



February 21, 2007

To whom it may concern:

Recently an article circulated in Brigham Young University's *Daily Universe* concerning the BYU Oxyrhynchus Papyrus Project. The *Daily Universe* is a student paper published on Brigham Young University campus, and as such is written and edited by journalism students, most of whom are undergraduates. Unfortunately, the above mentioned article, which highlighted the work of Stephen Bay, Roger Macfarlane, and Thomas Wayment contained several significant errors that warrant some clarification.

After considering the matter we feel certain that we were simply misquoted. We think that the problem stems from one response to the question asked: "What more do you and your colleagues hope to find?" Speculation on the desire to learn more about variant New Testament traditions seems to have been turned by the reporter into a fabricated discovery of that final proof. Other errors in the article seem to be of similar generation.

We do not suppose that the student willfully engaged in sensationalistic reporting, nor did he knowingly hype our project beyond its reasonable scope. One obvious cause of these errors was our not being given the opportunity to carefully check the quotations and facts attributed to us before publication. The student editor did read the quotes from Roger Macfarlane back to him before publication (but only his), and Roger assumed that the student editor/author was providing the same courtesy to the others as well, which turned out to be wrong.

We have not found a new text of Mark 16 for either the shorter or longer ending. In fact, we are not working with any manuscripts or papyri of Mark 16. We have not found missing text associated with Luke 22:43, although we are working with new images of P.Oxy. 2383, which does demonstrate that Luke 22:43-44 are missing in an important early papyrus witness. Other significant errors include the claim that we have "found" an unidentified Christian apocryphal gospel and that we are working on a different version of two verses of Philemon.

As a team, we are working on a handful of texts assigned to us in due process by the curator of the Oxyrhynchus papyrus collection. We are using multispectral imaging technology to gain clearer readings of problematic texts on each of these. Some of the papyri assigned to us have been published before and have, therefore, P.Oxy. numbers; some of the papyri assigned to us are as yet unpublished and are known to us only by the inventory number given in the Sackler Library. We intend to publish all our work in

appropriate venues, either in future volumes of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* or in other peer-reviewed journals, as each individual case dictates.

Also arising out of this article is the perception that previous work on the Oxyrhynchus papyri needs to be redone. We are indeed applying new technology (multispectral imaging) to damaged texts in the hope that the technology may help uncover new readings in portions where the papyri are damaged; but our work in no way implies that the work of previous editors and scholars needs to be redone.

The claims of this article were of course sensationalistic and extravagant; and in this situation the reality is not as startling as the fabrication. Like so many other scholars in the field, we are working with normally catalogued and recognized New Testament and other manuscripts, hoping that recent advancements in imaging technology will help expand the brackets of fragmentary texts. The news of new discoveries concerning Mark 16, etc, is erroneous... but not of our making.

As we believe newspaper editors are wont to say, "we regret the mistake."

Sincerely,

Thomas Wayment

Roger Macfarlane

Stephen Bay