



# PROGRAM

Conceptualizing Nature in Eastern Mediterranean Cultures of the Second-First Millennia BCE:  
The Use of Textual and Pictorial Evidence

Steinhardt Museum of Natural History at Tel Aviv University  
**May 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2023**

תפיסות של טבע בתרבויות מזרח הים התיכון מן האלף השני והראשון לפה"ס: העדויות הכתובות והתמונתיות

מוזיאון הטבע ע"ש שטיינהרדט אוניברסיטת תל אביב כג-כז אייר תשפ"ג  
**18-14 במאי 2023**



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מוזיאון הטבע ע"ש שטיינהרדט, אוניברסיטת תל אביב | כג-כז אייר תשפ"ג | 14-18 במאי 2023

הועדה המארגנת: **איזק דה-הולסטר**, אוניברסיטאות גטינגן והלסינקי • **ג'ואל לה-מון**, אוניברסיטת אמורי • **דלית רום-שילוני**, אוניברסיטת תל אביב

סדנת החוקרים/ות של אוניברסיטת אמורי ואוניברסיטת תל אביב היא יוזמה משותפת המבקשת ליצור שיח רב-תחומי בין חוקרים שייפגשו לדון באחדות מן השאלות הפתוחות עדיין במחקר המקרא ובמחקר התרבויות הקדומות האחרות במרחב המזרח הקדום ומזרח הים התיכון של האלף השני והראשון לפה"ס. **האם היו לתרבויות אלה תפיסות של טבע? - ואם אכן היו, כיצד נוכל לגלות תפיסות של טבע במקורות כתובים ותמונתיים (טקסטואלים ופיקטוריאליים) של החברות הקדומות הללו? כיצד מתייחסות תפיסות הטבע הקדומות ביצירה המקראית אל אלו של החברות הקדומות במזרח הים התיכון?** קבוצה רב-גונית ורב-תחומית של חוקרים/ות תתכנס במוזיאון הטבע ע"ש שטיינהרדט באוניברסיטת תל אביב בימים ראשון ועד חמישי, כג-כז באייר תשפ"ג, 14-18 במאי 2023, לשלושה ימי דיונים באולם, ולשני ימי סיור-מחקרי. למעלה משלושים משתתפים/ות מארה"ב, אירופה, בריטניה וישראל יתרמו לסדנה, והם מומחים/ות בתחומים הבאים: מקרא, אשורולוגיה, חתיתולוגיה, אגיפטולוגיה, לימודים קלאסיים, ואלה ימצאו דרכים להחליף דעות ולשתף פעולה עם חוקרים/ות מן התחומים: ארכאולוגיה, במיוחד: איקונוגרפיה, ארכאובוטניקה וארכאוזואולוגיה; מומחים/ות בבוטניקה, זואולוגיה, אקלים וגאוגרפיה.

סדנת החוקרים פתוחה ומזמינה את הקהל המתעניין-חוקרים, סטודנטים, והקהל הרחב-להצטרף לימי הדיונים במוזיאון הטבע. אנא, הקדימו להירשם בכתובת [concnature@tauex.tau.ac.il](mailto:concnature@tauex.tau.ac.il)

מושבי ההרצאות יתנהלו גם באופן היברידי. אם אתם מעוניינים להשתתף מרחוק, אנא, ציינו זאת בטופס ההרשמה. הסדנה ממומנת על ידי הקרן המשותפת (Collaborative Research Grant) לאוניברסיטת אמורי (The Halle Institute for) Global Research at Emory) ואוניברסיטת תל אביב ועל ידי הקרן הלאומית למדע (ISF 1642/23).

## Conceptualizing Nature in Eastern Mediterranean Cultures of the Second-First Millennia BCE: The Use of Textual and Pictorial Evidence

Steinhardt Museum of Natural History at Tel Aviv University | **May 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2023**

**Organizing Committee:** Izaak de Hulster, Universities of Göttingen and Helsinki • Joel LeMon, Emory University • Dalit Rom-Shiloni, Tel Aviv University

The Emory University and Tel Aviv University colloquium is a joint project designed to foster unique interdisciplinary discourse. It seeks to address open questions in Hebrew Bible scholarship and in the study of ancient Near Eastern and East Mediterranean cultures of the second and first millennia BCE. Did these ancient cultures have conceptions of nature? And if so, how could we discern such conceptions of nature in pictorial and literary sources? How might the conceptions of nature found in the Hebrew Bible relate to the conceptions of nature within the cultures of the ancient Near East and Eastern Mediterranean? An interdisciplinary team of scholars will convene in the **Steinhardt Museum of Natural History at Tel Aviv University on May 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2023**, for three days of discussions indoors and two days of outdoor research excursions. Over thirty scholars from the USA, Europe, the United Kingdom, and Israel will participate in the workshop. Specialists in the disciplines of Hebrew Bible, Assyriology, Hittitology, Egyptology, and Classics will engage archaeologists with particular expertise in Iconography, Archaeobotany, and Archaeozoology, along with other experts in Botany, Zoology, Climatology, and Geography.

The Colloquium is open for interested audiences. Scholars, students, and the general public are welcome to participate during the three days of indoor sessions. Please pre-register at [concnature@tauex.tau.ac.il](mailto:concnature@tauex.tau.ac.il). The Colloquium will also be hybrid, and allow remote participation. If you are able to join us remotely, please, mention that on the registration form.

This colloquium is funded by a Collaborative Research Grant provided by the Halle Institute for Global Research at Emory University and Tel Aviv University, and by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF 1642/23).

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# Sunday, May 14, 2023

9:00–9:30 Gathering and Tea/Coffee

## Session I | Introduction

9:30–10:30 Greetings

**Tamar Dayan**, Founding Director of the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History  
**Tamar Herzig**, Vice Dean for Research in the Humanities  
**Guy Darshan**, Chair of Biblical Studies Department

Organizers' Introduction

**Joel LeMon**, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

*An Invitation and Overview*

**Dalit Rom-Shiloni**, Biblical Studies Department, Tel Aviv University

*Five Days in Israel on Nature and Conceptions of Nature*

with a Round of Introductions

**Izaak de Hulster**, University of Göttingen

*Biblical Flowers: A Hermeneutical Reflection through Botanical Souvenirs from the Holy Land (c.1850–1950)*

10:30–10:45 Tea/Coffee Break

## Session II | World Orders and Cosmology

Moderator: **Joel LeMon**

10:45–12:45 **Wayne Horowitz**, Department of Assyriology, Hebrew University

*Geometric Patterns in the Cuneiform View of the Universe*

**Jonathan Ben-Dov**, Department of Biblical Studies, Tel Aviv University

*Beyond Nature and Culture: Justice in the World Order in Amos and the Psalms*

**Anna Angelini**, Faculty of Theology, University of Zürich

*Ordered Nature: Ancient Cosmologies between East and West*

Discussion

12:45–13:45 Lunch

## Session III | Climate Phenomena

13:45–15:45 Moderator: **Joel LeMon**

**Hadas Saaroni**, Department of Geography and the Human Environment, Tel Aviv University

*Spatial-temporal Heterogeneity and Extreme Events in Israel's climate as Fundamental Factors in Biblical Descriptions of Nature*

**Reuven Givati**, Departments of Geography and Biblical Studies, Tel Aviv University

*Precipitations in Israel: Climatic Knowledge and Biblical References*

**Pinhas Alpert**, Department of Geophysics, Tel Aviv University

*Air Dust: Ancient Concepts from Abraham Our Forefather to Present Scientific Knowledge*

Respondent: **Dalit Rom-Shiloni**, Department of Biblical Studies, Tel Aviv University

Discussion

15:45–19:30 **Neot Kedumim Park: Biblical Landscapes Reserve**

Introduction to Neot Kedumim and a Short Excursion till Sunset

19:30–21:00 Dinner at Neot Kedumim

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## Tuesday, May 16, 2023

9:00–9:30 Gathering and Tea/Coffee

### Session IV | Flora: Glorious Trees

9:30–11:30 Moderator: **Dalit Rom-Shiloni**

**Eric McDonnell**, Laney Graduate School, Emory University

*What Is It Like to Be a Tree? Conceptualizing Transplanted Trees as Analogues for the Righteous in the Psalms*

**Norma Franklin**, Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa

*The Assyrian Connection: Why the Palm Frond and Citron Became a Lulav and Etrog*

**Johannes Seidel**, Faculty of Theology, University of Jena

*Nature Images and Their Referential Level: Observations of Nature or Phantasy?*

Respondent: **Shira Penner-Rosenvasser**, Steinhardt Museum of Natural History (Botany), Tel Aviv University

11:30–11:45 Tea/Coffee Break

### Session V | Fauna 1: Prophecy and Wisdom

11:45–13:15 Moderator: **Dalit Rom-Shiloni**

**Brady Beard**, Laney Graduate School, Emory University

*Horses in Joel 2:4–5*

**Tova Forti**, Department of Bible, Archaeology and Ancient Near East, Ben Gurion University of the Negev

*Migration and Transformation of Encoded Animal Imagery in Proverbs: Between MT and LXX*

Respondent: **Haim Moyal**, Department of Natural & Life Sciences (Zoology), Levinsky-Wingate college

Discussion

13:15–14:15 Lunch

### Session VI | Fauna 2: Cult and Liturgy

14:15–16:15 Moderator: **Dalit Rom-Shiloni**

**Mark Stone**, Laney Graduate School, Emory University

*To Eat Is Human, to Taste, Divine: Food, Nature, and Need in Ancient Israelite Cult*

**Yoram Cohen**, Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University

*Wild and Domesticated Sacrificial Animals in Mesopotamia*

**Joel LeMon**, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

*Avian Imagery in the Psalter*

Respondent: **Raanan Eichler**, Department of Bible, Bar Ilan University

Discussion

16:15–16:30 Tea/Coffee Break

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- Session VII | Flora and Fauna: In the Lab**
- 16:30–18:00 Moderator: **Dalit Rom-Shiloni**  
**Lidar Sapir-Hen**, Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University  
*Conceptions of Wild and Domestic Animals During the Second–First Millennia BCE: The Zooarchaeological Evidence*  
**Dafna Langgut**, Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University  
*The Four Species: An Archaeobotanical Overview*
- Visit to the Archaeobotany and Archaeozoology laboratories of Langgut and Sapir-Hen**
- 18:30–21:00 **Special Event and Dinner at the Steinhardt Museum of Nature at TAU**  
 Keynote speaker: **Dr. Uzi Paz**, Beit Berl College  
*What Are the Wild Edible/Purified Animals?*

## Thursday, May 18, 2023

- 9:00–9:30 Gathering and Tea/Coffee
- Session VIII | Landscapes**
- 9:30–11:30 Moderator: **Izaak de Hulster**  
**Caitlin Hubler**, Laney Graduate School, Emory University  
*Sacred Şaphon: The Divinized Mountain in Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible*  
**Amir Gilan**, Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University  
*Mount Hazzi in Hittite Texts*  
**Deborah Sweeney**, Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University  
*The Royal Tomb-Builders of the Valley of the Kings and Their Natural Environment*  
 Discussion
- 11:30–11:45 Tea/Coffee Break
- Session IX | Conceptualizing Nature 1**
- 11:45–13:45 Moderator: **Izaak de Hulster**  
**Angelika Berlejung**, Faculty of Theology, University of Leipzig  
*The Relationship of Human Beings to Nature and Their Environment in Iconography*  
**Peter Joshua Atkins**, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh  
*Wisdom and Immortality in Eden: Distinctions between Animals and Humans in Genesis 2–3*  
**Sara Kipfer**, Institute of Protestant Theology, TU Dortmund University  
*Earth Mourns, Heavens Be Glad and Sun and Moon are Ashamed: Nature as Subject of Actions and Emotions in the Hebrew Bible*  
 Discussion

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13:45–14:45 Lunch

## Session X | Conceptualizing Nature 2

14:45–16:15 Moderator: **Izaak de Hulster**

**Łukasz Popko**, Ecole Biblique

*Beauty or the Beast? The Two Faces of Nature*

**Hindy Najman**, Faculty of Theology and Religion, Oriel College, Oxford University

*Philological and Conceptual Developments in Ancient Judaism: Nature and Natural Thinking*

Discussion

16:15–16:30 Tea/Coffee Break

## Session XI | Closing session

16:30–18:00 Organizers' summary and an open floor discussion

*What have we learned?*

*Prospects of future cooperation and publication*



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On Monday, May 15, 2023 and Wednesday, May 17, 2023 the Colloquium participants will be on excursions for the entire days.

**Monday, May 15, 2023**

**Excursion 1**

**The Northern Negev: Furreh Nature Reserve, Tel Be'er Sheba  
The Lower Shephela: Lachish, Azeka, the Ella Valley, and more**



Will be guided by  
**Alexandra Wrathall  
Haim Moyal  
Marcelo Sternberg  
Dalit Rom-Shiloni**

With the participation of other colleagues of the group

**Wednesday, May 17, 2023**

**Excursion 2**

**The Carmel, Lower Galilee, Tel Jezreel, Gilboa  
The Jordan Valley, and more**



Will be guided by  
**Norma Franklin  
Haim Moyal  
Yuval Sapir  
Dalit Rom-Shiloni**

With the participation of other colleagues of the group