Postscript: A Final Note about the Origin of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife**

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The owner of the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* provided Karen King with an interlinear translation of the text. Like the Coptic of the papyrus fragment, the English of this interlinear translation appears dependent on 'Grondin's Interlinear Coptic/English Translation of the Gospel of Thomas'. It shares a series of distinctive textual features with Grondin's work and even appears to translate two Coptic words found in the *Gospel of Thomas* but not in the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife.* Consequently, the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* seems undeniably to be a 'patchwork' of brief excerpts from the *Gospel of Thomas* created after November 2002.

Keywords: Jesus' wife, gospel, fragment, forgery, fake

1. Background

In the July 2015 issue of *New Testament Studies,* the present author published an article entitled 'The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: Textual Evidence of Modern Forgery'.[1] The article expanded on previous observations that the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* (*GJW*) appears to be little more than a 'patchwork' of words and short phrases culled from the lone extant Coptic manuscript of the *Gospel of Thomas* (*GTh*) found in Nag Hammadi Codex II (NHC II).[2] It also provided detailed evidence suggesting that the Coptic text of *GJW* was created by someone using a specific PDF edition of this manuscript posted online in November 2002,

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1 A. Bernhard, 'The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: Textual Evidence of Modern Forgery', *NTS* 61 (2015) 335–55.

2 The first public suggestion that *GJW* was a 'patchwork' text came three days after it was revealed on 18 September 2012, and scholars collaborating internationally via the internet soon pointed out that practically all of the text in *GJW* could be traced back to *GTh*. See F. Watson, 'The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: How a Fake Gospel-Fragment was Composed', *NT Blog*, 21 September 2012, http://ntweblog.blogspot.com/.

'Grondin's Interlinear Coptic/English Translation of the Gospel of Thomas' ('Grondin's Interlinear').[3]

Since the publication of the previous article, there have been two significant developments that potentially shed additional light on the origin of *GJW*. First, in August 2015, Karen King released an interlinear translation of *GJW* that the owner of the papyrus fragment had provided her.[4] It was released at the request of the *Boston Globe*,[5] following suggestions that a translation of *GJW* that King had received from the owner could provide critical evidence confirming that the text was created using Grondin's Interlinear.[6] The 'Owner's Interlinear', as the document released in 2015 will be labelled here, provides a brief description of the fragment and presents *GJW* in both Coptic and English.[7] Scholars immediately recognised that the English 'translation' it contains seemed to be dependent on Grondin's Interlinear, just like the Coptic of the papyrus fragment.[8]

Second, in June 2016, journalist Ariel Sabar published an article about his research exploring the provenance of *GJW*. In it, he reported that one of those

3 All references to Grondin's Interlinear in this article are to the 2002 PDF version, which is the only version that omits the direct object marker n̄– before ⲡⲱⲛⲉ̣ in *GTh* 101 (NHC ɪɪ 50.1); the same typographical (and grammatical) error appears to be repeated in *GJW* →1. The PDF is available at http://gospel-thomas.net/gtbypage_112702.pdf. The thesis that *GJW* was prepared by someone using Grondin's work was originally formulated in a series of essays posted online from 24 September to 9 November 2012 (now archived at https://oxford.academia.edu/AndrewBernhard).

4 This interlinear translation is available through the link labelled 'Image: transcription and translation supplied by the owner to King (June 2011)', at http://web.archive.org/web/20150921130124/http://gospelofjesuswife.hds.harvard.edu/introduction. Although labelled a 'transcription and translation' on Harvard Divinity School's *GJW* website, the document can be described more concisely as an interlinear translation because it presents 'the same text in different languages printed in alternate lines'. Cf. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (20 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989²) ᴠɪɪ.1111.

5 L. Wangsness, 'Revelation or Hoax?', *The Boston Globe*, 29 November 2015, A1, A14–15, at A15.

6 A seven-word excerpt from this translation was quoted in a *Smithsonian* article released the day King unveiled *GJW*. See A. Sabar, 'The Inside Story of a Controversial New Text About Jesus', *Smithsonian.com*, 18 September 2012, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-inside-story-of-a-controversial-new-textabout-jesus-41078791. On the basis of just this brief excerpt, Mark Goodacre and the present author jointly discerned the potential significance of the translation in April 2014. See A. Bernhard, 'The *Gospel of Jesus's Wife*: Missing Evidence of Antiquity', *Academia.edu* (2014) 1–2, at 2, www.academia.edu/25937694/The_Gospel_of_Jesuss_Wife_Missing_Evidence_of_Antiquity_April_25_2014_. Cf. Bernhard, 'Textual Evidence', 335, 347–48, 355.

7 The appellation 'Owner's Interlinear' and similar others (e.g. the 'owner's edition of *GJW*') used here are intended only to indicate that the owner of the *GJW* provided the document to King, not that the owner necessarily prepared it.

8 See A. Bernhard, 'The Gospel of Jesus' Wife: "Patchwork" Forgery in Coptic ... and English', *NT Blog*, 28 August 2015, http://ntweblog.blogspot.com/; C. Askeland, 'The Gospel of Jesus Wife and Grondin's Interlinear', 29 August 2015, http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/.

he interviewed, Walter Fritz, provided him with a statement asserting, 'I am the sole owner of a papyrus fragment ... which was named "Gospel of Jesus's Wife" ... I warrant that neither I, nor any third parties have forged, altered, or manipulated the fragment and/or its inscription in any way since it was acquired by me.'[9] According to the article, Fritz also 'confessed that he'd in fact translated [*GJW* and another papyrus fragment] himself, using a Coptic dictionary and grammar book from his university days'.[10] A former Egyptology student at the Freie Universtät Berlin, Fritz is said to have admitted that he concealed his background 'because he didn't want to be "embarrassed" if his Coptic skills had grown rusty'.[11]

Regardless of whether Fritz is the owner of the papyrus fragment or possesses a Coptic lexicon and grammar, the interlinear translation of *GJW* that King received clearly seems to be derived from Grondin's Interlinear. As explained below, it presents *GJW* in a format that looks like a crude imitation of Grondin's edition of *GTh*. Its English 'translation' of *GJW* appears to have been copied almost entirely from Grondin's Interlinear. Thus, it seems that *GJW* must have been created by someone 'cutting and pasting' brief excerpts of *GTh* from Grondin's Interlinear sometime after November 2002.[12]

2. The Owner's Interlinear

The Owner's Interlinear was apparently emailed to King in the form of a JPG file, and it looks like a digital photograph of a single-page computer print out.[13] The first line of text is in bold and reads, 'Coptic Papyrus, Sahidic,

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9 According to Sabar, Fritz initially denied that he was the owner of the papyrus fragment, then explained that an unidentified friend owned it, and finally emailed the statement quoted above. See A. Sabar, 'The Unbelievable Tale of Jesus's Wife', *The Atlantic*, July/August 2016, 64–78, at 69, 74–5. Similarly, journalist Owen Jarus has shared that Fritz denied that he was the owner of *GJW* during a phone interview in April 2014 (pers. comm., 2 July 2016).

10 According to Sabar, Fritz initially said that 'someone in Germany' had translated *GJW* but then claimed he had done it himself. See Sabar, 'Unbelievable Tale', 75–6.

11 According to Sabar, Fritz asserted that he 'had never studied Egyptology at the Free University ... [or] written an article for a German journal' until Sabar verified that he had. See Sabar, 'Unbelievable Tale', 68, 74–5; cf. W. Fritz, 'Bemerkungen zum Datierungsvermerk auf der Amarnatafel Kn 27', *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 18 (1991) 207–14, at 207 n. 1.

12 Given that scholarly debate about the authenticity of *GJW* appears to have concluded, this article seeks only to address lingering questions about *how* and *when* the text was prepared (not by *whom*). Cf. A. Sabar, 'Karen King Responds to "The Unbelievable Tale of Jesus's Wife"', *The Atlantic*, 16 June 2016, www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/06/karen-king-responds-to-the-unbelievable-tale-of-jesus-wife/487484/. King responded to the publication of 'Unbelievable Tale' online on 15 June 2016 at www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/07/the-unbelievable-tale-of-jesus-wife/485573/.

13 As Askeland has astutely observed, 'The paper has creases and is bowed at the top and bottom. A few characters are cut off of one side.' See Askeland, 'Gospel of Jesus Wife and Grondin's Interlinear'.

Gnostic Gosple [*sic*], probably 3–5th Centruy [*sic*] A.D.' The following line states, 'Recto: 8 lines, writing bleached out'. The central portion occupies most of the page and provides a transcription of each individual line of Coptic text on the recto (→) of the papyrus fragment with an English translation beneath. A two-line note near the bottom reads, 'Verso: Left 2/3 (approx. 2' [*sic*]) of the upper papyrus layer missing. On the remaining 1/3 probably 5– … lines of unreadable Coptic inscription. Only light shadows of the letters visible.'[14]

The central portion of the Owner's Interlinear bears a striking resemblance to Grondin's Interlinear. It provides a line-by-line edition of the manuscript containing *GJW* in a Coptic–English interlinear format, just as Grondin's work provides a line-by-line edition of the manuscript containing *GTh* in the same type of format. In addition, the two interlinears use fonts that are almost indistinguishable. The Coptic font in the Owner's Interlinear appears to be 'CS Coptic Manuscript', which is nearly identical to the 'Coptic2' font used in Grondin's Interlinear.[15]

The most noticeable difference between the two interlinears is the quality. In contrast to Grondin's work, the Owner's Interlinear provides an appalling Coptic transcription: none of the superlinear strokes that appear on the papyrus are reproduced,[16] djandja (ϫ) on the fragment is invariably represented by delta (ⲇ),[17] and the standard scholarly conventions for annotating editions of papyri have not been followed.[18] In addition, all text in the Owner's interlinear is left justified with English words separated only by single spaces. As a result, Coptic words are not vertically aligned with the corresponding English text as they would be in a properly prepared interlinear translation.

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14 The end of the first line is cut off in the image but presumably read, 'probably 5–6.'

15 Twenty-eight of the core thirty letters in the Coptic alphabet appear to be identical in both fonts. In 'CS Coptic Manuscript', chi (ⲭ) does not descend below the baseline and shai (ϣ) is italicised; in 'Coptic2', chi (ⲭ) descends below the baseline and shai (ϣ) is not italicised. Cf. Askeland, 'Gospel of Jesus Wife and Grondin's Interlinear'.

16 Superlinear strokes may have been omitted from the Owner's Interlinear because of challenges using the font, 'CS Coptic Manuscript'. With this older font, strokes had to be inserted in a counterintuitive manner: each had to be typed *before* the letter above which it was to appear. In addition, the single-width superlinear strokes often did not appear properly over the pertinent letters: e.g. strokes above iota (ⲓ) extend too far but strokes above omega (ⲱ) do not extend far enough.

17 It is unclear why delta (ⲇ) consistently appears in place of djandja (ϫ): both can be easily typed using the font 'CS Coptic Manuscipt'. While the two letters do appear similar, only a person with extremely limited Coptic proficiency would confuse them.

18 The standard papyrological conventions were laid out more than eighty years ago: P. Jouguet, M. Hombert and B.A. van Groningen, 'Essai d'unification des méthodes employées dans les éditions de papyrus', *Chronique d'Égypte* 7 (1932) 285–87. Cf. P. Schubert, 'Editing a Papyrus', *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (ed. R.S. Bagnall; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 197–215, at 203.

3. Analysis of the Owner's Interlinear

3.1 *Recto (→), Line 1*

Figure 1. Comparison of GJW →1 *in the Owner's Interlinear and the pertinent parallels to* GTh *in Grondin's Interlinear. Coptic letters and English words that are the same in the two interlinears are underlined. English words that are potential evidence of copying are double underlined.*

All the Coptic letters of *GJW* →1 in the Owner's Interlinear also appear in the pertinent parallels to *GTh* in Grondin's Interlinear (Fig. 1).[19] All ten English words in the two interlinears are the same, but they should not be. In his work, Grondin chose to place 'for' before 'my mother' rather than directly beneath the corresponding Greek loanword ⲅⲁⲣ. The Coptic of *GJW* does not even include ⲅⲁⲣ, but nonetheless 'for' still appears in the English translation of the Owner's Interlinear.[20] It seems obvious that 'for' in the English translation of *GJW* provided by the owner was copied directly from Grondin's edition of *GTh*.

3.2 *Recto (→), Line 2*

Figure 2. Comparison of GJW →2 *in the Owner's Interlinear and the pertinent parallel to* GTh *in Grondin's Interlinear.*

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[19] Throughout this article, the 'pertinent parallels' to *GTh* are those previously identified in Bernhard, 'Textual Evidence', 352. The Coptic transcription of the Owner's Interlinear does not deviate from the text of the papyrus unless noted. The present author viewed the fragment at Houghton Library (Harvard University) on 16 December 2015.

[20] Neither the Owner's Interlinear nor the papyrus fragment includes ⲅⲁⲣ in *GJW* →1.

Almost all the Coptic letters of *GJW* →2 in the Owner's Interlinear also appear in the pertinent parallel to *GTh* in Grondin's Interlinear;[21] the only exception is the first letter of the line (Fig. 2).[22] All six English words in the two interlinears are the same, and there is only a minor difference in order.[23] The Owner's Interlinear uses standard English word order for the phrase, 'The disciples said.' Grondin has endeavoured to keep English words beneath the corresponding Coptic text; as a result, the word 'said' precedes 'the disciples' in his translation.

The apparently telltale sign of copying in *GJW* →2 is the rendering of the Coptic conjunction ϫⲉ as 'this'. In his work, Grondin routinely used 'this' as 'filler' beneath each ϫⲉ introducing direct discourse in *GTh*. Yet, ϫⲉ is untranslatable in such a grammatical construction, and it would never actually be translated by the English word 'this.' The only plausible explanation for why the Owner's Interlinear renders ϫⲉ as 'this' in *GJW* →2 seems to be that it was copied directly from Grondin's edition of *GTh*.

3.3 Recto (→), Line 3

Figure 3. Comparison of GJW →3 *in the Owner's Interlinear and the pertinent parallels to* GTh *in Grondin's Interlinear.*

The Coptic transcription of *GJW* →3 in the Owner's Interlinear has clearly identifiable parallels to *GTh* in Grondin's Interlinear, but the Coptic name ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁⲙ ('Mary') appears to have been specially inserted into the 'patchwork' text (Fig. 3).[24] Also, two pronominal affixes are different: a third-person feminine singular pronominal affix (ⲥ) precedes the infinitive ⲁⲣⲛⲁ and a second-person masculine singular pronominal affix (ⲕ) completes the preposition ⲙⲙⲟⲥ in the Owner's Interlinear, while a third-person masculine pronominal affix (ϥ)

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21 I.e. assuming that the deltas (ⲇ) in ⲡⲉⲇⲉ and ⲇⲉ are supposed to represent djandas (ϫ).

22 The epsilon (ⲉ) at the start of the line in the Owner's Interlinear is surprising because the corresponding letter on the papyrus fragment looks most like a sigma (ⲥ).

23 Grondin abbreviates the name 'Jesus' as '*JS*' in English; the number '11' indicates the eleventh appearance of the *nomen sacrum* ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ in the Coptic of *GTh*.

24 The name 'Mary' is spelled ⲙⲁⲣⲓϩⲁⲙ in *GTh* 21 and 114, and Grondin has transliterated it as 'Mariam' in each instance. Cf. Bernhard, 'Textual Evidence', 346.

appears in both places in *GTh*.[25] Where the Coptic transcriptions agree and a translation of *GJW* is provided, all five corresponding English words are the same in both interlinears.

Two aspects of *GJW* →3 seem to suggest dependence on Grondin's Interlinear. Grondin's translation of ⲁⲣⲛⲁ as 'abdicate' in *GTh* 81 is unusual. None of the standard lexicons that probably would have been used to translate the Greek loanword (ἀρνέομαι) from which the Coptic infinitive is derived suggests such a definition;[26] yet, the Owner's Interlinear contains Grondin's seemingly unprecedented translation of ⲁⲣⲛⲁ. Also, it shares a minor error with Grondin's edition of *GTh*. In translating ⲙ̅ⲡϣⲁ in *GTh* 80, Grondin evidently copied the dictionary form of the verb ('be worthy') by accident rather than translating it in the present tense ('is worthy') as required by context.[27] The Owner's Interlinear contains the same mistake as Grondin's work and, consequently, abandons proper English grammar by stating 'Mary be worthy' rather than 'Mary is worthy'.

3.4   *Recto (→), Line 4*

Figure 4. Comparison of GJW →4 in the Owner's Interlinear
and the pertinent parallels to GTh in Grondin's Interlinear.

With the exception of ⲧⲁϩⲓⲙⲉ ('my wife'), all the Coptic letters of *GJW* →4 in the Owner's Interlinear also appear in the pertinent parallels to *GTh* in Grondin's Interlinear ([Fig. 4](#)).[28] Where the Coptic transcriptions agree and a translation of *GJW* is provided, all five corresponding English words are the same in both

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25 The second-person singular pronominal affix (ⲕ) in the Owner's Interlinear is surprising because a sigma (ⲥ) appears to have been written over (or under) the kappa (ⲕ) on the papyrus fragment so that the latter letter is all but unrecognisable.

26 E.g. H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones, *A Greek–English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996[9]) 244; W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000[3]) 132–3.

27 For the dictionary entry, see W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939) 179a. Grondin corrected the error before 2010. See https://web.archive.org/web/20090830025124/http://geocities.com/Athens/9068/logo80.htm.

28 I.e. assuming that the delta (ⲇ) in ⲡⲉⲇⲉ is supposed to represent djanda (ϫ).

interlinears.[29] There are just two minor differences in word order. First, the Owner's Interlinear uses standard English word order for the phrase 'Jesus said'. Grondin has endeavoured to keep English words directly below the corresponding Coptic text; as a result, the word 'said' precedes his abbreviation for 'Jesus'.[30] Second, the Owner's Interlinear has the word 'this' before (instead of after) 'to them'.

The presence of 'this' in *GJW* →4 in the Owner's Interlinear is unexpected. The English word is clearly intended to correspond to ϫⲉ (as it does in the *GJW* →2), but the Coptic conjunction does not actually appear in *GJW* →4.[31] Further, the Owner's Interlinear incorrectly translates the Coptic word (ϫⲉ) found in *GTh* (but not in *GJW*) in a manner attributable to a misunderstanding of Grondin's work.[32] 'This' in *GJW* →4 seems to be indisputable evidence that the person responsible for the Owner's Interlinear copied English words directly from Grondin's Interlinear.

3.5 *Recto (→), Line 5*

Figure 5. Comparison of GJW *→5 in the Owner's Interlinear and the pertinent parallel to* GTh *in Grondin's Interlinear.*

With the exception of the pronominal affix at the start of the line, all the Coptic letters of *GJW* →5 in the Owner's Interlinear also appear in the pertinent parallel to *GTh* in Grondin's Interlinear (Fig. 5).[33] Where the Coptic transcriptions agree and a translation of *GJW* is provided, six of the seven corresponding English words are the same in both interlinears; the only difference in wording is that the

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29 The word 'this' does not correspond to any of the Coptic text in *GJW* →4.

30 Grondin abbreviates the name 'Jesus' as '*JS*' in English; the number '12' indicates the twelfth appearance of the *nomen sacrum* ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ in the Coptic of *GTh*.

31 The conjunction ϫⲉ was most likely omitted by accident from *GJW* because it is separated from ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ ⲛⲁⲩ ('Jesus said to them') by a line break in NHC ɪɪ. See Bernhard, 'Textual Evidence', 347–8. Neither the Owner's Interlinear nor the papyrus fragment includes ϫⲉ in *GJW* →4.

32 Based on the apparent rendering of ϫⲉ as 'this' in *GJW* →2 and →4, the person responsible for the Owner's Interlinear seems to have possessed extremely limited knowledge of Coptic.

33 The Coptic particle ⲁⲛ ('not') appears to have been deliberately omitted from *GJW*. See Bernhard, 'Textual Evidence', 348.

Owner's Interlinear has an indefinite article ('a') before the word 'disciple' and Grondin's work does not.[34]

The precise verbal correspondence of the English in both interlinears at two points in *GJW* →5 is notable. Grondin has used a simplified translation ('can') for the combination of the future auxiliary ⲛⲁ– and the verbal auxiliary ϣ–; the Owner's Interlinear gives the same translation, even though the formally literal translation of 'will be able to' for ⲛⲁϣ would have been suitable. Grondin has used a formally literal translation for the Coptic words ⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ('disciple to me'); the owner's edition of *GJW* gives the same translation, even though a simplified translation ('my disciple') is commonly employed in rendering these Coptic words into English. The fact that the two interlinears alternate between simplified and formally literal English translations in exactly the same manner seems to be another subtle indication of copying.

3.6 *Recto (→), Line 6*

Figure 6. Comparison of GJW →6 *in the Owner's Interlinear and the pertinent parallels to* GTh *in Grondin's Interlinear.*

All the Coptic letters of *GJW* →6 in the Owner's Interlinear are found in the pertinent parallels to *GTh* in Grondin's Interlinear, but the iota (ι) in ϣⲁϥⲉⲓⲛⲉ is absent (Fig. 6). This is probably because a copy error is present on the papyrus fragment. As previously observed, the third-from-last character appears to be some kind of epsilon–iota hybrid;[35] detailed measurements of every epsilon (ⲉ) and iota (ι) are consistent with this observation.[36] Apparently, the copyist first wrote epsilon (ⲉ) or iota (ι) and then attempted to correct the mistake. The '(Sic!)' at the end of the line suggests that the person responsible for the Owner's Interlinear believed there was a copy error in the final word of the

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34 There is no indefinite article (ⲟⲩ) in the Coptic, as the grammatical construction does not require one.

35 A. Suciu and H. Lundhaug, 'A Peculiar Dialectal Feature in the Gospel of Jesus's Wife, Line 6', *Patristics, Apocrypha, Coptic Literature and Manuscripts*, 27 September 2012, http://alinsuciu. com.

36 Bernhard, 'Textual Evidence', 341–2.

line. Four of the first five English words in the interlinears agree; the only differ-ence in wording is that the Owner's Interlinear has 'who' instead of 'which', pre-sumably because the antecedent of the relative clause is ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ('person', 'man') in *GJW* and ⲡⲉϥⲉϩⲟ ('his treasure') in *GTh*. The question mark immediately after 'is he' at the end of the line evidently indicates that a translation is impossible because the corresponding Coptic text is corrupt.[37]

Perhaps the only conceivable reason why ⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ would be rendered as 'no man' in the Owner's Interlinear is if it were copied from Grondin's edition of *GTh*. The dialect of *GTh* has been characterised as 'crypto-Subakhmimic';[38] that is, it is 'Sahidic with a fluctuating mixture of features from Lycopolitan'.[39] In *GTh* 47 (NHC �II 41.17), ⲙⲁⲣⲉ– functions as a negative aorist conjugation base (as in Lycopolitan).[40] Thus, a formally literal translation of ⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ in *GTh* might be, 'People do not ...'; Grondin has used a simplified (if not gender neutral) trans-lation, 'No man'.[41] Yet, the Owner's Interlinear characterises *GJW* as a 'Sahidic' text, and ⲙⲁⲣⲉ– is the standard jussive conjugation base in this dialect. Thus, the owner's version should translate ⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ something like, 'Let people ...', but it does not. Instead, it seemingly repeats Grondin's simplified (non-gender neutral) translation of a dialectical variant in *GTh*.

3.7 *Recto (→), Line 7*

Figure 7. Comparison of GJW →7 *in the Owner's Interlinear and the pertinent parallels to* GTh *in Grondin's Interlinear.*

With the exception of the pronominal affix that completes ⲛⲙⲙⲁ⸗, all the Coptic letters of *GJW* →7 in the Owner's Interlinear also appear in the pertinent

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37 The phrase 'is he?' is certainly not a valid translation of the meaningless Coptic text ϣⲁϥ ⲉⲛⲉ. The only other question mark in the Owner's Interlinear appears next to the nu (ⲛ) at the end of *GJW* →3, and it evidently indicates uncertainty about the text.

38 For a discussion of the dialect of NHC �II, see B. Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7 together with XIII,2*, Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1), and P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655* (NHS xx; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1989) I.3, 6–14.

39 B. Layton, *Coptic Gnostic Chrestomathy* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004) 189.

40 See A. Suciu and H. Lundhaug, 'Peculiar Dialectal Feature'.

41 Given the absence of a definite or indefinite article before ⲣⲱⲙⲉ, the noun may be understood as referring to a class of persons (i.e. those 'who are wicked').

parallels to *GTh* in Grondin's Interlinear ([Fig. 7](#)). Where the Coptic transcriptions agree and a translation of *GJW* is presented, all four corresponding English words are apparently intended to be the same in both interlinears: 'within' is presumably a typographical error.[42]

Admittedly, *GJW* →7 is the line of text with the least evidence of copying from Grondin's Interlinear. Still, the English rendering of ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ϯϣⲟⲟⲡ as 'I exist' is suspicious. A better translation of ϯϣⲟⲟⲡ in the context of *GJW* might have been 'I am' or 'I dwell'. In addition, when an independent personal pronoun appears before a verb in Coptic, the extraposited pronoun is commonly indicated in English translation by a prepositional phrase at the head of the sentence (e.g. ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ϯϣⲟⲟⲡ: '*As for me*, I am ...'). Of course, a person with limited knowledge of Coptic would not know to follow this convention in translating because Grondin merely provided the formally literal translation of ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ('I') beneath the word in his work.
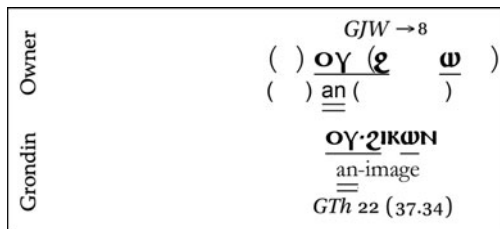
3.8 *Recto (→), Line 8*

Figure 8. Comparison of GJW →8 *in the Owner's Interlinear and the pertinent parallel to* GTh *in Grondin's Interlinear.*

All four Coptic letters of *GJW* →8 in the Owner's Interlinear also appear in the pertinent parallel to *GTh* in Grondin's interlinear ([Fig. 8](#)). It is unclear why the noun ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ has not been fully transcribed: it is faint but readable on the papyrus fragment. Regardless, without identifying the noun, the person responsible for the owner's edition of *GJW* should not have been able to determine that the diphthong ⲟⲩ ought to be translated as an indefinite article preceding a noun beginning with a vowel in English ('an'). While ⲟⲩ frequently functions as an indefinite article in Coptic, the diphthong also appears in so many other words that its meaning cannot be deduced without context. It seems clear that the person responsible for the Owner's Interlinear relied on more than just the papyrus fragment for information about the text of *GJW* and how to translate it.

42 It is assumed that 'within' is a typographical error similar to 'Gosple' and 'Centruy' in the title.

4. Conclusion

The shared line-by-line Coptic-English interlinear format and nearly identical fonts provide only an initial hint of the connection between the edition of *GJW* that the owner provided to King and Grondin's Interlinear. Textual analysis reveals that the Owner's Interlinear was almost certainly prepared by someone using Grondin's work. The extensive verbal correspondence between the English translations of the two interlinears strongly suggests a direct literary relationship.

Only ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁⲙ ('Mary'), ⲧⲁϩⲓⲙⲉ ('my wife') and three pronominal affixes appear to have been translated from the Coptic of *GJW* in the Owner's Interlinear without the assistance of Grondin's edition of *GTh*.[43] Essentially all of the remaining English 'translation' appears derived from Grondin's Interlinear. Where the Coptic transcriptions of the two interlinears agree and a translation of *GJW* is given, forty of the corresponding forty-two English words are the same: the only differences are the apparent addition of an indefinite article ('a') before 'disciple' in *GJW* →5 and the apparent switch of 'which' to 'who' in *GJW* →6 in the Owner's Interlinear.[44] The three minor differences in word order suggest only that the person responsible for the Owner's Interlinear wanted the 'translation' to use English (rather than Coptic) word order.[45] Anyone who knew English could easily have rearranged the pertinent words from Grondin's Interlinear.

Most strikingly, the two interlinears contain a series of verbal agreements that seem all but inconceivable as the work of independent translators. Every single line of the owner's purported 'translation' includes some textual feature suggestive of copying. The Owner's Interlinear seems to repeat both Grondin's unprecedented translation of ⲁⲣⲛⲁ as 'abdicate' and his minor mistake in rendering ⲙ̄ⲡϣⲁ as 'be worthy' instead of 'is worthy' in *GJW* →4. It alternates between simplified and formally literal translations in *GJW* →5, exactly as Grondin does in his translation of the pertinent parallels in *GTh*. It treats ⲙⲁⲣⲉ– as a Lycopolitan negative aorist rather than a Sahidic jussive in *GJW* →6, precisely where Grondin's translation reflects the

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43 I.e. ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁⲙ in *GJW* →3, ⲧⲁϩⲓⲙⲉ in →4, the second-person singular pronominal suffix (ⲕ) completing ⲙ̄ⲙⲟ⸗ in →3, the third-person singular feminine pronominal prefix (ⲥ) at the start of →5 and the third-person singular feminine pronominal prefix (ⲥ) completing ⲛ̄ⲙⲙⲁ⸗ in →7.

44 In this analysis, the English word 'within' in *GJW* →7 is regarded as a typographical error for 'with', and the Coptic text ϣⲁϥ ⲉⲛⲉ marked with '(Sic!)' at the end of →6 is not considered an agreement with ϣⲁϥⲉⲓⲛⲉ in the pertinent parallel to *GTh*.

45 In *GJW* →2, the Owner's Interlinear has 'The disciples said' instead of 'Said-the-disciples' (as in the pertinent parallel to *GTh* in Grondin's Interlinear). Similarly, in *GJW* →4, it has 'Jesus said' instead of 'Said-*JS*' and 'this to them' instead of 'to-them this'.

dialectical influence of Lycopolitan on *GTh*. Perhaps most tellingly, the Owner's Interlinear seems to translate two Coptic words found in *GTh* but *not* in *GJW*.[46]

Since Grondin certainly did not copy anything from the Owner's Interlinear,[47] the already carefully documented thesis that *GJW* was prepared by someone using Grondin's Interlinear now appears to have been fully confirmed.[48] It would be bizarre for anyone to attempt to decipher a papyrus fragment of unknown content using an interlinear translation of another text, and it hardly seems plausible that someone with limited knowledge of Coptic could have identified the pertinent parallels to *GTh* in *GJW* without prior knowledge of its 'patchwork' nature. In the judgement of this author, the person responsible for the Owner's Interlinear must at least have been aware that the Coptic text of *GJW* had been created by copying specific excerpts from Grondin's Interlinear and that, consequently, the same dual-language edition of *GTh* could conveniently be used to prepare an English 'translation' of the new text. While more information may be needed to identify the specific person(s) responsible for devising *GJW* with complete certainty, it now seems safe to assume that this 'ancient gospel' was actually created quite recently by someone reworking material from Grondin's Interlinear sometime after November 2002.

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46 The word 'for' in *GJW* →1 appears to be a translation of ⲅⲁⲣ in *GTh* 101, and 'this' in *GJW* →4 appears to be a mistranslation of ⲭⲉ in *GTh* 12. The text of *GJW* →1 does not include ⲅⲁⲣ and *GJW* →4 does not contain ⲭⲉ.

47 Grondin cannot have copied from the Owner's Interlinear: it was not provided to King until June 2011 or released publicly until August 2015, long after he commenced his work on *GTh*.

48 Prior to the release of the Owner's Interlinear, significant evidence supporting this thesis had already been accumulated on the basis of the Coptic text of *GJW* alone. See Bernhard, 'Textual Evidence', 335–55.