

Blood on the Water:

Contextualizing the First Biblical Plague

Prof. John Huddlestun, Sabbatical Lecture
Tuesday November 1st at 3:15
Levin Library, Jewish Studies Center



This talk deals with that most popular of biblical narratives, namely, the exodus from Egypt, and, more specifically, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. Biblical scholars, Egyptologists, and zealous amateurs have offered numerous, often spectacular, explanations for these miraculously portrayed events. While good for the media and book sales, such explanations have little to do with ancient Egyptian history or literary convention. In contrast, this lecture will situate the water-to-blood motif of the first plague (the Nile turns to blood) within its larger ancient Middle Eastern literary context, calling into question the assumed uniquely Egyptian aspects of the motif.