



Use and Meaning of Caves in the Eastern Mediterranean Traditions 1000 BCE to 1000CE

Digital Workshop September 15th – 16th 2022



Adolf von Meckel (attributed), Landscape in Sinai, 1856-1893, Image: <https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Caves are a common feature of the landscape in the Mediterranean World, but in particular in the Near East. As such, the use of caves in the ancient Near East has been attested in a number of different functionalities: caves as holy spaces or sanctuaries, caves as graves, caves as living spaces, caves as spaces for strategic/military use or refuge, caves as places of economic use and caves as spaces for ruler representation.

These examples underline a different spatial approach to caves and their use and meaning in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean setting it apart from other regions of the ancient world. In order to find out what the specific perceptions and interpretations of the use and meaning of caves were in the ancient Near East, a wide net over two millennia and a large area of the Near East has to be cast.

By bringing together colleagues of a wide range of academic fields and making use of an equally wide range of sources from archaeology, epigraphy, papyrology, numismatics and the literary tradition, we want to decipher the specific meanings of caves in the different traditions of the Near East and contextualize the sources on the uses of caves in their user's own mentality.

**For more information and participation
please contact**

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Thursday September 15th:

- 14.00 Welcome and Introduction
- 14.15 Mika Ullman (Hebrew University Jerusalem), Cave use patterns during the 5th millennium BCE in the Galilee, Israel, a view from Har Sifsof Cave
- 14.50 Helen M. Dixon (University of Michigan): Caves in First Millennium BCE Levantine Phoenician Sacred Landscapes
- 15.25 Uri Davidovich (Hebrew University Jerusalem): Archaeology and the Levantine subterranean sphere: a Judean Desert perspective
- 16.00 Coffee Break
- 16.10 Boaz Zissu (Bar Ilan University): Above and Underground at Maresha, a City from the Hellenistic Period in the Judean Foothills, Israel
- 16.45 Julia Hoffmann-Salz (Free University Berlin): Josephus and the Caves
- 17.20 Daniel R. Schwartz (Hebrew University Jerusalem): Why Not Call a Cave a "Cave"? Some Reflections on 1 Maccabees 2

Friday September 16th:

- 14.00 Yulia Ustinova (Ben-Gurion University): Charon, Hauron, and the Charonia: Caves and Healing in the Eastern Mediterranean
- 14.35 Mladen Popović (University of Groningen): Considering Judean Desert Caves and Manuscript Finds from "the Archival Turn"
- 15.10 Sabine Müller (University of Marburg): Caves and cave-like spaces in Lucian. A satirical perspective
- 15.45 Coffee Break
- 15.50 Klaus Geus (Free University Berlin): Antike Seefahrer auf der Dioskuren-Insel: zu einer griechischen Inschrift in der Höhle Hoq (Sokotra)
- 16.25 Mattia Guidetti (University of Bologna): From the Prophet Muhammad to Sufi Saints: The Cave as a Space of Muslim Spirituality
- 17.00 Final Discussion

All times are Central European Times.