







Religion and the Natural Environment – Multiple Perspectives

International Conference

The Center for the Study of Conversion and Inter-Religious Encounters (CSoC)

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Marcus Family Campus, Be'er Sheva Building 71 (Samuel & Milada Ayrton University Center), Room -136

9-11 January 2023

Conference Program

Monday 9 January 2023

09:45-10:15 Registration and light refreshments

10:15-10:30 Greetings: Prof. Daniella Talmon-Heller, CSoC Director,

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

10:30-11:45 Panel 1: Premodern Perceptions of Animals and Plants

Chair: Uri Shachar, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

- David Shyovitz, Northwestern University

Pious Animals in Medieval Jewish Culture: Narrative, Theological, and Polemical Dimensions

- Yotam Tsal, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

When God was no Longer Natural: Contesting Visions for the Natural Environment in the Age of Enlightenment

11:45-12:15 Break and light refreshments

12:15-12:30 **Greetings:** Prof. Chaim Hames, Rector of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and CSoC Founder

12:30-13:45 Panel 2: Pre-modern State Control of the Natural Environment

Chair: Yana Tchekhanovets, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Jan Szemiński, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
 The Inca Religion, Ecology and Politics before Spanish Conquest

Jonathan Brack, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Sacred Kingship and the Environment between the Mongols and the Mughals

13:45-15:00 **Lunch** in Barkan Hall

15:00-16:45 Panel 3: Deities in the Natural Environment

Chair: Nimrod Hurvitz, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

- Ariadne Konstantinou, Bar-Ilan University

Gods and Nature (and the nature of gods) in Early Greek Epic Poetry

- Marco Curatola Petrocchi, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

The Living Stones: Rocks and Water as Speaking Deities in Inca Ontology and Religion

Bat-ami Artzi, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
 The Andean Earth Goddess and Her Six Days of Rest

16:45-17:15 **Break** and light refreshments

17:15-18:30 Panel 4: Natural and Supernatural

Chair: Cana Werman, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

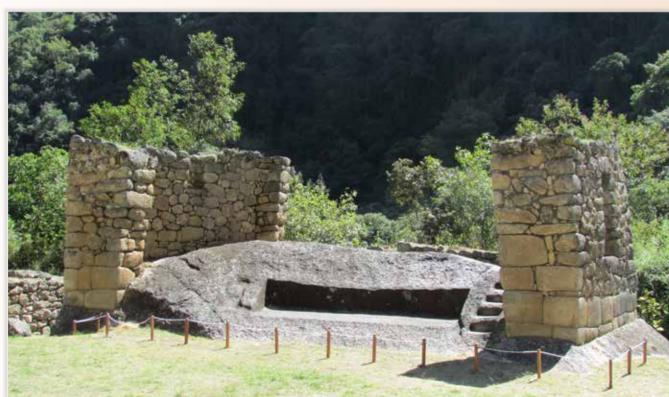
- Gal Sofer, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

"The Natural Forces of the Universe Will Obey This Soul": The Role of Nature in Ritual Magic

- Samuel Glauber-Zimra, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Are Miracles Natural or is Nature Miraculous? A Debate between a Rabbi and an Occultist in 1940's New York City

19:00-20:45 Dinner at Shufan restaurant



Inca Sanctuary of Chachabamba (photographed by Marco Curatola Petrocchi)

Tuesday 10 January 2023

10:15-12:00 Panel 5: Ritual and Water

Chair: Ephriam (Effie) Shoham-Steiner, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

- Gideon Bohak, Tel Aviv University

Jewish Magical Recipes for Quelling a Storm at Sea

- Tzafrir Barzilay, Bar-llan University

Man-made Holy Nature: Fountains and the Religious Culture of Jews and Christians in High-medieval Europe

- Neta Bodner, Open University of Israel

"Rising Up from the Waters": Architectural Framing of Baptismal and Immersion Fonts in the Middle Ages

12:00-13:30 **Lunch** in Barkan Hall

13:30-15:15 Panel 6: Faith-based Environmentalism

Chair: Nir Barak, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

- Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, Arizona State University

Jewish Environmentalism and the Dialectic of Post-Secularism: Israel vs. Diaspora

- David Krantz, Arizona State University

Green Galut: The Jewish-Environmental Movement in the United States

- Ophir Weinshall Shachar, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Itay Greenspan, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Jewish Environmentalism in Israel: Organizational Characteristics, Practices and Entrepreneurs

15:15-15:45 **Break** and light refreshments

15:45-17:30 Panel 7: The Environment in Contemporary Religious Practice and Thought Chair: Peter Lehnardt, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

- Einat Kramer, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Development of a Stewardship Eco-Theology Discourse Around the Commandment (mitzvah) of Shemitah in the Face of Climate Change

- Oluwabunmi Bernard, University of Cambridge and Obafemi Awolowo University Sacred Trash: Paradox of Ritual Objectification in Yorùbá Orature

- Yiftach Ashkenazi, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Religion and Environmental Commitment in Southern Israeli Literature
17:30-18:00 Break and light refreshments

18:00-19:00 Final Discussion: Prof. Daniella Talmon-Heller, CSoC Director, Ben-Gurion University

of the Negev

19:15-21:00 **Dinner** at Little India Restaurant

Wednesday 11 January 2023

Jordan River and Dead Sea Tour:

Ecology, Religion and Environmental Peacebuilding through Regional Cooperation

Guided by Nadav Tal from EcoPeace



(photographed by Nadav Tal)

08:15 Departure from BGU (parking lot of Building #72)

- Arad evaporation ponds viewpoint
- Ein Bokek Gorge short hike
- Lunch (Picnic)
- Qasr al-Yahud (Jordan River Baptism Site)

16:30 Travel back to BGU via Jerusalem Train Station