

# Jesus and the Extracanonial Works

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The debate surrounding the usefulness of the extracanonial Gospels for historical Jesus research is a long one, which in one form or another can be traced back to the early church. One thinks especially of second-, third-, and fourth-century fathers who appeal to various Gospels or Gospel recensions in commentaries, treatises, and apologetic works, consciously supplementing, even modifying, the tradition of the Gospels that would eventually come to be recognized as canonical. In some ways what these early Christian theologians and apologists were doing was not much different from the objectives and activities of modern research.

In the present study I undertake a critical investigation of the status of the question today, advocating an openness to the possibility of early, reliable tradition in these texts, but at the same time urging greater caution in their use. I focus on four sources, which in some quarters have been judged as preserving tradition independent of, equal to, and in some cases perhaps even superior to what is preserved in the New Testament Gospels. These four sources are the *Gospel of Thomas*, Egerton Papyrus 2, the alleged *Gospel of Peter*, and the *Secret Gospel of Mark*. These sources received prominent attention in John Dominic Crossan's *Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon*.<sup>1</sup> These sources have continued to receive scholarly attention, with respect to questions relating to the historical Jesus and the origin of the Jesus tradition and the New Testament Gospels. The *Gospel of Thomas* has enjoyed pride of place and is in fact the fifth Gospel in the Jesus Seminar's publication *The Five Gospels*.<sup>2</sup> I begin with *Thomas*, and give it more attention than the other extracanonial Gospel sources.

## The Gospel of Thomas

The extracanonical Gospel that is the most celebrated is the *Gospel of Thomas*, which survives in complete form in Coptic, as the second tractate in Codex II of the Nag Hammadi library (NHC II,2), and partially in three Greek fragments in Oxyrhynchus Papyri 1, 654, and 655.<sup>3</sup> Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654 preserves *Gos. Thom.* prologue and sayings 1-7, and a portion of saying 30; P.Oxy. 1 preserves *Gos. Thom.* sayings 26-33, and P.Oxy. 655 preserves *Gos. Thom.* sayings 24, 36-39, and 77. Although the point has been disputed, most scholars contend that *Thomas* was originally composed in Greek and that the Oxyrhynchus Papyri stand closer to the original form of the tradition.<sup>4</sup>

Church fathers writing in the third and fourth centuries mention a *Gospel of Thomas*. In reference to the Naassenes, a gnostic group, Hippolytus (writing c. 230) refers to a work “entitled the *Gospel according to Thomas*” (*Haer.* 5.7.20). Soon after, Origen (185-254) also refers to a “*Gospel according to Thomas*” (*Hom. Luc.* 1.5.13-14), a testimony that Jerome (342-420) repeats near the end of the fourth century (*Comm. Matth.* Prologue). Ambrose (339-397) also mentions the work (*Exp. Luc.* 1.2.10). There is no reason not to identify this document mentioned by the church fathers with the *Gospel of Thomas* found in Egypt. The *Gospel of Thomas* is an esoteric writing, purporting to record the secret (or “hidden”) teachings of Jesus.

Most of the codices that make up the Nag Hammadi library have been dated to the second half of the fourth century, though of course many of the writings within these old books date to earlier periods. The codex that contains the *Gospel of Thomas* may date to the first half of the fourth century. In the case of the *Gospel of Thomas* itself (whose *explicit* reads: *p<sup>e</sup>euaggelion p<sup>e</sup>kata thōmas*, “the Gospel according to Thomas”) we have the three Greek fragments from Oxyrhynchus, which date to the beginning and middle of the third century. One of the fragments may date as early as 200. Many scholars allow that *Thomas* was composed as early as the mid-second century. How much earlier is hotly debated. I will argue that *Thomas* dates no earlier than the end of the second century.

A few scholars still argue that the *Gospel of Thomas* contains primitive, pre-Synoptic tradition.<sup>5</sup> This is of course possible theoretically, but numerous difficulties attend efforts to cull from this collection of logia (114 in the apparently complete Coptic edition) material that can with confidence be judged primitive, independent of the New Testament Gospels, and even authentic. Quoting or alluding to more than half of the writings of the New Testament (i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1-2 Corinthians,

Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 John, Revelation),<sup>6</sup> *Thomas* could very well be a collage of New Testament and apocryphal materials that have been interpreted, often allegorically, in such a way as to advance second- and third-century mystical or gnostic ideas. Moreover, the traditions contained in *Thomas* hardly reflect a setting that predates the writings of the New Testament, which is why John Dominic Crossan and others attempt to extract an early version (or early versions) of *Thomas* from the Coptic and Greek texts that are now extant. Attempts such as these strike me as special pleading — that is, if the extant evidence does not fit the theory, then appeal to hypothetical evidence. The problem here is that we do not know if there ever was an edition of the *Gospel of Thomas* substantially different from the Greek fragments of Oxyrhynchus or the later Coptic translation from Nag Hammadi. Positing an early form of *Thomas*, stripped of the embarrassing late and secondary features, is a gratuitous move. The presence of so much New Testament material in *Thomas* should give us pause before accepting theories of the antiquity and independence of this writing.

Another major problem with viewing the *Gospel of Thomas* as independent of the canonical Gospels is the presence of a significant amount of material that is distinctive to Matthew (M), Luke (L), and John. This is an important observation, because scholars usually view Mark and Q — not M, L, and the Johannine tradition — as repositories of material most likely to be ancient and authentic. Yet *Thomas* parallels the later traditions often.

Another telling factor that should give us pause before assuming too quickly that the *Gospel of Thomas* offers early and independent tradition lies in the observation that features characteristic of Matthean and Lukan redaction are also found in *Thomas*. First, we may consider a few examples involving Matthew. Logia 40 and 57 reflect Mt 15:13 and 13:24-30, respectively. This Matthean material derives from M and gives evidence of Matthean redaction. Other sayings in *Thomas* that parallel the triple tradition agree with Matthew's wording (cf. Mt 15:11 = *Gos. Thom.* 34b; Mt 12:50 = *Gos. Thom.* 99), rather than with Mark's wording. Matthew's unique juxtaposition of alms, prayer, and fasting (Mt 6:1-18) appears to be echoed in *Gos. Thom.* 6 (= P.Oxy. 654.6) and 14. In *Thomas* alms, prayer, and fasting are discussed in a negative light, probably reflecting gnostic antipathy toward Jewish piety, which surely argues for viewing *Thomas* as secondary to Matthew. All of this suggests that *Thomas* has been influenced by Matthean tradition.

There is also evidence that the *Gospel of Thomas* was influenced by the Gospel of Luke. The Lukan Evangelist alters Mark's "For there is nothing hid except to be made manifest" (Mk 4:22) to "For nothing is hid that shall not

be made manifest” (Lk 8:17). It is this redacted version that is found in *Gos. Thom.* 5-6, with the Greek parallel preserved in P.Oxy. 654.5 matching Luke’s text exactly, which counters any claim that Luke’s text only influenced the later Coptic translation.<sup>7</sup> The texts read as follows:

οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτόν ἐὰν μὴ ἴνα φανερωθῆ (Mk 4:22)  
οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτόν ὃ οὐ φανερόν γενήσεται (Lk 8:17)  
οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτόν ὃ οὐ φανε[ρόν γενήσεται] (P.Oxy. 655.5)

Elsewhere there are indications that *Thomas* has followed Luke.<sup>8</sup> Given the evidence, it is not surprising that a number of respected scholars have concluded that *Thomas* has drawn upon the New Testament Gospels.<sup>9</sup>

Yet another important point needs to be made. If the *Gospel of Thomas* truly dates to the first century, perhaps as early as 70 CE, then why is it not cited by anyone in the first half of the second century? Justin Martyr’s *Harmony of the Gospels* (c. 150 CE) made use of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but not *Thomas*. The *Diatessaron* (c. 175 CE) by Justin’s student Tatian makes use of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and perhaps some other material, but not *Thomas*. As Édouard Massaux has shown in his magisterial study of the influence of the Gospel of Matthew on Christian literature before Irenaeus, the New Testament Gospels were well known, above all Matthew.<sup>10</sup> If *Thomas* was so early and truly preserved primitive, authentic materials, then why does it remain unknown to Christian writers until the end of the second century?

Finally, not long after the publication of the *Gospel of Thomas* scholars noticed that the new Gospel shared several affinities with eastern, or Syrian Christianity, especially as expressed in second-century traditions, including Tatian’s aforementioned harmony of the four New Testament Gospels, called the *Diatessaron*. This point is potentially quite significant, for the *Diatessaron* was the only form of New Testament Gospel tradition known to Syrian Christianity in the second century. We must carefully consider the implications of this evidence.

Proponents of the independence and first-century origin of the *Gospel of Thomas* are aware of at least some aspects of this writing’s relationship to Syrian Christianity. Crossan and Patterson rightly call attention to Edessa, eastern Syria, as the original provenance of *Thomas*. They point out, among other things, that the name “Judas Thomas” is found in other works of Syrian provenance, such as the *Book of Thomas the Contender* (NHC II,7), which begins in a manner reminiscent of the *Gospel of Thomas*: “The secret words that the Savior spoke to Judas Thomas, which I, even I Mathaias,

wrote down” (138.1-3; cf. 142.7: “Judas — the one called Thomas”), and the *Acts of Thomas*, in which the apostle is called “Judas Thomas, who is also (called) Didymus” (1; cf. 11: “Judas who is also Thomas”). The longer form of the name in the *Acts of Thomas* agrees with the prologue of the *Gospel of Thomas*, where the apostle is identified as “Didymus Judas Thomas.” In the Syriac version of Jn 14:22, “Judas (not Iscariot)” is identified as “Judas Thomas.” This nomenclature continues on into later Syrian Christian traditions.<sup>11</sup>

Despite these affinities with Syrian tradition, whose distinctive characteristics, so far as we can trace them, emerged in the second century, Crossan and Patterson (and others) are confident that the *Gospel of Thomas* originated quite early. Patterson thinks *Thomas* must have existed before the end of the first century (though he allows for later editing). Crossan believes that the first edition of *Thomas* emerged in the 50s and the later edition — essentially the extant text — emerged in the 60s or 70s. In other words, the *Gospel of Thomas* in its first edition is earlier than any of the New Testament Gospels. Indeed, even the later edition of *Thomas* may be earlier than the New Testament Gospels.<sup>12</sup>

Scholars have weighed in on both sides of this question, with many arguing that the *Gospel of Thomas* dates to the second century (e.g., early to mid) and with almost as many (several of whom are numbered among the members of the Jesus Seminar) arguing that *Thomas* dates to the first century. The latter usually date *Thomas* to the end of the first century, but believe they can identify independent tradition that in some cases should be preferred to its parallel forms in the Synoptic Gospels.

This important question cannot be settled by taking a poll. I think we need to take a hard look at the *Gospel of Thomas*, especially as it relates to Syrian tradition. In my view, this text probably should not be dated before the mid-second century. Indeed, the evidence suggests that *Thomas* was probably composed in the *last quarter of the second century*. There is probably nothing in *Thomas* that can be independently traced back to the first century. Let us consider the evidence.

In print and in public lectures Crossan has defended the antiquity and independence of the *Gospel of Thomas* principally on two grounds: (1) He can find “no overall compositional design” in the Gospel, apart from a few clusters of sayings linked by catchwords; and (2) he finds several differences in the parallels with the New Testament Gospels that he believes cannot be explained in terms of Thomasine redaction. Patterson’s arguments are similar.<sup>13</sup> As it turns out, the Syrian evidence answers both points.

Almost from the beginning, a few scholars with Syriac expertise recog-

nized the Semitic, especially Syriac, style of the *Gospel of Thomas*. This was, of course, consistent with what has already been said about the form of the name of the apostle. It was further noticed that, at points, distinctive readings in *Thomas* agree with the Syriac version of the New Testament or with the earlier *Diatessaron* by Tatian.<sup>14</sup> Some also wondered if perhaps portions of *Thomas* originated in the Syriac language, instead of the Greek language, as was widely assumed.<sup>15</sup>

Nicholas Perrin has examined the catchwords of the *Gospel of Thomas*. To do this, he translates the Coptic into Greek, where the Greek is no longer extant. He also translates the entire text into Syriac, the principal language of Edessa in the second century. In the Coptic and Greek versions he finds about 250 catchwords. In the hypothetical Syriac he finds some 600, which he thinks proves that *Thomas* was originally composed in Syriac. However, this part of his study has been criticized, mainly because of a lack of rigorous controls in defining the catchwords.<sup>16</sup> It is probably best to assume that *Thomas* originated in Greek, even if in Syria. Nevertheless, Perrin has succeeded in showing that *Thomas* is more tightly linked than previously thought. Moreover, Perrin shows that the logia of *Thomas* are not only organized around catchwords, but also that some of the organization reflects Syrian traditions. Where Perrin agrees with Crossan, Patterson, and others is that *Thomas* is not directly dependent on the New Testament Gospels.

In my view the principal argument that Crossan and others have advanced in support of the literary independence of the *Gospel of Thomas* from the New Testament Gospels has been seriously undermined. One is no longer justified to say that there is no discernible framework or organizing principle lying behind the composition of *Thomas*. There clearly is, if this writing of acknowledged Syrian provenance is studied in the light of distinctive Syrian traditions.

Just as impressive is the number of specific contacts between the *Gospel of Thomas* and Syrian Gospel traditions and other Syrian religious traditions. What we see is that again and again, where *Thomas* differs from the New Testament Gospels, this is where *Thomas* agrees with Syrian tradition. This point has not been sufficiently appreciated by Crossan and others. There are many examples; let me discuss one.

The Syrian tradition sheds light on the Thomasine form of Jesus' beatitude pronounced on the poor:

Greek Mt 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Greek Lk 6:20: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

Gos. *Thom.* 54: “Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.”

Syriac Mt 5:3: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.”

*Diatessaron*: “Blessed are the poor in spirit —”

Crossan views *Gos. Thom.* 54 as providing strong evidence of the independence of the Thomasine tradition. He notes that the Matthean gloss “in spirit” is missing from *Thomas* and the forms of the two clauses are mixed, with the first clause in the third person (as in Matthew) and the second clause in the second person (as in Luke). Crossan cannot imagine how the author/collector of *Thomas* could have done this: “One would have at least to argue that *Thomas* (a) took the third person ‘the poor’ from Matthew, then (b) the second person ‘yours’ from Luke, and (c) returned to Matthew for the final ‘kingdom of heaven.’ It might be simpler to suggest that *Thomas* was mentally unstable.”<sup>17</sup> As it turns out, it is simpler to review the Syrian tradition, instead of indulging in armchair psychology.

Logion 54 follows the Syriac form of Matthew (probably from the *Diatessaron*, the only form in which the NT Gospel tradition was available for Syriac speakers in the late second century). The omission of the qualifying prepositional phrase “in spirit” should hardly occasion surprise. Not only is it missing from Luke, its nonappearance in *Thomas* is consistent with the Thomasine worldview. Omitting the qualifying phrase “in spirit” is not too difficult to explain in light of *Thomas*’s antimaterialistic perspective (cf. *Gos. Thom.* 27, 63, 64, 65, 95, 110), a perspective consistent with the ascetic views of the Syrian church. No, *Thomas* declares, it is not the poor *in spirit* who are blessed, it is *the poor*. So, to return to Crossan’s argument, all that one needs to say is that *Thomas* (a) took the saying as it existed in Syriac (which accounts for the mix of third and second person, as well as the presence of the phrase “kingdom of heaven”) and (b) deleted “in spirit,” in keeping with Syrian Christianity’s asceticism.

The ascetic, antimaterialistic, and anticommercial tendency in *Thomas* is well attested and should be pursued further. Let us consider logia 63-65. Why have these three logia been grouped together? The answer is plain: All three make pronouncements against wealth and materialism. The first logion (63) parallels Lk 12:16-21, the parable of the Rich Fool. In Luke’s version the rich man decides to build bigger barns, in order to house his bountiful harvest. He assumes that he will now live many years in comfort and se-



curity. In God's eyes he is a fool, for he will die much sooner than he thinks, leaving behind his earthly wealth and coming before God empty-handed. The Lukan form of the parable forms an *inclusio*, beginning with the "rich" (πλούσιος) man (v. 16) and ending with a man who is not "rich (πλουτῶν) toward God." The Thomasine version is somewhat briefer (primarily through the omission of the details about the abundant harvest and the need to build larger barns),<sup>18</sup> saying that the rich man has a great deal of money (Greek loanword: χρήμα),<sup>19</sup> money that he intends to invest, in order that he might reap further profits and fill his barns, so that he will lack nothing. So he thought. However, that night he died. The Thomasine version ends with the familiar exhortation to hear.

The second logion (64) parallels the parable of the Banquet (Mt 22:1-14; Lk 14:15-24), particularly in its Lukan form. According to Luke, three of the invited guests decline the servant's summons because they variously have purchased a field or a yoke of oxen, or have married, though (presumably) they had originally promised to attend. In their place people not normally thought of as blessed or privileged (e.g., the poor, maimed, blind, and lame) are urged into the banquet hall. In the Thomasine version the excuses of the invited guests (four in all, not three) are noticeably monetary. The first says, "I have money from some merchants. They are coming to me this evening." The fourth says, "I have bought a village. Since I am going to collect the rent, I will not be able to come." There are also curious features about the replies of the second and third invited guests. The second says, "I have bought a house, and I have been called away for a day. I will not have time." The reference to "called away" probably implies the need to conduct business. Evidently the purchaser does not live in this house. Perhaps we should assume that it is a rental. The third says, "My friend is getting married, and I am the one who is going to prepare the meal." This may represent an improvement over Luke's third excuse, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come," in that this excuse may not make sense to one who is unfamiliar with Jewish custom (i.e., the one-year marital exemption from civic duties). The Thomasine version makes it clear why a wedding will prevent attendance of the banquet. It may again hint at business, if we are to understand this excuse maker as the caterer of the wedding feast. Accordingly, the Thomasine version concludes with the pronouncement, "Dealers and merchants will not enter the places of my Father." In other words, from the Thomasine perspective, all four of the excuse makers are involved in business deals of one sort or another.

The third logion (65) parallels the parable of the Vineyard, which appears in all three Synoptic Gospels (Mt 21:33-41; Mk 12:1-9; Lk 20:9-16). Once



again, the Thomasine version parallels Luke's version more closely than it does the others.<sup>20</sup> Luke's version omits virtually all of the details drawn from Isa 5:1-7, but drives home the same point that we see in Mark (and in Matthew). The tenant farmers defy the authority of the owner of the vineyard, molesting his servants and even killing his son. For this they face destruction. The Thomasine version, however, is quite different. It is not "a man" who "planted a vineyard," but a "moneyman" or "usurer" (χρηστής) who owned a vineyard and hoped to make a profit. His efforts fail. His servants are not respected and his son is murdered. Again, no explicit lesson is drawn.<sup>21</sup> Instead we once again hear the familiar refrain, "Let him who has ears hear."

In *Thomas* all three logia are taken from the Gospel of Luke. All three emphasize money and material wealth. All three teach that business and the pursuit of material wealth cannot provide security and certainly cannot assure a place with the Father. In editing these Lukan materials the Thomasine redactor omits the concluding lessons (which in their own ways reflect Lukan redaction as well), because they do not make the desired point. In deleting the original lesson of logion 63, the Thomasine redactor spoiled the inclusio. Logia 63 and 65 conclude with the exhortation to hear. And what are the readers and auditors of *Thomas* to hear? They are to hear the conclusion of logion 64: "Dealers and merchants will not enter the places of my Father." This is the lesson of the three clustered and edited passages from Luke, in their new context in the *Gospel of Thomas*. The editor/compiler of *Thomas* has created a new inclusio, one that begins and ends with the familiar injunction to hear, and at its center the main lesson, namely, that those concerned with wealth will not be saved.

Another important element to consider involves geographical and historical verisimilitude. At innumerable points the New Testament Gospels shed light on the political, social, and cultural conditions of pre-70 CE Jewish Palestine. Josephus and the New Testament evangelists are mutually clarifying, each providing significant evidence of familiarity with the land of Israel in the first half of the first century. Archaeology of pre-70 Jewish Palestine is guided and aided by material in the New Testament Gospels. Conversely, archaeological discoveries often clarify this or that detail in the New Testament Gospels. The New Testament Gospels speak of real places and figures, of real events and customs. Almost nothing like this can be said with reference to the *Gospel of Thomas*. There is little or no historical, social, or geographical verisimilitude in the *Gospel of Thomas*, and virtually no coherence whatsoever with what is known of pre-70 Jewish Palestine.<sup>22</sup> This important

point has simply not impressed itself sufficiently on supporters of the antiquity and independence of the *Gospel of Thomas*.

Before concluding the discussion of the *Gospel of Thomas* I need to address one other issue. Stephen Patterson, James Robinson, and others have argued that the genre of the *Gospel of Thomas* supports an early date. Because *Thomas* is like Q, the sayings source on which Matthew and Luke drew, then *Thomas* in its earliest form may approximate the age of Q.<sup>23</sup> This argument is wholly specious, not only because it does not take into account the extensive coherence with late-second-century Syrian tradition, which has been reviewed above, or the lack of coherence with pre-70 Jewish Palestine; it also fails to take into account that other sayings collections, some in Syria, emerged in the second and third centuries. Among these are the rabbinic collection that became known as the *Pirqe 'Abot* ("Chapters of the Fathers") and the *Sentences of Sextus*. The latter is particularly significant, because it originated in Syria, in the second century, the approximate time and place of the emergence of the *Gospel of Thomas*. The evidence suggests that the *Gospel of Thomas* is another second-century collection that emerged in Syria.

The evidence strongly points to a late origin of the *Gospel of Thomas*. The lack of reference to *Thomas* in early-second-century Christian writings, the lack of historical, cultural, and geographical verisimilitude, the association of the work with Judas Thomas, and the coherence of the readings in *Thomas* that differ from the Greek New Testament Gospels with the readings either in the *Diatessaron* or other Christian Syriac works from this period compellingly argue for a late-second-century Syrian origin of the *Gospel of Thomas*. In short, it is the flood of factors that point to the eastern, Syriac-speaking church, a church that knows the New Testament Gospels primarily — perhaps exclusively — through Tatian's *Diatessaron*,<sup>24</sup> a work not composed before 170 CE, that persuades me that the *Gospel of Thomas* does not offer students of the Gospels early, independent material that can be used for critical research into the life and teaching of Jesus.

### **The Akhmîm Gospel Fragment (the Gospel of Peter?)**

In a discussion of writings attributed to the Apostle Peter, church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-340) mentions a *Gospel of Peter*, which Serapion, bishop of Antioch (in office 199-211), condemned as heretical (*Hist. eccl.* 6.12.3-6). Serapion quotes no portion of this Gospel, only saying that it was used by Docetists. In the winter of 1886-1887, during excavations

at Akhmîm in Egypt, a codex was found in the coffin of a Christian monk, dating perhaps to the ninth century. The manuscript comprises a fragment of a Gospel, fragments of Greek *Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and, written on the inside of the back cover of the codex, an account of the martyrdom of St. Julian. The Gospel fragment bears no name or hint of a title, for neither the incipit nor the explicit has survived. Because the Apostle Peter appears in the text, narrating in the first person (v. 60: "But I, Simon Peter"), because it may have a Docetic orientation, and because the Gospel fragment was bound together with the *Apocalypse of Peter*, it was widely assumed that the fragment belonged to the *Gospel of Peter* mentioned by Eusebius.<sup>25</sup>

Critical assessments of the newly published Gospel fragment diverged widely, with some scholars claiming that the fragment was independent of the New Testament Gospels and others claiming that the fragment was dependent on the New Testament Gospels.<sup>26</sup> Throughout this debate no one seriously asked if the Akhmîm fragment really was part of the second-century *Gospel of Peter*. It was simply assumed that it was.

Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, two more Greek fragments from Egypt were published, P.Oxy. 2949 and P.Oxy. 4009, which with varying degrees of confidence were identified as belonging to the *Gospel of Peter*. Indeed, one of the fragments was thought to overlap with part of the Akhmîm fragment. The publication of these fragments renewed interest in the Gospel, because it was felt that the identity of the Akhmîm fragment as the second-century *Gospel of Peter*, the writing initially accepted and later rejected by Bishop Serapion, was confirmed. Indeed, it has also been suggested that the Fayyum fragment, or P.Vindob. G 2325, is yet another early fragment of the *Gospel of Peter*.<sup>27</sup>

In more recent years, Helmut Koester and a circle of colleagues and students have given new life to Gardner-Smith's position. According to Koester, the *Gospel of Peter*'s "basis must be an older text under the authority of Peter which was independent of the canonical gospels."<sup>28</sup> Koester's student Ron Cameron agrees, concluding that this Gospel is independent of the canonical Gospels, may even antedate them, and "may have served as a source for their respective authors."<sup>29</sup> This position has been worked out in detail by John Dominic Crossan, who accepts the identification of the Akhmîm fragment with Serapion's *Gospel of Peter*. In a lengthy study that appeared in 1985 Crossan argued that the *Gospel of Peter*, though admittedly in its final stages influenced by the New Testament Gospel tradition, preserves a very old tradition, on which all four of the canonical Gospels' passion accounts are based.<sup>30</sup> This old tradition is identified as the *Cross Gospel*. Crossan's provocative conclusion calls for evaluation.

The author of the Akhmîm Gospel fragment apparently possessed little accurate knowledge of Jewish customs and sensitivities. According to Akhmîm frgs. 8.31 and 10.38, the Jewish elders and scribes spend the night in the cemetery, as part of the guard keeping watch over the tomb of Jesus. Given Jewish views of corpse impurity, not to mention fear of cemeteries at night, the author of our fragment is unbelievably ignorant. Who could write such a story only twenty years after the death of Jesus? And if someone did at such an early time, can we really believe that the Matthean evangelist, who was surely Jewish, would make use of such a poorly informed writing? One can scarcely credit this scenario.

There are worse problems. The Jewish leaders' fear of harm at the hands of the Jewish people (Akhmîm frg. 8.30) smacks of embellishment, if not Christian apologetic. The "seven seals" (8.33) and the "crowd from Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside" that "came in order to see the sealed tomb" (9.34) serve an apologetic interest: the resurrection story is well attested. These details are probably secondary to the canonical tradition. The appearance of the expression, "the Lord's day," of course, is another indication of lateness, not antiquity.<sup>31</sup> The centurion's confession in *Peter* not only reflects Matthean influence,<sup>32</sup> it has been placed on the lips of *all the guards*, who proclaim it before Pilate! Again, we have apologetic interests at work.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, can it be seriously maintained that the Akhmîm fragment's resurrection account, complete with a talking cross and angels whose heads reach heaven, constitutes the most primitive account extant? Is this the account that the canonical evangelists had before them? Or is it not more prudent to conclude what we have here is still more evidence of the secondary, fanciful nature of this apocryphal writing?<sup>34</sup> Crossan and others have not sufficiently probed the significance of the fantastic elements in the Akhmîm Gospel fragment. The fragment describes the risen Jesus as so tall that his head extended above the heavens and that the cross on which Jesus had been crucified exited the tomb with him (10.39-40). These are the details of late, not early, tradition. Does not the evidence suggest that the Akhmîm Gospel fragment is little more than a blend of details from the four canonical Gospels, especially from Matthew, that has been embellished with pious imagination, apologetic concerns, and a touch of anti-Semitism?

The evidence strongly suggests that the Akhmîm Gospel fragment is a late work, not an early work, even if we attempt to find an earlier substratum, (gratuitously) shorn of imagined late accretions. But more pressing is the question whether the extant ninth-century Akhmîm Gospel fragment really is a fragment of the second-century *Gospel of Peter* condemned by Bishop Serapion in the early third century. The extant Akhmîm fragment does not

identify itself, nor do we have a patristic quotation of the *Gospel of Peter* with which we can make comparison and possibly settle the questions. Nor is the Akhmîm Gospel fragment Docetic, as many asserted shortly after its publication.<sup>35</sup> If the fragment is not Docetic, then the putative identification of the fragment with the *Gospel of Peter* is weakened still further. After all, the one thing that Serapion emphasized was that the *Gospel of Peter* was used by Docetists to advance their doctrines. Finally, as Paul Foster has shown, the connection between the Akhmîm Gospel fragment and the aforementioned small papyrus fragments that may date as early as 200-250 is quite tenuous.<sup>36</sup> Thus we have no solid evidence that allows us with any confidence to link the extant Akhmîm Gospel fragment with a second-century text, be that the *Gospel of Peter* mentioned by Bishop Serapion or some other writing from the late second century. Given its fantastic features and its coherence with late traditions, it is not advisable to make use of this Gospel fragment for Jesus research.

## Papyrus Egerton 2

Papyrus Egerton 2 consists of four fragments. The fourth fragment yields nothing more than one illegible letter. The third fragment yields little more than a few scattered words. The first and second fragments offer four (or perhaps five) stories that parallel Johannine and Synoptic materials. Papyrus Köln 255 constitutes a related fragment of the text.<sup>37</sup>

At many points these fragments parallel the New Testament Gospels. The first story is replete with allusions to the fourth Gospel. Jesus' assertion in lines 7-10 (ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς· ἐν αἷς ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐκεῖναί εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ . . .) could well be drawn from Jn 5:39, 45. The lawyers' reply in lines 15-17 (εὖ οἶδαμεν ὅτι Μωϋσεὶ ἐλάλησεν ὁ θεός· σὲ δὲ οὐκ οἶδαμεν πόθεν εἶ) appears to be taken from Jn 9:29, while Jesus' rejoinder in lines 20-23a (εἰ γὰρ ἐπιστεύσατε Μωϋσεῖ, ἐπιστεύσατε ἂν ἐμοί· περὶ ἐμοῦ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν)<sup>38</sup> reflects Jn 5:46. The attempt to stone Jesus in lines 22-24 parallels Jn 10:31, while the declaration in lines 25-30 that they were unable to do so because his "hour had not yet come" (οὐπω ἐληλύθει αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα) echoes Jn 7:30 (οὐπω ἐληλύθει ἡ ὥρα αὐτοῦ). Reference to Jesus in line 30 as "the Lord" has a secondary ring. The second story is mostly Synoptic. The third story again combines Johannine and Synoptic elements. The opening statement in lines 45-47, "Teacher Jesus, we know that [from God] you have come, for what you are doing tes[tifies] beyond all the prophets," is based upon Jn 3:2 and 9:29 (cf. also Jn 1:45; Acts 3:18). Egerton's use of

“teacher” (διδάσκαλε) is secondary to John’s transliteration ραββί (Jn 1:38), and may be due to its appearance in Mk 12:14a (“Teacher, we know that you are true”). The question put to Jesus in lines 48-50 (“Is it permissible to pay kings those things due authority? Do we pay them or not?”) is taken from Mk 12:14b and parallels, but appears to have missed the original point. Jesus’ emotion in line 51 (ἐμβρειμησάμενος) recalls Mk 1:43 (ἐμβριμησάμενος), while his question in lines 52-54 (“Why do you call me with your mouth ‘teacher,’ not hearing what I say?”) recalls a form of the question found in Lk 6:46 (“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”). The remainder of Jesus’ saying, which is a paraphrase of Isa 29:13, echoes Mk 7:6-7 and parallels.

Crossan’s analysis of these fragments leads him to conclude that P.Egerton 2 represents a tradition that predates the canonical Gospels. He thinks that “Mark is dependent on it directly” and that it gives evidence of “a stage before the distinction of Johannine and Synoptic traditions was operative.” Koester agrees with Crossan’s second point, saying that in P.Egerton 2 we find “pre-Johannine and pre-synoptic characteristics of language [which] still existed side by side.” He thinks it unlikely, *pace* Jeremias, that the author of this papyrus could have been acquainted with the canonical Gospels and “would have deliberately composed [it] by selecting sentences” from them.<sup>39</sup>

Theoretically Crossan and Koester could be correct in this assessment. However, some serious questions must be raised. First, several times editorial improvements introduced by Matthew and Luke appear in the Egerton Gospel.<sup>40</sup> There are other indications that the Egerton Papyrus is posterior to the canonical Gospels. The plural “kings” is probably secondary to the singular “Caesar” that is found in the Synoptics (and in *Gos. Thom.* 100). The flattery, “what you do bears witness beyond all the prophets,” may reflect Jn 1:34, 45, and is again reminiscent of later pious Christian embellishment that tended to exaggerate the respect that Jesus’ contemporaries showed him.<sup>41</sup>

A second question arises in response to Koester’s statement about the improbability that the author of P.Egerton 2 “would have deliberately composed [it] by selecting sentences” from the canonical Gospels. But is this not the very thing that Justin Martyr and his disciple Tatian did? Justin Martyr composed a *Harmony* of the Synoptic Gospels (c. 150 CE) and twenty years or so later Tatian composed a harmony (i.e., the *Diatessaron*) of all four New Testament Gospels. If Justin Martyr and Tatian, writing in the second century, can compose their respective harmonies through the selection of sentences and phrases from this Gospel and that Gospel, why could not the author of the Egerton Papyrus 2 do the same thing?

Examples can be found in Justin Martyr's quotations that sometimes combine materials from two or more Gospels. From *1 Apol.* 15:9 we read:

If you love those who love you [cf. Mt 5:46 = Lk 6:32], what new thing do you do [*unparalleled*]? For even the fornicators do this [Mt 5:46: "tax collectors"; Lk 6:32, 33: "sinners"]. But I say to you [cf. Mt 5:44], pray for [cf. Mt 5:44: "love"] your enemies and love [cf. Lk 6:27: "do good"] those who hate you and bless those who curse you and pray for those who mistreat you [cf. Lk 6:28].

In *1 Apol.* 15:10-12 Justin combines materials from Matthew and Luke to create a lengthy saying that his readers would take as a single utterance. Yet it is not a unified piece; it is a conflation.

In *1 Apol.* 16:9-13 Justin has assembled, based on memory, a "word" of Jesus that is in reality a pastiche of Synoptic materials, which at one point may also reflect Johannine influence. Although drawn from a variety of contexts, there is nevertheless a general thematic unity that holds these materials together. With respect to composition, the sayings in P.Egerton 2.1 and 3 are quite similar to Justin's dominical "word."

A third question arises out of Koester's suggestion that the mixture of Johannine-like and Synoptic elements is primitive, while their bifurcation into the extant canonical forms is secondary. If Koester's suggestion is correct, then the Egerton Gospel does indeed derive from the mid-first century, as Crossan argues. It would have to be this early, if it were to be used by the Synoptic evangelists. If this is the case, then one must wonder why it is that we have no other fragment, nor any other evidence of the existence of this extraordinarily primitive Gospel. How is it that we do not have other papyri, extracanonical Gospels, or patristic quotations attesting this primitive pre-Synoptic, pre-Johannine unified tradition?

Another feature that tells against the antiquity and priority of P.Egerton 2 is the story related in the badly preserved verso of frg. 2. Jesus apparently sows a handful of seed on the Jordan River, from which abundant fruit springs up. The story is reminiscent of the kind of stories one finds in the late and fanciful apocryphal Gospels. For example, in the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* we are told of the boy Jesus who sowed a handful of seed that yielded a remarkable harvest (*Inf. Gos. Thom.* 10:1-2 [Latin]).<sup>42</sup> The parallel stories, even if vague and imprecise, hardly encourage us to view P.Egerton 2 as early and even reliable for Jesus research.

Although the hypothesis of Crossan, Koester, and others remains a theoretical possibility, the evidence available at this time suggests that in all



probability P.Egerton 2 represents a second-century conflation of Synoptic and Johannine elements, rather than primitive first-century material on which the canonical Gospels depended.<sup>43</sup> The presence of at least one apocryphal tale akin to those of the least historically viable traditions only strengthens this conviction.

## The Secret Gospel of Mark

At the annual Society of Biblical Literature meeting in New York in 1960, Morton Smith announced that during his sabbatical leave in 1958, at the Mar Saba Monastery in the Judean wilderness, he found the first part of a letter of Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) penned in Greek, in what he suggested was an eighteenth-century hand, in the back of a seventeenth-century edition of the letters of Ignatius.<sup>44</sup> In 1973 Smith published two editions of his find, one learned and one popular.<sup>45</sup> From the start, scholars suspected that the text was a hoax and that Smith was himself the hoaxer.<sup>46</sup> Many scholars — including several members of the Jesus Seminar — defended Smith and the authenticity of the Clementine letter.

What made the alleged find so controversial were two quotations of a mystical or secret version of the Gospel of Mark, quotations of passages not found in the public Gospel of Mark. In the first, longer passage Jesus raises a dead man and then later, in the nude, instructs the young man in the mysteries of the kingdom of God.<sup>47</sup> The homoerotic orientation of the story is hard to miss.

Despite the facts that no one besides Smith has actually studied the physical document and that the paper and ink have never been subjected to the kinds of tests normally undertaken, many scholars have accepted the Clementine letter as genuine and its testimony as valid that there was in circulation, in the second century, a secret version of the Gospel of Mark. Indeed, some scholars have suggested that *Secret Mark* may help us nuance the solution of the Synoptic Problem, and, of course, some scholars have suggested that *Secret Mark* (or “Longer Mark”) is older and more original than public Mark (or “Shorter Mark”). Learned studies continue to appear,<sup>48</sup> including four more recent important monographs, whose conclusions diverge sharply.<sup>49</sup>

In my view all of this labor has been misspent; the Clementine letter and the quotations of *Secret Mark* embedded within it in all probability constitute a modern hoax, and Morton Smith may well be the hoaxer. Several scholars have for years suspected this to be the case, but the clear, color, re-

cently published photographs of the document have given experts in the science of the detection of forgeries the opportunity to analyze the handwriting of the document and compare it with samples of the handwriting of the late Professor Smith.<sup>50</sup> The evidence suggests that Smith produced the text. Stephen Carlson has compiled and analyzed the evidence. Here are his major conclusions:<sup>51</sup>

1. Magnification of the handwritten text reveals the telltale presence of what handwriting experts call the “forger’s tremor.” That is, the handwriting in question is not really *written*; it is *drawn*, in the forger’s attempt to imitate a style of writing not his own. These telltale signs are everywhere present in the alleged Clementine letter. (Carlson hired an experienced handwriting analyst.)<sup>52</sup>

2. Comparison of the style of the Greek of the handwritten text with Morton Smith’s style of writing Greek (as seen in his papers and marginal notes in his books) suggests that Smith is the person who wrote (or, “drew”) the Clementine letter. For example, Smith had an unusual way of writing the Greek letters *tau*, *theta*, and *lambda*. These unusual forms occasionally intrude in what otherwise is a well-executed imitation of eighteenth-century style of Greek handwriting in the document in question.

3. Some of the distinctive themes in the document are in evidence in some of Smith’s work published *before* the alleged find in 1958.<sup>53</sup>

4. The discolored blotch that is plainly visible in the lower left-hand corner of the final page of the printed text of the volume and in the lower left-hand corner of the second page of the handwritten text prove that the handwritten pages were originally part of the printed edition of the letters of Ignatius. These corresponding blotches, as well as many of the other blotches and discolorations that can be seen in the color photographs, are mildew. The presence of this mildew strongly suggests that the book in question was not originally part of the library of Mar Saba, whose dry climate is not conducive to the production of mold and mildew in books. The mildew in the printed edition of the letters of Ignatius suggests that this book spent most of its existence in Europe. We may speculate that in Europe, or perhaps in North America, the book was purchased and the Clementine letter was drawn onto the blank end papers. The book was then taken to the Mar Saba Monastery, where it was subsequently “found” in the library. It is important to note that the Isaac Voss book does not appear on Mar Saba’s list of old books and manuscripts drawn up in 1910.

5. One of the Mar Saba documents catalogued by Smith appears to be written in the same hand as the alleged Clementine letter. This document Smith dated to the *twentieth* century (not to *eighteenth* century, as in the case

of the Clementine letter). Moreover, the document Smith dates to the twentieth century is signed “M. Madiotes.” This name may be a pseudo-Greek name, whose root (μαδάω) means “flaccid” or “bald” (cf. LSJ), or, in reference to a person, “baldy.” Carlson plausibly suggests that here Smith, who was quite bald throughout his adult life, is facetiously alluding to himself (i.e., “M[orton] the baldhead”).

6. The entire story — finding a long-lost document in the Mar Saba Monastery that is potentially embarrassing to Christianity — is adumbrated by James Hunter’s novel *The Mystery of Mar Saba*.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, one of the heroes of the story, who helps to unmask the perpetrators and expose the fraud, is Scotland Yard Inspector Lord *Moreton*. The parallels between Morton Smith’s alleged Mar Saba discovery and Hunter’s Mar Saba mystery are fascinating. It should be added that Smith says in the preface to his publication of the Clementine letter that his invitation to visit Mar Saba came in 1941 (the year after the publication of Hunter’s novel).

Both Carlson and Jeffery have probed Smith’s motives. Carlson suggests an academic backdrop, perhaps having to do with failure to obtain tenure. Jeffery considers a possible ecclesiastical scenario. Brown has vigorously challenged these suggestions. It must be acknowledged, of course, that this part of the matter will always remain the most uncertain and controversial. Apart from a written confession, no one will ever know exactly what the late Professor Smith had in mind, if indeed he was the hoaxer.

In my view the most compelling evidence that the Mar Saba Clementine letter is spurious is the troubling fact that in two previous publications Smith himself had linked the very elements distinctive to the 1958 Mar Saba “discovery.” In his dissertation, published in 1951, Smith discusses (1) secrecy, (2) the phrase “the mystery of the kingdom of God” (Mk 4:11), and (3) a rabbinic passage (*t. Hag.* 2:1) that discusses prohibited sexual activity. In a study that appeared in 1958 Smith revisits these ideas, only this time including (4) discussion of Clement of Alexandria. Later that year, among the old books and manuscripts in the Mar Saba Monastery in the Judean wilderness, Smith discovers a document in which all four of these distinctive elements are present. It is just this sort of coincidence, in which the discoverer possesses knowledge distinctive to the discovery *before the discovery is made*, that leads critics to suspect fraud. This is clearly so in the case of Professor Coleman-Norton, who joked of a third set of teeth given the damned and then a decade later claimed to have found a text containing this very saying. It is probably also so in the case of Professor Smith, who spoke of mystery and illicit sex in the teaching of Jesus and then subsequently found a text containing this unusual collocation of ideas. The framework for the pepe-

trating of such a hoax may well have been suggested to both Coleman-Norton and Smith by the James Hunter novel, in which just such a hoax was attempted by placing a spurious page of Greek among Mar Saba's uncatalogued rare books.<sup>55</sup>

Certitude in this strange case may never be obtained. No doubt the debate will continue. But in my opinion, prudent, scholarly investigation into the Gospel of Mark and the historical Jesus should not rely on the Mar Saba Clementine.

### Concluding Remarks

Many scholarly portraits and reconstructions of the historical Jesus are badly distorted through the use of documents that are late and of dubious historical value. The irony is that in trying to "go behind" the New Testament Gospels and find truth buried under layers of tradition and theology some scholars depend on documents that were composed sixty to one hundred years *after* the New Testament Gospels. This is a strange way to proceed.

Two of the four extracanonical Gospels reviewed in this paper originated in the second half of the second century. These are the *Gospel of Thomas* and the Egerton Papyrus. A third writing, the Akhmîm Gospel fragment, also cannot date earlier than the mid-second century, if indeed it is the *Gospel of Peter* mentioned by Bishop Serapion at the beginning of the third century. But there are grave doubts that this document is the *Gospel of Peter*. The Akhmîm Gospel fragment may be part of an unknown writing from an even later period of time — a fragment characterized by implausible, inaccurate, and sometimes fantastic elements. In any case, scholars are in no position to extract from the Akhmîm fragment a hypothetical mid-first-century passion and resurrection narrative on which the first-century New Testament Gospels relied. Such a theory completely lacks a critical basis.

The remaining document — the quotations of the *Secret Gospel of Mark*, embedded in a long-lost letter by Clement of Alexandria — may well be a modern hoax and, if so, has nothing to offer critical scholarship concerned with Christian origins and the emergence of the Jesus and Gospel tradition. Yet this writing, along with the other texts, has been used in historical Jesus research and in studies of the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel that scholars have for more than a century regarded as the oldest of the three Synoptics.

The scholarly track record with respect to the use of these extracanonical Gospels is, frankly, embarrassing. In marked contrast to the

hypercritical approach many scholars take to the New Testament Gospels, several scholars are surprisingly uncritical in their approach to the extracanonial Gospels. It is hard to explain why scholars give such credence to documents that reflect settings that are entirely foreign to pre-70 CE Jewish Palestine and at the same time reflect traditions and tendencies found in documents known to emerge in later times and in places outside Palestine.

The value of the Akhmîm Gospel fragment, given its uncertain identity and provenance, is probably minimal for Gospel research. The *Gospel of Thomas* and Egerton Papyrus 2, however, are important texts and deserve careful, critical study. Both could be very important witnesses to the development of the Gospel tradition in the second century and may well be important witnesses to early Gospel harmonies, such as those produced by Justin Martyr and his student Tatian.

But these texts have much less value as sources for the historical Jesus, or as sources for understanding the emergence of the New Testament Gospels. I urge fellow Gospel scholars and Jesus researchers in the future to exercise greater caution and proceed with less hypothesis and special pleading and more exacting, evidenced-based criticism.

1. J. D. Crossan, *Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon* (1985; repr. Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1992).

2. R. W. Funk, R. W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1993).

3. For recent studies of the *Gospel of Thomas*, see M. W. Meyer, *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992); S. J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1993); R. Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (NTR; London: Routledge, 1997); S. J. Patterson, J. M. Robinson, and H.-G. Bethge, *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998); E. Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003); R. Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: T&T Clark, 2003); H.-J. Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), pp. 107-22.

4. For critical editions that compare the Coptic and Greek texts of the *Gospel of Thomas*, see J.-E. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Thomas* (NHS 5; Leiden: Brill, 1975); B. Layton, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codices II, 2-7, Together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926 (1) and P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655* (2 vols.; NHS 20-21; Leiden: Brill, 1989). For an edition with Coptic and English on facing pages, see A. Guillaumont et al., *The Gospel According to Thomas: Coptic Text, Established and Translated* (2nd ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1976). For the Greek texts, plus plates, see B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Edited with Translations and Notes* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1891), pp. 1-3 (= P.Oxy. 1); idem, *New Sayings of Jesus and a Fragment of a Lost Gospel from Oxyrhynchus* (London: Frowde, 1904) (= P.Oxy. 654); idem, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part IV* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1904), pp. 1-22 (= P.Oxy. 654), 22-28 (= P.Oxy. 655).

5. For a selection of studies by scholars who believe that the *Gospel of Thomas* contains primitive, pre-Synoptic tradition, see G. Quispel, "The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament," *VC* 11 (1957): 189-207; H. Koester, "Q and Its Relatives," in *Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings* (ed. J. E. Goehring et al.; FS J. M. Robinson; Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1990), pp. 49-63, here pp. 61-63; R. D. Cameron, "The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis," *ANRW* II.25.6 (1988): 4195-4251; Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, p. 241; U.-K. Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary* (trans. G. S. Robinson; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008), pp. 15-34; S. L. Davies, "Thomas: The Fourth Synoptic Gospel," *BA* 46 (1983): 6-9, 12-14, who makes the astonishing claim that the *Gospel of Thomas* "may be our best source for Jesus's teachings" (p. 9). See also S. L. Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom* (New York: Seabury, 1983). Davies dismisses too quickly the possible gnostic orientation of many of the sayings; it is surely inaccurate to report that scholars have concluded that the *Gospel of Thomas* is gnostic "mainly because it was discovered as part of the Nag Hammadi library" (p. 3; my emphasis). Most scholars are persuaded that the *Gospel of Thomas* is gnostic in its final form, though to what degree continues to be debated. See Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, p. 227: "Gnosticism seems to provide the most likely theological framework within which to understand the esotericizing trend one finds throughout Thomas." I should also mention the recent volumes by April D. DeConick, *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and Its Growth* (LNTS 286; London: T&T Clark, 2005); idem, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London: T&T Clark, 2006). DeConick believes she has identified an early kernel of Palestinian dominical tradition, dating to 30-50

CE, followed by subsequent expansions and revisions, dating to 50-60 CE, 60-100 CE, and 100-120 CE, respectively. I remain quite skeptical of manipulations of the evidence in order to find "early" forms of the document in question. For a critical evaluation of DeConick's work, see N. Perrin, *Thomas, the Other Gospel* (London: SPCK, 2007), pp. 52-69.

6. For a synopsis of parallels between the NT writings and the *Gospel of Thomas*, see C. A. Evans, R. L. Webb, and R. A. Wiebe, *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index* (NTTS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1993), pp. 88-144. Scholars who think *Thomas* is dependent on the NT writings include W. Schrage, *Das Verhältnis des Thomas-Evangeliums zur synoptischen Tradition und zu den koptischen Evangelienübersetzungen* (BZNW 29; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964); C. L. Blomberg, "Tradition and Redaction in the Parables of the Gospel of Thomas," in *The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels* (ed. D. Wenham; Gospel Perspectives 5; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), pp. 177-205; R. E. Brown, "The Gospel of Thomas and St John's Gospel," *NTS* 9 (1962-1963): 155-77; B. Dehandschutter, "L'Évangile de Thomas comme collection de paroles de Jésus," in *Logia: Les paroles de Jésus — The Sayings of Jesus* (ed. J. Delobel; BETL 59; Leuven: Peeters, 1982), pp. 507-15; idem, "Recent Research on the Gospel of Thomas," in *The Four Gospels 1992* (ed. F. Van Segbroeck et al.; FS F. Neirynck; BETL 100; Leuven: Peeters, 1992), pp. 2257-62; M. Fieger, *Das Thomasevangelium: Einleitung, Kommentar und Systematik* (NTAbh 22; Münster: Aschendorff, 1991).

7. On Luke's influence on the *Gospel of Thomas*, see Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 1:136; C. M. Tuckett, "Thomas and the Synoptics," *NovT* 30 (1988): 132-57, esp. 146.

8. *Gos. Thom.* 10 influenced by Lk 12:49; *Gos. Thom.* 14 influenced by Lk 10:8-9; *Gos. Thom.* 16 influenced by Lk 12:51-53, as well as Mt 10:34-39; *Gos. Thom.* 55 and 101 influenced by Lk 14:26-27, as well as Mt 10:37; *Gos. Thom.* 73-75 influenced by Lk 10:2.

9. Several scholars have concluded that the *Gospel of Thomas* draws upon the NT Gospels. See R. M. Grant, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), p. 113; B. Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel according to Thomas* (New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 26-27, 34, 42-43; E. Haenchen, *Die Botschaft des Thomas-Evangeliums* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1961), pp. 67-68; R. Kasser, *L'Évangile selon Thomas: Présentation et commentaire théologique* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1961); Ménard, *Évangile selon Thomas*; A. Lindemann, "Zur Gleichnisinterpretation im Thomas-Evangelium," *ZNW* 71 (1980): 214-43; Schrage, *Verhältnis des Thomas-Evangeliums*, pp. 1-11. Similar conclusions have been reached by H. K. McArthur, "The Dependence of the Gospel of Thomas on the Synoptics," *ExpTim* 71 (1959-1960): 286-87; W. R. Schoedel, "Parables in the Gospel of Thomas," *CTM* 43 (1972): 548-60; K. R. Snodgrass, "The Gospel of Thomas: A Secondary Gospel," *SecCent* 7 (1989-1990): 19-38; Tuckett, "Thomas and the Synoptics," p. 157; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 1:130-39. According to C. E. Carlston (*The Parables of the Triple Tradition* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975], p. xiii), "many readings of the Gospel of Thomas and a considerable amount of time spent with the secondary literature . . . have not yet convinced me that any of the parabolic material in *Thomas* is clearly independent of the Synoptic Gospels."

10. É. Massaux, *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus* (ed. A. J. Bellinzoni; 3 vols.; NGS 5.1-3; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1990-1993). A close approximation of *Gos. Thom.* 22 appears in 2 *Clem.* 12:2. *Second Clement* probably originated in the mid-second century. Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 3.13.92) claims that the saying derives from the *Gospel of the Egyptians*.

11. On the Apostle Thomas in Syrian Christian tradition, see H.-C. Puech, "Une collection de paroles de Jésus récemment retrouvée: L'Évangile selon Thomas," *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Paris: Institut de France, 1957), pp. 146-67; Beate



Blatz, "The Coptic Gospel of Thomas," in *The New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 1: *Gospels and Related Writings* (ed. W. Schneemelcher; trans. ed. R. McL. Wilson; rev. ed.; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1991-1992), pp. 110-33; Crossan, *Four Other Gospels*, pp. 9-11; Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, pp. 118-20; idem, "Understanding the Gospel of Thomas Today," in *Fifth Gospel*, ed. Patterson, Robinson, and Bethge, pp. 37-40.

12. On the proposal that the *Gospel of Thomas* dates to the first century, see Davies, *Gospel of Thomas*, pp. 146-47; J. D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), pp. 427-30; Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, pp. 118-20; idem, "Understanding the Gospel of Thomas Today," in *Fifth Gospel*, ed. Patterson, Robinson, and Bethge, pp. 40-45. The editors of the Greek fragments of the *Gospel of Thomas* (i.e., P.Oxy. 1, 654, and 655) suggested that the original Greek text probably dated to 140 CE, a date that Crossan, Patterson, and others find too late and based on untested and unwarranted assumptions.

13. On the argument that there is no compositional order to the *Gospel of Thomas*, see Crossan, *Four Other Gospels*, pp. 11-18.

14. The *Diatessaron* (from Greek, meaning "through the four [Gospels]") blends together the four NT Gospels, plus some material from a fifth Gospel source. See S. Hemphill, *The Diatessaron of Tatian: A Harmony of the Four Holy Gospels Compiled in the Third Quarter of the Second Century* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1888); W. L. Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance and History in Scholarship* (VCSup 25; Leiden: Brill, 1994); idem, "Tatian's Diatessaron," in H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), pp. 403-30. The last essay provides a very helpful overview. In a comprehensive study Gilles Quispel observed that, in comparison with the Greek NT Gospels, the *Gospel of Thomas* and Tatian's *Diatessaron* share a large number of textual variants. Indeed, almost half of the sayings in *Thomas* give evidence of at least one such variant. See G. Quispel, *Tatian and the Gospel of Thomas: Studies in the History of the Western Diatessaron* (Leiden: Brill, 1975). Tatian (c. 120-185), a disciple of Justin Martyr (c. 100-165), composed the *Diatessaron*, probably in Syriac and probably in Syria, sometime between 172 and 185. The *Diatessaron* relies heavily on Matthew and may have been inspired by the earlier harmony of the Synoptic Gospels produced by Justin Martyr.

15. On Syriac as the original language of *Thomas*, see N. Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (SBLAcBib 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), pp. 49-155; idem, "NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments (P.Oxy 1, 654, 655): Overlooked Evidence for a Syriac *Gospel of Thomas*," *VC* 58 (2004): 138-51.

16. On this problem see P. J. Williams, "Alleged Syriac Catchwords in the Gospel of Thomas," *VC* 63 (2009): 71-82.

17. On Crossan's analysis of the beatitude in *Gos. Thom.* 54, see Crossan, *Four Other Gospels*, pp. 18-19. The quotation is from p. 19. See also the analysis in Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, pp. 42-44. The source-critical and exegetical arguments of Crossan and Patterson lose all force in view of the Syrian evidence.

18. Plisch (*Gospel of Thomas*, p. 155) says the Thomasine "logion seems simpler and more archaic" compared to the Lukan parallel. To be sure, it is briefer, perhaps "simpler" (though that is debatable), but it is not more *archaic*. Surely Luke's version, which describes an abundant crop and the need for bigger barns, more authentically reflects the agrarian so-

ciety of Galilee than the Thomasine version, where a businessman plans to invest in commercial farming.

19. The singular χρῆμα usually means “property.” However, the Coptic syntax is plural, which suggests that “money” (χρήματα) is probably in view (cf. LSJ; Mk 10:23). The context supports this reading, in that the rich man plans to invest in farming. The Thomasine perspective of logion 63 anticipates the commercial interpretation of the parable of the Vineyard that follows in logion 65.

20. Besides the omission of most of the details from Isa 5:1-7, the Thomasine version also shares Luke’s distinctive “perhaps” (ἴσως) at Lk 20:13, which is not found in the Markan (12:6) and Matthean (21:37) parallels. Plisch (*Gospel of Thomas*, p. 161) suggests that this Lukan editorial element found its way into *Thomas* during the transmission process. Given the other points of agreement with Luke, a better explanation is that what we have here is additional evidence of the secondary nature of *Thomas*.

21. Having abandoned the point of the parable from the Synoptic perspective, supporters of the antiquity and independence of *Thomas* are not sure what the parable means. Plisch (*Gospel of Thomas*, p. 161) thinks the point is that the tenants are willing to do anything to defend themselves from the “unreasonable demands of the owner” and to “secure their livelihood.” There is nothing in the context to suggest such an interpretation. The Thomasine context, esp. in light of logia 63 and 64, suggests that the parable of the Vineyard illustrates yet one more failure to find security in worldly wealth. This very much reflects the perspective of ascetic Syrian Christianity.

22. This point may be illustrated by drawing attention to the recently published collection of studies assembled in *Jesus and Archaeology* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006). In this massive book only one author (B. Chilton, “Recovering Jesus’ *Mamzerut*,” pp. 84-110) discusses the *Gospel of Thomas*, and only then in reference to the “literary Jesus.” The nonusage of *Thomas* — in sharp contrast to the NT Gospels, which are referenced hundreds of times — in a book concerned with Jesus and the archaeology of first-century Palestine says a great deal.

23. On the argument that the sayings genre of the *Gospel of Thomas* is evidence of an early date, see J. M. Robinson, “LOGOI SOPHON: On the Gattung of Q,” in Robinson and H. Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 71-113; idem, “On Bridging the Gulf from Q to the Gospel of Thomas (or vice versa),” in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity* (ed. C. W. Hedrick and R. Hodgson Jr.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1986), pp. 127-55; Davies, *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 145; Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, pp. 113-18.

24. Which may then account for the observation that *Thomas* sometimes does not appear to be directly dependent on Synoptic material, i.e., Synoptic material as it is found in the Greek NT Gospels as individual and discrete documents.

25. The Akhmīm Gospel fragment was published five years after its discovery, in U. Bouriant, “Fragments du texte grec du livre d’Enoch et de quelques écrits attribués à Saint Pierre,” in *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire* 9.1 (Paris: Librairie de la Société asiatique, 1892), pp. 137-42. Edited and corrected editions of the text can also be found in J. A. Robinson and M. R. James, *The Gospel According to Peter, and The Revelation of Peter* (London: Clay, 1892); H. von Schubert, *Das Petrus-evangelium* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1893); idem, *The Gospel of St. Peter* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1893); and more recently in M. G. Mara, *Évangile de Pierre* (SC 201; Paris: Cerf, 1973). The Greek text of the *Gospel of Peter* is also found in *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (ed.

K. Aland; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 479-80, 484, 489, 493-94, 498, 500, 507.

26. Those who argued that the newly discovered Akhmim Gospel fragment depends on the Synoptic Gospels include T. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Petrus* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1893); H. B. Swete, *EΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΙΕΤΡΟΝ: The Akhmim Fragment of the Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1893), pp. xiii-xx. Robinson (*Gospel According to Peter*, pp. 32-33) speaks of "the unmistakable acquaintance of the author with our Four Evangelists. . . . He uses and misuses each in turn." Those who argue that the fragment is independent of the Synoptic Gospels include A. Harnack, *Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apokalypse des Petrus* (TU 9; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1893); A. Harnack and H. von Schubert, "Das Petrus-evangelium," *TLZ* 19 (1894): 9-18; P. Gardner-Smith, "The Gospel of Peter," *JTS* 27 (1925-1926): 255-71; idem, "The Date of the Gospel of Peter," *JTS* 27 (1925-1926): 401-7.

27. For reconstruction of P.Oxy. 2949, see R. A. Coles, "Fragments of an Apocryphal Gospel (?)," in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (ed. G. M. Browne et al.; vol. 41; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1972), pp. 15-16 (+ pl. II). See also D. Lührmann, "POx 2949: EvPt 3-5 in einer Handschrift des 2./3. Jahrhunderts," *ZNW* 72 (1981): 216-22. P.Oxy. 2949 may date as early as the late second century. The second fragment, P.Oxy. 4009, also probably dates to the second century. See D. Lührmann and P. J. Parsons, "4009. Gospel of Peter?" in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (ed. Parsons et al.; vol. 60; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1993), pp. 1-5 (+ pl. I); D. Lührmann, "POx 4009: Ein neues Fragment des Petrus-evangeliums?" *NovT* 35 (1993): 390-410. For the proposal that the Fayyum fragment also belongs to the *Gospel of Peter*, see D. Lührmann, with E. Schlarb, *Fragmente apokryph gewordener Evangelien in griechischer und lateinischer Sprache* (MTS 59; Marburg: Elwert, 2000), pp. 80-81.

28. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament* (2nd ed.; 2 vols.; New York: de Gruyter, 1995-2000), 2:163; cf. idem, "Überlieferung und Geschichte der frühchristlichen Evangelienliteratur," *ANRW* II.25.2 (1984): 1463-1542, esp. 1487-88, 1525-27.

29. R. D. Cameron, *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), p. 78. Another Koester student, B. A. Johnson ("The Empty Tomb Tradition in the Gospel of Peter" [PhD diss., Harvard University, 1966]), has argued that Peter's empty tomb tradition is based not on the canonical Gospels but on an older tradition.

30. On the theory that an early form of the *Gospel of Peter* lies behind the Passion Narratives of the NT Gospels, see J. D. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 404: "This book has argued for the existence of a document which I call the *Cross Gospel* as the single known source for the Passion and Resurrection narrative. It flowed into Mark, flowed along with him into Matthew and Luke, flowed along with the three synoptics into John, and finally flowed along with the intracanonial tradition into the pseudepigraphical *Gospel of Peter*. I cannot find persuasive evidence of anything save redactional modification being added to that stream once it departs its *Cross Gospel* source."

31. Akhmim frg. 9.35, ἐπέφωσεν ἡ κυριακή ("the Lord's Day dawned"); cf. Rev 1:10, ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ ("on the Lord's Day"); Ign. *Magn.* 9:1, κατὰ κυριακῆν ("according to the Lord's Day").

32. Akhmim frg. 11.45, ἀληθῶς υἱὸς ἦν θεοῦ; Mt 27:54, ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος; cf. Mk 15:39, ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν; Lk 23:47, ὄντως ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν.

33. On the late and secondary nature of the Akhmim Gospel fragment (or *Gospel of Peter*), see L. Vaganay, *L'évangile de Pierre* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1930), pp. 83-90; T. W. Man-

son, "The Life of Jesus: A Study of the Available Materials," *BJRL* 27 (1942-1943): 323-37; C. H. Dodd, "A New Gospel," in *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), pp. 12-52; K. Beyschlag, "Das Petrusevangelium," in *Die verborgene Überlieferung von Christus* (Munich: Siebenstern Taschenbuch, 1969), pp. 27-64; J. B. Green, "The Gospel of Peter: Sources for a Pre-Canonical Passion Narrative?" *ZNW* 78 (1987): 293-301; and Massaux, *Influence*, 2:202-14. Dodd ("New Gospel," p. 46) concludes that the Akhmîm fragment (which he accepts as the *Gospel of Peter*) "depends on all four canonical Gospels, and probably not on any independent tradition." Beyschlag ("Petrusevangelium," pp. 62, 64) opines that the Akhmîm fragment presupposes all four canonical Gospels. On the secondary nature of the guard tradition in the Akhmîm fragment, see S. E. Schaeffer, "The Guard at the Tomb (*Gos. Pet.* 8:28-11:49 and *Matt* 27:62-66; 28:2-4, 11-16): A Case of Intertextuality?" in *SBL 1991 Seminar Papers* (ed. E. H. Lovering; SBLSP 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 499-507; and Massaux, *Influence*, 2:202-4.

34. On the great height of Jesus, see *Herm. Sim.* 83:1 ("a man so tall that he rose above the tower"). The *Shepherd of Hermas* was composed sometime between 110 and 140 CE. The mid-second-century addition to 4 *Ezra* (i.e., 2 *Esd* 1-2) describes the "Son of God" as possessing "great stature, taller than any of the others" (2:43-47). The Akhmîm Gospel fragment's description of Jesus' head extending *above the heavens* probably represents a further and much later embellishment of these traditions. The Akhmîm Gospel fragment's description of the cross that exits the tomb with the risen Jesus, accompanied by angels, parallels late Ethiopic tradition, attested in two works, whose original Greek compositions probably dated no earlier than the mid-second century. According to *Ep. Apos.* 16, Jesus assures his disciples: "I will come as the sun which bursts forth; thus will I, shining seven times brighter than it in glory, while I am carried on the wings of the clouds in splendour with my cross going on before me, come to the earth to judge the living and the dead" (J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1993], p. 566). This tradition, with some variation, is repeated in the Ethiopic *Apoc. Pet.* 1: "with my cross going before my face will I come in my majesty; shining seven times brighter than the sun will I come in my majesty with all my saints, my angels" (Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 600). The Akhmîm Gospel fragment has presented in literal form (a very tall Jesus, accompanied by his cross) what in these second-century sources are allegorical and symbolic portraits of the glory of the risen Christ. For a compelling assessment of the Akhmîm Gospel fragment, which is seen as late and secondary, see C. L. Quarles, "The Gospel of Peter: Does It Contain a Precanonical Resurrection Narrative?" in *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue* (ed. R. B. Stewart; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), pp. 106-20, 205-10.

35. There are serious questions about the alleged Docetism in the Akhmîm Gospel fragment. In 4.10 it says that Jesus "himself was silent, as having no pain (αὐτὸς δὲ ἐσίωπα, ὡς μηδὲν πόνων ἔχων)." This does not say that Jesus in fact felt no pain; it implies that he was silent, even though the experience was indeed painful. Also, the cry from the cross, "My power, [my] power, you have abandoned me (ἡ δύναμις μου, ἡ δύναμις [μου], κατέλειψάς με!)" (5.19), is taken by some to indicate Docetism. But what we have here is probably no more than influence from a variant form of Ps 22:1, where one of the Greek recensions reads **βλ** as "strength" (or "power"), instead of "God." For further discussion on this issue see McCant, "Gospel of Peter." There is no compelling basis for seeing Docetic tendencies in the Akhmîm Gospel fragment.

36. On the problem of identifying the early Greek fragments with the Akhmîm Gospel fragment, see P. Foster, "Are There Any Early Fragments of the So-Called *Gospel of Peter*?"

NTS 52 (2006): 1-28. Foster shows that it is far from certain that the small Greek fragments P.Oxy. 2949, P.Oxy. 4009, and P.Vindob. G 2325, as well as the fragmentary P.Egerton 2 (to be considered shortly), are from the *Gospel of Peter* mentioned by Bishop Serapion, or that Ostracon van Haelst Nr. 741 actually depicts Peter as a Gospel writer. Foster rightly warns of the circular reasoning in the interpretation of the evidence, where the ninth-century Akhmīm fragment is assumed at the outset to be the *Gospel of Peter* and then the early-third-century papyri are reconstructed on the basis of the Akhmīm fragment, which in turn confirms the assumption that the Akhmīm fragment is indeed the *Gospel of Peter*. In my opinion, Foster ("The Disputed Early Fragments of the So-Called *Gospel of Peter* — Once Again," *NovT* 49 [2007]: 402-6) convincingly rebuts the objections against his study raised by D. Lührmann, in "Kann es wirklich keine frühe Handschrift des Petrus-evangeliums geben? Corrigenda zu einem Aufsatz von Paul Foster," *NovT* 48 (2006): 379-83.

37. For the Greek text of the London fragments of P.Egerton 2, see H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: British Museum, 1935), pp. 8-15, 26; idem, *The New Gospel Fragments* (London: British Museum, 1951), pp. 29-33. A critical edition has been prepared by G. Mayeda, *Das Leben-Jesu-Fragment Papyrus Egerton 2 und seine Stellung in der urchristlichen Literaturgeschichte* (Bern: Haupt, 1946), pp. 7-11. See also Aland, *Synopsis*, pp. 60, 323, 332, 340, 422.

The text of the more recently discovered P.Köln fragment has been made available in M. Gronewald, "Unbekanntes Evangelium oder Evangelienharmonie (Fragment aus dem Evangelium Egerton)," in *Kölner Papyri (P. Köln)* (ed. M. Gronewald et al.; vol. 6; ARWAW; Sonderreihe Papyrologica Coloniensia 7; Cologne: Bibliothèque Bodmer, 1987), pp. 136-45; and in D. Lührmann, "Das neue Fragment des P.Egerton 2 (PKöln 255)," in *Four Gospels 1992*, ed. Segbroeck et al., 3:2239-55.

38. On enumerating the lines in the Egerton and Köln papyri: lines 22a and 23a, which are based upon P.Köln 255, are so designated, in order to distinguish them from lines 22 and 23 of P.Egerton 2, frg. 1 recto. The same is done with lines 42a-44a, which also are based upon P.Köln 255, at the end of the same fragment, in order to distinguish them from lines 42-44 of P.Egerton 2, frg. 2 recto.

39. On claims that the Egerton Papyrus is early and independent of the NT Gospels, see Crossan, *Four Other Gospels*, p. 183; Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, pp. 207, 215; cf. idem, "Überlieferung und Geschichte," pp. 1488-90, 1522; Jeremias and Schneemelcher, "Papyrus Egerton 2," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Schneemelcher, p. 97. Crossan (*Four Other Gospels*, p. 86) argues that Mark is actually "directly dependent on the [Egerton] papyrus text."

40. E.g., cf. P.Egerton line 32 with Mk 1:40; Mt 8:2; Lk 5:12; or P.Egerton lines 39-41 with Mk 1:44; Mt 8:4; Lk 17:14.

41. See the examples in *Gos. Heb.* 2 ("My Son, in all the prophets was I waiting for you, that you should come and I might rest in you"; recorded by Jerome, *Comm. Isa.* 4, on Isa 11:2), and Josephus, *Ant.* 18.64 ("Jesus . . . appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him"; the date of this Christian gloss is not known).

42. The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* may have originated as early as the late second century; cf. O. Cullmann, "Infancy Gospels," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Schneemelcher, p. 442. The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, extant in various Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Arabic mss., should not be confused with the *Gospel of Thomas*, found complete at Nag Hammadi and in three fragments found at Oxyrhynchus.

43. The same conclusion has been reached by T. Nicklas, "Papyrus Egerton 2 — The 'Unknown Gospel,'" *ExpTim* 118 (2007): 261-66.

44. The book in question is by Isaac Voss, *Epistolae genuinae S. Ignatii Martyrii* (Amsterdam: Ioannes Blaeu, 1646). Voss presents the letters of Ignatius in parallel Latin and Greek columns, along with notes and comments. The book concludes with an appendix on the *Letter of Barnabas* and a discussion of inauthentic interpolations.

45. M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); idem, *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel according to Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

46. An early and outstanding critical review of Smith's books was written by Q. Quesnell, "The Mar Saba Clementine: A Question of Evidence," *CBQ* 37 (1975): 48-67. Quesnell's probing review raised many troubling questions about the authenticity of the Clementine letter. See Smith's indignant reply to Quesnell, in "On the Authenticity of the Mar Saba Letter of Clement," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 196-99; as well as Quesnell's rejoinder, "A Reply to Morton Smith," in *CBQ* 38 (1976): 200-203.

47. "And after six days Jesus gave him instruction, and in the evening the youth comes to him, wearing a linen cloth over his naked body. And he remained with him that night, for Jesus was teaching him the mystery of the kingdom of God" (1:8-9).

48. P. Sellew, "Secret Mark and the History of Canonical Mark," in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (ed. B. A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), pp. 242-57; J.-D. Kaestli, "L'Évangile secret de Marc: Une version longue de l'Évangile de Marc réservée aux chrétiens avancés dans l'Église d'Alexandrie" and "Fragment d'une lettre de Clément d'Alexandrie au sujet de l'Évangile secret de Marc," in *Le mystère apocryphe: Introduction à une littérature méconnue* (ed. J.-D. Kaestli and D. Marguerat; EssBib 26; Geneva: Labor & Fides, 1995), pp. 85-102 and 103-6, respectively; S. G. Brown, "On the Composition History of the Longer ('Secret') Gospel of Mark," *JBL* 122 (2003): 89-110; C. W. Hedrick, "The Secret Gospel of Mark: Stalemate in the Academy," *J ECS* 11 (2003): 133-45; M. W. Meyer, *Secret Gospels: Essays on Thomas and the Secret Gospel of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003).

49. See E. Rau, *Das geheime Markusevangelium: Ein Schriftfund voller Rätsel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003); S. G. Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel: Rethinking Morton Smith's Controversial Discovery* (SCJ 15; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005); S. C. Carlson, *The Gospel Hoax: Morton Smith's Invention of Secret Mark* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2005); and P. Jeffery, *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled: Imagined Rituals of Sex, Death, and Madness in a Biblical Forgery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

50. For good quality color photographs of the Clementine letter, see C. W. Hedrick, "Secret Mark: New Photographs, New Witnesses," *The Fourth R* 13.5 (2000): 3-16. Hedrick thought that his photographs supplied evidence supporting the authenticity of the Clementine letter. As it turns out, they seem to have had the opposite effect.

51. For impressive evidence that the Clementine letter that contains quotations and discussion of *Secret Mark* is a hoax, see Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*; and Jeffery, *Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled*. In "The Question of Motive in the Case against Morton Smith," *JBL* 125 (2006): 351-83, Scott Brown attempts to cast doubt on Carlson's proposals, particularly with regard to Smith's motives. See also Brown's lengthy review of Jeffery, in *RBL* (posted online). Jeffery has written a rejoinder, which is in press. See also Carlson's review of Brown's book, "Reply to Scott Brown," in *ExpTim* 117 (2005-2006): 185-88, as well as the brief review essays and



comments by P. Foster, “*Secret Mark: Its Discovery and the State of Research*” and “*Secret Mark Is No Secret Anymore*,” in *ExpTim* 117 (2005-2006): 46-52, 64-68. The question of motive — apart from the discovery of a written confession — will remain the most uncertain feature of this strange case.

52. Viz., Julie C. Edison, a professional forensic document examiner, who has given courtroom and deposition testimony in the United States and in Australia. See Carlston, *Gospel Hoax*, pp. xix, 112 n. 9.

53. Prior to the “discovery” of the letter of Clement and its quotations of *Secret Mark*, Smith linked the idea of secret Christian doctrine, which he thinks is alluded to in Mk 4:11 (“To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God”), to *t. Hag.* 2:1, which discusses forbidden sexual relationships in Lev 18 and requires that this teaching be discussed in private. See M. Smith, *Tannaïtic Parallels to the Gospels* (JBLMS 6; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1951), pp. 155-56. Just prior to his visit to the Mar Saba Monastery in 1958, Smith published an article in which he again mentions *t. Hag.* 2:1, only this time linking it to Clement of Alexandria. See M. Smith, “The Image of God: Notes on the Hellenization of Judaism, with Especial Reference to Goodenough’s Work on Jewish Symbols,” *BJRL* 40 (1958): 473-512, here 507. This distinctive combination — the “secret of the kingdom of God,” *t. Hag.* 2:1, a rabbinic passage that discusses forbidden sexual relationships, and Clement of Alexandria — is found only in Morton Smith’s writings. The combination is also found in the Mar Saba letter, supposedly written by Clement of Alexandria, in which the “secret of the kingdom of God” (a phrase from Mk 4:11) is taught to a young man clothed with only a linen cloth over his “naked” body, followed by mention of “naked [man] with naked [man],” which of course is one form of the forbidden sexual relationships. For additional instances of anachronism, see F. Watson, “Beyond Suspicion: On the Authorship of the Mar Saba Letter and the Secret Gospel of Mark,” *JTS* 61 (2010): 128-70. Watson believes there is little doubt that Morton Smith was the author of the Greek letter.

The anachronism we see in Smith’s publications parallels the notorious case of Paul Coleman-Norton, professor of classics at Princeton University. He published an agraphon, in which Jesus humorously remarks that a third set of teeth will be provided to the damned who are toothless and go into outer darkness, so that they can weep and gnash their teeth. See P. R. Coleman-Norton, “An Amusing Agraphon,” *CBQ* 12 (1950): 439-49. We know that this is another case of forgery, for Coleman-Norton used to regale his students with a very similar joke, which ended with a reference to the provision of a third set of teeth. Bruce Metzger was one of Coleman-Norton’s students and heard the joke — several years before its “discovery” in North Africa! See B. M. Metzger, “Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 3-24; repr. in Metzger, *New Testament Studies: Philological, Versional, and Patristic* (NTTS 10; Leiden: Brill, 1980), pp. 1-22. The whole matter is succinctly discussed in Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, pp. 71-72.

54. J. H. Hunter, *The Mystery of Mar Saba* (New York: Evangelical Publishers, 1940, and reprinted many times). Hunter’s book may well have inspired Coleman-Norton’s hoax.

55. Two respected historians, who are not biblical scholars but are trained in historiography, view the whole story of the discovery of the Clementine letter at Mar Saba as very likely a hoax. See Philip Jenkins, *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 102; Donald Harman Akenson, *Saint Paul: A Skeleton Key to the Historical Jesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 84-89. Akenson remarks: “Although there exist many very solid scholars who are not besotted with the gimcrack false-antiquities of the sort exemplified by Secret Mark (for instance, two of the most



rigorous of the Yeshua-questers, John P. Meier and E. P. Sanders), as a professional historian I nevertheless find that the methods of many of those who search for the historical Yeshua make me uneasy and, sometimes, downright queasy” (p. 89). Both Jenkins and Akenson express reservations about the utilization of the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Gospel of Peter* on the part of many scholars. Jenkins is Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University. Akenson is Professor of History at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, and Beamish Professor of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool, England.