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Papyri, Ethics, and Economics: A Biography of *P.Oxy.* 15.1780 (P39)

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Abstract

Discussion of the retrieval, distribution, and sale of *P.Oxy.* 15.1780, a fragment of the Gospel of John (P39), currently in the Green Collection, and the ethical issues involved. An appendix publishes early correspondence about the acquisition of the Rylands papyri.

“But there are other events in the biography of objects that convey more subtle meanings. What of a Renoir ending up in a private and inaccessible collection? Of one lying neglected in a museum basement? How should we feel about yet another Renoir leaving France for the United States? Or for Nigeria?”¹

In an article recently published in this journal, William A. Johnson has drawn attention to the history of the distribution of items coming from archaeological excavations, funded by the Egypt Exploration Fund (from now on EEF), to American colleges, universities, and museums, and has reminded us of the complexity of the questions related to any contemporary evaluation of the “fascinating stories about the discovery, recovery, excavation, and politics of papyri.”² The present contribution is centred on one of these stories, that concerning the discovery, recovery and following transfers of ownership

¹I. Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commodization as Process,” in A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge 1986) 69. I wish to thank friends and colleagues who have read and commented on different drafts of this paper: Brent Nongbri, Nick Gonis, Todd Hickey, and Malcolm Choat. Useful comments came also from the anonymous reviewers. I am grateful for the careful reading and enlightening comments that every one in the list has contributed; the responsibility for the opinions expressed in the article is all mine.

²W.A. Johnson, “The Oxyrhynchus Distributions in America: Papyri and Ethics,” *BASP* 49 (2012) 209-22; quotation from p. 222.

of *P.Oxy.* 15.1780, also known as $\mathfrak{P}39$, a fragment bearing some lines from chapter 8 of the Gospel of John and one of the most ancient testimonies of this New Testament book.³ The reconstruction and discussion of the modern biography⁴ of this papyrus aims to contribute to the debate surrounding papyri as cultural heritage artefacts and hopes to disentangle some of the ideologies underpinning the acquisition, use, and interpretation of biblical papyri as special heritage objects.

Some time after 300 CE, someone in Oxyrhynchus discarded at least one page from a papyrus codex containing the Gospel of John.⁵ We do not know why it happened or how it went, but many centuries later Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt found a fragment of the page, and published it in the fifteenth volume of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri series in 1922.⁶ Grenfell and Hunt's campaigns in Egypt, and the publication of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri volumes, were both financially sustained by the EEF through its Greco-Roman branch.⁷ As is well known, this organization was founded in 1882, the same year that Britain invaded Egypt, by Amelia Edwards, the successful author of *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* (1876) and a great promoter of archaeology in Egypt.⁸ Edwards was aware of the threat of modernization to the archaeological landscape of the country, and she wanted the "civilized world" to save it for the future. The educated elites of the United Kingdom felt they had to play a major role in the salvation and study of the Egyptian cultural patrimony through

³TM 61638. The papyrus has been recently dated to AD 275-300 by W. Clarysse and P. Orsini, "Early New Testament Manuscripts and Their Dates: A Critique of Theological Palaeography," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 88 (2012) 462 and 470.

⁴With "biography" I mean "cultural biography" as defined in I. Kopytoff's seminal essay (n. 1).

⁵On throwing away biblical texts in ancient Oxyrhynchus see most recently A.M. Lujendijk, "Sacred Scriptures as Trash: Biblical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus," *Vigiliae Christianae* 64 (2010) 217-254.

⁶In the preface to the volume, there is no mention of the campaign in which this particular papyrus was found. Hunt explains that most of the pieces, but not all, were from the 1905-1906 campaign, and some were purchased by Grenfell during his last trip to Egypt in 1920. During this last trip Grenfell also purchased papyri for the John Rylands Library, and *P.Ryl.* 3.457 ($\mathfrak{P}52$) was part of that lot.

⁷On the history of the EEF, nowadays Egypt Exploration Society (EES), see T.G.H. James (ed.), *Excavating in Egypt: The Egypt Exploration Society 1882-1982* (London 1982), esp. the contribution of E. Turner, "The Graeco-Roman Branch," 161-178.

⁸For a recent biography of Amelia Edwards see B.E. Moon, *More Usefully Employed: Amelia B. Edwards, Writer, Traveller and Campaigner for Ancient Egypt* (London 2006). It was through the EEF that William Matthew Flinders Petrie began his work in Egypt; see M.S. Drower, "The Early Years," in James (n. 7) 18-19.

excavations, conservation, and the export of as many as possible of the items retrieved. At the same time they were the main instigators of the very processes of modernization and exploitation of the resources of the country that, as they recognized and denounced, were putting antiquities at risk.⁹

Egyptomania spread all over Europe and the U.S. Scholars and tourists flocked to Egypt, to excavate and study, for leisure and to buy antiquities, papyri included, on the thriving local antiquities market.¹⁰ Egyptomania certainly predated the British occupation of Egypt and the formation of the EEF. It was opened by Napoleon's expedition of 1798 and was deeply embedded into a Western cultural environment where Egyptian antiquities were thought to be a key for Biblical studies.¹¹ This cultural attitude boosted a range of activities and enterprises of various kinds, from excavations to editions of texts, from tourism to Christian advocates' and religious leaders' interest in papyri and other artefacts, that contributed as a whole to a massive transfer of Egyptian

⁹The classic study of political and cultural colonization of Egypt is T. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge 1988); see also D.M. Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museum, and National Identity From Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 2002), esp. 139-212 concerning the English occupation and the Graeco-Roman heritage; E. Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity* (Durham, NC 2007).

¹⁰Evidence of the purchasing activities by the first generations of papyrologists are well attested in the archives of most collections, in some cases available online through brief descriptions or electronic editions of relevant material; see for instance the archive relative to the Michigan papyri collection at <http://www.lib.umich.edu/papyrology-collection/acquisition-reports> (last accessed on 12 May 2014). The collection of my university, the John Rylands collection, was all bought on the antiquities market through Lord Crawford, B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, J. Rendel Harris, A. Deissman and Carl Schmidt, and possibly others. Rendel Harris was arrested, although immediately released, in the Fayum while engaged in such activities, as he reports in one of his lively letters to the head librarian of the John Rylands Library, Henry Guppy, from Cairo on 17 February 1917 (JRL/4/1/1/1917/Rendel Harris).

¹¹The role of Biblical studies in the birth of Egyptology has been most recently studied and highlighted by D. Gange, *Dialogues with the Dead: Egyptology in British Culture and Religion, 1822-1922* (Oxford 2013) esp. 53-120. The first public announcement of the foundation of the EEF, published in various newspapers, stressed the aim of the newly created society "to raise a fund for the purpose of conducting excavations in the Delta, which up to this time has been very rarely visited by travellers, and where one site (Zoan, Tanis) has been explored by archaeologists. Yet here must undoubtedly lie concealed the documents of a lost period of Biblical history – documents which we may confidently hope will furnish the key to a whole series of perplexing problems." Cited from Drower (n. 8) 9.

antiquities to other countries, in Europe and elsewhere.¹² The year 1882 signalled a turning point in the intensification of this trend.

Although international, shared legislation on the ownership, selling, and export of antiquities has been achieved, not without problems, only since the issuing of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 14 November 1970, and subsequent national subscriptions and adhesions to it, it is worth recalling that in Egypt there were rules regulating these activities as early as the 19th century.¹³ The Antiquities Service was in charge of authorising archaeological excavations and the following *partages* and was tasked with controlling the preservation and care of the cultural heritage of the country. It is well known, however, that the Service operated under heavy French control, was influenced by the wider colonial political and cultural climate, and was unable to function effectively on the ground because of limited resources and the wider Egyptian political and economic conditions. As a result, a large number of antiquities left Egypt legally and illegally in those years. Important steps forward were made only later, in the 20th century. In 1912, law nr. 14 established the important principle according to which all antiquities found in Egypt belonged to the State, and forbade the selling of them, unless they were already part of a collection or coming from legal excavations, recognised by the State. This law applied only to Egyptians; therefore foreigners continued their activities until 1951, when a stricter law on the protection of antiquities was issued (law nr. 215 of 31 October 1951, emended by laws nr. 529 of 1953 and nr. 24 of 1965). This has been now superseded by law nr. 117 of 1983, emended in 2003. Needless to say, looting and illegal trafficking of antiquities are still on going in Egypt, as elsewhere. In fact the political instability of the country following the Arab spring, and the high demand for antiquities from collectors based not only in the US and Europe, but also in China, Japan, the Gulf,

¹² A very interesting example of the connection between religious activism and the discovery of Egypt is provided by the story of the acquisition of Egyptian antiquities, including papyri, by Joseph Smith, author of the Book of Mormon and founder of the Church of the Latter-day Saints (later Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), in 1835, on which see R.K. Ritner, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition* (Salt Lake City 2012), esp. chapter one.

¹³ See A. Khater, *Le Régime juridique de fouilles et des antiquités en Égypte* (Cairo 1960); for a shorter summary, see M.M. Kersel, "The Changing Legal Landscape for Middle Eastern Archaeology in the Colonial Era, 1800-1930," in G. Emberling (ed.), *Pioneers to the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East 1919-1920* (Chicago 2010) 87. See also the wider discussion of P. Davoli, "Papiri, archeologia e storia moderna", *Atene e Roma* 1-2 (2008) 100-124, esp. 102-103 on legislation.

and other emergent markets, have led to an increase of these phenomena in the last decade, despite continuous national and international efforts.¹⁴ Papyri and other archaeological objects coming from the ruins of Antinoopolis were recently recovered in Egypt by members of the Italian archaeological mission and the Egyptian authorities, while at least one piece was identified in a catalogue of the London auction house Bonhams and as a consequence seized by the British police.¹⁵

But let us go back to the late 19th-early 20th century. Fund-raising for the EEF was promoted through public lectures in the United Kingdom and abroad, newspapers articles and other activities by Amelia Edwards herself, and Egyptologists and scholars sponsored through it.¹⁶ As recalled in Johnson's article, an American branch was created in 1883.¹⁷ As a reward for funding, the EEF distributed papyri and other items from excavations to its subscribers.¹⁸ In fact the movement of antiquities from excavations in this period was far more complicated than distribution lists may imply. Some of Petrie's excavations, for instance, were funded directly by private individuals.¹⁹ The collection of the Manchester Museum is substantially based on Jesse Howarth's private

¹⁴ E.g. most recently the "Emergency Red List of Egyptian Cultural Objects at Risk" compiled by ICOM and available at http://icom.museum/uploads/tx_hpoindex-bdd/120521_ERLE_EN-Pages.pdf (last accessed on 12 May 2014), and the on-going campaign for the subscription of a bilateral agreement between Egypt and the U.S. restricting Egyptian imports in the US, on which see T. Mashberg, "Egypt Asks U.S. to Impose Sharp Curbs on Importing of Antiquities," *The International New York Times*, 14 March 2014 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/15/arts/design/egypt-asks-us-to-impose-sharp-curbs-on-importing-of-antiquities.html>, last accessed on 12 May 2014).

¹⁵ See R. Pintaudi et al., "*Latrones: furti e recuperi da Antinoupolis*," *AnalPap* 26 (2014) 359-402; the piece recovered in London was on sale as lot 65 on 23 October 2013, see <http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20669/lot/65/> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

¹⁶ For these activities in the North-West of England see H. Forrest, *Manufacturers, Mummies and Manchester: Two-Hundred Years of Interest in and Study of Egyptology in the Greater Manchester Area* (Oxford 2011), esp. 10-16.

¹⁷ Johnson (n. 2) 213; see also Drower (n. 8) 22-23.

¹⁸ For the papyri, see R.A. Coles, *Location-List of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri and Other Greek Papyri Published by the Egypt Exploration Society* (London 1974), available in electronic format at <http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk/POxy/lists/listmenu.htm> (last accessed on 7 April 2015). The methods of distributions employed by the EEF were one of the reasons why Flinders Petrie resigned in 1886, see Drower (n. 8) 26-27.

¹⁹ This especially after he resigned from the EEF in 1886. He worked again with the Fund between 1896 and 1905, Drower (n. 8) 26-27. Petrie used to include the names of sponsors in his archaeological reports, see e.g. W.M.F. Petrie, *Hawara, Biahmu, and Arsinoe* (1889) 3-4.

collection and those of other Manchester cotton magnates.²⁰ The famous 2nd century Homer roll, found beneath the head of a young lady in a tomb of Hawara's cemetery by Petrie in 1888, was presented by his sponsor, Jesse Howarth, to the Bodleian Library in Oxford.²¹ As Johnson rightly recalls, Grenfell and Hunt's expeditions were sustained by EEF money, and the American branches of the EEF collected even more than the British ones. However, to the accountancy related to excavation campaigns funded by the EEF, we should add that for acquisitions on the antiquities market. Grenfell and Hunt received sums directly from wealthy collectors, and possibly some colleagues, for the acquisition of papyri from dealers. For instance, Lord Crawford funded them expressly for the purchasing of papyri;²² Enriqueta Rylands, widow of the cotton magnate John and founder of the John Rylands Library, gave them money for this purpose certainly for the campaign of 1901-1902, and the Library sent Grenfell the sum of £55 for purchasing papyri while he was in Egypt in 1920;²³ the Egyptologist Griffith gave money for the acquisition of Demotic papyri to Grenfell at least once, before the 1896-1897 campaign, according to a letter of Grenfell to him held in the John Rylands Library archives (see Appendix 1). These sums did not end up in the expedition budget, but formed a separate fund designated to the purchase of papyri for others and themselves.²⁴ In fact excavations and purchases on the antiquities market were activities that most European and American archaeologists and papyrologists were conducting at the same time.²⁵ It must not be forgotten that dealers too dug in Egypt with the permission, or even the help, of the Egyptian authorities.²⁶

²⁰ See S.J.M.M. Alberti, *Nature and Culture: Objects, Disciplines and the Manchester Museum* (Manchester 2009) 66-73; Forrest (n. 16) 3-38.

²¹ TM 60571; see Petrie (n. 19) 28-9; I. Uytterhoeven, *Hawara in the Graeco-Roman Period: Life and Death in a Fayum Village* (2009) 268-269.

²² See M. Choat, "Lord Crawford's Search for Papyri: on the Origin of the Rylands Papyrus Collection," in P. Schubert (ed.), *Actes du 26e Congrès international de papyrologie (Genève, 16-21 août 2010)* (Genève 2012) 145.

²³ I suspect the first payment was repeated for the following campaigns, but I need to do more work on the archives of the John Rylands Library, which are extensive and not fully catalogued. For the payment to Grenfell in 1920 we have three letters, two from Cairo (dated 24 February and 26 March), one from Oxford (dated 1 May) addressed by him to the head librarian, Henry Guppy; see JRL/4/1/1/1920/Grenfell.

²⁴ See N. Gonis, "Further Letters from the Archive of Apa Ioannes," *BASP* 45 (2008) 69-71.

²⁵ For an Italian example, see E. Breccia, "In Egitto con Girolamo Vitelli (trent'anni dopo)," *Aegyptus* 15 (1935) 255-262.

²⁶ See Davoli (n. 13) 103-104 on excavation permissions conceded to Ali Farag, based in Giza, and Sayed Bey Khashaba, based in Asyut.

Transferred from Egypt to Oxford some time between the end of the 19th century and 1920, *P.Oxy.* 15.1780 (P39) left Oxford for America when it was assigned, together with other 29 papyri, to Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, in the second round of the distributions of papyri to American museums, universities, and colleges.²⁷ It remained in Chester until 1980, when the seminar merged with Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York, and the papyrus collection was moved there. P39 rested in the Ambrose Swasey Library of Colgate Rochester Divinity School under the inventory number 8864 for many years, while scholars were studying and discussing it, sometimes taking trips to Rochester in order to examine the fragment itself. Such was the life of our fragment, until the School got into financial troubles, like many other institutions in the US and elsewhere. Then the administrators took the decision to sell some of their manuscripts, including the Oxyrhynchus papyri, in order to make ends meet: P39 went on auction in Sotheby's New York rooms on 20 June 2003 as lot 97.²⁸ It sold for \$400,000 (\$350,000 + \$50,000 commission), according to Sotheby's "the highest price ever paid at public sale for any early Christian manuscript."²⁹ The operation was sharply criticized by scholars worldwide, who were worried about this new trend to sell research items; in this particular case they pointed out that the seller did not even add a clause imposing open access to the items for research to the prospective owner.³⁰

The Sotheby's auction of 2003 has been recalled briefly in an article of 2006 by R.J. Schork – one of the two contributions from which Johnson starts his discussion – but he misses some important details that are worth recalling

²⁷ See the list in *P.Oxy.* 16, pp. 275-279.

²⁸ *Fine Books and Manuscripts Including Americana: New York Friday 20 June 2003*, Sotheby's New York 2003, 88-100. The Oxyrhynchus papyri on sale were: 1462, 1471, 1520, 1548, 1707, 1721 (lot 92); 1583, 1675, 1669, 1748, 1755, 1760, 1768 (lot 93); 1256, 1265 (lot 94); 1423, 1638, 1691, 1722, 1733 (lot 95); 1382 one item with 1445 (lot 96); our 1780 (lot 97); 1351 (lot 98); 1601, 1784 (lot 99); 1300, 1494, 1592 (lot 100). Lot 100 was purchased by Macquarie University. *P.Oxy.* 12.1567 results as "not found" in Coles' *Location List* (n. 17), and in fact does not appear in the Catalogue. The following papyri were acquired later by the British Museum (October 2008): 1462, 1471, 1520, 1548, 1675, 1707, 1721, 1583, 1669, 1755, 1760, and 1768.

²⁹ This is explained in the catalogue description of the second auction of 2008, on which see below, available on line, <http://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.pdf.L08241.html/f/23/L08241-23.pdf> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

³⁰ Johnson (n. 2) 220 based on R.J. Schork, "The Singular Circumstances of an errant Papyrus," *Arion* 16.2 (2008) 37-38 on which more below.

here.³¹ Right after the auction, P39, which rested for so long first under the Egyptian sands and then in the vaults of various libraries, started a new life as a big star of the cabinet of curiosities that formed the exhibit *Ink & Blood: Dead Sea Scrolls to Gutenberg*.³² This remarkable event, which had the aim to illustrate the history of western civilization through its most relevant book, the Bible, was curated by a physician called William H. Noah, and toured in a good number of American museums from June 2004 to November 2009, as one can read on its still active website.³³ In his article, Schork reports that “Ink & Blood inc.” was the purchaser of the papyrus, and comments that the papyrus was probably acquired in order to be exhibited at such events because of its appeal not only as one of the first testimonies of the Gospel of John, but also for its palaeographical qualities and visual impact. This last is an interesting point, although the story of the acquisition is far more complex. What follows is an attempted reconstruction based on the information I was able to gather.

Ink & Blood: Dead Sea Scrolls to Gutenberg has had many incarnations. Behind its first steps there was a society, HisStory, LLC, comprising three partners: the above mentioned William H. Noah, Lee Biondi, a manuscript dealer based in Santa Barbara, California, and Bruce C. Ferrini.³⁴ Ferrini was a famous ancient manuscripts collector and dealer and one of the main characters of the

³¹ The two articles are Schork (n. 30), esp. pp. 37-38 on the papyrus at the center of our interest, and K. Fleischer, “Die Teilung von P. Oxy. III 448,” *ZPE* 172 (2010) 201-200.

³² The exhibit took different names and forms. See details below. Its website has a page devoted to the papyrus at the center of our interest, <http://www.inkandblood.com/the-collection/item-detail.php?PRKey=53> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

³³ <http://www.inkandblood.com> (last accessed on 7 April 2015). Possibly, a reshaped version of the exhibit toured in Anaheim Muzeo and elsewhere in 2012; see http://www.muzeo.org/exhibit_past.html. P39 features in a YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzGB1wsaK6o>, last accessed on 7 April 2015) publicizing the event, but the papyrus at that time was certainly in the Green Collection, on which see below, and part of their touring exhibit *Passages I*.

³⁴ See R. Kraft, “Pursuing Papyri and Papyrology by Way of eBay: A Preliminary Report,” available at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rak/papyri/ebay/report-2007/report-2007.html> (last accessed on 7 April 2015), report given to the 25th International Congress of Papyrology (Ann Arbor, 3 August 2007). See also the dossier regarding the Gospel of Judas collected by Roger Pearse: http://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/manuscripts/gospel_of_judas/ (last updated on 30 March 2011, last accessed on 7 April 2015), especially the sections on Ferrini and Ferrel. The exhibit featured also the Marzeah papyrus, on the troublesome discovery and publication of which see Edward C. Cook, “Thoughts on the Marzeah Papyrus,” *Ralph The Sacred River* 25 January 2005 <http://ralphriver.blogspot.co.uk/2005/01/thoughts-on-marzeah-papyrus.html> (last accessed on 7 April 2015). On Lee Biondi see his website including the CV, <http://www.biondirarebooks.com> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

codex Tchacos affair.³⁵ He had often acted on the edge of legality and taken big financial risks, until he encountered serious financial troubles and filed for bankruptcy in September 2005.³⁶ The 2005 bankruptcy was preceded by that of HisStory, LLC in February 2004, after Noah sued the two partners over his share of the profits. According to rumors circulating at the time and posted by the dealer M. van Rijn³⁷ on his website, there was a financial partner that backed up the operation, James Ferrell, who according to Van Rijn was the

³⁵ The codex Tchacos appeared on the Egyptian antiquities market in the late 1970. It contains four Coptic texts belonging to the Gnostic corpus (the Letter of Peter to Philip, a version of the first revelation of James, the Gospel of Judas, and the Book of the Allogenes) and was apparently associated with other three codices, bearing a mathematical treatise in Greek, the Book of Exodus in Greek, and a translation of the letters of Paul in Coptic (some pages of this one went confused with the Tchacos codex). The codex left Egypt at some point, passed through the hands of various dealers, and was offered to different potential purchasers, including some Universities' libraries. In 2000, Bruce Ferrini bought it from Frieda Nussberger-Tchacos, a dealer of Egyptian origins, owner of Gallery Nefer in Geneva. The passage of ownership involved a long and complicated legal controversy between the two; in the meanwhile both dealers had justice problems for their activities (more below on this); see H. Krosney, *The Lost Gospel: The Quest for the Gospel of Judas Iscariot* (Washington, DC 2006), and J.M. Robinson, *The Secrets of Judas. The Story of the Misunderstood Disciple and His Gospel* (San Francisco 2007), both to be read with N. Brodie, "The Lost, Found, Lost again and Found again Gospel of Judas," *Culture Without Context: The Newsletter of the Illicit Antiquities Research Centre* 19 (2006) 17-27. Some dispersed leaves of the Tchacos codex, retrieved later on the antiquities market, were repatriated to Egypt in 2009, while the most substantial part of it is currently deposited at the Bodmer Foundation in Geneva waiting to be restituted to Egypt as established by Nussberger-Tchacos; see H. Krosney, M. Meyer, and G. Wurst, "Preliminary Report on New Fragments of Codex Tchacos," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010) 282-285.

³⁶ On Bruce Ferrini and the codex Tchacos see Krosney (n. 35), esp. chapter 12, and Robinson (n. 35), esp. 6-9 and 59-91; see also Brodie (n. 35), esp. 20-22. For an outline of Bruce Ferrini's career see his obituary by Dorothy Shinn on *Ohio.com Akron Beacon Journal*, 14 May 2010, available at <http://www.ohio.com/news/bruce-ferrini-akron-rare-book-dealer-dies-at-60-1.169713> (last accessed on 7 April 2015) besides the two above-mentioned volumes. On the selling of parts of his collection via eBay see Kraft (n. 34).

³⁷ Van Rijn is an art and antiquities dealer who started denouncing his colleagues, although remaining a controversial personality; see his autobiography, *Hot Art Cold Cash* (London 1993) and the documentary that the BBC dedicated to him, *The Artworld Dodger*, freely available on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t05Q8FQZmKA> in four parts, last accessed on 7 April 2015).

funder and owner of *Ink & Blood*.³⁸ In order to give a more precise idea of the material assembled by *Ink & Blood* and the dealers and collectors involved, it is important to recall that a leaf from the codex of the Pauline letters in Copitic associated with the codex Tchacos and possibly a page from the codex itself were part of the exhibit too.³⁹

Whoever he was, the buyer of P39 must have hoped to make up the very large amount of money paid for it through the sale of tickets for the exhibit and of connected merchandise. For Ferrini, those were the years immediately following the Tchacos codex money losses. It is worth noting that at the bottom of the great marketing operation mounted later around the Gospel of Judas, by the Maecenas Foundation and *National Geographic* magazine, could lie an idea initially developed by Bruce C. Ferrini. This seems to be implied by some information contained in one of the books published as part of the Gospel of Judas campaign, authored by the journalist H. Krosney.⁴⁰ He reports the plans of Ferrini and his companion Bill Veres, consisting of international exhibition tours of the codex, the publication of a facsimile followed by a scholarly edition, and a big media campaign. "Project First Word," as it was named by Ferrini, flopped when the major prospective financial partner, James Ferrell, backed off. The Judas Gospel's case deserves to be remembered and considered as an analogy for the exhibits such as *Ink & Blood* of which our papyrus had been part and more broadly for the wider study of the economics of papyri. In fact, papyri are not only cultural heritage objects, but also commodities exchanged at different rates after their discovery. Moreover, as *Ink & Blood* and other exhibitions and media operations prove, economic enterprises involving complex structures with the aim of generating incomes have been created around papyri

³⁸ The website of van Rijn disappeared at some point but a mirror site of the relevant part is available via the archive.org: <http://archive.today/iTbMP> (last accessed on 7 April 2015: originally posted on 11 November 2005, it was archived through the "Wayback machine").

³⁹ On the recovery of the page from the Pauline letters codex see C. Askeland, "Coptic Text of the Pauline Epistles," *Evangelical Textual Criticism* 16 April 2009 <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.it/2009/04/coptic-text-of-pauline-epistles.html> (last accessed on 7 April 2015); Kasser mentions the finding of a page from the ending of James in R. Kasser, M. Meyer, and G. Wurst, *The Gospel of Judas* (Washington, DC 2006) 74-75: "Just such a decorated page (colophon) appeared mysteriously in the catalog of a roving religious exhibition in the United States, showing a bottom fragment of page 30, containing the final title 'James' ..." I have been unable to access a copy of the *Ink & Blood* exhibition catalogue.

⁴⁰ Krosney (n. 35), chapter 12.

collections or special items.⁴¹ While *Ink & Blood* was certainly a flop, merchandising and the organization of public events are part of normal business activities of museums, libraries, and collections worldwide. These economic aspects eventually connected with the ownership of papyri and other ancient artefacts tend to be forgotten by scholars, since their focus is mostly the cultural value of such artefacts; but it is worth remembering that there is a market and an economy which rely on the circulation of these objects.

Let us go back to the historical outline. As a consequence of these somewhat unclear events, P39 stopped touring with *Ink & Blood* at some point and certainly went back to Sotheby's auction house in London, on December 3, 2008. However, this time it failed to sell. Possibly the price was too high, as the economic recession was at its peak. The reality is that we cannot know what happened because of the private, reserved character of such auctions. At that time, as for the previous auction, there was much discussion especially among biblical scholars on dedicated blogs, forums, and emailing lists.⁴²

Then silence fell upon P39, until it resurfaced as part of the private collection of biblical artefacts of David Green and his family, owners of the American Hobby Lobby Corporation. The story of the formation of this collection, which includes about 40,000 items ranging from cuneiform tablets to the Lunar Bible,⁴³ is very interesting. According to their own account, the Green family started collecting in 2009.⁴⁴ Today their collection tours the world via different exhibits (*Verbum Domini I* and *II* in Vatican City, *Passages I* and *II* throughout the US, and *Book of the Books* in Israel), while awaiting the open-

⁴¹ E.g. the exhibit of the Artemidorus papyrus in Turin from 8 February to 7 May 2006 in connection with the Winter Olympics; see C. Gallazzi, S. Settis (eds), *Le tre vite del papiro di Artemidoro. Voci e sguardi dall'Egitto greco-romano* (Milano 2006), and most recently the Smithsonian coverage on the fragment of the so-called wife of Jesus fragment.

⁴² E.g. on *Evangelical Textual Criticism*, the blog maintained by Peter Head and Tommy Wassermann; see <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.co.uk/2008/11/p39-for-sale-again.html> and <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.co.uk/2008/12/p39-and-0313-failed-to-sell-at-sothebys.html> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁴³ The Lunar Bible is a photochromic micro-imaging version of the King James Bible especially produced to be sent on Apollo 12 mission to the moon; on this fascinating story see D. Trobisch, J. Atwood, J. Kirkpatrick, and R. Crowley, *Verbum Domini II. God's Word Goes out to the Nations* (Washington, DC 2014) 202-206.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., the interview of Steve Green, son of David Green, current CEO of Hobby Lobby and patron of the Museum of the Bible, with S. Hindmann, "We Are Story Tellers First," *Les Enluminures* (Autumn 2013) 32-37.

ing of a dedicated Museum of the Bible in Washington DC in 2017.⁴⁵ The Green family has also founded the Green Scholars Initiative (from now on GSI), directed first by Jerry Pattengale and currently by Michael Holmes. The GSI groups a committee of senior scholars supervising the teaching, learning, and research activities of a wider number of academics and students located in different countries. Clearly, the GSI covers many areas of expertise related to the artefacts of the collection, ranging from the Dead Sea Scrolls to medieval and modern Bible collections.⁴⁶ Currently there is one papyrologist listed as “Scholar” on the GSI: Jeffrey Fish (Distinguished Scholar of Greek Texts, Baylor University).⁴⁷ There is also a dedicated curator of the papyri, Josephine Dru, among the staff members.

Since February 2014, the director of the Green collection is David Trobisch. The first head of the collection, however, and the Green’s mentor for acquisitions from 2009 to 2012 was Scott Carroll, current owner of Scott Carroll Manuscripts & Rare Books, Inc. Before his arrival at the Green collection, Carroll held a similar position at the Van Kampen collection,⁴⁸ another creation of his, according to the lively account of his career that he has disseminated in videos and interviews online.⁴⁹ It is fascinating to try to understand how these two collections were formed *in such a brief period*.⁵⁰ If we trust what Scott Carroll says in interviews and on his Twitter account about how he operates on the market, some acquisitions must have been made directly from private collectors in Europe, Turkey, and elsewhere.⁵¹ But I wonder how such connections,

⁴⁵ For an overview, see the main portal of the Museum of the Bible, which gives access to the different exhibitions’ websites: <http://www.museumofthebible.org> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁴⁶ See the GSI website <http://www.greenscholarsinitiative.org> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁴⁷ Dirk Obbink was a member of the GSI until recently.

⁴⁸ See the collections’ website at <http://www.solagroup.org/vkc.html>; about 5,000 papyrus fragments, dating from the pharaonic to the 8th century AD, are said to be held in the collection. Similarly to David Green, Robert Van Kampen (1938-1999), founder of the eponymous collection, had a deep interest in the Bible and was animated by a profound evangelical Christian faith.

⁴⁹ See for instance the two videos inserted into the online article G. Thomas, “Green Collection Uncovers Journey of God’s Word,” *Christian Broadcasting Network* 7 April 2012, <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2012/April/Green-Collection-Uncovers-Journey-of-Gods-Word/> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁵⁰ This point has been recently noted also by Pintaudi et al. (n. 15) 360.

⁵¹ See R. Mazza, “Papyri, the Bible, and the Formation of the Green Collection,” *Faces & Voices* 16 February 2014, <http://facesandvoices.wordpress.com/2014/02/16/papyri-the-bible-and-the-formation-of-the-green-collection/> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

conversations, and, later, purchase agreements could be established. In other words, the *realia* of these transactions remain opaque to the general public.

Our papyrus was bought by the Green family in February 2010.⁵² It was displayed in *Passages I*, the exhibit curated by Scott Carroll that toured in the US from 2011 on. In 2010-2011, it was also used for both teaching and research purposes at the University of Mary Hardyn-Baylor, under the supervision of Renate Hood, professor of Christian Studies at that University and scholar of the Green Scholars Initiative. That she was a GSI scholar is mentioned in her university website and was also mentioned in a dedicated Green Scholars Initiative webpage that I have seen, but which has since been removed. In any case, Renate Hood gives an enlightening statement on the Green Scholars Initiative “vision” at that time in an interview published in her University’s bulletin:

“The vision is let’s get the undergraduate students involved and let’s get the smaller schools involved who normally do not get these opportunities,” Hood said. “Let’s get them excited about the word of God and the world of the Bible. I love that vision.”⁵³

The aim of the Green Scholars Initiative to introduce papyri to those hitherto un- or underexposed to them has a laudable and uncontroversial aspect. Translated into current university rhetoric, papyri enhance the students’ experience, which is certainly true. When the papyri are biblical, as in the case of our P39, for the Green Scholars and others they also enhance the level of students’ interest for the word of God and the Bible. This leads us to the religious meanings and added values Biblical manuscripts have for some collectors, scholars, students, and members of the wider, general public and how they impact the politics and economics connected with these artefacts. The wish to procure excitement for the word of God and the world of the Bible is pursued by the Green family and their collaborators through a complex and interesting cultural enterprise that includes the collecting of artefacts related to the Bible, their display in popular exhibits, and the promotion of research and teaching

⁵² Personal communication via email from Josephine Dru, on 21 May 2014. See also G. Fabrikant, “Craft Shop Family Buys Up Ancient Bibles for Museum,” *International New York Times* online edition, 11 June 2010 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/12/business/12bibles.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>, last accessed on 7 April 2015). Also another papyrus originally sold by Crozer Seminary in 2003 is now with the Green Collection, *P.Oxy.* 11.1351 (personal communication via email from Josephine Dru on 6 June 2014).

⁵³ B. Montgomery, “Bible Scholars Study Manuscripts,” *The Bells*, 29 March 2011, available at <http://thebells.umhb.edu/2011/03/29/bible-scholars-study-manuscript/> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

methods that rely on them. The emotional, religious, and ideological investment in these artefacts in cases like those of the Green collection is special and has a direct effect on their economic value. As we have seen in the case of *P.Oxy.* 15.1780 (P39), the Christian content of it played a major role first in the record price it reached on auction and secondly in the way the manuscript was commercialised in public exhibits.

I find the vicissitudes of *P.Oxy.* 15.1780 (P39) very interesting in many respects. First of all, they enlighten the close ties linking papyrology to the search for and study of biblical and early Christian texts. Many of the scholars travelling to Egypt from the 19th century onwards have been moved by religious and biblical interests: C. von Tischendorf, A. and M. Smith (A. Lewis and M. Gibson), J. Rendel Harris, C. Schmidt, and A. Deissmann, to mention only a few.⁵⁴ One of the reasons why Grenfell and Hunt chose to excavate in Oxyrhynchus was the historical background of the city, which was promising not only for the retrieval of classical literary texts and everyday writings of ancient people, but also for that of early Christian writings.⁵⁵ They proved to be right, as we all know. The Oxford Dioscuri were careful media communicators and always played up the importance of all three kinds of texts in promoting their work and research.⁵⁶ In particular, they perfectly knew which one of the three to use for stimulating funding from collectors. The first letter A.S. Hunt sent to Mrs Rylands after her purchase of the Crawford collection of papyri in August 1901 is revelatory in this respect (see Appendix 2.1). Mrs Enriqueta Rylands and her deceased husband were devoted non-conformist Christians. They actively promoted the study of the Bible through different initiatives such as collecting copies of the text and sponsoring evangelical activities in the UK and abroad. This biblical and theological passion culminated in the foundation of a library dedicated to the memory of her husband by Mrs Rylands.⁵⁷ In order

⁵⁴ On these connections see most recently Gange (n. 11); see also J. Soskice, *Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Found the Hidden Gospels* (London 2009), with a lively account of the interactions between the first European scholars going to Egypt at that time. On Deissmann in Egypt, see R. Mazza, "Graeco-Roman Egypt at Manchester: The Formation of the Rylands Papyri Collection," in Schubert (n. 22) 505-506, and A. Gerber, *Deissmann the Philologist* (Berlin and New York 2010) 137-143.

⁵⁵ See B.P. Grenfell, "Oxyrhynchus and Its Papyri," *Egypt Exploration Fund: Archaeological Report* 6 (1896-7), reprinted in "Excavations at Oxyrhynchus (1896-1907)," in A.K. Bowman, R.A. Coles, N. Gonis, D. Obbink, and P.J. Parsons (eds.), *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* (London 2007) 345-346.

⁵⁶ See D. Montserrat, "News Reports: The Excavations and Their Journalistic Coverage," in Bowman et al. (n. 55) 28-39.

⁵⁷ See D.A. Farnie, "Enriqueta Augustina Rylands (1843-1908), Founder of the John Rylands Library," *BJRL* 71 (1979) 16-32; id., "John Rylands of Manchester," *BJRL* 75/2

to get funds for the forthcoming campaign of 1901/1902, Hunt reminded the wealthy Manchester lady of the weaknesses in her collection in a few, carefully constructed sentences, where the lack of theological texts appear in the first position of a longer list.

The biography of P39 could be compared to that of a similar papyrus in the Rylands collection, *P.Ryl.* 3 457 (= P52). Both papyri come from Grenfell and Hunt's activities in Egypt and are small fragments of the Gospel of John. They are both from codex leaves and have received great attention from scholars and the public in general because of their early dating. But there are also differences in the histories of these fragments. Having rested in the John Rylands Library since its purchase in 1920 and following arrival to Manchester, so far P52 has experienced much less threats than P39. Any time a papyrus goes on sale, there is the risk for it to end up in a collection with poor policies on conservation and access, or even worse for it to be acquired by someone who does not care at all about these issues. The Tchacos codex, for instance, has dramatically deteriorated in the course of years, passing from one dealer to another; Bruce Ferrini dismembered and sold fragments from it and stored the codex in a freezer for a while.⁵⁸ The lack of information about the ownership and location of P39 after the first Sotheby's auction until 2010 is a warning for papyrologists to exercise more pressure on collectors, collections, and dealers to find effective ways to prevent the disappearing of vital historical evidence. Papyri may be in the legal ownership of individuals or institutions, but they are first and foremost humanity's cultural patrimony, which must be preserved for future generations.

The selling of the New Testament fragment and other papyri from Crozer Theological Seminary is not an isolated case. The Bodmer Foundation, for instance, put on sale the famous *P.Bodmer* XIV and XV that were transferred to the Vatican Library in 2006.⁵⁹ The history of the sale is very interesting. It appears that some approaches to the Bodmer Foundation were made by the

(1993) 17-37.

⁵⁸ See Kasser et al. (n. 39) 47-76; Brodie (n. 35) 22-23; on new fragments emerged from the antiquities market see also Krosney et al. (n. 35) 282-294.

⁵⁹ P75, LDAB 2895: two pages from a codex that originally contained the Gospels of Luke and John, and one of the most ancient testimony of the order of the two books in the New Testament, since *P.Bodmer* XV bears the end of Luke followed by John 1. It dates to 200-250 according to Clarysse and Orsini (n. 3) 456-57 and 471. Other fragments from the same codex have been published most recently, see M.-L. Lakmann, "Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75) Neue Fragmente," *Museum Helveticum* 64 (2007) 22-41, and J.M. Robinson, "Fragments from the Cartonage of P75," *HTR* 101 (2008) 231-252.

Holy See in 1999 without success.⁶⁰ Later on, in 2006, the Bodmer Foundation entrusted Christie's of London with the private sale of the abovementioned papyri, not without criticisms from the academic side.⁶¹ Despite competing institutions and the high price asked, the manuscripts were finally acquired by the American magnate Frank J. Hanna III, who presented them to Pope Benedict XVI; the papyri are now stored in the Vatican Library. Later on, *P. Bodmer XXIV* was also sold, to the Green family. The sale was negotiated privately, and this time academics learnt about the transfer only after the papyrus went on exhibit in Rome in 2014.⁶²

Although details on transactions involving papyri remain in most cases hidden,⁶³ when big auction houses are involved prices are sometimes available through catalogues and online databases. They form an interesting pool of data through which we can observe the economics of papyri more closely. Let us start considering the prices realized for the Oxyrhynchus papyri sold in 2003 with $\text{¥}39$: lot 94 went from an estimated \$4,000-6,000 to an actual sale price of \$33,000 (ca. 450% more); lot 99, two Christian papyri, went from \$10,000-15,000 to \$142,000 (ca. 846% more); lot 92 went from \$4,000-6,000 to \$25,000 (ca. 315% more); lot 95 and 93 went each from \$3,000-5,000 to \$20,400 (ca. 307% more); lot 100 went from \$4,000-6,000 to \$31,200 (ca. 420% more); lot 97, our Gospel of John's fragment, went from \$125,000-175,000 to \$450,000 (ca. 157% more).⁶⁴

⁶⁰ I am following the account given by L.J. Spiteri, "His Eminence, Cardinal Raffaele Farina, SBD, and the Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV," in A.M. Piazzoni (ed.), *Studi in onore del cardinale Raffaele Farina 2* (Vatican City 2013) 1093-1097.

⁶¹ See e.g. A. Beaumont, "War of Words Erupts over Sale of Ancient Texts," *Swiss.info* 28 October 2006, with comments from Paul Schubert (available at <http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/war-of-words-erupts-over-sale-of-ancient-texts/5527548>, last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁶² See Trobisch et al. (n. 43) 19-21. I sent an email to Paul Schubert after I visited the exhibit in April 2014, and he was unaware of the sale. The information was circulated later on through the papy-list.

⁶³ E.g. Westminster College, Cambridge, has recently sold the Codex Climaci Rescriptus and the Cairo Genizah fragments in its possession. The Codex Climaci Rescriptus failed to sell on 2 July 2009 at Sotheby's, but was purchased by the Green family one year later. The Cairo Genizah fragments have been bought by the Bodleian Library (Oxford) and Cambridge University Library in 2013 through a joint fundraising initiative. The Oxyrhynchus papyri sold by United Theological Seminar, Dayton, Ohio, in 2009 are also with the Green Collection: *P.Oxy.* 11.1353, *P.Oxy.* 12.1459, *P.Oxy.* 14.1678, 1688, 1728, 1756, 1775, and 1779. In all these cases information on the prices is unavailable.

⁶⁴ See the list in footnote 27; data retrieved through Sotheby's online databank available at <http://www.sothebys.com/en.html> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

The Schøyen collection sold 60 manuscripts, among them papyri, through Sotheby's on 12 July 2012.⁶⁵ The Adler papyri (lot 3) were bought for the University of Copenhagen and joined the Carlsberg collection. They were sold for £457,250, with an increase of about 128% over the estimated price. Similar increases were obtained on the sale of lot 1, fragments of the *Iliad* previously in the private collection of Michael Fackelmann, and lot 3, the so-called Wyman fragment, a parchment with lines from St. Paul's letter to the Romans.⁶⁶ The substantial increase in the price at these two auctions is due to the combination of supply and demand: demand for papyri of this kind – in good condition, with important texts on them, and of documented provenance – is high, but supply is very low. The supply is especially low for papyri bearing Biblical texts like the one at the centre of this article. Early Christian texts predating Constantine the Great are very rare for different reasons, ranging from the scarcity of Christians living in Egypt at that time to the uses of written texts they made in the first three century of their history, and so on.⁶⁷ While supply is low, demand for such pieces is particularly high, because of the special cultural, religious, and ideological meanings papyri of this type have in Western societies and in particular for some individuals and groups in them, as I already explained.

Provenance is a very important factor in price formation too.⁶⁸ Papyri are rare commodities because in the course of their modern history they have gone

⁶⁵ *The History of Script: Sixty Important Manuscript Leaves from the Schøyen Collection*, 10 July 2012, Sotheby's London available on line at <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2012/the-history-of-script-sixty-important-manuscript-leaves-from-the-schuyen-collection.html> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁶⁶ Michael Fackelmann was a conservator of the National Library of Vienna around 1970-1980, who became also a collector and dealer. He sold papyri to many collections in Europe (e.g. Lecce University, see "La collezione dei papiri dell'Universita' degli Studi di Lecce [PUL]" available at http://www.museopapirologico.eu/?page_id=1194) and the US (e.g. Princeton University; see A. Hanson, "Papyri in the Princeton University Collections: The New Acquisitions," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 44/2 [1983] 159-169). The Wyman fragment (Nestle-Aland 0220/20220) is now in the Green collection.

⁶⁷ See R. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton 2009) 1-24.

⁶⁸ On the influence of documented provenance on prices see S.R.M. Mackenzie, *Going, Going, Gone: Regulating the Market in Illicit Antiquities* (Leicester 2005) 37-38; N. Brodie, "The Effect of an Artefact's Provenance on its Saleability," *Culture without Context* 19 (2006) 4-6; id., "Provenance and Price: Autoregulation of the Antiquities Market?" *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 20 (2014) 427-444.

through a slow process of “singularization,” to use Kopytoff’s terminology.⁶⁹ The cultural meaning modern societies attribute to papyri and other antiquities has transformed them into “singular collectibles” that can be sold only under very special circumstances regulated by national and international laws, generally forbidding in any case such transactions for items that left Egypt after April 1972.⁷⁰ As a result of their cultural heritage status, papyri with documented provenance are mostly in the possession of institutions that as a rule are not going to sell them, while recently found items cannot appear openly on the market because of current legislation. This situation has an impact on the price of papyri of well-documented provenance when they appear on sale. The point is corroborated by dealers’ experience; for instance, in a recent paper on the antiquities market, James Ede (of Charles Ede Ltd., London) explains: “You have only to look at the disparity in values between objects with provable provenance and those without – even when those have long collection history which cannot be proved – to see how much store the trade now sets by legitimacy.”⁷¹

Now provenance is a complicated question. I use the term to indicate the history of a papyrus (or any other ancient objects) from its archaeological finding to its present location in a museum, library, antiquities shop, or even private house. Very often, details of such history are incomplete, lost, or obscure. For instance, it is unclear from which Oxyrhynchus campaign P39 came from, and we cannot even exclude the possibility it was purchased by Grenfell in 1920.⁷² Moreover the fragment’s ownership and location present some obscurities from 2003 to 2010. However, we are sure that the piece left

⁶⁹ On the dynamics of “singularization,” i.e. the transformation of commodities into higher-priced commodities of special, controlled status, see Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things” (n. 1) 80-83.

⁷⁰ The date of the enforcement of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 14 November 1970. On the legal complexities related with the circulation of antiquities, and the different ways the Convention and other international initiatives are interpreted and enforced see most recently J. Ulph and I. Smith, *The Illicit Trade in Art and Antiquities: International Recovery and Criminal and Civil Liability* (Oxford and Portland 2012) 27-77.

⁷¹ J. Ede, “Dealers: Trade, Traffic and the Consequences of Demonisation,” paper read at the colloquium *To Publish or Not to Publish? A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Politics, Ethics and Economics of Ancient Artefacts* (Manchester, 25 October 2014) available at <https://facesandvoices.wordpress.com/to-publish-or-not-to-publish/programme/james-edel/> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁷² See above, n. 6. The second hypothesis seems less probable because in theory only the papyri belonging to the Egypt Exploration Fund could be distributed to sponsors.

Egypt legally not later than 1920, and this makes its provenance particularly appealing for the antiquities market under current legislation and in the current cultural climate.

Sometimes papyri do appear on the market or in academic publications with very few information about their provenance, which may even reveal to be unreliable. Let us consider some recent cases. The first is that of the so-called Jesus's wife papyrus. The existence of a Coptic fragment with sentences attributed to a lost apocryphal gospel where Jesus mentioned his wife was announced in 2012 by Karen King during a session of the 10th International Congress of Coptic Studies in Rome; unsurprisingly, the fragment ignited a hot debate for its content and material aspect, and some papyrologists and historians of the Church doubted it was genuine.⁷³ Cultural heritage experts raised questions on the provenance of the papyrus too, although King made a good effort in reporting the contents of the documents relating to the collecting history since the online publication of a provisional pre-print edition of the fragment.⁷⁴ Some details were also added in an interview that appeared in the Smithsonian online magazine.⁷⁵ The definitive publication of the papyrus in the *Harvard Theological Review*⁷⁶ confirmed what she has asserted since the first announcement: the fragment belongs to a private owner, who wants to remain anonymous, and nothing is known about its archaeological finding. There are only a few recent documents relating to its collecting history that King has seen. From them, it appeared that the fragment was bought in 1999 together with five other papyri from a previous German collector, Mr. Hans-Ulrich Laukamp, who purchased the batch in 1963 in Potsdam (East Germany); in the early 1980 the manuscripts were seen by Profs. Peter Munro and Gerhard Fecht of the Berlin Freie Universität, both since deceased. After

However, we cannot rule out the possibility that in practice there was some confusion in the handling of the finds.

⁷³ See e.g. "On the so-called Gospel of Jesus Wife: Some Preliminary Thoughts by Hugo Lundhaug and Alin Suciu," *Alin Suciu Blog* 26 September 2012, <http://alin-suciu.com/2012/09/26/on-the-so-called-gospel-of-jesus-wife-some-preliminary-thoughts-by-hugo-lundhaug-and-alin-suciu/> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁷⁴ "Jesus Said to Them, 'My Wife...': A New Coptic Gospel Papyrus," *HTR* (2012) 2-3. See, e.g., the critics moved by D. Gill, "The Gospel of Jesus' Wife from an Old German Collection," *Looting Matters* 19 September 2012, <http://lootingmatters.blogspot.it/2012/09/the-gospel-of-jesus-wife-from-old.html> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁷⁵ A. Sabar, "The Inside Story of a Controversial New Text on Jesus," *The Smithsonian.com* 18 September 2012 available at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-inside-story-of-a-controversial-new-text-about-jesus-41078791> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁷⁶ King (n. 74) 153-154.

the circulation of images of the other papyri forming the dossier, the hypothesis that the papyrus is in fact a forgery, and as a consequence the collecting history documents too, has prevailed among scholars.⁷⁷ Whatever the end of the story will be, it demonstrates that modern documents concerning the collecting history of manuscripts are very difficult to evaluate and represent a challenge for scholars as well as for dealers and collectors.⁷⁸

Equally alarming is the acquisition history of a papyrus currently in the Green collection as it has emerged after almost a year of research I have conducted on it. When I visited the exhibit *Verbum Domini II* organised by the Museum of the Bible in Vatican City in 2014, my attention was attracted by a small Coptic fragment of Galatians 2, GC.MS. 462.⁷⁹ I recognized that the papyrus was the same as one on sale through eBay in October 2012. At that time Brice Jones published a post in his blog, with a transcript and some commentary of the papyrus.⁸⁰ This led some cultural heritage bloggers to criticize Jones' behaviour, since it provided more reasons for the dealers to increase the price and to attract possible purchasers; but more worrying was the fact that the eBay seller, MixAntik, was in fact operating illegally from Turkey.⁸¹ In the light of this background, I posed the question of the papyrus' provenance to David Trobisch, director of the Green Collection. The first answer I received was that the papyrus was not purchased on eBay, but was bought by the Green collection in 2013 "through a trusted dealer that we have done business with

⁷⁷ See the compelling arguments made by C. Askeland, "A Fake Coptic John and Its Implications for the 'Gospel of Jesus's Wife,'" *Tyndale Bulletin* 65 (2014) 1-10, with references to the longer debate. The latest issue of *New Testament Studies* (61.3 [2015]) is entirely devoted to the "Gospel of Jesus' Wife" fragment, with articles by C. Askeland and others.

⁷⁸ On the pitfalls of documents accompanying the selling of antiquities see MacKenzie (n. 68), ch. 2.

⁷⁹ See Trobisch et al. (n. 43) 42 with figure 28.

⁸⁰ "A Coptic New Testament Papyrus Fragment" originally posted in *The Quaternion* on 29 October 2012, now migrated to <http://www.bricecjones.com/blog/a-coptic-new-testament-papyrus-fragment-galatians-2-for-sale-on-ebay> (last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁸¹ The critique was moved by Dorothy Loebel King and others. On MixAntik and its different incarnations see: "The Tale of the Very Dodgy Papyri," *Dorothy King's PhDiva* 14 December 2012 <http://phdiva.blogspot.ca/2012/12/the-tale-of-very-dodgy-papyri.html>; "More Dodgy Papyri..." *Dorothy King's PhDiva* 20 December 2012 <http://phdiva.blogspot.it/2012/12/more-dodgy-papyri.html>; "Yet More Dodgy Papyri..." *Dorothy King's PhDiva* 1 January 2013 <http://phdiva.blogspot.it/2013/01/yet-more-dodgy-dealings.html> (all last accessed on 7 April 2015).

over many years.”⁸² The situation, however, became more complicated later on. In November 2014, I was informed that further researches in the collection archives revealed that GC.MS. 462 came from the David Robinson’s papyri sold through a Christie’s auction in 2011.⁸³

Christie’s catalogue of that auction⁸⁴ describes lot 1 as composed by 59 packets of papyri fragments, a number but not all of which coming from the collection bequeathed to the University of Mississippi by David M. Robinson, late professor at that University. The papyri of the Mississippi University were de-accessioned by the institution in the early 1980 and dispersed among different purchasers.⁸⁵ Two of the lot’s 59 packets are stated to come from the collection of P. Deaton. Interestingly, this Christie’s lot is the same from which the recently published Sappho fragments, now with the Green collection (*P.G.C. inv. 105*) and an anonymous London collector (*P.Sapph. Obbink*), derive. These came in the shape of “domestic or industrial cartonnage” before the London collector and his staff dismantled it, restored the fragments, and decided to re-sell some of them without realising their content.⁸⁶ This new piece of information on GC.MS. 462 poses questions of very difficult solution because of the reserved nature of auction sales: it would be very interesting to know how a papyrus went from one of the most famous auction houses in the world

⁸² Personal communication via email dated 10 May 2014.

⁸³ In an email dated 18 November 2014, David Trobisch wrote to me the following: “Our research has since shown that the Gal fragment came from the David Robinson collection, 1950, and was sold through Christie’s in 2011. Why it showed up on eBay, I don’t know. But it was offered to us through regular channels. We have export licenses, it went through US customs, the IRS evaluation was done without raising any flags when it was donated by the Green family to the Museum of the Bible collection.”

⁸⁴ *Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts Including a Selection from the Malcolm Jr. Churchill Collection and Photo Books from the Calle Collection, Monday 28 November 2011* (London 2011) 2, reproduced also on line: <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/books-manuscripts/a-collection-of-greek-and-coptic-papyri-5504745-details.aspx>. The lot sold for £7,500, i.e. £ 2,500 more than the highest estimate.

⁸⁵ See J.M. Robinson, *The Story of the Bodmer Papyri: From the First Monastery’s Library in Upper Egypt to Geneva and Dublin* (Cambridge 2011) 92-93.

⁸⁶ D. Obbink, “Provenance, Authenticity and Text of the New Sappho Papyri,” Paper Read at the Society of Classical Studies Panel: New Fragments of Sappho, New Orleans 9 January 2015, available at <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/Fragments/SCS.Sappho.2015.Obbink.paper.pdf> (last accessed on 7 April 2015); see p. 3 on the quality of the cartonnage and p. 2 on the recovery and following selling of some of the fragments. See also D. Obbink, “Interim Notes on ‘Two Poems of Sappho,’” *ZPE* 194 (2015) 5. The Sappho papyri were previously published without any information on their provenance, S. Burris, J. Fish, and D. Obbink, “New Fragments of Book 1 of Sappho,” *ZPE* 189 (2014) 1-28; D. Obbink, “Two Poems by Sappho,” *ZPE* 189 (2014) 32-49.

to a Turkish seller who was operating without any awareness of his country's legislation on the selling and exporting of antiquities and communicated in a very poor English with his possible clients.⁸⁷ What kind of relationship there is between MixAntik and the Green collection's trusted dealer who sold them the piece in 2013 is another point which will remain obscure, unless the director of that collection will reveal more details on the acquisition documents that came with the Galatians 2 fragment.

Surprising details on the way Christie's takes care of the ancient manuscripts sold in their rooms emerged from email conversations with Eugenio Donadoni of the manuscripts department in London. I asked Donadoni if an inventory and images of the pieces contained in the above mentioned 59 folders were available for consultation; I found it odd that nobody noticed the presence of a New Testament fragment among the Robinson papyri, because they are not too common and the Robinson papyri have been seen by papyrologists in the past.⁸⁸ It turned out that Christie's has no record of that lot, except the scanty one page description published in the catalogue, since there is no firm policy on the keeping of images and data of the manuscripts on sale. It is evident that the lack of inventories and images constitutes a serious threat to the manuscripts' collection history and can lead to the loss of important information concerning the legal (or illegal) provenance of artefacts. Because of the poor status of the documentation available, how can we be certain that the Galatians 2 fragment, for instance, was part of the Robinson papyri and not of the Deaton's collection or any other in that lot?

The cases I have discussed demonstrate how complicated it sometimes is to establish the provenance of papyri and as a result what kind of challenges we face when publishing them. To study and to publish are always parts of a longer chain of actions involving the manuscripts in question, from their finding to the present location and ownership; as Johnson has recalled in his article on the EEF papyri and artefacts, we must be aware of how these were found, exported, and distributed to institutions and donors, recognizing the positive and negative sides of those enterprises, because we are part of those stories.⁸⁹ Now, a papyrus with an unclear acquisition history poses an ethical problem to scholars. To publish a papyrus of undocumented provenance is

⁸⁷ Dorothy Lobel King has kindly forwarded me emails exchanges entertained at that time with the dealer.

⁸⁸ W.H. Willis, "The New Collection of Papyri at the University of Mississippi," *Pap. Congr. X* (1964) 381-382 gives many details on the quality and contents of the papyri; for more information on the acquisition circumstances and history of the collection, see Robinson (n. 85) 83-94.

⁸⁹ Johnson (n. 2), esp. 220-222.

a substantial step in making it more legitimate and more presentable on the market and in the wider community engaged with the item, from academics to the general audience. When some of the actions that have brought a papyrus to us for study and publication are unethical, or – even worse – illegal, we end up being partially responsible for them. Besides ethics, we must also consider the law, because to give expertise on and to publish illegally acquired antiquities can have serious legal consequences. In sum, the engagement with such objects puts academics in a very precarious position in many respects.⁹⁰

The difficulties connected with decisions regarding the publication of papyri with poorly documented (if not undocumented) provenance are even more acute when they are of great academic interest: is scholarship more important than ethics and the law? Would it be possible to find a compromise between respecting the laws and ethical codes and saving objects of unclear provenance from oblivion? The recent case of the new Palladas epigrams papyrus shows that we are still looking for firm answers on these matters. The codex, acquired by the Beinecke Library in 1996, has been published recently in the American Studies in Papyrology series with few and vague information on its acquisition circumstances,⁹¹ which seems at odds with the policy established in the ASP Resolution Concerning the Illicit Trade of Papyri of 2007.

⁹⁰ See N. Brodie, “Consensual Relations? Academic Involvement in the Illegal Trade in Ancient Manuscripts,” in P. Green, S. MacKenzie (eds.), *Criminology and Archaeology: Studies in Looted Antiquities* (Oxford 2009) 41–58.

⁹¹ K. Wilson, *New Epigrams of Palladas: A Fragmentary Papyrus Codex (P.CtYBR inv.4000)* (Ann Arbor 2013). In the introduction (footnote 1, p. 1), the author states that the codex and other fragments are accessed in the Beinecke’s inventory as “Acquisition 1996a.” The papyri came into a box containing also other fragments of documentary nature, dated to different centuries and from different Egyptian sites. This box was purchased from Gallery Nefer, the Zurich gallery owned by Frieda Nussberger-Tchacos. He concludes: “There is no discernible coherence to the items that comprise this acquisition, and it is likely they were thrown together, from a variety of sources, by an earlier collector or dealer. The box of fragments was said to have come from a recently (in 1996) deceased collector of Egyptian artifacts who formed the collection in the 1950s and 60s in Geneva.” In view of the profile of Frieda Nussberger-Tchacos, who has been condemned by an Italian court of law in relation to illicit export of antiquities in 2002 and has been also involved in the Gospel of Judas affair, the information as reported in this volume does not seem to me to constitute a solid acquisition circumstances dossier. On the investigation involving Frieda Nussberger-Tchacos see “Getty Museum Returns to Italy 2005–2007,” published in *Cultural Heritage Resource*, 27 July 2009 (<https://www.stanford.edu/group/chr/drupal/ref/getty-museum-returns-to-italy-2005-2007>, last accessed on 7 April 2015); for the involvement in the Gospel of Judas affair see n. 35 above, with bibliography.

This forbids members of the Society from participating directly and indirectly in the buying or selling of Egyptian antiquities exported from Egypt after 24 April 1972; in section 2, it also seeks to prevent them from acting in a way to add significant value to objects from illegal excavations or exported from Egypt after 1972, and to exclude the publishing of such material under the Society's auspices "unless the author, or curator includes a frank and thorough discussion of the provenance of every item." In the case of the Yale codex, the reader is only given the information that it was purchased in 1996 (i.e. after 1972), with very scanty details on the acquisition circumstances.⁹² But there is more. Does a brief statement saying that a recently acquired papyrus is from documented, legal provenance given by the editor in an article or other publication suffice to make it such? I personally think it does not, but opinions clearly diverge as the examples discussed in this article have shown.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that papyrologists do have a prominent role in the biographies of papyri. Editorial boards, publishers, museums, libraries, and professional societies have the power to strengthen and enforce policies in order to exercise control over the circulation, handling, and publication of papyri and as a consequence to curb the illicit market of antiquities from Egypt. I personally believe that the magic of Egypt and her world of mummies, masks, papyri, and other treasures cannot erase the important issues at stake when we evaluate – to elaborate from Johnson's words recalled in the opening of this article – the fascinating stories about the discovery, recovery, excavation, politics, and economics of papyri and the role we, scholars, decide to play in them.

Appendix

1. *John Rylands Library Archive, correspondence to Henry Guppy (head librarian from 1900 to 1948), JRL/4/1/1/1905/Grenfell*

Letter of B.P. Grenfell to F.L. Griffith, 2 May 1897⁹³

⁹²The ASP resolution is available online (<http://tebtunis.berkeley.edu/ASPresolution.pdf>, last accessed on 7 April 2015).

⁹³The letter's date has no year, but a second hand has added later in pencil "1905?" However, it is clear from the content that the year certainly was 1897. The letter has been found in the correspondence of Henry Guppy, but predates the acquisition of the Crawford manuscripts; therefore my hypothesis is that it was attached to one of the many letters of Griffith to him. Griffith held an honorary position in Egyptology at Manchester from 1896 to 1908, but moved later to Oxford where his papers should have ended up.

Queen's College Oxford, May 2
My Dear Griffith,

Many thanks for Beni Hasan III⁹⁴ which I found on arrival here.

Yes, we have got through 270 out of 273 boxes,⁹⁵ including everything of real value. It was a difficult business as De Morgan⁹⁶ for some time insisted they must have half, but eventually he was satisfied with the 150 big rolls which I had selected for him.⁹⁷ Of course the bulk of the whole collection is very fragmentary but there are several thousand which aren't, so we shall have to be very cautious in announcing our finds. An account will appear in the Times towards the end of the work, but (between ourselves) this rather understates the value of the find.

I am sorry there is very little demotic in our find, nothing, so far as I remember, except fragments and of course nothing earlier than 1st century AD nor have I been able to do much for you in buying. I tried to get the 23 large demotic rolls (two perhaps literary) which Ali⁹⁸ has, for £120, but he wouldn't take it, though I am pretty sure it made an impression on him and I should not be surprised if I get them for that price in a year or two when he is tired of waiting. Revillout⁹⁹ came out but I gather he didn't buy very much. Prices for [corrected from an original "per"] papyri are beyond almost every one now. The only demotic things I have are some which Newberry¹⁰⁰ picked up

⁹⁴ F.L. Griffith, *Beni Hasan 3* (London 1896).

⁹⁵ These should be the boxes of the Oxyrhynchus first campaign that, however, amounted to 280 according to Montserrat (n. 50) 31. According to Montserrat there are no surviving manuscripts by the two papyrologists relating to that campaign in Oxford. In the excavation report of 1896/7 Grenfell states that the papyri arrived at Oxford only in June, while this letter was written in May; my guess is that maybe the boxes were sorted out in Cairo before being sent to Britain, see Grenfell (n. 55) 351.

⁹⁶ Jacques De Morgan (1857-1924), French civil engineer, archaeologist, and pre-history scholar, was the General Director of the Egyptian Antiquity Service from 1892 to 1897. Cf. M. Bierbrier (ed.), *Who Was Who in Egyptology* (London 2012) 386.

⁹⁷ The 150 rolls left to the Gizeh Museum are mentioned in Grenfell (n. 55) 351.

⁹⁸ Ali el-Arabi or Ali Farag, papyrus dealers based in Giza. See Breccia (n. 25) 259-261; Davoli (n. 13) 104.

⁹⁹ The reading of the name seems certain, but I am not sure this indicates Eugène Revillout (1843-1913), the famous French Egyptologist and Demotist; cf. Bierbrier (ed.) (n. 96) 462.

¹⁰⁰ Percy E. Newberry (1868-1949), Egyptologist who worked in close contact with Amelia Edwards, Flinders Petrie, and Griffith, and later had appointments in Liverpool, London, and Cambridge. From 1890 to 1894 he excavated in Beni Hasan and El-Bersha,

cheap at Luxor and sent to me. They are 1 good sized ~~roll~~ contract with Greek docket, written on both sides, and 4 or 5 smaller rolls more or less broken but which may fit together. They all came from Gebelén and are 2nd century BC.¹⁰¹ They cost £4. If you care to have them at that price, I will sent^(sic) you them and return £46 (when you can come and fetch them), if not I will return you the £50, hoping in any case you will lend it me again next winter when inshallah I shall have better luck.

Hoping to see you some time this summer yours ever B.P.G.

2. JRL/6/1/6/2/8 correspondence between A.S. Hunt and Mrs Rylands

An envelope containing three letters of A.S. Hunt to Mrs Rylands and one letter written by the secretary of Mrs Rylands, J.W. Kiddle, to Hunt. The letters were later also copied into a miscellaneous register, in which a section entitled “Copies of letters in connection with the Crawford Manuscripts” collects copies of the correspondence between Mrs Rylands and scholars who were working on those manuscripts and were alarmed by the change of ownership (JRL/6/1/6/1/6).

2.1. Letter of Hunt to Mrs Rylands, 9/10/1901

Queen’s college,
Oxford
Oct. 9 1901

Dear Madam,

then in Thebes until 1901. See Brian Fagan, “Newberry, Percy Edward (1869–1949),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. Oct 2006 (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35210>, last accessed 7 April 2015); Bierbrier (n. 96) 402-403.

¹⁰¹ *P.Ryl.Dem.* 3.15-36 are all from Gebelén. In the general introduction to these papyri Griffith explains (p. 130): “to those obtained by Lord Crawford are here added a few papyri which had reached England separately: so closely were the two batches connected that some of the fragments of the second series actually fitted lacunae in the former.” However, nothing is added in what follows that helps to distinguish between these two batches. It may be possible that the papyri mentioned by Grenfell were purchased by Griffith and then given to the Rylands Library; this would explain the presence of this letter in the John Rylands Library Archive. However, I have not found any other proof that this is what happened. For the Hellenistic archives from Pathyris/Gebelén see K.Vandorpe and S. Waebens, *Reconstructing Pathyris’ Archives: A Multi-cultural Community in Hellenistic Egypt* (Brussels 2009).

Mr Edmond, Lord Crawford's librarian, has asked me to write to you with reference to the publication of the Greek papyri which you have recently purchased. Dr Grenfell and I had jointly undertaken their publication for Lord Crawford, and we have at different times copied a number of them. But we have been so much occupied with previous engagements that we have not really been able to get very far. The ground has now been cleared to some extent by the conclusion of Lord Amherst's catalogue, the second volume of which has just appeared.¹⁰² But for the next two years most of our spare time will be occupied with similar work for the University of California.¹⁰³

It has occurred to us that you might like to add a little to the collection before commencing its publication. It is still weak in literary, especially theological, texts; it is very deficient in documents of the Ptolemaic period, of which there are not more than two or three; and some strengthening in official documents of all periods would be very desirable. As you may know, a considerable part of Lord Crawfords (sic) collection was purchased for him in Egypt by us; and we should be glad to continue this if you chose. We should probably want to expend from £50 to £100 each winter. The publication might then be begun after a year or two when we should be more free, and by which time the collection ought to have become thoroughly representative.

With regard to terms: we should not of course ask for remuneration until work of editing had actually commenced. Perhaps the most satisfactory method would be to make the amount proportionate to results. The California University for instance is paying £15 (between the two of us) for the sheet of 16 pages quarto; some scale similar to this might be adopted. I would suggest that the catalogue should resemble in general style our publications of papyri for the Egypt Exploration Fund.

¹⁰² In 1900 Grenfell and Hunt published the first volume of the Amherst papyri. As they explain in the preface: "with few exceptions the Greek papyri have been bought for Lord Amherst by us at various places in Egypt during the last three years." The second volume was published one year later, in 1901; *The Amherst Papyri, Being an Account of the Greek Papyri in the Collection of the Right Hon. Lord Amherst of Hackney, F.S.A. at Didlington Hall, Norfolk*, ed. B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt: vol. 1, *The Ascension of Isaiah and Other Theological Fragments*; vol. 2, *Classical Fragments and Documents of the Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine Periods* (London 1900-1901).

¹⁰³ Grenfell and Hunt started collaborating with the University of California in 1899; for a brief outline of the Tebtunis papyri collection see the dedicated webpage of the Center for the Tebtunis Papyri (<http://tebtunis.berkeley.edu/collection/history>, last accessed on 12 May 2014).

¹⁰⁴ There is one of the papyri bought last winter which, with your permission, we should like to produce without delay - in the "Archiv für Papyrusforschung", a periodical exclusively devoted to Greek papyri and cognate subjects.¹⁰⁵ The document in question is what is technically known as a libellus - a declaration made by a woman during the Decian persecution of the Christians that she had made the requisite sacrifices to the pagan gods. Only two similar documents have as yet come to light,¹⁰⁶ and this new specimen has therefore a very special interest. I have a copy here, so it could be done with no difficulty. The text would of course be ultimately reprinted in its proper place in the general catalogue.

I am, dear Madam,
yours very truly

Arthur S. Hunt

Mrs Rylands¹⁰⁷

2.2. Letter of Hunt to Mrs Rylands, 25/11/1901

Queen's College Oxford
Nov. 25 1901

Madam,

I am returning to Egypt in December and should therefore be grateful if you could let me know whether you would like me to make any purchases of Greek papyri on your behalf as suggested in my previous letter. I must apologize for troubling you again on the subject but we have to make our plans for the season and the time is getting rather short.

Yours very truly

A.S. Hunt

¹⁰⁴ There is a little cross in blue ink here, which is connected with a note in the same ink written in the space above the date and place. This reads: "Cannot give attention more particularly as the MSS are not unpacked." A line below with a pencil: "Will write later on." These notes were written by Mrs Rylands.

¹⁰⁵ The papyrus (*PRyl.* 1.12) was never published in *APF*.

¹⁰⁶ *BGU* 1.287 and *SB* 1.4455.

¹⁰⁷ This is a reminder of the address for the secretary probably in charge of the sending, repeated also in the other two letters.

Mrs Rylands

The letter is written on a folded Queen's College letter paper, which consists of four pages. On the third page, left blank by Hunt, is written in blue ink by Mrs Rylands:

Acknowledge this letter and say I shall be glad if this winter during his travels in Egypt he will purchase any papyri he thinks suitable for my collection, the amount of purchases not to exceed one hundred pounds. Explain that absence from home has caused delay in my answer.

(Keep a copy of your letter and attach to this paper -)

These lines from Mrs Rylands are not copied in the abovementioned register, which however adds the following: "Mr Kiddle replied. Could give no attention to suggestions = manuscripts were not unpacked."

2.3. Letter of J.W. Kiddle, secretary of Mrs Rylands, to Hunt, 28/11/1901

Longford Hall, Stretford,
Manchester Nov. 28 1901
A.S. Hunt Esq.

Sir,

Mrs Rylands wishes me to reply to your letter of Nov. 25th and to say she should be glad if during your travels in Egypt, this winter, you would purchase any papyri you may consider suitable for her collection; but the amount spent must not exceed one hundred pounds.

You will please to note that this arrangement is for one year only.

At the close of your letter to Mrs Rylands, dated Oct. 9 1901, you say - "There is one of the papyri bought last winter, which, with your permission, we should like to produce without delay in the 'Archiv für Papyrusforschung.' The document in question is technically known as a libellus. Only two similar documents have as yet come to light. I have a copy here so it could be done with no difficulty. The text would of course be ultimately reprinted in the proper place in the general catalogue." Will you kindly inform Mrs Rylands if the papyrus to which you refer in the foregoing quotation from your letter belongs to the Crawford collection and if the original is in your possession or only a copy of it.

Mrs Rylands wishes me to say she would have written to you sooner but for the fact that she has been from home.

Faithfully Yours

J.W. Kiddle
Sec<retary>

2.4 Letter of Hunt to Mrs Rylands, 30/11/1901

Queen's College Oxford
Nov. 30 1901

Dear Madam

I was glad to receive your secretary's letter yesterday authorising the expenditure of £100 on papyri this winter in Egypt. It is I think quite probable that we shall not want to spend so large a sum - especially as I hear that there is a German already out there on behalf of the Berlin Museum.¹⁰⁸

The 'libellus' to which I referred in my letter of Oct. 9 was one of the papyri bought for Lord Crawford last year and was sent to him with the rest. There is nothing particular in its appearance by which to identify it, but if I remember the papyrus is rather light-coloured and slightly rubbed in parts; and I should guess that it measures about 8 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches. The handwriting is a small cursive.

Yours very truly

A.S. Hunt

Mrs Rylands

P.S. It may perhaps not be out of place to mention that the papyri should not be mounted in any way until they have been published; they are more difficult to decipher when under glass, and small pieces are very apt to get misplaced or turned over. - They are best stored in a dry place between sheets of paper.

¹⁰⁸This probably is Otto Rubensohn: see O. Primavesi, "Zur Geschichte der Deutschen Papyruskartell," *ZPE* 114 (1996) 175. On the activities of the Papyruskartell see also A. Martin, "Papyruskartell: The Papyri and the Movement of Antiquities," in Bowman et al. (n. 55) 40-49.

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