John Tracy Thames, Jr.

Curriculum Vitae

126D Hardin Hall • 403 Calhoun Drive
Clemson, SC 29634-0528 • 864-656-2001
Email jtthame@clemson.edu

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Clemson University, Philosophy and Religion

2025- Associate Professor of Religion
2024- Director, Program in Religious Studies
2019-25 Assistant Professor of Religion

2017-19 **Yale University**

Lecturer, Yale College
Lecturer in Hebrew Bible, Yale Divinity School

2015-19 **University of Connecticut**, Literatures, Cultures & Languages

Senior Lecturer of Biblical Languages and Biblical Literature

EDUCATION

2016 Ph.D., Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Philology
Department of Near Eastern Studies
Johns Hopkins University
Dissertation: "Ritual Revision and the Influence of Empire: The Politics of Change in the *zukru* Festival of Late Bronze Age Emar."

2010 M.A., Hebrew Bible
Yale University Divinity School

2008 M.A., Philosophy
Louisiana State University
Thesis: "Pacifism and War: What are the Ethical and Theological Limitations on the Use of Violence?"

2004 B.A., Philosophy
Louisiana State University
Concentration in Religious Studies
Minor: Jewish Studies

BOOKS

- *Power and Performance: Ritual and the Shaping of Identities in the Ancient Near East*. Edited by John Tracy Thames, Jr. and Shane M. Thompson. Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns; Penn State University Press, under contract.

- *The Politics of Ritual Change: The* zukru *Festival in the Political History of Late Bronze Emar*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 65 (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

- "Ritual as an Aspect of Cultural Integration: Ugarit, Emar, and the Hittites in Syria," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 24 (2024): 126–49.

- "Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread as a Single Ritual Complex: The Comparative Evidence from Emar," *Vetus Testamentum* 74 (2024): 415–38.

- "'International Politics and Local Change at Emar," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 10 (2023): 23–52.

- "Dagan and the Ritualization of First Fruits at Emar." Pages 463–73 in *Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of P. Kyle McCarter Jr.* Edited by Christopher Rollston et al. Ancient Near East Monographs 27. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2022.

- "Writing Ritual and Calendar Together: The Biblical Cultic Calendars in Ancient Near Eastern Context." *Religion Compass* 15 (2021), 1–15.

- "Keeping the Paschal Lamb: Exodus 12.6 and the Question of Sacrifice in the Passover-of-Egypt." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44/1 (2019): 3–18.

- "A New Discussion of the Meaning of the Phrase *'am hā'āreṣ* in the Hebrew Bible." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130/1 (2011): 109-125.

IN-PROGRESS WORKS

- "'Ba'lu and the Bow: A Weapon of the Storm-god at Emar," in press.

- "Sacred Space, Sacred Body: The City as Locus and Patron of Ritual in Late Bronze Emar" in *The Routledge Handbook of Urban Evolution*. Edited by Yi Samuel Chen, Shane M. Thompson, and Laura Battini. Under Contract with Routledge. In preparation; due December 2025.

- "Ritual, Power, and Performativity – An Introduction" in *Power and Performance: Ritual and the Shaping of Identities in the Ancient Near East*. Edited by John Tracy Thames, Jr. and Shane M. Thompson. Contract pending with Penn State University Press/Eisenbrauns. In preparation; due January 1, 2025.

- "Yahweh's Song in a Foreign Land: Communal Identity and Ritual Performance in p.Amherst 63," in preparation.

- "Psalm 7 and Ritual Denial of Guilt: *šiggāyôn* Reassessed," in preparation.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- "Review of Mary E. Buck: The Amorite Dynasty of Ugarit: Historical Implications of Linguistic and Archaeological Parallels. (Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant.) xiii, 376 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2020. ISBN 978 90 04 41510 2." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 85/3 (2022).

- "Culture Summary: Ancient Israelites." *Human Relations Area Files, World Cultures*. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 2018. Online version: http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2024 "City as Ritual Space: A Material View of Religion in Emar"
Society of Biblical Literature (San Diego), forthcoming

2023 "Ritual, Textualization, and the Festivals from Emar"
Society of Biblical Literature (San Antonio)

"Israelite Ritual and Late Bronze Continuity: Observations from Psalms"
European Association of Biblical Studies (Siracusa)

2022 "Psalmic Terminology in Comparative Perspective"
Society of Biblical Literature (Denver)

2020 "Power and Change in Late Bronze Age Emar"
American Schools of Oriental Research

2019 "Problems of Comparativism in Ritual: Considering the Role of Emar in Biblical Studies.
Society of Biblical Literature (San Diego)

2017 "Processional Politics in Emar's *zukru* Festival and Implications for Procession Rituals in the Hebrew Bible"
Society of Biblical Literature (Boston)

2015 "The Character of Dagan in Emar's *zukru* Festival and the Biblical Ritual of First Fruits."
Society of Biblical Literature (Atlanta)

2014 "On Keeping a Lamb Four Days: *mišmeret* in Exodus 12:6."
Society of Biblical Literature (San Diego)

2008 "Just War Theory and Cosmopolitanism."
Louisiana State University Philosophy Colloquium

INVITED LECTURES

2024 "Singing the Lord's Song in a Foreign Land"
North Carolina Wesleyan University

2018 "The Political Impact of Ritual Change at Emar"
Institute for the Study of the Ancient World
New York University

2016 "The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls"
University of Hartford

COURSES TAUGHT

Clemson University
- Old Testament (REL 3010)
- Biblical Hebrew I & II (REL 3520 & 3530)
- The Ancient Near East (REL 3510/HIST 3510)
- Judaism (REL 3060)
- Studying Religion: Theories and Methods (REL 3000)
- Junior Research Colloquium (REL 3990)

- Studies in Biblical Literature and Religion (REL 4010)
  Topic: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers (Spring 2020)
- Religious Studies Senior Seminar (REL 4900)
  Topic: Psalms in Historical Context (Fall 2019)
  Topic: Israelite Ritual in the Psalms (Fall 2023)

Past Courses

- The Bible: Old and New Testaments
- The Song of Songs: Sex, Sexuality, and Religion in the Bible
- Hebrew Wisdom Literature in the Ancient World
- Judaism in the Hellenistic World
- The New Testament and Early Christianity
- Hebrew Prophets
- Elementary Biblical Hebrew
- Advanced Biblical Hebrew
- Rituals in Ancient Societies
- First Year Seminar: Inquiry-based Learning
- Senior Year Integrative Capstone
- Introduction to Ethics
- The History of the Alphabet

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE TO THE FIELD

2024-	Editor, Ancient Near East Section, *Religion Compass* John Wiley and Sons
2023-	Member, Book Series Editorial Board Life and Society in the Ancient Near East (Transnational)
2023-	Co-chair, Hebrew Bible Section American Academy of Religion Southeast Region
2023-	Co-chair, ASOR Member-sponsored Section American Academy of Religion Southeast Region
2020-	Member, Editorial Board *Avar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Life and Society in the Ancient Near East* (Transnational)
2020-	Member, Ritual in the Biblical World Steering Committee Society of Biblical Literature
2017-19	Society of Biblical Literature, New England/Eastern Canada Regional Executive Committee Member

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

2020	Clemson Online Learning Tech Conference, August 13, 2020
2019	Clemson Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation New Faculty Introduction to Teaching at Clemson
2017	Yale Center for Teaching and Learning Yale Summer Institute: Course (Re)Design
2016	UConn Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Faculty Teaching Workshop
2011	Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum Syriac Epigraphic Project, Incantation Bowl
2008-10	Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Public Services Project Assistant

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

2024	John B. & Thelma A. Gentry Award for Teaching Excellence in the Humanities Clemson University
2021	Humanities Hub Faculty Research Fellowship Clemson University
2019	Guest Fellow of Pierson College Yale University
2018	Guest Fellow of Jonathan Edwards College Yale University
2014-15	Hodson Fellowship Johns Hopkins University
2013-14	Samuel Iwry Fellowship Johns Hopkins University
2012	Summer Travel Grant Johns Hopkins University
2011	Summer Language Study Award Mellon Foundation
2010-15	Jewish Studies Awards The Stulman Program in Jewish Studies
2010-15	Departmental Fellowship (Near Eastern Studies) Johns Hopkins University
2009	Two Brothers Fellowship Yale University

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

2012 Tayinat Archaeological Project, Hatay Province, Turkey
Square Supervisor

2009 Leon-Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, Israel
Volunteer

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Society of Biblical Literature
American Society of Overseas Research
Catholic Biblical Association – Full Member
European Association of Biblical Studies

LANGUAGES

modern: German, French; Modern Standard Arabic (elementary).
ancient: Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, Ugaritic, Akkadian, Northwest Semitic Dialects (Phoenician, Moabite, epigraphic Hebrew), Egyptian, Greek (koine).

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Ritual in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East. Ritual theory.
Construction of power. Materiality and Material Religion.
Late Bronze Age history. Late Bronze Age Syria (Ugarit and Emar).
Book of Psalms.