. Oxy. 840 could have been carried by its owner and assigned magical powers (although it is unlikely to have been carried around the neck because there is no evidence of a cord being used; it may have simply been carried in a pocket or in a bag). But, theoretically, the same could be said of P⁶⁶ or P⁷⁵ or a vast number of other manuscripts.

⁶² Unless for some reason we have either (a) the express testimony of the owner that he used the document in this fashion, or (b) something done to the text that indicates it was used in this way, e.g., a string used to carry it around the neck or if it was folded many times.

miniature codices indicates that private books were a significant means of promulgating literature that had not been approved by ecclesiastical authorities.⁶³

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⁶³ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, p. 236.

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