A FRAGMENT OF NAG HAMMADI CODEX III IN THE BEINECKE LIBRARY: YALE INV. 1784

The fragment of a Coptic papyrus manuscript published here belongs to a large collection of papyri purchased by the late Edwin J. Beinecke in 1964 for the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. The collection, 140 pieces in Hieroglyphic, Demotic, Greek, Coptic, and Arabic, was purchased from H. P. Kraus, the famous rare book and manuscript dealer of New York City, who had advertised it in his 105th sales catalogue.¹ T. C. Petersen, who compiled the catalogue,² stated that "the exact origin of the present papyri is not known," but that these "were until recently the private collection of a renowned scholar in the field of papyrology."

¹ A Collection of Papyri: Egyptian, Greek, Coptic, Arabic (H. P. Kraus Catalogue 105; New York, no date). The acquisition of the collection by the Yale University Library was reported in the New York Times on July 1, 1964 (p.37; cf. A. E. Samuel, "The Beinecke Papyri," BASP 1 [1963–1964] 31, where "hieratic" is an error for "hieroglyphic"), and the catalogue cannot have appeared very many months before that date. See H. P. Kraus, A Rare Book Saga: The Autobiography of H. P. Kraus (New York 1978) 356 and 296 (where the date given for the issuance of the catalogue, 1961, either is a misprint [cf. p.304, where Catalogue 100 is said to have been issued in 1962] or may refer to Kraus’s own acquisition of the collection [cf. pp.275-76]). To judge from various records in the Yale University Library, Catalogue 105 appeared sometime between October 25, 1963, and May 12, 1964, probably close to the latter date.

² The only part of the catalogue explicitly ascribed to Petersen is the introduction, but that the descriptive section is also his work is stated by Kraus (supra n. 1) 356.

³ Kraus Catalogue 105 (supra n. 1) "Introductory Note," pp. [ii], [i]. Kraus himself reports that the papyri had been "assembled by a well-known collector" from whom he acquired them sometime later than 1960 (Kraus [supra n. 1] 275-76).
What is now Yale Inv. 1784 was described by Petersen under no. 46: "Apocryphal Text. Three fragments and several small pieces . . . 6–9 lines of text on the two larger fragments, remnants of 2 lines on the smaller pieces . . . 60 x 80 mm. and 50 x 90 mm. for the larger fragments. In glass enclosure. Egypt, VIth–VIIth century A.D." Petersen correctly recognized that the fragments derive "from a codex in Sahidic dialect," but his conjecture concerning their content ("dealing apparently with the story of the passion of Christ and betrayal of Judas") must now be revised. In fact they form a hitherto unknown portion of pp. 145/146 of Nag Hammadi Codex III (iv A.D.), the remainder of which is owned by the Coptic Museum in Old Cairo (Inv. 4851).

At precisely what juncture these fragments became separated from the rest of NHC III is not known. The oldest unambiguous record of that portion of the codex purchased by the Coptic Museum is a set of photographs made near the end of 1947, shortly after the leaves and fragments were conserved in glass and roughly one year after the date of purchase (October 4, 1946). Neither these photographs nor any earlier inventory provide evidence for the existence of the fragments now at Yale. Hence their separation from the rest of the codex must have occurred during the course of events which took the codex from the site of the discovery in the Nag Hammadi region late in 1945 to the Coptic Museum a year later. Although there are several points at which leaves and fragments may well have been separated from the bulk of the codex and its leather binding and passed on to interested individuals, speculation in the absence of more precise information is of little avail. Still, it is worth noting that the existence of Yale Inv. 1784 provides some reason for optimism that at least some of the other missing portions of NHC III (most notably the nearly complete leaves 19/20, 45/46, 47/48, 79/80, 109/110, and 115/116, which at present are not represented by so much as a single fragment) may also lie safely in some collection awaiting identification.


5 Prints of these photographs are kept in the Nag Hammadi Archive of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont, CA, under the siglum D III.

6 These events have been painstakingly reconstructed by J. M. Robinson, "The Discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices," BiblArch 42 (1979) 206–224, on NHC III esp. 215–18 and 222–23.

7 Note especially that the man who eventually sold the codex to the Coptic Museum thinks that it was returned to him after a first showing in Cairo, sometime in the early months of 1946, "with five or six leaves missing" (Robinson [supra n. 6] 218).
A FRAGMENT OF NAG HAMMADI CODEX III

When I first saw the fragments of Yale Inv. 1784 in the middle of February of this year, I recognized the handwriting as that of NHC III, they were still in the glass enclosure in which they were purchased, corresponding to Petersen's description. The two largest fragments already consisted of several smaller pieces joined together and I have been able to reassemble these and the 10 smaller inscribed fragments into a single piece 19.5 x 7.0 cm. which attaches to the Cairo fragments of NHC III 145/146, filling in extensive portions of 145:6–24/146:5–24. There remains one unplaced fragment 2.0 x .5 cm. which, however, is not inscribed and does not seem to join to the rest of the Yale fragments.

Although the text to which Yale Inv. 1784 contributes (NHC III 5, The Dialogue of the Savior) has not yet appeared in a critical edition, the Cairo portion is fully available in facsimile edition and in an English translation based on a preliminary edition prepared by members of the Coptic Gnostic Library Project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity. Hence I venture to include here a preliminary transcription and translation of NHC III 145/146 including the new fragment. For the Cairo fragments of the leaf I rely on my own collation of the manuscript completed, with the aid of ultraviolet light, in February 1975. For the Yale fragment I have not had the benefit of ultraviolet light, which might facilitate the reading of a few passages. In the following transcription unrestored lacunas are measured according to an average letter space (including inter-literal space) of .49 cm., calculated on the basis of the scribe's work on p.144 of the codex.

8 I must express my gratitude to Lucinda Nafriger (Yale Class of 1980), whose enthusiastic interest in Coptic impelled me to undertake a complete examination of the Coptic holdings in the Beinecke Library long before I would have found time to do so otherwise.
9 I am indebted to the staff of the Beinecke Library for their hospitable willingness to facilitate my work on the reconstruction and conservation of Yale Inv. 1784 and to the Yale University Library for permission to publish the fragment here.
10 Supra n. 4.
12 A complete edition of the text, including a new collation of the Yale fragment, will appear in a forthcoming volume (ed. B. Layton) of the series The Coptic Gnostic Library (Nag Hammadi: Studies 4, 11, and following; Leiden 1975, 1979, and following) containing NHC II 2-7, III 5, and XIII 2* with P.Oxy. 1, 654, and 655 and BM Or 4926(1). Plans are presently in progress to include a facsimile reproduction of the Yale fragment in the section of additions and corrections in The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Introduction (cf. supra n.4) (Leiden, scheduled to appear in 1981 or 1982).
NHC III 145:1-24

[Δ]ΤΩ ΝΕΚΣΙΔΑΛΕΤΕ ΟΝ ΝΝΕΙΒΗ Ν
[Ο]ΤΕ ΝΤΜΝΤΙΚΙΜΕ ΕΜΠΕΙΤΟΠΙΟϹ ΠΕΧΕΙΟΤΑϹ [ΜΜΑΘΕ]ΑΙΟϹ ΧΕ
[Σ]ΕΝΑΒΒΑ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΕΙΝΕΒΗ ΗΟΥΗ Ν
[Τ]ΜΝΤΙΚΙΜΕ . . . . . . . ΝΑΡΧΧΝ
[Σ]ΕΝΑΒΒΗΠ . . . . . . . [ . . . ] Δ ΕΝΑΒΒΗ
[ΠΕ ΝΤΠΕ ΕΝΣΒΤΗΤ] ΕΠΡΟΟΤ ΝΕ
[ΧΕΠΗΧΟΙΕΙϹ ΧΕΜΗ ΓΑΡ ΜΕΝΑΤ ΕΡΨ
[ΤΝ ΜΗ ΜΕΝΑΤ ΕΜΕΠΑΡΑΛΑΜΒΑΝΕ]
[Χ]ΕΠΗΧΟΙΕΙϹ ΧΕΜΗ ΓΑΡ ΜΕΝΑΤ ΕΡΨ
[ΝΗ ΜΗ ΜΕΝΑΤ ΕΜΕΠΑΡΑΛΑΜΒΑΝΕ]
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[ΝΗ ΜΗ ΜΕΝΑΤ ΕΜΕΠΑΡΑΛΑΜΒΑΝΕ]

NHC III 146:1-24

ΧΕΠΗΧΟΙΕΙϹ ΧΕΜΗ ΓΑΡ ΜΕΝΑΤ ΕΡΨ
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[ΝΗ ΜΗ ΜΕΝΑΤ ΕΜΕΠΑΡΑΛΑΜΒΑΝΕ]
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[ΝΗ ΜΗ ΜΕΝΑΤ ΕΜΕΠΑΡΑΛΑΜΒΑΝΕ]
NOTES ON THE TRANSCRIPTION

145:1–2 Cf. 144:19–20. 3 Π is read from ink blotted onto 144:3. For the restoration cf. 135:7–8, 143:11. 6 The undeciphered traces are scanty: (1) probably from K, perhaps from Ν; (2) probably from Δ, perhaps from Τ, Κ, Μ, Π, or Τ; (3) from Δ, Ε, Θ, Ο, Ζ, 2, or #; (4) probably from Ν. Perhaps restore ΕΠΙΚΔΔΙΕ[Ν] ΔΕ[Ι] Ν (lacuna over Ν), though Δ would be a bit crowded. (Greek verbs in εω are spelled with either ΕΙ [129:14, 134:12] or Ε Ι [126:19, 132:12, 137:21] in this text.) 10 Lacuna over ΤΝ. 10–14 Cf. 135:8–136:1. 12 The traces of ΙΚ are rather ambiguous, but the context recommends the restoration. 13 6Μ: The MS reads 6Μ, but see F. Wisse, “Nag Hammadi Codex III: Codicological Introduction” in M. Krause (ed.), Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Pahor Labib (Nag Hammadi Studies 6; Leiden 1975) n.2. 15 [ΠΔΤΕ]: Neither of the two more attractive restorations suits the length of the lacuna: ΔΤΕ is too short, ΔΕΙΤΕ too long. [ΤΕΙ]: Cf. 120:23–26, 139:2–6, 142:5–9. ΤΔΕΙ: Although elsewhere in the text the demonstrative pronoun is regularly spelled ΠΑΙ etc. (though the corresponding article is spelled ΠΕΙ etc., except in 141:6 where ΝΔΙ[sic] occurs), I see no other way to construe the passage. (Note that [ΠΔ]:ΕΙ or [ΤΔ]:ΕΙ is a likely restoration at the beginning of 141:16.) 15–17 The circumflex articulation mark (on which see Wisse [supra ad 145:13] 234, where attention should also have been drawn to the occasional use of these marks to divide any double consonant, e.g. Μ in 122:16, Θ in 128:23) in line 16 is certain. Δ could also be Δ or Μ, or possibly Κ or Χ. C could also be Δ, Δ, Ε, Ο, Ξ, or Ψ. In defense of the restoration several points should be recorded. When ΟΤΕ (which requires a negative clause) coordinates two nouns, these are most often of like determination. Throughout NHC III the first Γ of (ΔΡΧ)ΔΓΤΕΛΟΔΣC is marked (except in 57:25–26, but that as an instance of a phenomenon Wisse has observed elsewhere in the codex,
when the letter to be marked occurs at the end of a line) and the scribe’s
habit in writing ΔΓΤ€ΔΟΔ€ is to leave a large inter-letteral space between
the first and the second Γ [see, e.g., 77:21, 81:9, 87:21, 102:9, 105:15, 113:4].
ΔΓΤ€ΔΟΔ€ does not occur elsewhere in NHC III.5, but then neither does
ΞΟΤΣΙΔΑ. ΕΜ[..ΔΝ rather than ΕΜ[..ΠΔΕ would be unlikely since elsewhere in the text only the spelling ΔΝ- occurs (though ΔΝ does occur elsewhere in the codex). Conceivably ΕΜ[..MON . . . ] (“verily,
for,” cf. 122:16) is to be restored, but this would make restoring the rest of
line 16 very difficult. Line 17 is to be restored with a verb (either status
pronominatus, or status absolutus followed by a preposition). For the
9. 17 ΔΔΔΔ: The restoration is virtually certain; each of the three
uncertain letters can be interpreted only as Δ or Λ. 18 [ ]JC read
from photographs (BASP 14 [1977] 121 ad loc.). 19 The first lacuna
is too short to contain ΟΤΗΠΔ. Νι corrected over an erased Π. 19
ΜΜΟ read from photographs (BASP 14 [1977] 121 ad loc.). ΚΝ
corrected over an erased ΚΝΔ. 20 [ΩΠΗΠ]: See note on 145:15. 22 ΕΙ=
alone occurs also in 122:6 and probably 125:21. 23–24 Cf. 139:6–7. Such
repetition of a saying occurs elsewhere in the text (126:16–17 = 142:23–24;

146:1 [ΜΑΠΙΙΑΔ: That the Lord’s female interlocutor is required
is made clear by ΤΕ- at the end of line 4. The lacuna is too short to contain
ΜΑΠΙΙΑΔΜΗ. 3–4 I take what might be interpreted as a raised
point at the end of line 3 to be ink blotted from p.147. It is just possible,
however, that a point is to be read here and that Ν at the beginning of line 4
stands for ΓΝ (cf., with due caution, K. Piel, “Études cop - 6 ΙΙ: Ν = ΚΝ
et ΚΝ = ΚΝ,” Sphinx 5 [1902] 89–92), in which case ΝΟΤΩΠΙ[Π] could be
restored. In defense of this alternative, which I regard as very unlikely in
this text, it should be noted that εΒΟΑ ΜΜΟυ occurs several times for
εΒΟΑ ΝΗΠΔ (> 120:22, 135:12, 136:16–17, perhaps also 121:16). 5 The
trace of Ε3 is very ambiguous. The trace of Ε3 could also be from C. Ι could
also be Γ or Π. 6 The undeciphered traces are very ambiguous, but
the subject of ΝΑ- seems to be nominal (4ΝΑ cannot be read).
8 Exceptions to standard Sahidic usage with regard to the long
form of the definite article are rare in this text (125:9 [but cf. 127:1], 129:7
[but cf. 125:5 etc.], 139:4, 143:13). 9 [ΞΟΤΟΝΠ]: [ΞΟΥΟΑΠ] would
give the line a more usual length. 13 Lacuna over I.
16 There seems to be a connective superlinear stroke over the fifth
and sixth undeciphered traces. 17 ΕΒΟ[Λ- ΠΗΧΞ]: Possibly
ΕΒΟ[Λ Ν ΠΗΧΞ] 18 Π is virtually certain. 19 ΕΝ[.. ] read
from photographs (BASP 14 [1977] 121 ad loc.). ε] at the end of the line, though not strictly necessary, is recommended for a usual line length. 20 Lacuna over M. 21–22 Cf. 138:16–17.

22 II[C]Θ[O][J]NOC: See supra ad 146:8. THNO[T]: Cf. 128:5, 143:23–24. 23 H[OT]: Following the usual orthography of this text.

24 \text{\textit{T}} could also be ⲡ or just possibly ⲡ ⲡ could also be ⲡ.

In the following translation “you” is always plural except at the end of 146:4 where it is clearly addressed only to Mary. The translation begins at 144:15 in order to establish the context of the discussion continued at the top of 145. The approximate beginning of every fifth line is indicated in parentheses.

(144:15) The Lord said, “Pray in the place where there is no woman.”

Matthew said, “Pray in the place where there is [no woman],” he tells us, saying, “Destroy the (20) works of womanhood,” not because there is any other [manner of birth], but because they will cease [giving birth].”

Mary said, “They will never be obliterated.”

The Lord said, “[Who] knows that they will [not] dissolve (145:1) and [the works] of [womanhood here] be [destroyed as well]?"

Judas said [tomatthew], “[The] works of [womanhood] will dissolve (5) [. . .] the archons will [ . . . [. . .].” Thus will we become prepared for them.”

The Lord said, “Right. For do they see you? [Do they see] those who receive (10) you? Now behold! A word [belonging to] heaven will come forth from the Father [to the depth], in silence with a flash of lightening, giving birth. Do they see it or overpower it? But you are all (all) the more (15) aware of [the path], this one, [before] either [angel] or authority has [. . . it]. Rather it belongs to the Father and the [Son] because they are both a single [. . .]. And you will go via (20) [the path] which you have known. Even if the archons become huge [they] will not reach it. [But listen!] I tell you [that] it is difficult even for me [to reach it].”

13 Restoring 144:20 X[C]Θ[C][ΠO].

14 Restoring 144:21 Θ[XΠO].

15 This is perhaps a question: “Will they never be obliterated?”


17 Perhaps: “will [call upon . . .]”

18 I.e., the word.

19 I.e., the path.
(146:1) [Mary said to the Lord], "When the works [dissolve, . . . ] which (or: who)\textsuperscript{20} dissolves (or: dissolve) a [work]."

The Lord said,\textsuperscript{21} "Right, for you (5) know [ . . . ] . . . if I dissolve [ . . . ] . . . will go to his (or: its) place."

Judas said, "How (or: In what) is the [spirit] apparent?"

The Lord said, "How (or: In what) [is] the sword\textsuperscript{22} [apparent]?"

(10) Judas said, "How (or: In what) is the light apparent?"

The Lord said, "[ . . . ] in it (or: by means of it) forever."

Judas said, "Who forgives the actions (15) of whom? [The] actions which\textsuperscript{23} [ . . . ] the cosmos [ . . . ] [ . . . ] who\textsuperscript{24} forgives (or: forgive)\textsuperscript{25} the actions."

The Lord [said], "Who [ . . . ]? It behooves whoever has understood the actions (20) to do the [will] of the Father.\textsuperscript{26} And as for you, [strive] to rid yourselves of [anger] and [jealousy], and strip yourselves of your [ . . . ]s, and do not [ . . . ]" (The beginning of 147 is wholly lacking.)

20 This pronoun is relative, not interrogative, but the passage as a whole may be a question.
21 It is just possible that Mary's statement (or question) ends with "dissolves (or: dissolve)," the next sentence beginning: "[Privately, the Lord said] etc.
22 Or possibly: "reed."
23 Possibly: "which you (masc., sing.) [ . . . ]" etc.
24 See supra n. 20.
25 Possibly: "who does (or: do) [not] forgive" etc.
26 Alternatively: "Who [ . . . ] the one who has understood the actions? It behooves him (i.e., the person answering to the preceding question) to do" etc.