

Shawn Zelig Aster
Academic Curriculum Vita

Associate Professor, Martin (Szusz) Land of Israel Studies Department, Bar Ilan University,
Ramat-Gan 5290007 Israel

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Education

Ph.D.

University of Pennsylvania, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 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."

M.A.

McGill University, Department of Jewish Studies, 1996
Thesis: "Narrative and Exegesis in Midrash Bereishit Rabba."

A.B. (magna cum laude)

Harvard University, Department of Government, 1993
Thesis: "Conventional Deterrence in Israeli National Security Policy 1949-1991."

Honours and Awards

- Israel Science Foundation Individual Research Grant, Number 1003-22, "Isaiah 40-66 and Mesopotamian Royal Inscriptions," 2022-2024
- Ihel Foundation Research Grant, Bar-Ilan University, March 2018
- Israel Science Foundation Publication Grant, November 2017
- Azrieli Institute for Israel Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Visiting Fellow, Spring 2016
- 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
- Ellis Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania, Fall 2002
- Dean's Scholar, University of Pennsylvania, 2000
- William Penn Fellow, University of Pennsylvania, 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, Israel

Senior Lecturer, Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, 2012-2019

Associate Professor, Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, since 2019

Yeshiva University, New York

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

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

Visiting Scholar

Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

Visiting Scholar at the Azrieli Institute for Israel Studies, Spring 2016

University of Toronto, Canada

Visiting Researcher in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, Spring 2016 and Fall 2019

Teaching Languages: English, Hebrew, French

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

Publications

Books:

- *The Unbeatable Light: Melammu and Its Biblical Parallels*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament volume 384, Muenster: Ugarit Verlag, 2012.
- *Reflections of Empire in Isaiah 1-39: Reactions to Assyrian Imperialism*, Ancient Near East Monographs 19, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017
https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/9780884142720_OA.pdf
- Co-editor: *The Southern Levant Under Assyrian Domination*, ed. Avraham Faust and Shawn Zelig Aster, University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018

Published Articles:

- “Isaiah and Empire,” to appear in the *Cambridge Companion to the Book of Isaiah*, ed. Christopher Hays (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 154-169
- “Assyria and Its Image in Hosea,” to appear in the *Oxford Handbook of Hosea*, ed. Brad Kelle (Oxford University Press, 2024), pp. 37-53
- “Settlement Patterns, Administration and Roads in the Neo-Assyrian Province of Samaria,” *Orientalia* 92 (2023): 130-159. Authors: Gilad Itach, Shawn Zelig Aster, James McLennan, Avraham Faust
- “Dor in the Assyrian Period,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 73 (2023):14-33 Authors: Gilad Itach and Shawn Zelig Aster
- “Responses in Isaiah 40:1-11 to Jeremiah’s ‘Set Time’ Prophecy and Ezekiel’s Temple Vision,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 85 (2023): 420-439
- “Israelite Prophecy from its Origins to the Exile,” in *The Ancient Israelite World*, ed. Kyle H. Keimer and George A. Pierce (London and New York: Routledge, 2023), pp. 494-504.
- “Assyrian “Control Points” in the Domination of the Southern Levant in the Reign of Tiglath-Pileser III,,” *Aula Orientalis* 39/1 (2021): 47-55
- “The Contribution of Assyriology to the Study of Isaiah,” pp. 3-22 in *The History of Isaiah: The Formation of the Book and Its Presentation of the Past*, eds. Jacob Stromberg and Todd Hibbard (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 150; Berlin: Mohr Siebeck, 2021)
- “Ashdod in the Assyrian Period: Territorial Extent and Political History,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 80.1 (2021; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1086/715992>), pp. 323-340
- "Sargon in Samaria—Unusual Formulations in the Royal Inscriptions and their Value for Historical Reconstruction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 139.3 (2019; doi: <https://doi.org/10.7817/jameroriesoci.139.3.0591>): 591-610
- "An Assyrian Loyalty-Oath Imposed on Ashdod in the Reign of Tiglath-pileser III?," *Orientalia* 87 (2018): 275-289
- "Assyrian Influences on Biblical Literature and Judahite Society in the Late Eighth Century," pp. 469-481 in *Archaeology and History of Eighth-Century Judah*, ed. Jacob Wright and Zev Farber, SBL Ancient Near Eastern Monographs 23, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2018

- "Between Narrative and Exegesis: Miyyad in Midrash Bereshit Rabba," pp. 147-171 in *To Fix Torah in their Heart: Festschrift for B. Barry Levy* (ed. by Jackie Du Toit, Jason Kalman, Hartley Lachter, and Vanessa Sasson (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 2018)
- "Akkadian *Bulluṭu* and Hebrew אפר: Pardon and Loyalty in Hosea and in Neo-Assyrian Political Texts," together with Abraham J. Berkovitz, *Hebrew Studies* 59 (2018): 201–226
- "Treaty and Prophecy: The Influence of Neo-Assyrian Political Thought on Biblical Literature," pp. 89-118 in *The Southern Levant Under Assyrian Domination*, ed. Avraham Faust and Shawn Zelig Aster, (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018)
- "The Historical Background of the Destruction of Judahite Gath in 712 BCE," pp. 1-9 in *Tell it in Gath: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Israel . Essays in Honor of A. M. Maeir on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, Ägypten Und Altes Testament (ÄAT), edited by Jeff Chadwick, Louise Hitchcock, Itzhaq Shai and Joe Uziel, Ugarit Verlag, 2018
- "Isaiah 31 as a Response to Rebellions Against Assyria in Philistia," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136 (2017): 347–361
- "Jerusalem in the Bible," (Heb.) pages 73-80 in *Jerusalem from Its Beginnings to the Ottoman Conquest*, ed. A. Faust and E. Baruch, Rennert Centre for Jerusalem Studies, Bar-Ilan University, 2017
- "Judah's Reaction to the Babylonian Exile," in *Bible Lands E-Review*, 2017 S1 (<https://biblelandsreview.wordpress.com>)
- "The Wedge-impressed Bowl and the Assyrian Deportation," together with Gilad Itach and David Ben-Shlomo, *Tel Aviv* 44 (2017):72-97
- "Israelite Embassies to Assyria in the First Half of the Eighth Century," *Biblica* 97 (2016): 175-198
- "Administrative Texts, Royal Inscriptions and Neo-Assyrian Administration in the Southern Levant: The View from the Aphek-Gezer Region," together with Avraham Faust, *Orientalia* 84 (2015): 292-308
- "Ezekiel's Adaptation of Mesopotamian Melammu," *Welt des Orients* 45 (2015): 10-22
- "Isaiah 19: The Burden of Egypt and Neo-Assyrian Imperial Policy," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 135/3 (2015):453-470.
- "An Assyrian *Bit Mardite* Near Tel Hadid?" *Journal of Near East Studies* 74 (2015): 281-288

- “Images of the Throne Room of Assurnasirpal II at Calah in Isaiah 6,” *Marbeh Hokma*, Memorial Volume for Avigdor Victor Hurowitz, ed. S. Yona, M. Gruber, E. L. Greenstein, S. Paul, P. Machinist (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 13-42.
- "The Role of Isaiah 14:28-32 in the Development of the Tradition of Jerusalem's Sanctity and Invincibility" (Heb.) *Hiddushim Be-Heker Yerushalayim* 20 (2014)
- “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

Invited Lectures:

- "Indigeneity among Judahites in the Babylonian Exile", McMaster Divinity College, (Ontario, Canada), November 2024
- "The Modern David and Goliath: Environment, Heritage, and Archaeology in Israel," Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, September 2022
- "National Identity in the Biblical Narrative of Samson: Love, Death, and Ritual Meals," Department of Religion, Concordia University, Montreal, September 2022
- "Prophecy in Samaria: Amos 3:9-10," Biblical Studies Guild, McMaster Divinity College, McMaster University (Ontario, Canada), January 2022 (by zoom)
- "Exodus 15 in its Historical Context," Bernard Revel Graduate School, Yeshiva University, July 2021
- "Judahites in Babylonia and Isaiah 40," McMaster Divinity College, McMaster University (Ontario, Canada), April 2020 (by zoom)
- "The Historical Background to the Root and Branch Prophecy," McMaster Divinity College, McMaster University (Ontario, Canada), November 2019
- "Phoenicia as a Nodal Point in Assyrian Control of the Southern Levant in the Reign of Tiglath-pileser III," Fourth annual conference of the Minerva Center for Relations between Israel and Aram in the Biblical Period, May 2019
- "Isaiah 44 and its Babylonian Background," in Readings in Hebrew Bible, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto, February 2019
- "Messianism: Its Origins and its Use in Israeli Political Discourse," Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, November 2018
- "The Sophisticated Thief: Assyria in Hosea 4-14," Conference on the Book of Hosea in Honour of Prof. Mayer I. Gruber, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, June 2018

• ירושלים ביחזקאל ובישעיה, יום עיון במכללת ושינגטון, פברואר 2017

- "Rebellions Against Assyria in Philistia in the Reign of Sargon II and their Reflection in Isaiah 1-39," Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations and Center for Jewish Studies, University of Toronto, April 2016
- "Assyrian Control of Samaria and Its Reflection in Isaiah 1-39," Department of Bible, Archaeology, and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, January 2016, Departmental Seminar
- "Deities in the Service of the King and Independent God," Department of Archaeology and Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University, November 2015, Departmental Seminar
- "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

Selected Conference Papers

- "Our Hope is Lost, We are Cut Off" (Ezek. 37:11)," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2022
- "Reactions to Assyrian Imperialism in Micah 1-5," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2022
- "Isaiah 10:5-15 as a Reaction to the Destruction of the Kingdom of Israel," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2021
- "Kings and Netsivim in Edom: On the meaning of the terms "melek" and "netsiv" in Biblical Hebrew," Session on Nomadism in the Biblical World, American Schools of Oriental Research online Conference, Nov. 2020
- "How Isaiah 44:21–28 Both Support Cyrus and Undermine His Neo-Babylonian Royal Ideology", Assyriology Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 2019
- "Reflections of Empire in Isaiah 11:1-10," Formation of Isaiah Section, Society of Biblical Literature, November 2018
- "A Dialogue Between Isaiah 40 and Ezekiel on the Nature of *Kebod YHWH* ?" International Conference on Contextualizing Jewish Temples, Bar-Ilan University, May 2018
- "Ashdod in the Assyrian Period," (Heb) Conference of the Israel Society for Assyriology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Haifa University, Feb. 2018