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For immediate release

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SISTER OF THE EARLIEST COMPLETE OLD TESTAMENT FOUND

Tyndale House, Cambridge, England

Discovery published in the *Tyndale Bulletin* 68.1 (2017) 1-29

Tyndale House, Cambridge, announces a new discovery made by young researcher **Dr Kim Phillips** published in its latest *Tyndale Bulletin* 68.1.

Tyndale House Research Associate Dr Kim Phillips identifies the writing style of Samuel ben Jacob in newly published **digitised photographs** of a manuscript from the **Firkowich collection** in the depths of the **National Library of Russia** archives of **St Petersburg**. Locked away from the eyes of interested researchers for a number of years these microfilms have recently been posted online by the **National Library of Israel**. Due to painstaking work in the unusual practices of this scribe Dr Phillips has been able to identify that this is **Samuel ben Jacob's** work despite there not being any identifying colophon, or signed publication note, on the text. The mystery of who wrote these texts has been decoded.

Samuel ben Jacob is the scribe who wrote **The Leningrad Codex**, the earliest complete copy of the Old Testament we have reproduced in **Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia**. This manuscript is behind most modern translations. Identifying this piece of work to be by the same scribe will allow scholars to **check the accuracy** of tiny details in the manuscript behind **most modern Bible translations**. This will then contribute to **future scholarly Bibles**.

"For the first time (for scholars outside Israel and Russia) it is possible to contextualise the readings of the Leningrad Codex against the background of equivalent readings in other manuscripts known to have been written by Samuel B. Jacob" Dr Kim Phillips *Tyndale Bulletin* 68.1 p. 20

The Article is available online at www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/tyndale-bulletin

Ends

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Tyndale Bulletin 67.2 (2016) 287-307 Phillips has previously published work demonstrating single folios found in the Cairo Genizah to be by Samuel ben Jacob, using a set of identifying features, or fingerprints, that collectively point to this particular scribe's handiwork.

For further details of the Cairo Genizah and its significance visit newly opened exhibition **Discarded History: The Genizah of Mediaeval Cairo** providing "a window on the life of a community a thousand years ago - a Jewish community in the centre of a thriving Islamic empire, international in outlook, multicultural in make up, devout to its core." Cambridge University Library www.lib.cam.ac.uk

Tyndale House is an independent evangelical charity founded in 1944 to advance biblical research. It possesses **one of the finest libraries for biblical research in the world**, packed with specialist material on the language, culture, history, and meaning of the Bible and enjoys close links with the University of Cambridge. **Tyndale Bulletin** is a peer review journal of Biblical and Theological research. Published twice a year our next **Tyndale Bulletin 68.2** is due out later this year.

Research Fellows working at Tyndale House are involved in various personal and collaborative projects.

Forthcoming Publications at Tyndale House

The Greek New Testament, Produced At Tyndale House, Cambridge

Expected Publication Date November 15th, 2017

Published by Crossway and Cambridge University Press

The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge has been created under the oversight of editors Dr. Dirk Jongkind (St Edmund's College, University of Cambridge) and Dr. Peter Williams (Tyndale House, Cambridge). While a few trusted Greek texts are in print, significant advances have been made in Greek translation studies of the New Testament since a standard text was adopted by academics in 1975. Together with their team, they have taken a rigorously philological approach to reevaluating the standard text - reexamining spelling and paragraph decisions as well as allowing more recent discoveries related to scribal habits to inform editorial decisions. Ideal for students, scholars and pastors alike, and published to coincide with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, *The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge* is a groundbreaking contribution to biblical scholarship.

For further details visit www.crossway.org/bibles/the-greek-new-testament-produced-at-tyndal-hconly/



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Codex Climaci Rescriptus

Codex Climaci Rescriptus is an important and complex palimpsest containing much biblical text and many mysteries. Dr Kim Phillips is working alongside the **Tyndale House Student Scholars Program** to describe and publish this extraordinarily complex and intriguing manuscript. Research carried out on the codex is supported by the **Museum of the Bible**.

For further details visit www.museumofthebible.org

www.stepbible.org

The STEP Bible is a free online resource providing translation overlays, which show the underlying biblical Hebrew and Greek, and explain how particular words were used in the ancient world. Tyndale House is currently working with the United Bible Society to create a Swahili version of STEP and our next project will be to create a Spanish version, as we seek to make this a multi-lingual resource.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the background to this discovery?

Codex Firkowich B19a (more commonly known as The Leningrad Codex, or L for short) was completed in around 1008. It is the earliest complete codex of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament).

- L is the main manuscript behind the Hebrew Bibles used by scholars called the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia and the Biblia Hebraica Quinta (more recent, but not yet complete). See <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/home/current-projects/biblia-hebraica-quinta-bhq/>.
- The textual traditions found in L and other manuscripts from the same period are referred to as The Masoretic Text (i.e. the text of the Hebrew Bible produced by a group of scholars called the Masoretes, between the 7th and 10th centuries).
- Thousands of tiny details in L differ from the other high-quality Hebrew Bible codices written in the same period. Scholars have debated these differences: do they reflect an intentionally different Masoretic tradition, or are they simply errors?
- The new manuscript, L17, will allow scholars to check whether those differences in the Leningrad Codex are deliberate. This will alter future scholarly Bibles, and will contribute to our understanding of how The Masoretic Text developed.

Both manuscripts were written by a scribe called Samuel ben Jacob (Samuel son of Jacob)

Phillips has previously published demonstrating single folios found in the Cairo Genizah to be by Samuel ben Jacob, using a set of identifying features, or fingerprints, that collectively point to this particular scribe's handiwork.

See <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit> for details of the Cairo Genizah and its significance.

What is its significance?

This discovery is significant because it will allow scholars to check the accuracy of tiny details in the manuscript behind most modern Bible translations. Scholars have not previously been able to agree about the accuracy of the scribe behind the earliest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible.

- The Leningrad Codex is the main basis for the Old Testament in most Bible translations in the world
 - Including most English translations
 - And most scholarly editions of the Hebrew Bible
- Scholars will be able to use this newly identified manuscript to check the accuracy of the most widely used manuscript of the Old Testament.

Who discovered it?

Research by Dr Kim Phillips, Research Associate at Tyndale House, Cambridge, and Research Associate at the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit, University of Cambridge, aged 35.

About Dr Phillips

Photo of Kim Phillips available for use by media:

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=kim+phillips+genizah&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS711US711&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj-sL-XscLUAhWLBsAKHUidDoMQ_AUIBygC&biw=1536&bih=759#tbn=isch&q=kim+phillips+tyndale+house&imgsrc=4NI9A2AthWI5nM:

Qualifications: MA, MPhil, PhD from University of Cambridge; PGDip from University of Wales

Research Associate at Tyndale House [www.tyndalehouse.com] carrying out research on the Codex Climaci Rescriptus and on early Masoretic Manuscripts, research supported by the Museum of the Bible [https://www.museumofthebible.org]

Tyndale House is an independent evangelical charity founded in 1944 to advance biblical research, which is also producing its own edition of the Greek New Testament to be published by Crossway and Cambridge University Press this November. See www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/thgnt_blog

Research Associate at the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit, University of Cambridge [<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/unit-staff/dr-kim-phillips>]

Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit, University of Cambridge, is a collection of around 193,000 manuscript fragments making up the world's greatest repository of information about Judaism for the mediaeval period and much of the early modern period.

See <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit>

How was it discovered?

Phillips identifies Bible manuscript in St Petersburg, Russia, as by the scribe who also wrote the famous Leningrad Codex, the earliest complete copy of the entire Old Testament in Hebrew.

Identification only became possible in 2017 when the National Library of Israel put digital copies of old microfilms of the collection in St Petersburg online.

What was discovered?

The newly identified manuscript

- is also known to scholars as L17.
- contains Joshua–2 Kings (i.e. Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings)
- was dated by Israel Yeivin to around AD 975, earlier than the Leningrad Codex
- was already known to a few scholars, but they were not aware of its link with the Leningrad Codex
- was originally around 240 folios (480 sides) long and is now about 180 folios (360 sides) long
- is in the Russian National Library and is labelled in two parts: EVR I Bibl. 80 and EVR I B 13

The identification by Phillips is based on 11 distinctive traits of the scribe called Samuel ben Jacob (Samuel son of Jacob)

Where can these images be found online?

National Library of Israel <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/nli/english/Pages/default.aspx>

National Library of Russia http://expositions.nlr.ru/eng/ex_manus/firkovich/catalog.php

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