

## TWU scholar to lead significant Septuagint project



[A student examines a piece of papyrus similar to the the fragments studied by Professor Rob Hiebert of TWU's John William Wevers Institute of Septuagint Studies.](#)

TWU professor and Septuagint scholar Rob Hiebert, Ph. D., has been invited to serve as a supervisor for the Green Scholars Initiative's (GSI) Greek Psalter Project. Hiebert, who has served as a Professor of Old Testament studies since 1998, is the Director of the University's John William Wevers Institute for Septuagint Studies.

The GSI Greek Psalter Project is a collaborative undertaking focused on an important, well-preserved papyrus containing the text of Septuagint Psalms. Papyrus Bodmer XXIV, dating to the third or fourth century, contains Psalms 17-118 (according to Septuagint numbering) in a text form that is proving to be immensely valuable for reconstructing the original text of the Greek translator. A key aspect of this GSI project will be to prepare and publish a new edition of the papyrus text, one that both corrects the errors that appeared in the first edition in 1967, and that includes new material that did not make its way into that first edition.

"Everyone knows about the Dead Sea Scrolls," said Hiebert. "The Septuagint is the equivalent of that. It doesn't have quite the profile in popular media, but it's dealing with the same kinds of ancient texts and manuscripts."

The Septuagint is the earliest Greek translation of the Old Testament and the first major work of religious translation in history. The books of the Pentateuch were the first to be translated, in Alexandria, Egypt likely in the third century BC, and the other books were worked on in the years that followed. The Septuagint, therefore, provides significant insight into the Jewish understanding of the Scriptures in the three centuries before the time of Jesus Christ.

Due to influence of Alexander the Great, Greek language and culture spread throughout much of the ancient Near East. "Even into Roman and Byzantine times, Greek was a common language that was spoken in much of that region," Hiebert said. "When the authors of the New Testament quoted the Old

Testament, they often quoted directly from the Greek version of the Old Testament, rather than going to the Hebrew and retranslating it; they already had a version in Greek.”

Launched in 2011, the John William Wevers Institute for Septuagint Studies at Trinity Western University continues to be a renowned centre of world-class Septuagint research. “The Institute provides a great opportunity for us to work with antiquities and primary source materials” said Hiebert.

The [Green Scholars Initiative](#) involves a group of scholars from over 60 universities across North America and Europe. Founded by Steve Green, president of the US arts and crafts chain Hobby Lobby, GSI has collected more than 40,000 objects, including ancient papyri, manuscripts, and other antiquities. The Green Collection will be on display in the Museum of the Bible, scheduled to open in Washington, DC in 2017.

TWU students Sarah Baribeau and Brian Baucom have been awarded scholarships to participate this summer in the Logos in Oxford workshop. Organized on behalf of GSI by the Oxford research and educational institute known as Scholarship and Christianity in Oxford (SCIO), the summer workshop focused on biblical texts, vocation, and the Christian mind. The opportunity allowed Baribeau and Baucom to interact with other students and scholars from around the world, to hear lectures from textual experts, and to participate in seminars dealing with various kinds of ancient documents.

Baribeau and Baucom, along with recent alumnus David Sigrist ('15) will work alongside Hiebert on the Greek Psalter Project. “These kinds of opportunities for research and scholarship attract students to TWU,” Hiebert said. “Students get to be part of exciting ventures like this project.”

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