

The Center for the Study of Conversion
and Inter-Religious Encounters (CSOC)
at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Religion and the Natural Environment – Multiple Perspectives International Conference

Marcus Family Campus, Be'er Sheva

Building 71 (Samuel & Milada Ayrton University Center), Room -136

9-11 January 2023

Participants' Biographies

Bat-ami Artzi is an art historian and archaeologist, interested in Andean visual and material culture created by ancient and early colonial indigenous societies. Her studies explore three thematic axes as portrayed through artistic expression: ecologies, plants, and landscape; ancient Andean gender structures; and the Spanish invasion from the indigenous perspective. Currently she is a postdoctoral fellow at the CSOC at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Dr. Artzi's studies were funded by the Harvard University's Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, the Institute for Art History in Florence (Max Planck Society), the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For one of her publications she has been awarded the Polonsky Prize for Creativity and Originality in the Humanistic Disciplines.

Yiftach Ashkenazi is a scholar of contemporary Israeli literature and culture, particularly interested in negotiating identities within communities of readers and writers. His Ph.D. is in Hebrew literature (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2021), titled: *Israeli Literature in 2008*. He is a novelist (Yiftach won the Israeli Prime Minister's prize for excellence in creative writing and his last novel *Gehenna* was a bestselling thriller). Currently, he is a Postdoctoral Fellow at CSOC at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and the Truman Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Tzafrir Barzilay is a senior lecturer at Bar Ilan University History Department. He is interested in the development of the common perceptions of Jews and Christians, and their change throughout the Middle Ages, in particular around the subject of water. He is the author of *Poisoned Wells: Accusation, Persecution and Minorities in Medieval Europe, 1321-1422* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022). Barzilay is currently investigating lay beliefs and practices pertaining to water in Jewish and Christian life from 1050 to 1450 in Europe, focusing on the tensions between the different meanings attributed to water by Jews and Christians in the context of its wide range of practical and ritual uses. He also published articles dealing with the views of medieval Jews on lordship and violence, and on the issue of medieval river travel.

Oluwabunmi Bernard teaches Yorùbá literature and culture at Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria. Her research interests include Yorùbá literature, gender and sexuality, postcolonial, and environmental studies. She has authored and co-authored papers in these areas. She won the prestigious UMAPS fellowship at the University of Michigan and the A.G. Leventis fellowship at SOAS, University of London respectively in 2020. She is currently a visiting research fellow at the Centre of African Studies University of Cambridge. During her fellowship at CAS University of Cambridge, she will be developing her monograph on environmental sustainability and Yorùbá sacred orature.

Neta Bodner holds a position as lecturer at the Open University of Israel in the department of Literature, Languages and the Arts. She is an architectural historian currently working on a book project on medieval Jewish ritual baths (mikvaot) in Germany. She has published in the journals *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, *Viator*, and *Zion* (with Ariella Lehmann) and in various anthologies, and is co-editor of two volumes. She is part of a Massada Foundation Research Network on Purity and the Body with Conrad Leyser and Laura Quick from the university of Oxford and in 2022 began a collaborative ISF project with Israeli and German partners on the ritual bath of Cologne.

Gideon Bohak holds the Jacob M. Alkow Chair for the History of the Jews in the Ancient World at Tel Aviv University. His main field of research is the history of Jewish magic. His most recent books include *A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of Jewish Magic*, Los Angeles, 2014 (in Hebrew), *Magie, anges et démons dans la tradition juive*, Paris, 2015 (an exhibition catalogue, curated with Anne Hélène Hoog), and *Thābit ibn Qurra On Talismans and Pseudo-Ptolemy On Images 1-9*, Florence, 2021 (with Charles Burnett).

Jonathan Brack is a lecturer in the Department of Middle East Studies at BGU. He completed his PhD at the Department of History at the University of Michigan in 2016, and was a postdoc fellow at the Martin Buber Society of Fellows before coming to BGU. His research focuses on medieval Iran and the Mongol Empire, inter-religious exchange, conversion, and sacral kingship. His forthcoming book with UC press is titled: "An Afterlife for the Khan: Muslims, Buddhists, and Sacred Kingship in Mongol Iran and Eurasia".

Marco Curatola Petrocchi is professor of history, editor of the journal *Histórica* and director of the Andean Studies Series at the PUCP, Lima. He founded and directed the Andean Studies Program at the Graduate School of the PUCP from 2006 to 2021. As a specialist in history of Andean culture, he has focused his interests on native religion in Inca and colonial times. He has published the books *Il giardino d'oro del dio Sole. Déi, culti e messia delle Ande* (1997), *Adivinación y oráculos en el mundo andino antiguo* (ed. with M. Ziolkowski, 2008), *El quipu colonial* (ed. with J.C. de la Puente, 2013), *El Inca y la huaca* (ed. with J. Szemiński, 2016). *El estudio del mundo andino* (2019) and *El arte antes de la historia. Para una historia del arte del mundo andino antiguo* (ed. With J. Pillsbury, C. Michaud and Lisa Trever, 2020). Currently he is developing a research project about the oracles of the ancient Andean world.

Samuel Glauber-Zimra is a PhD candidate in the Department of Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. His dissertation, written under the supervision of Prof. Jonatan Meir, explores Jewish engagement with modern occult currents in early-twentieth-century Eastern Europe. His research has been published in *Correspondences*, *Nashim*, *Jewish Historical Studies*, *Kabbalah*, and *East European Jewish Affairs*, and he was most recently the 2021-2022 recipient of the Fellowship in American Jewish Studies at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Itay Greenspan is a Senior Lecturer at the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research focuses on the nexus of civil society, civic participation and environmentalism. He studies (among other topics) volunteering infrastructures in nonprofit organizations, public participation in the environmental field, the development of the Israeli environmental movement, the role of NGOs in localizing climate change adaptations, environmentalism and Judaism, and environmental behaviors of individuals and families from a comparative perspective.

Ariadne Konstantinou is a Greek-Israeli classicist and a senior faculty member in the Department of Classical Studies at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. She began her studies in her hometown at the Department of Philology (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece) and completed her PhD in Classical Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with fellowships from the Onassis Foundation and the Hebrew University ("President's Fellow"). She was awarded postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Toronto in Canada, and at Tel Aviv and Bar-Ilan Universities in Israel. Her research focuses on ancient Greek mythology and religion, on women in antiquity, and on Classical Reception in Modern Greece. She has published so far more than ten peer-reviewed articles in some of the leading journals in Classics, as well as the monograph *Female Mobility and Gendered Space in Ancient Greek Myth* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018). Her main efforts these days are dedicated to writing a monograph on the Greek goddess Hestia, which is under contract for Routledge (in the series *Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World*).

Einat Kramer is a Ph.D. student at the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare at the Hebrew University. Her research deals with connections between eco-theological worldviews, religious practice, and sustainable lifestyles. Einat Kramer is the Founding Director of "Teva Ivri", an NGO which promotes Jewish environmentalism in Israel, and Co-Director of the Israeli Climate Forum's Department of Education. She lives in Mazkeret Batya with her husband and four kids.

David Krantz is a PhD candidate at Arizona State University, a National Science Foundation IGERT Fellow and a Wrigley Fellow researching solar-energy policy and faith-based environmentalism. He also runs the environmental nonprofit, Aytzim: Ecological Judaism, parent organization of Jewcology.org, the Green Zionist Alliance, EcoJews of the Bay, Jews of the Earth, and Shomrei Breishit: Rabbis and Cantors for the Earth. He serves on the board of directors of Interfaith Moral Action on Climate and is on the founding team of Interfaith Oceans. He previously served as a leadership fellow at the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life; as a global-justice fellow at American Jewish World Service; and as a member of the board of directors of the American Zionist Movement and Arizona Interfaith Power & Light.

David Shyovitz is Associate Professor of History and Director of NU's Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies. His research focuses on medieval European intellectual and cultural history, with a particular emphasis on Jewish history and Jewish-Christian relations. He is the author of *A Remembrance of His Wonders: Nature and the Supernatural in Medieval Ashkenaz* (Philadelphia, 2017), which was awarded the John Nicholas Brown Prize for best first book in Medieval Studies by the Medieval Academy of America. His current book project, "O Beastly Jew!" *Jews, Animals, and Jewish Animals in the Middle Ages*, explores the overlapping ways in which Jewish and Christian authors and artists distinguished humans from animals, and Jews from Christians, over the course of the Middle Ages.

Gal Sofer submitted his doctoral dissertation to the department of Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University, as a graduate of the Azrieli Foundation Fellows Program, and he is a post-doctoral fellow of CSoC and the ERC project "JEWTRACT." His work focuses on demonic magic and Kabbalah from the late Middle Ages to the modern period, focusing in particular on the transfer of knowledge across linguistic boundaries. Medically trained (MD), he is an adjunct lecturer in the faculty of health sciences where he teaches cardiovascular physiology and pathophysiology. His most recent publication dealt with the reception of Shi'ur Qomah among Christian magicians in the late Middle Ages (*Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 16).

Jan Szemiński is a prof. emeritus of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and PhD in history from the Warsaw University. As a historian he has specialized in the history of central Andean societies, Inca empire and Andean resistance against colonial rule. He also studied resistance ideologies of the Incas under Spanish rule, Inca oral tradition as a historical source for precolonial times, Inca local administration and planning, Inca economy and ecology as well as Inca language as a historical source.

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson is Regents Professor of History, Irving and Miriam Lowe Professor of Modern Judaism, and Director of Jewish Studies at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. Her main focus is the interplay of philosophy and mysticism, religion and science, and religion and ecology. In addition to over 60 essays and book chapters, she is the author of several books, such as *Happiness in Premodern Judaism: Virtue, Knowledge, and Well-Being in Premodern Judaism* (2003), and *Religion and Environment: The Case of Judaism* (2020). She is also the editor of several volumes, including *Perfecting Human Futures: Transhuman Visions and Technological Imaginations* (2016); and the *Future of Jewish Philosophy* (2018). Professor Tirosh-Samuelson is the editor-in-chief of the LIBRARY OF CONTEMPORARY JEWISH PHILOSOPHERS (2012-2018), a series of 21 books that features outstanding Jewish thinkers today. Tirosh-Samuelson explores the interplay of religion, science, and technology with a focus on transhumanism and religious environmentalism as expression of our post-secular age. She is the PI or Co-PI of several large externally-funded projects, such as “Beyond Secularization: Religion, Science, and Technology in Public Life” (2019-2023); and “Fasting and Flourishing: Comparative Analysis” (2022-2025). She is a member of the International Society of Science and Religion (ISSR) and serves on the academic board of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*. As Director of the Center for Jewish Studies at ASU, Tirosh-Samuelson manages the international society, Judaism, Science and Medicine Group (JSMG) and organizes its annual conferences.

Yotam Tsal is a Lady Davis Postdoctoral Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He received his PhD in history from the University of California, Berkeley in 2021. He is a historian of science and the natural environment, focusing on eighteenth-century France and its colonial empire.

Ophir Weinshall-Shachar is a postdoctoral fellow of CSOC and the School of Sustainability Climate change at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She received her PhD from The Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2021. Her research interests focus on environment-society relations, the development of the environmental education field in Israel, environmental behaviors, and environmentalism and Judaism. Ophir is a teaching fellow at Hebrew University, teaching seminars on sustainability issues, Environmental Justice and Equity.