

# HOW GOD BECAME A LAWGIVER

## THE PLACE OF THE TORAH IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LEGAL HISTORY

June 15th-17th, 2022

Theologische Fakultät, Universität Zürich

Room 200 (2nd floor)

Kirchgasse 9, Zürich 8001

This international conference explores the origins of biblical notions of divine laws and God as a lawgiver. It also seeks to elucidate the impact of these ideas on religion and politics in ancient Judah/Persian Yehud. By contextualizing these developments against both the background of the ancient Near Eastern legal tradition and related developments within ancient Greek polities, this conference compares ancient discourse on “divine law” across time and between cultures.



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University of  
Zurich <sup>UZH</sup>

JUNE 15th

9:00-9:10

Konrad Schmid (Zürich)  
Welcome and Introduction

9:10-10:40

Sophie Démare-Lafont (Paris)  
The Mesopotamian Legal Culture:  
A Secularization of the Divine

10:40-11:10

Coffee Break

11:10-12:40

Dylan Johnson (Zürich)  
Establishing Justice in the Land:  
The Real and Aspirational Roles of Ancient  
Near Eastern Lawgivers

12:40-14:10

Lunch

14:10-15:40

Eckart Frahm (Yale)  
Cuneiform Law Collections in their  
Political and Cultural Contexts

15:40-16:10

Coffee Break

16:10-17:40

Bruce Wells (Austin)  
How to Write a Law in Ancient Israel  
and Mesopotamia

## JUNE 16th

9:00-10:30

**Dominik Markl (Rome)**  
**The Monotheistic Elevation of Divine Law  
in Its Imperial Contexts**

10:30-11:00

Coffee Break

11:00-12:30

**Lida Panov (Zürich)**  
**Divine Law and the Activity of Priestly Scribes:  
Insights from the Book of Proverbs**

12:30-14:00

Lunch

14:00-15:30

**Jonathan Vroom (Toronto)**  
**Negotiating the Non-Negotiable:  
Interpretation, Innovation, and Ezra's Use of  
Torah in Nehemiah 8 and Ezra 9–10**

15:30-16:00

Coffee Break

16:00-17:30

**Peter Altmann (Zürich)**  
**The Reception of God's Torah in the Pentateuch:  
A Preliminary Study of How Later Sections of  
Numbers Understood Divine Law**

## JUNE 17th

9:00-10:30

**Konrad Schmid (Zürich)**  
**How Moses Became a Lawgiver:  
The Formation of the Pentateuch and  
Its Reorganization of Biblical Legislation**

10:30-11:00

Coffee Break

11:00-12:30

**Angelos Chaniotis (Princeton)**  
**How did Greek (and Hellenized) Gods Dictate  
and Enforce Norms?**

12:30-14:00

Lunch

14:00-15:30

**Rebecca Van Hove (Groningen)**  
**Oracles, Documents, and Laws in the  
Courts of Athens**

15:30-16:00

Coffee Break

16:00-17:30

**Anna Angelini (Zürich)**  
**Law and Cosmic Justice:  
Contexts and Meanings of Juridical Vocabulary in  
Presocratic Philosophy**

This conference is open to the public, though capacity is limited. We therefore ask those wishing to participate to RSVP with [dylan.johnson@uzh.ch](mailto:dylan.johnson@uzh.ch) before June 1, 2022. A light lunch will be provided to all those registered for the conference.