

The Gospel of Mary

Coptic-English Interlinear

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This interlinear reproduces the text of the Berlin Codex 8502, page 7, line 1, through page 19, line 5 (BG 8502, 1, 7:1-19:5). The Berlin Codex contains the most complete copy of Mary's Gospel discovered so far, even though more than half of it is missing. It's a fifth-century Coptic translation of an earlier Greek text. Dr. Carl Reinhardt purchased it in Cairo in 1896 from an antiquities dealer from Achmim and brought it to Berlin, where it was studied by Egyptologists. However, a number of obstacles (including two world wars) made it impossible to publish a German translation until 1955.¹ An English translation by George W. MacRae and R. McL. Wilson was included at the end of the one-volume translation of *The Nag Hammadi Library* edited by James M. Robinson in 1978.² Other translations followed.

In addition to the Coptic manuscript, two smaller Greek fragments also came to light in the twentieth century.³ Both Greek copies date to the third century, which proves that Mary's Gospel was widely copied in antiquity.

All three copies were discovered in Egypt. Scholars widely agree that the original Gospel was probably written in Egypt or Syria in the first half of the second century, which would mean it was written at least as early as the latest books of the New Testament.

For some reflections on the meaning and significance of Mary's Gospel for us today, see my book *The Gospel of Mary: A Fresh Translation and Holistic Approach*, available from Amazon.com.

Notes

¹Cf. Esther De Boer, *Mary Magdalene: Beyond the Myth* (Trinity Press International), 1997, pp. 75,76,79; Karen L. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* (Polebridge Press), 2003, pp. 7-12.

²James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (Harper & Row), 1978. The Berlin Codex wasn't included among the codices discovered near Nag Hammadi, but two of the other four books in the Berlin Codex had turned up in that collection, which was discovered in 1945.

³The Papyrus Rylands 463, published in 1938, coincides with 17:5-19:5 of the Berlin Codex. The Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 3525, published in 1983, coincides with 9:5-10:13.

Sources

The Coptic text and reconstructions included in this interlinear are based on the following critical sources, which were developed by scholars examining the original manuscript in Berlin. Readers interested in learning more about the text are encouraged to consult them directly:

Walter C. Till and Hans-Martin Schenke, *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502* (Akademie Verlag), 1972, pp. 62-79; 342-366

Anne Pasquier, *L'Évangile Selon Marie* (Les Presses de l'Université Laval), 1983, pp. 29-47; 109-118

R. McL. Wilson and George W. MacRae in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices, Vol. III*, ed. By James M. Robinson (Brill), 2000, pp. 456-471; 495-542

Christopher Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary* (Oxford University Press), 2007, pp. 86-106

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Symbols

[]	Gap in the text
< >	Editorial correction of a scribal error
{ }	Letter erroneously added by the scribe
''	Letter or letters inserted over the line by the scribe

- 1 [...] Θ[Υ]ΛΗ ΘΕ ΝΑ·
“Matter then will
- 2 ΟΥ[ΦΘ]Π ΧΝ ΗΜΟΝ ΠΕΧΕ Π-ΩΠ ΧΕ
be destroyed or not?” Said the-Savior this:
- 3 ΦΥCIC ΝΗΜ ΠΑΛCΜΑ ΝΗΜ ΚΤΙCIC
“Nature every form every creature
- 4 ΝΗΜ ΕΥ-ΩΠΙ ΖΝ ΝΕΥ-ΕΡΗΥ {Η}ΝΗ-
every they-exist in each-other with
- 5 ΜΑΥ ΑΥΩ ΟΝ ΕΥ-ΝΑ-ΒΩΛ ΕΒΟΛ Ε·
them and again they-will-dissolve into
- 6 ΤΟΥ-ΝΟΥΝΕ ΗΜΗΝ ΜΟ-ΟΥ ΧΕ ΤΕ·
their-root their~own, for the-
- 7 ΦΥCIC Ν-ΘΥΛΗ ΕC-ΒΩΛ ΕΒΟΛ Ε-ΝΑ·
nature of-matter it-dissolves into-the things of-
- 8 ΤΕC-ΦΥCIC ΟΥΛΑ-C ΠΕΤΕ ΟΥΝ ΜΑΛ-
its-nature alone. Whoever has ear
- 9 ΧΕ ΗΜΟΙ Ε-ΩΤΗΜ ΜΑΡΕ-Ι-ΩΤΗΜ
— to-hear let-him-hear!”
- 10 ΠΕΧΕ ΠΕΤΡΟC ΝΑ-Ι ΧΕ ΖΩC ΑΚ-ΤΑ-
Said Peter to-him this: “As you-
- 11 ΜΟ-Ν Ε-ΖΩΕ ΝΗΜ ΧΩ Μ-ΠΙ-ΚΕ-ΟΥΑ
told-us concerning-thing every tell of-the-other-one
- 12 ΕΡΟ-Ν ΟΥ ΠΕ Π-ΝΟΒΕ Μ-Π-ΚΟCΜΟC
to-us: What is the-sin of-the-world?”
- 13 ΠΕΧΕ Π-ΩΠ ΧΕ ΜΝ ΝΟΒΕ ΩΠ ΑΛ-
Said the-Savior this: “No sin exists, but
- 14 ΑΛ ΝΤΩΤΝ ΠΕΤΡΕ Η-Π-ΝΟΒΕ ΕΤΕ-
you it is who make the-sin when
- 15 ΤΝ-ΕΙΡΕ Ν-ΝΕΤΝΕ Ν-Τ-ΦΥCIC Ν-Τ-ΗΝΤ-
you-do those (things) like the-nature of-the-
- 16 ΝΟΕΙΚ ΕΤ<ΟΥ>-ΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟ-C ΧΕ Π-ΝΟ-
adultery which is-called it this: the-sin.
- 17 ΒΕ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΑΙ ΑΙ-ΕΙ ΝΟΙ Π-ΑΓΑΘΟ
Because of this he-came viz the-Good
- 18 ΖΝ ΤΕΤΗ-ΗΝΤΕ ΩΑ ΝΑ ΦΥCIC
into your-midst up to the things of nature
- 19 ΝΗΜ ΕΙ-ΝΑ-ΚΑΘΙCΤΑ ΗΜΟC ΕΖΟΥ
every he-will-restore — within
- 20 ΕΤΕC-ΝΟΥΝΕ ΕΤΙ ΑΙ-ΟΥΩΖ ΕΤΟΤΙ
its-root.” Then he-continued
- 21 ΠΕΧΑ-Ι ΧΕ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΑΙ ΤΕΤΗ-Ω-
said-he this: “Because of this you-get
- 22 [Ν]Ε ΑΥΩ ΤΕΤΗ-ΜΟΥ ΧΕ Τ[ΕΤΗ-ΜΕ]
sick and you-die, for you-love