

## ΒΑΛΑΑΚ in the $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ Text of Jude 11: A Proposal\*

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This article proposes that the variant Βαλαάκ in the  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  text of Jude 11 be read in light of theological tendency in the Bodmer codex, especially as evidenced in the christological variants of  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ . Initially, scholarly opinion dismissed the ‘Balaak’ reading as nothing more than an inexperienced copyist’s careless mistake. Though recognizing the older view to be unsatisfactory, recent explanations are also inadequate. Given neutral or positive traditions about Balaam in Judaism, and in the context of the early Christian belief that the Spirit of Christ inspired the OT Prophets (including Balaam), the article makes a case for reevaluation of the variant.

**Keywords:** Balaam, Balak,  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , Bodmer Codex, Jude 11, Text Criticism

The author of Jude lists the notorious seer Balaam (cf. Numbers 22-25) among ancient examples of wrong-doers (Jude 11). 2 Peter’s expansion of Jude’s Balaam material and simultaneous omission of Jude’s other two examples (Cain and Korah) remind us that Balaam held a special place as villain within Jewish and Christian tradition.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is all the more surprising that the  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  text of Jude 11 reads Βαλαάκ instead of Βαλαάμ<sup>2</sup> (τῆ πλάνη τοῦ Βαλαάκ μεισθοῦ ἐξεχύθησαν).<sup>3</sup> While no one doubts that Βαλαάμ is the better reading

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1 The  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  text of 2 Pet 2.15 reads Βαλλαάμ τοῦ Βοσόρ. 2 Pet 2.15-16 expands upon the Jude material, including the addition of the identification of Balaam with the place name. While the copyist inadvertently doubled the *lambda* in Βαλαάμ, there is no doubt as to who is intended.

2 Jude 11 NA27 reads...τῆ πλάνη τοῦ Βαλαάμ μεισθοῦ ἐξεχύθησαν.

3 Michel Testuz, ed., *P. Bodm. VII-IX, L’Épître de Jude, les deux Épîtres de Pierre, les Psaumes 33 et 34* (Cologny-Genève: Bibliothèque Bodmer, 1959) 22.  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  is the designation given to 1-2 Peter and Jude as published in P. Bodm. VII and VIII. See Martin Bircher, ed., *Bibliotheca Bodmeriana. La collection des Papyrus Bodmer/Die Sammlung der Bodmer-Papyri/The collection of the Bodmer Papyri*. 8. Planches de toutes les pages originales/Abbildungen sämtlicher originaler Manuskriptseiten/Reproductions of all the original pages 1-400 (München: K. G. Saur, 2000) 271-86, esp. 274.

in Jude 11, the origin and effect of the  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  reading remain in doubt. Given evidence for a neutral or even positive portrayal of Balaam within Judaism, and in light of certain theological tendencies in  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , a plausible link may be posited between the other ideological interests of  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  and the ‘Balaak’ reading in Jude 11. This relationship offers a new perspective on the significance of the variant, since the reading effectively salvages Balaam’s oracles on behalf of an early Christian view of prophecy.

### Previous Explanations of the ‘Balaak’ Reading in Jude 11

Neither NA27 nor the *Editio Critica Maior* lists any other MSS with the Jude 11 ‘Balaak’ reading,<sup>4</sup> which in the past has been viewed almost universally as merely a copyist’s random mistake and without textual or theological significance. Because of the many itacisms<sup>5</sup> and other errors,  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  gained the reputation of being ‘wild’ and carelessly done,<sup>6</sup> with the ‘Balaak’ reading in Jude 11 as a prime example. The negative reputation of  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  is overstated, however,<sup>7</sup> since such errors are not uncommon in ancient MSS.<sup>8</sup> Insofar as scholarly opinion has been unduly influenced by the negative reputation of  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , the temptation to dismiss out of hand the reading Βαλαάκ in Jude 11 should be resisted.

- 4 *Novum Testamentum Graece Editio Critica Maior*, IV Die Katholischen Briefe, Teil I, Text. 4. Lieferung: Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief; der Judasbrief (ed. Barbara Aland et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005). Tommy Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission* (ConBNT 43; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell, 2006) 108, 167, 283. Wasserman lists the fifteenth-century MS. 432\* as the only other witness which reads ΒΑΛΑΑΚ. Such late copies are excluded from consideration by NA27 and the *Editio Critica Maior* as insignificant for the reconstruction of the text.
- 5 ‘...le copiste écrit volontiers εἰ pour ι, ou ι pour εἰ; ε pour αἰ et plus rarement αἰ pour ε...on trouve aussi υ à la place du groupe οι...’ (Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer VII-IX*, 16); see Sakae Kubo,  *$\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  and the Codex Vaticanus* (SD 27; Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1965) 9.
- 6 Massaux labeled  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  ‘wild’, and analogous to the Western or Bezan text of the Gospels and Acts; Edouard Massaux, ‘Le texte de l’Épître de Jude du Papyrus Bodmer VII ( $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ )’, *Scrinium Lovaniense. Melanges historiques. Etienne Van Cauwenberg* (Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1961) 108-25; Marchant A. King, ‘Jude and 1 and 2 Peter: Notes on the Bodmer Manuscript’, *BSac* 121(1964) 54-7; Jerome D. Quinn, ‘Notes on the Text of the  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  1 Pet 2.3; 5.14; and 5.9’, *CBQ* 27 (1965) 241-9, here, 242: ‘...[the scribe’s] quite inconsistent orthography...scarcely [disposes] one to consider his work careful’.
- 7 J. Neville Birdsall, ‘The Text of Jude in  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ ’, *JTS* 14 (1963) 394-9, here 395; Kubo,  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , 152, in which Kubo challenged the previously held assumption of the superiority of B; cf. Sakae Kubo, ‘Textual Relationships in Jude’, *Studies in the New Testament Language and Text: Essays in Honor of George D. Kilpatrick on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. J. K. Elliott; Leiden: Brill, 1976) 276-82, here 280. See Winfried Grunewald, ed., *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus I. Die Katholischen Briefe* (ANTF 6; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986).
- 8 See Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Development of Greek and the New Testament* (WUNT 167; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 502: while the percentage of such orthographic errors is higher in  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , similar errors are also found in Codex Sinaiticus, and in  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ ,  $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$ , and  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ .

Although moving beyond earlier scholarly opinion regarding this variant, recent explanations offer little in the way of new perspectives.<sup>9</sup> C. Landon entertains the possibility that ‘...the error mentioned in Jude 11 may have been interpreted by some copyists as Balak’s, since Balak allowed himself to be misled by Balaam, hence a deliberate change from Βαλαάμ to Βαλαάκ is effected for contextual reasons and reflected in ϣ<sup>72</sup>.’<sup>10</sup> He continues: ‘It is debatable whether the error referred to in [Jude 11] should be ascribed to Balaam or to Balak. [According to] Num 22.18, 24.13, Deut 23.4, and Neh 13.2..., Balaam refrained from cursing Israel for financial gain...’.<sup>11</sup> Landon asserts, ‘When I look in more detail at the transcriptional evidence, it would seem that the reading Balaak (in Jude 11) arose by accident, with the copyist of ϣ<sup>72</sup> inheriting Balak written with a single alpha. Balak in turn originated as an improvement introduced for contextual reasons as I have explained.’<sup>12</sup>

Landon (correctly) considers unlikely the older suggestion, that the problem could have been simply visual, *kappa* being mistaken for *mu* in the *Vorlage*. Rather, he suggests that the copyist worked with an exemplar which read Βαλάκ, a reading he unintentionally changed to Βαλαάκ. There are, however, at least two objections to Landon’s *Vorlage* hypothesis. First, this reading is singular.<sup>13</sup> Whereas the argument from ‘missing’ evidence may be weak by itself, the absence of other significant MSS with the reading in question is problematic. Second, the likelihood is low that a copyist would make such an accidental change as a random mistake. It is unlikely that a copyist would accidentally repeat the *alpha* when copying the name ‘Balak’. No other such doubling of the *alpha* can be observed in the ϣ<sup>72</sup> text of Jude (or in 1 Peter or 2 Peter).<sup>14</sup> As one would expect in keeping with general Greek orthography, αα is not attested as a substitution for α.<sup>15</sup> Since the double *alpha* in Βαλαάμ reflects the Hebrew

9 See esp. Charles Landon, *A Text-Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude* (JSNTSup 135; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 100-101; Wasserman, *Epistle of Jude*, 283; Tobias Nicklas, ‘Der “lebendige Text” des Neuen Testaments: Der Judasbrief in ϣ<sup>72</sup> (P.Bodmer VII)’, *ASE22* (2005) 203-22, esp. 204-5.

10 Landon, *Jude*, 100-101.

11 Landon, *Jude*, 100: ‘According to Philo *Mos.* 1.295-300; Josephus *Ant.* 4.126-30; Tg. Ps.-J. Num 24.14,25; *y. Sanh.* 10.28d; *b. Sanh.* 106a; and Rev 2.14; Balaam persuaded Balak to lead Israel into idolatry and sins of a sexual nature. [But] these references are contradicted by a post-biblical Jewish tradition, for example, Philo *Mos.* 1.266-9 which provides the opposite impression’. Landon here summarizes the position of Duane Frederick Watson, *Invention, Arrangement and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (SBLDS 104; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1988) 59.

12 Landon, *Jude*, 101.

13 The fifteenth-century manuscript cited in Wasserman, *Epistle of Jude* (108, 167, 283) is not significant for this study.

14 With the exception of Balaam in 2 Pet 2.15.

15 While the double *alpha* is attested in Homer and a few others, it is rare (e.g. LSJ, 1). The vowel *alpha* was not subject to the substitution problems mentioned, as is shown by Caragounis’

spelling of the name as mediated through the LXX, it is much more likely that a copyist generally familiar with Greek orthography would inadvertently omit one of a pair of *alphas*, than that he would accidentally add an *alpha* where there was only one.

On the other hand, if the copyist were making a conscious correction from Βαλάκ to Βαλαάμ, that is, intentionally correcting upon the *Vorlage* to conform to his knowledge of Scripture, it is unlikely that he would write Βαλαάκ instead of Βαλαάμ. Indeed, when commenting on the poor quality of the text of the last five verses of Jude in Ψ<sup>72</sup>, King suggests that these verses were missing in the *Vorlage* and that this part was written from memory, essentially paraphrasing the text of Jude.<sup>16</sup> But if the copyist was so familiar with the text of Jude as to be able to reconstruct the last five verses from memory, what is the likelihood that he would have written Βαλαάκ in verse 11? In sum, Landon's hypothesis is unlikely.

While it is true that the second *alpha* of 'Balaak' in Jude 11 is badly formed, the evidence does not support the suggestion that the copyist or another hand attempted to correct a mistake in the MS. Such a suggestion regarding Jude 11 has recently been made by T. Wasserman: 'Βαλαάκ (in Jude 11 of Ψ<sup>72</sup>)... is probably due to a scribal slip. I suspect that the scribe of Ψ<sup>72</sup> might have intended to write Βαλαάμ, which he spells with two *lambdas* in 2 Pet 2.15 (Βαλλαάμ). However, the scribe realized the mistake and changed the second *lamda* to an *alpha* and possibly the final *mu* was corrected to a *kappa* (thus Βαλαάκ)'.<sup>17</sup> A detailed examination of the photographic plate of Jude 10-13, however, does not support Wasserman's claim.<sup>18</sup> Specifically, it is not obvious that the Βαλαάκ reading was merely the result of a scribal slip. While it may be that the scribe 'realized the mistake' and changed the second *lambda* to an *alpha*, it is more likely that the scribe merely formed the second *alpha* badly, and that the scribe or a later hand traced over the second *alpha*. Given that there was no attempt to correct a similar mistake (double *lambda*) at 2 Pet 2.15, it is unlikely the scribe changed the second *lambda* to an *alpha* in Jude 11. In any case, close examination of the second *alpha* in Βαλαάκ in Jude 11 does not clearly reveal the presence of an initial, now corrected *lambda*.

For Wasserman's second suggestion, that the *mu* of Βαλαάμ may have been changed to a *kappa*, the evidence is weak. In the facsimile there are some letters visible which appear darker than the surrounding text. The presence of such

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discussion of 'pronunciation of vowels and diphthongs' (*Development*, 365-77), and 'similarly spelled but identically pronounced variants' (*Development*, 517-46).

<sup>16</sup> King, 'Notes', 56.

<sup>17</sup> Wasserman, *Epistle of Jude*, 283.

<sup>18</sup> Bircher, *Bibliotheca Bodmeriana*, 274; also reproduced in Wasserman, *Epistle of Jude*, Plate IV.

letters or words may suggest that someone has traced over certain letters, or may be merely the result of the scribe re-dipping his pen in the ink. In a few places it appears the scribe may have formed a letter badly and overwritten it. While the *kappa* of Βαλαάκ appears slightly smudged, there is no clear indication it was originally a *mu*. A similarly smudged *kappa* occurs in  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  text of Jude 25 (in the word καί), where there is likewise no indication it was changed from another letter. None of the apparent instances of overwriting a letter in  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  is an *obvious* attempt to change one letter to another. Significantly, in none of these instances is it clear that the changes were for the purpose of correcting the text (changing the reading). The scribal errors which have been corrected (the text changed) were accomplished using strikeouts (indicated by double brackets in P.Bodm. VII and VIII), with dots over letters which should be omitted, and missing letters or words inserted above the line. In two places corrections from one letter to another were made by striking out a letter and supplying the correct letter above the line (1 Pet 4.12; 2 Pet 3.14).<sup>19</sup> It is also theoretically possible that such corrections have been made by erasure and rewriting. In short, it appears unlikely that someone attempted to change the reading from Βαλαάμ to Βαλαάκ.

In assessing the suggestions of Landon and Wasserman, orthographic considerations alone are inconclusive. In addition to these issues, the reader is confronted with other evidence not explained by orthography. For example, the passage in Jude includes the phrase 'for the sake of gain'. According to tradition this description characterizes the pagan seer Balaam, the biblical evidence cited by Landon notwithstanding. Moreover, although Βαλάκ is the normal spelling<sup>20</sup> such that the double *alpha* appears to belong to the name 'Balaam', the double *alpha* in Βαλαάκ is attested in certain MSS of the LXX.<sup>21</sup> Finally, we are faced with the fact that although the copyist or a later scribe corrected several errors in the manuscript, Βαλαάκ was left uncorrected. There was no attempt to bring the text of Jude 11 into harmony with 2 Pet 2.5-16 or vice versa. We must look beyond orthography for a way forward in the discussion.

T. Nicklas has suggested the reading Βαλαάκ was a conscious change on the part of the scribe.<sup>22</sup> He finds it unlikely that this change is a mere *Schreibfehler*, and notes the subtle change to the Balaam story such an alteration effects.<sup>23</sup> Balak did not succeed in persuading Balaam to curse Israel. Rather, according to Num 25.1-5 and Num 31.16, the error of Balak was to take Balaam's advice

19 Though not so indicated in Testuz, P.Bodm. VIII, the supralinear addition of εἰς in 2 Pet 2.6 occurs above a letter or letters which have been crossed out.

20 Βαλάκ is usual in the LXX; cf. Βαλάκος in Jos. Ant. 4.107.

21 Wasserman, *Epistle of Jude*, 283 n. 201.

22 Nicklas, 'Der "lebendige Text"', 215-16.

23 'Gegen die Idee eines Schreiberfehlers spricht die Tatsache, dass er einen sinnvollen Text ergibt', so Nicklas ('Der "lebendige Text"') 216 n. 44.

to entice Israel into sexual dissipation and the worship of idols. Thus Balak's error in the  $\text{פ}^{72}$  text of Jude 11 should be understood not as passive (Balak's error) but as active, that is, as Balak's leading Israel into error (die 'Irreführung des Balak'). As once Balak led Israel astray, so do the opponents of Jude lead the congregation astray into a falling away from faith and possibly into sexual dissipation.<sup>24</sup> Nicklas is at least partly correct in his assertions, though this article proposes that the change took place for reasons he does not mention. In that light, and in response to the inadequacies of other positions, the rest of the article seeks to build a case for a fresh perspective on the 'Balaak' variant in the  $\text{פ}^{72}$  text of Jude 11.

### Balaam 'Rehabilitated'

By the first Christian century most Jewish and Christian traditions vilified Balaam, but there are important examples of neutral or even positive treatments.<sup>25</sup> Such alternative (non-negative) traditions about Balaam are evident in Josephus, and especially pronounced in *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*.<sup>26</sup> Josephus is at least ambivalent toward Balaam and positive toward his prophecies. It is God who brought Balaam to high renown in the first place 'for truth's sake and for the prediction thereof'.<sup>27</sup> Josephus states that Moses did Balaam the honor of recording his prophecies; he gave Balaam this testimony and deigned to perpetuate his memory (*Ant.* 4.156-8). Important for Josephus is that Balaam's prophecies came true.<sup>28</sup> Josephus declares that Balaam prophesied of calamities of kings, and of cities which did not yet exist, some of which events allegedly took place in Josephus' own day (*Ant.* 4.125).

Compared to other sources, the brief account of *L.A.B.* 18 portrays Balaam quite sympathetically. In *L.A.B.* 18.10-12 Balaam repents. He was 'led astray' (by Balak) but he acknowledges his transgression, for which he must pay with a shortened life. The speech, which serves as a warning to the readers, goes beyond anything else known in its presentation of Balaam. It is a message from a seemingly chastened Balaam who now admits his error. The statement about Balaam's abiding oracles constitutes a positive evaluation of the prophecies despite the failings of the prophet.<sup>29</sup>

24 Nicklas, 'Der "lebendige Text"', 216.

25 'Rehabilitation' and 'positive treatment' are admittedly relative concepts.

26 A tradition of positive assessment of Balaam has continued into recent times. For example, note the inclusion of 'Balaam Propheta' among the Hebrew prophets in the ceiling frescoes of Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Luxembourg.

27 *Ant.* 4.105; ET is based throughout on Thackeray, LCL.

28 Compare the rejection by Moses of Balaam's prophetic status in Philo *Migr.* 114.

29 ET in Daniel J. Harrington, 'Pseudo-Philo', *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (ed. James Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 297-377, here 324-6.

Significantly, the author of 2 Peter calls upon positive aspects of the seer's prophetic actions<sup>30</sup> and, unlike other witnesses, refuses to deny to Balaam the title προφήτης (2 Pet 2.16).<sup>31</sup> Correspondingly, the  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  reading in Jude 11 effectively exonerates Balaam by shifting to Balak the blame for Israel's apostasy. The point is not so much to blame Balak as to rehabilitate Balaam, or more precisely, to salvage Balaam's oracles and their interpretation. If valid, this assessment would constitute important evidence in the reconstruction of developing Balaam traditions in Judaism and early Christianity.

### 'Balaak' in Jude 11 and Theological Tendencies in $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$

The substitution of Βαλαάκ for Βαλαάμ in Jude 11 was probably ideological. This explanation is consistent with neutral or positive portrayals of Balaam, and is plausible on internal grounds. Lending credence to the possibility of an ideological substitution is the presence in  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  of theologically motivated variants.<sup>32</sup> Some scholars have already demonstrated the presence of theological tendency in  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , noting three christological variants. These are θεοῦ for χριστοῦ in 1 Pet 5.1,<sup>33</sup> θεὸς χριστός in Jude 5 (while other witnesses read κύριος, ὁ κύριος, ὁ θεός or Ἰησοῦς),<sup>34</sup> and the omission of καὶ in 2 Pet 1.2, such that the text reads τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰησοῦ (instead of τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦ). To this list we may add the possibility that the variant in the  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  text of 2 Pet 1.20 was also theologically motivated.<sup>35</sup>

30 Consider the argument in 2 Pet 1.19-21; see my article, "They Promise Them Freedom": Once again, the ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι in 2 Peter', *ZNW* 99 (2008) 129-38.

31 See George W. Coats, 'Balaam: Sinner or Saint?', *Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable: Narrative Forms in Old Testament Literature* (ed. G. W. Coats, JSOTSup 35; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985) 56-62; John T. Greene, *Balaam and His Interpreters: A Hermeneutical History of the Balaam Traditions* (BJS 244; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1992) 18-20; etc.

32 Most scholars accept M. Testuz' judgment that there was a single scribe for all three documents of  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ . A single scribe for  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  is consistent with the case for taking the theological variants together, which in turn is amenable to the assertion that 'Balaak' in Jude 11 is an ideological variant. See Kubo,  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , 9; Quinn, 'Notes', 241; King 'Notes', 56; Floyd Filson, 'More Bodmer Papyri', *BA* 25 (1962) 52.

33 F. W. Beare, 'The Text of I Peter in Papyrus 72', *JBL* 80 (1961) 255; cf. Kubo,  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , 12; King, 'Notes', 57. See also T. Nicklas and T. Wasserman, 'Theologische Linien im Codex Bodmer Miscellan?', *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World* (ed. T. Kraus and T. Nicklas, TENT 2; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 161-88, here 177-9, 183-5.

34 Kubo,  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ , 12. Cf. Bart D. Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University, 1993) 262-9.

35 In addition to the 'drei hochtheologisch motivierte Varianten des  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ ' (Jude 5; 1 Pet 1.5; 2 Pet 1.2), B. Aland considers the variant in 2 Pet 1.20 theologically significant; Barbara Aland, 'Welche Rolle spielen Textkritik und Textgeschichte für das Verständnis des Neuen Testaments? Frühe Leserperspektiven', *NTS* 52 (2006) 303-18, here 307-8.

In light of the ideological character of these variants, it is quite plausible to suggest that the reading Βολαόκ in Jude 11 of  $\mathfrak{Y}^{72}$  may also have come about as the result of a substitution linked to an ideological position.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, while the reading Βολαόκ in Jude 11 clearly is not on the same level as the christological variants, it is compatible with them, and in fact is not unrelated to them. Specifically, parallel to the interest in promoting or protecting a ‘high’ christology evidenced in the above mentioned christological variants, Βολαόκ in Jude 11 can be understood as part of an inclination to protect christological interpretation of OT prophecies.

The ideological interests of  $\mathfrak{Y}^{72}$ , including the ‘Balaak’ reading in Jude 11, are part of a larger matrix of ideas within the Bodmer codex,<sup>37</sup> of which  $\mathfrak{Y}^{72}$  was a part.<sup>38</sup> In general, the Bodmer codex documents—especially 3 *Corinthians*,<sup>39</sup> Melito’s *On Pascha*,<sup>40</sup> and *Apology of Phileas*<sup>41</sup>—demonstrate a strong interest in the deity and preexistence of Christ, as well as God’s working through Christ throughout (OT) history.<sup>42</sup> This view of God’s activity through Christ includes

36 The discussion of tendentious textual variants linked to specific ideology is well known; see Eldon J. Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts* (SNTSMS 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1966) esp. 1–40; cf. Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, esp. 3–46; see Bart D. Ehrman, ‘Text and Transmission: The Historical Significance of the “Altered” Text’, *Studies in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (NTTS 33; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 325–42 [= *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 5 (2000) electronic journal, <http://purl.org/TC>].

37 ‘The Bodmer codex’ is a designation given to this miscellaneous codex; Wasserman, ‘Papyrus 72’, 137; see 142. This article takes the view that the codex is a miscellany, a group of manuscripts consciously collected together, as opposed to a random assemblage of heterogeneous materials.

38 The codex is now disassembled. One can still observe pagination from earlier arrangements, showing the codex was comprised of recombined earlier codices. Remnants of earlier bindings support this judgment. Such a recombined codex is consistent with a collection made for ideological (theological) reasons.

39 P.Bodm. X (= 3<sup>rd</sup> *Corinthians* 1 and 3); the designation ‘3<sup>rd</sup> *Corinthians*’ is used for convenience. Michel Testuz, *Correspondance apocryphe des Corinthiens et de l’apôtre Paul* (P. Bodm. X–XII; Cologny-Genève: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1959) 38, 40; see J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 380–2; ET of P.Bodm. X in Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books That Did Not Make It Into the New Testament* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University, 2003) 158–9.

40 *On Pascha* presents the pre-existent Christ as active in creation and proclaimed through the law and prophets; Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha and Fragments: Texts and Translations* (ed. Stuart George Hall; OECT; Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) 59–60, 104. Michel Testuz, *Melito Sardianus, Homélie sur la Pâque: Manuscrit du IIIe siècle* (P.Bodm. XIII; Cologny-Genève: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1960).

41 Victor Martin, *Apologie de Philéas, évêque de Thmouis* (P.Bodm. XX; Cologny-Genève: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1964).

42 See *Apology of Phileas* 3–4; see Albert Pietersma, *The Acts of Phileas Bishop of Thmuis*. P. Chester Beatty XV, with a new edition of P.Bodm. XX, and Halkin’s Latin *Acta* (COR VII; Geneva/Dublin: Patrick Cramer/Chester Beatty Library, 1984) 94; cf. 62–3.



the assumption that the Spirit of Christ inspired the Hebrew prophets, an early Christian belief that is found explicitly in 1 Pet 1.10 and corroborated in the Bodmer codex by a similar assertion in P.Bodm. X (= 3 Cor. 3.10; cf. 1.9-15).

Safeguarding the perceived apostolic interpretation of (OT) prophecy is the thrust of the argument in 2 Pet 1.16-21, a concern echoed in the other Ƴ<sup>72</sup> documents and the larger Bodmer codex. In 2 Peter both the scripture passages behind the divine voice ‘on the holy mountain’ (2 Pet 1.16-18), and the prophecy behind the coming of the Morning Star (2 Pet 1.19) are christological statements protected from ‘private interpretation’.

For the scribe of Ƴ<sup>72</sup> (as for the author of 2 Peter), the formulation of 1 Pet 1.10-12 is foundational, namely that it was the spirit of Christ who spoke through the prophets of old, presaging the ministry (sufferings) of Christ, and addressing later generations. Thus, the Balaam oracles were not just inspired by the God of Israel (Numbers 22-24), but were spoken specifically through the Spirit of Christ.

2 Peter’s expansion upon Jude 11 is informative. The focus on the divine identity of Jesus and the apologetic use of the apostolic witness to the same (in resisting the opponents), is the theme of 2 Pet 1.16-19. What is often overlooked is that the quintessential example of the prophet of 2 Pet 1.19-21 (‘those borne along by the Spirit spoke from God’)<sup>43</sup> is Balaam himself, the προφήτης of 2 Pet 2.16. Balaam’s behavior cannot be condoned, but because the prophets were inspired by the Spirit of Christ Balaam’s prophecy must be salvaged—especially the oracle of the Morning Star (Num 24.17), echoed in 2 Pet 1.19. It is in this light that we should understand the evidence in the Ƴ<sup>72</sup> text of Jude 11 for the shifting of blame away from Balaam onto Balak.

### Conclusion

In light of the christological tendency present in all three documents of Ƴ<sup>72</sup>, it is no surprise to find a suggestion of ideological tendency in a related matter, namely, the nature, role, and interpretation of prophecy—especially prophecy considered christological. This is precisely the concern of 2 Pet 1.16-21 as the author formulates his argument against the opponents. For Ƴ<sup>72</sup> as for the author of 2 Peter, the key to understanding ‘prophecy of scripture’ is its perceived apostolic interpretation, an interpretation defended by those who wrote the various documents, and, apparently, by those who copied and collected them into this codex.

At the root of this concern is the early Christian belief that the Spirit of Christ inspired the Hebrew prophets (1 Pet 1.10; 3 Cor. 3.10). With this hermeneutical assumption, 2 Peter’s opponents (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, 2 Pet 2.1) were resisted in their reinterpretation of prophecies and the resulting unacceptable christology

43 My paraphrase.

and eschatology (2 Pet 1.16-21). Similarly, for the scribe of  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  Balaam has been exonerated to some degree, and the interpretation of his prophecy protected. In shifting blame for Israel's apostasy from Balaam to Balak, the scribe of  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  has made a fully understandable change in Jude 11 which is consistent with the christological tendencies in evidence in all three documents, as well as the correlative view of prophecy and God's actions in play in several of the other documents of the Bodmer codex.

In this light, the solution for the problem of the substitution of Βαλαάκ for Βαλαάμ is plausible since the reading of Jude 11 in  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  effectively exonerates Balaam and preserves his prophecy, prophecy understood as christological and part of the perceived apostolic interpretation of prophecies relating to Christ. This in turn provides a small clue in the reconstruction of developing Balaam traditions in Judaism and early Christianity, as well as in our understanding of early Christian hermeneutics.