

The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: “Patchwork Forgery” in Coptic . . . and English (Recap)

Guest post on the NT Blog by Andrew Bernhard

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On Thursday, Karen King generously posted online the “translation” of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* that the owner of the papyrus fragment provided her. All seven lines containing more than a single word in the owner’s “translation” show obvious dependence on *Grondin's Interlinear*:

- *Line 1.* The Coptic text in this line of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* does not include a word meaning “for,” but this English word is included in the owner’s “translation”; *Grondin's Interlinear* presents the word “for” in the exact same place as the owner’s “translation” does in the corresponding passage.
- *Line 2.* The Coptic conjunction $\chi\epsilon$ (*je*) in this line of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* is rendered incorrectly as “this” in the owner’s “translation”; *Grondin's Interlinear* translates $\chi\epsilon$ as “this” in the corresponding passage.
- *Line 3.* The Coptic infinitive $\alpha\rho\eta\alpha$ (*arna*) in this line of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* is rendered bizarrely – [and arguably incorrectly](#) – as “abdicate” in the owner’s “translation;” *Grondin's Interlinear* translates $\alpha\rho\eta\alpha$ as “abdicate” in the corresponding passage.
- *Line 4.* The Coptic conjunction $\chi\epsilon$ (*je*) is unexpectedly missing from this line of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*, but it is still rendered (incorrectly, as in line 2) as “this” in the owner’s translation; *Grondin's Interlinear* includes $\chi\epsilon$ with the English translation “this” beneath it in the corresponding passage.
- *Line 5.* The Coptic $\eta\alpha\omega$ (*naš*) in this line of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* is rendered incorrectly as “can” in the owner’s “translation”; *Grondin's Interlinear* translates $\eta\alpha\omega$ as “can” in the corresponding passage.
- *Line 6.* The Coptic $\eta\alpha\rho\epsilon\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$ (*marerōme*) in this line of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* is rendered incorrectly as “no man” in the owner’s “translation”; *Grondin's Interlinear* translates $\eta\alpha\rho\epsilon\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$ as “no man” in the corresponding passage.
- *Line 7.* The Coptic $\alpha\eta\sigma\kappa \text{ †}\omega\sigma\sigma\iota$ (*anok tišoop*) in this line of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* is rendered distinctively as “I exist” in the owner’s “translation”; *Grondin's Interlinear* translates $\alpha\eta\sigma\kappa \text{ †}\omega\sigma\sigma\iota$ as “I exist” in the corresponding passage.

While a number of additional features of the owner’s “translation” suggesting that it was prepared from the English of *Grondin's Interlinear* could also be mentioned, I think the representative sample above will suffice for the discussion here.

The bottom line is: the extensive verbal correspondence between the owner’s translation and *Grondin's Interlinear* cannot be reasonably attributed to anything but direct literary dependence, especially since the owner’s “translation” of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* includes repeated translations of Coptic words not even present on the papyrus, incorrect translations of Coptic text, and surprisingly distinctive translations as well (all of which are clearly attributable to *Grondin's Interlinear*).

Given that the owner’s “translation” was just released on Thursday and *Grondin's Interlinear* has been online for more than a decade, the direction of literary dependence must be from *Grondin's Interlinear* to the owner’s “translation” (not vice versa) **The owner’s “translation” is not actually a translation, it was prepared by someone (with extremely limited knowledge of Coptic) who depended directly on the English of *Grondin's Interlinear*. There is no other plausible alternative.**

For a more detailed analysis of the owner’s translation, please see [the preceding blog post](#).