

JESUS' FANTASY WIFE UNFURLS

In 2012, Karen L. King presented a small piece of papyrus with an inscription that indicated Jesus had a wife: "Jesus said to them, 'My wife...'" She was ecstatic, as were many in the media. It has now been determined by some scientists that the fragment, the size of a credit card, is likely of ancient origin and not a forgery. But not everyone agrees.

Some scholars say the text refers to the "bride of Christ." Others, like those at the Vatican, say it is a fake. Dr. Leo Depuydt, a professor of Egyptology at Brown University, said it is so fake that it "seems ripe for a Monty Python sketch." He noted that the "gross grammatical errors" are an exact match to writings found in the Gospel of Thomas, and that "an undergraduate student with one semester of Coptic" could have forged the lines.

Another issue is King herself. According to *New York Times* reporter Laurie Goodstein, King "has said all along that it [the papyrus] should not be regarded as evidence that Jesus married..." But she was much more confident initially about her claims. Indeed, in 2012, King said, "certainly the fact that this is the first unequivocal statement we have that claims Jesus had a wife, is of great interest."

Fact. Unequivocal. Those words do not spill out of King's mouth anymore. This may explain the contrast between the way the media first reported on her claims, and now. In 2012, 128 newspapers covered this story. In 2014, only four did. In 2012, ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and PBS reported on this story. In 2014, there was no coverage by NBC, CNN, or PBS.

King, a professor at Harvard's Divinity School, does not believe in the divinity of Jesus, though she has invented a wife for him. She also thinks Mary Magdalene was an apostle. And she still won't disclose the identity of the donor. It's a

secret. Sounds like more fodder for Monty Python.