

Shawn Zelig Aster
Academic Curriculum Vita

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Date of Birth: May 11, 1970

Citizenship: Canadian, Israeli

Education

University of Pennsylvania, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Ph. D. in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, December 2006
Dissertation: "The Phenomenon of Divine and Human Radiance in the Hebrew Bible and in Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Literatures: A Philological and Comparative Study."
Dissertation Committee: Prof. Jeffrey H. Tigay; Prof. Barry L. Eichler

McGill University, Department of Jewish Studies
M. A. in History of Jewish Biblical Interpretation, May 1996.
Thesis: "Narrative and Exegesis in Midrash Bereishit Rabba."

Harvard University, Department of Government
A.B. magna cum laude, June 1993.
Thesis: "Conventional Deterrence in Israeli National Security Policy 1949-1991."

Honours and Awards

- Chelst Book Grant, Yeshiva College 2011
- Kreitman Post-doctoral Fellowship, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2005-2007
- Memorial Foundation Fellowship, 2001-2 and 2002-3
- SAS Dissertation Fellowship, 2001-2002
- Ellis Fellowship, Fall 2002
- Dean's Scholar, 2000
- William Penn Fellow, 1995-2000
- J. W. McConnell Fellow at McGill University, 1993-1995

Areas of Teaching Competence: Hebrew Bible, Assyriology, Northwest Semitics, Rabbinic and Medieval Jewish Interpretation of the Bible, Historical Geography and Biblical History

Areas of Research: Connections between Biblical Prophecy and Near Eastern History, Historical Geography, Comparative Study of Cuneiform and Biblical Civilizations, Rabbinic Biblical Interpretation

Teaching and Research Positions

Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan

Senior Lecturer, Department of Land of Israel Studies, since Fall 2012

Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies, Yeshiva College, Yeshiva University, New York (2007-2012)

Associate Faculty Member, Bernard Revel Graduate School, Yeshiva University (2010-2012)

Adjunct Faculty, Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, Summer 2012 and Summer 2013

Rutgers University, New Jersey

Part-time Lecturer, Department of Jewish Studies, Spring 2008

Ben-Gurion University, Israel

Kreitman Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies 2005-6 and 2006-7

Research Project: Prophetic Reactions to Neo-Assyrian Imperial Ideology

Haifa University, Israel

Instructor, Department of Bible, Fall 2006

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Rothberg International School, Instructor (2006) and Co-ordinator (2007), Summer Institute in the World of the Bible

University of Pennsylvania

Lecturer in Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, 2003-4

Lecturer in College of General Studies, Spring and Summer 2004

Bar Ilan University, Israel

Instructor, Department of Bible, Spring 2002, 2003, 2006

Instructor, Department for the Study of the Land of Israel, Spring 2003, Spring 2011

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Summer Session Lecturer, Faculty of Religious Studies, Summer 1998

Publications

- *The Unbeatable Light: Melammu and Its Biblical Parallels*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament volume 384, Muenster: Ugarit Verlag, 2012.

Articles Published and Accepted for Publication:

- "The Role of Isaiah 14:28-32 in the Development of the Tradition of Jerusalem's Sanctity and Invincibility" (Heb.) *Hiddushim Be-Heker Yerushalayim* 19 (2014)
- "Ezekiel's Adaptation of Mesopotamian Melammu," accepted in *Welt des Orients*
- "Isaiah 19: The Burden of Egypt and Neo-Assyrian Imperial Policy," accepted in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- "An Assyrian *Bit Mardite* Near Tel Hadid?" accepted in *Journal of Near East Studies*
- "Images of the Throne Room of Assurnasirpal II at Calah in Isaiah 6," to appear in *Marbeh Hokma*, Memorial Volume for Avigdor Victor Hurowitz
- "Central Hill Country," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology*, Oxford University Press
- "Why Sennacherib Did Not Conquer Jerusalem: The Assyrian Policy of Leveraging Territorial Conquest for Political Gain," (Heb.) *Hiddushim Be-Heker Yerushalayim* 19 (2013): 57-66.
- "Mishna Bava Metzia 7:7 and the Distribution of the Phoenician Jar: The Relationship of Mishnaic Hebrew to Northern Biblical Hebrew and to Phoenician and Archeological Evidence for the Continuity of Jewish Settlement in the Galilee from Iron II to the Greco-Roman Period," in *Talmuda de-Eretz Israel*. Ed. Aaron J. Koller and Steven Fine (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014),
- "The Function of the City of Jezreel and the Meaning of Jezreel in Hosea 1-2," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 71.1 (Spring 2012): 31-46.
- "The Exodus Narrative as an Expression of the Cosmic Combat Motif," in *A Common Cultural Heritage: Studies on Mesopotamia and the Biblical World in Honor of Barry L. Eichler*, ed. G. Frame et al (Bethesda: CDL, 2011).
- "The Bread of the Dungheap: Light on Num. 21:5 from the Tell Fekheriye Inscription," *Vetus Testamentum* 61 (2011): 341-358

- “The Transmission of Neo-Assyrian Claims of Empire to Judah in the Late Eighth Century,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 78 (2009): 1-44
- “The Subversion of Assyrian Motifs in the Prophetic Narrative about Sennacherib’s War Against Judah (Isa. 37:24-25//II Kings 19:24-25)” (Heb.), *Shenaton Le Miqra Ve La Mizrah Ha Qadum* 19 (2009): 105-124.
- “On the Term ‘Qarne Hod’ in Late Midrashim,” in *Or Le-Mayer: Studies in Bible, Semitic Languages, Rabbinic Literature, and Ancient Civilizations, Presented to Mayer Gruber on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. Shamir Yona (Beer-sheva: Ben Gurion University, 2010), 39-52.
- “On the Place of Psalm 21 in Israelite Royal Ideology,” in *Mishne Todah: Studies in Deuteronomy and Related Literature in Honor of Jeffrey Tigay*, ed. David Glatt-Gilad, Nili S. Fox, M. Williams (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 307-320.
- “‘They Feared God/ They Did Not Fear God:’ On the Use of ‘Fear of God’ in II Kings 17 24-41,” in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. C. Cohen et al (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 135-141.
- “The Historical Background to the Prophecy about the Messiah in Isaiah 10:28ff” (Heb.), in *Mehkere Yehuda ve Shomron* 17 (2008): 25-35.
- “The Image of Assyria in Isaiah 2:5-22: The Campaign Motif Reversed,” in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127.3 (2007): 249-278.
- "What was Doeg the Edomite's Title? Textual Emendation vs. a Comparative Approach to I Samuel 21:8," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003): 353-362

Popular Articles:

- “The Imagined Return to the Land of Israel in Hosea 2,” in *Mitokh Ha-Ohel: Haftarat*, ed. Daniel Z. Feldman and Stuart W. Halpern (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2011).
- “The Division of the Land of Israel: Archaeology, Anthropology, and Halakha” in *Mitokh Ha-Ohel*, ed. Daniel Z. Feldman and Stuart W. Halpern (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2010), 387-394.
- "Academic Jewish Studies as 'Handles for Torah': The Case of Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Joshua," *Ten Daat: A Journal of Jewish Education* 17 (2005), pp. 49-57 (with Ariel Rothstein)
- Articles on "Book of Judges," "Book of Samuel," "Book of Kings," "Biblical Flora and Fauna," in *Readers' Guide to Judaism* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000).

Conference Papers

- "The Creation of Historical Narrative in Chronicles: The War of Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 20", Association for Jewish Studies Annual Meeting, December 2014
- "Changes in Assyrian Imperial Control of the West in the Seventh Century and the Development of Isaiah's Theology," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2013
- "Micah 5:1-5 and Neo-Assyrian Claims of Empire," American Oriental Society Annual Meeting, March 2013
- "Assyrian Rule in Samaria, Based on Non-Literary Documents" (Heb.), Ariel University Conference on Judea and Samaria, June 2013
- "Periodizing First Isaiah's Responses to Neo-Assyrian Claims of Empire," Hebrew Scriptures and Cognate Literature Section at Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2011, read by substitute due to illness
- "Images of the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Calah in Isaiah 6," Assyriology Section at Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2011, read by substitute due to illness
- "Isaiah 31 as a Response to Rebellions against Assyria in Philistia," in session on The Bible and Empires of the Ancient Near East, at Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting (London), July 2011
- "Mishna Bava Metzia 7:7 and the Distribution of the Phoenician Jar: The Relationship of Mishnaic Hebrew to Northern Biblical Hebrew and to Phoenician" at Talmuda de-Eretz Israel: Archaeology and the Rabbis in Late Antiquity, international conference organized by the Center for Israel Studies at Yeshiva University
- "Isaiah 31 and the Relationship between Judah and Assyria in the Period of Sargon II" (Heb.), Conference in Honor of Prof. Anson F. Rainey, Bar Ilan University, May 2010
- "The Gideon Story as an Expression of the Sovereign's Day of Conquest," Association of Jewish Studies Annual Meeting, December 2009
- "The Burden of Egypt and Neo-Assyrian Policy in Isaiah 19," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, National Association of Professors of Hebrew session, November 2009 (read by chair)

- “The Exodus Narrative as an Expression of the Cosmic Combat Motif,” Tablet and Torah: Mesopotamia and the Biblical World, Conference in Honor of Dr. Barry L. Eichler, University of Pennsylvania Museum, March 2009
- “Responses to Neo-Assyrian Universalism and the Centralization of Worship in the Time of Hezekiah,” Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, December 2008
- “The Centralization of Worship in the Temple and the Development of Israelite Monotheism,” YU Center for Israel Studies Conference, May 2008
- “The Historical Background of Isa. 10:28-32”, Annual Conference on Judea and Samaria Studies, Ariel Academic College, June 2007
- “The Mesopotamian Background to Isaiah 6,” Ben-Gurion University Department of Bible, Archeology, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Seminar, May 2007
- “The Babylonian Background to Isaiah 60,” Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2007
- “The Vision of the End of Days in Isaiah and Micah as a Reaction to Assyrian Might,” Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2007
- “The Polemic Against Assyrian Royal Inscriptions in Isa. 37:24-25,” Israel Association for Ancient Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference, Ben-Gurion University, January 2007
- “Geographical Names in Transition: Nature and Relationships with God in Hosea,” Bi-Annual Conference of the Department of Biblical Studies, Haifa University, December 2006
- “Royal and Divine *Melammu*: Cracking a Code in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” Seminar of the S. N. Kramer Assyriology Institute, Bar-Ilan University, November 2006
- “*Kebod YHWH* in Ezekiel and its Mesopotamian Background,” Annual Conference of the Dept. of Bible, Archeology, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Ben-Gurion University, January 2006
- "Isaiah's Universalism and Neo-Assyrian Royal Ideology," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, December 2004
- "Religious Practice in the Northern Kingdom in the Eighth Century B.C.E.," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, December 2003
- "The Excavations at Jezreel and the Symbolism of Jezreel in Hosea 1-2," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2003

- "Parallels to the Fire and the Cloud in the Exodus and Wilderness Narratives," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2002.
- "Jeremiah Chap. 1 and Mesopotamian Royal Inscriptions," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, December 2001
- "Divine Radiance and Isaiah Chapter 2," World Congress for Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 2001
- "Literary Analysis of II Kings 8-10 in Light of the Tel Dan Stele," Near and Middle Eastern Studies Graduate Student Symposium, University of Toronto, March 2001
- "Is Northern Biblical Hebrew Related to Mishnaic Hebrew: Archeological Evidence for Settlement in the Lower Galilee 733 BCE-103 BCE," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Boston, December 2000.

Invited Lectures:

- "Historicity and the Exodus," Yeshiva University, New York, December 2014
- "Sennacherib in Judah," Seminar for Historical Reconstruction, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations and Center for Jewish Studies, University of Toronto, April 2013
- "Literary Evidence for the Historicity of the Exodus," Center for Jewish Studies, York University, Toronto, April 2013
- "Periodizing the Eighth Century Prophecies of First Isaiah," Department of Bible, Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, November 2012
- "Teaching Biblical Hebrew to Students with Language-Based Learning Disabilities," Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages, Bar Ilan University, Spring 2012
- "Isaiah 60 and Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions," Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, Bar Ilan University, February 2011

Courses Taught:

- Introduction to Historical Geography of the Biblical Period (Bar Ilan University)
- Royal Inscriptions in the Near East (Bar Ilan University)
- Assyria, Babylonia, and Their Influence on Biblical Israel (Bar Ilan University)
- Introduction to Bible, covering methods of Biblical interpretation and their relationship to Rabbinic Judaism (Yeshiva College)
- Joshua and Judges (Yeshiva College)
- First Year Akkadian (Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies)
- Exodus and the Haggadah (Isaac Breuer College, Yeshiva University)
- Isaiah (Bar Ilan University; Yeshiva College and Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Yeshiva University)
- Prophecies of Consolation (Yeshiva College and Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Yeshiva University)
- Ezra/Nehemiah: The Literature and History of the “Return to Zion” Period (Yeshiva College)
- First Year Akkadian (Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Yeshiva University)
- Historical Analysis of Biblical Narrative (Yeshiva College and Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Yeshiva University)
- Chronicles: Rewriting History (Yeshiva College)
- Varieties of Jewish Life in Late Antiquity (co-taught, Rutgers University)
- Literary Reactions to Conquest in the Ancient Near East (Heb., Ben-Gurion University)
- First Isaiah in its Historical Context (Heb., Ben-Gurion University)
- Northwest Semitic Inscriptions (University of Pennsylvania)
- The Hebrew Bible in History and Literature (University of Pennsylvania, College of General Studies)
- Prophetic Reactions to Assyrian Propaganda (Heb., Haifa University)
- Introduction to Bible (Hebrew University, Rothberg International School)
- History of the Biblical Period (Hebrew University, Rothberg International School)
- Religion in Biblical Israel and the Ancient Near East (co-taught, Hebrew University, Rothberg International School)
- History of the Kingdom of Israel (Bar-Ilan University)
- Selections from Prophetic Literature (Bar-Ilan University)
- Historical Geography of the Galilee in the Biblical Period (Bar-Ilan University)
- Ezekiel (Bar-Ilan University)

Memberships: Society of Biblical Literature, Association for Jewish Studies, American Oriental Society

Teaching Languages: English, Hebrew, French

Research Languages: Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Akkadian, Sumerian, Hittite, Ugaritic, other Northwest Semitic dialects, German