



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL™ EXCLUSIVE HOME TO
STORY BEHIND DISCOVERY OF
THE GOSPEL OF JESUS'S WIFE
PREMIERES MONDAY, MAY 5 AT 8PM ET/PT**

**Scientific Testing Indicates Ancient Text Dated Between
Sixth and Ninth Centuries**

New York, NY – April 23, 2014 – In the wake of scientific results indicating that the text fragment, known as the Gospel of Jesus's Wife, is authentically ancient and not a modern fake, Smithsonian Channel will premiere the full, definitive story of the groundbreaking fragment's discovery and expert analysis of what it means. The one-hour special, *The GOSPEL OF JESUS'S WIFE*, debuts Monday, May 5 at 8 p.m. ET/PT.

In September 2012, Dr. Karen King, the Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School, announced she had confirmed that a previously unknown codex written in the ancient Coptic language included the phrase: "Jesus said to them, my wife."

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS'S WIFE exclusively details the story of Dr. King's findings and the controversy surrounding the fragment.

Her announcement sparked claims that the fragment must be a forgery—including an editorial in the official newspaper of the Vatican. In reaction, the fragment's anonymous owner agreed to submit it to a series of scientific and analytical tests, including radio-carbon dating, which required the destruction of a tiny sample of the papyrus. The results, announced by Harvard this month, indicate that the fragment is most likely ancient and dates to sometime between the sixth and ninth centuries, hundreds of years after the life of Jesus. Tests on the ink used to write the text were also found to be consistent with an ancient origin.

According to Dr. King, this small fragment of ancient Christian text does not offer historical evidence that Jesus was married. She believes, however, that it does raise serious questions about how early Christians were debating the role of women, celibacy

and marriage. The fragment also includes the phrase, "She can be my disciple," which could be read as making an argument for leadership roles for women in the early church.

After receiving the fragment in December 2011 from the owner, King took the papyrus in 2012 to New York, where Dr. Roger Bagnall, director of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University, assessed the physical condition of the papyrus and the ink to be forensic proof of its age. The new scientific tests have confirmed his assessment that the fragment is authentically ancient.

Along with the physical tests on papyrus and ink, the fragment underwent extensive analyses of the handwriting and grammar to compare them with other ancient texts. None of the testing provides any evidence that the fragment is a modern fabrication or forgery.

Other experts interviewed for THE GOSPEL OF JESUS'S WIFE include:

AnneMarie Luijendijk, Associate Professor of Religion at Princeton University, an expert on early Christianity and a papyrologist who assisted Karen King with her analysis.

The Rev. Robin Griffiths-Jones, an Anglican priest and theologian from the Temple Church in London, which appeared as a location in the feature film "The Da Vinci Code."

Alberto Camplani, Professor at Sapienza University in Rome, who initially analyzed the fragment for the Vatican newspaper.

Father Henry Wansborough, a Benedictine monk and Professor of Biblical Studies at Ampleforth Abbey in North Yorkshire, England.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS'S WIFE is produced for Smithsonian Channel by Blink Films and Treasures Investigation, Inc. Executive Producers for Smithsonian Channel are David Royle and Charles Poe. Producer is Dan Oliver, Director is Andy Webb.

ABOUT SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL

Smithsonian Channel™, owned by Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution, is where curiosity lives, inspiration strikes and wonders never cease. This is the place for awe-inspiring stories, powerful documentaries and amazing entertainment across multiple platforms. Smithsonian Channel combines the storytelling prowess of SHOWTIME® with the unmatched resources and rich traditions of the Smithsonian, to create award-winning programming that shines new light on popular genres such as air and space, history, science, nature, and pop culture. Among the network's offerings are series including *Aerial America*, *L.A. Frock Stars*, *Secrets*, *Mighty Ships*, *Mighty Planes* and *Air Disasters*, as well as critically-acclaimed specials that include *Civil War 360*, *9/11: The Heartland Tapes*; *MLK: The Assassination Tapes* and *The Day Kennedy Died*. Find out more at www.smithsonianchannel.com.

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