

JOSEPH JOHN CROSS

Seminar für Altes Testament, Geschichte Israels in der altorientalischen Welt
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EDUCATION

- 2022 Ph.D., Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago
Advisor: Dennis Pardee
Dissertation: “The Poetics of Plot in the Egyptian and Judean Novella”
Dissertation committee: Simeon Chavel, Jacqueline Jay, Brian Muhs, Dennis Pardee
- 2014 M.A., Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago
- 2011 M.A., Theology
University of Dallas
- 2006 B.A., Classics
University of Texas at Austin

POSITIONS

- 2022- Postdoctoral researcher, ERC Advanced Grant project “From Texts to Literature: Demotic Egyptian Papyri and the Formation of the Hebrew Bible” (DEMBIB)
Theologische Fakultät, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

- Forthcoming *Ruly Stories, Unruly Plots: A Poetics of Storytelling in the Judean and Demotic Egyptian Novella*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Expected Spring 2026.

EDITED BOOKS

- Contracted *The Routledge Handbook of Ancient Egypt and the Hebrew Bible*. Co-edited with Bernd U. Schipper and Robert Kade, submission in Spring 2026

EDITED JOURNAL ISSUES

Forthcoming Exploring New Directions in Biblical Narrative: Contemporary Perspectives on Narrative Theory and Biblical Studies. *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*. Co-edited with Davide D'Amico, submission in Summer 2026

Forthcoming A Scroll Approach to the Hebrew Bible and Beyond: Perspectives and Prospects. *Advances in Ancient Biblical and Near Eastern Research*, submission in Summer 2026.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Forthcoming “The Style of the Opening of the Novella: Beginning a Story in Judean and Egyptian Narrative,” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 15:3

Forthcoming “Finding God in Nineveh: Mapping a Motif in Judean and Egyptian Literature,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 25:2

2023 “*Mouvance* and the Art of Fiction in Performance in Manuscripts of a Demotic Novella,” *Manuscript and Text Cultures* 2:2, pp. 168–200

CHAPTERS IN BOOKS

Forthcoming “Beyond Paradise: The Persian **Paridaidā* and Imperial Space in Persepolis and the Demotic Chronicle,” in Kristin Joachimsen and Jason Silverman, eds., *Symbolic Spaces Associated with Paradise* (Pardes) (Brill, Themes in Biblical Narrative) (with José Rafael Saade)

Forthcoming “The Corpus of Northwest Semitic Texts in Egyptian Script,” in Susan Hollis, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Egypt and the Hebrew Bible*

2026 “Appearance and Reality in Setna’s Dialogue with ‘Pharaoh’ in First Setna 5.31-35,” in Aurore Motte and Victoria Almansa-Villatoro, eds., *(Im)politeness in Ancient Egypt: Norms, Wit, and Rudeness in Texts from Pharaonic Times through Late Antiquity* (Brill, Studies in Pragmatics 27), pp. 265–292

2025 “Esther as Novella,” in Helge Bezold and Kristin Joachimsen, eds., *Esther: Themes and Issues* (Equinox Themes and Issues in Biblical Studies)

2022 “The Teaching of Amenemope,” in *Global Humanities Reader: Engaging Ancient Worlds and Perspectives*, ed. Brian S. Hook, Sophie Mills, Katherine C. Zubko, Keya Maitra, pp. 77-79

2022 “Egyptian Love Poetry,” in *Global Humanities Reader: Engaging Ancient Worlds and Perspectives*, ed. Brian S. Hook, Sophie Mills, Katherine C. Zubko, Keya Maitra, pp. 98-100

2022 “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” in *Global Humanities Reader: Engaging Ancient Worlds and Perspectives*, ed. Brian S. Hook, Sophie Mills, Katherine C. Zubko, Keya Maitra, pp. 236-238

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

BOOK REVIEWS

Forthcoming Christopher Hays, *Wenamun's Prophetic Mission: Theocratic Rhetoric in Egypt and the Hebrew Bible, Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*

2020 Claudia Suhr, *Die ägyptische "Ich-Erzählung": eine narratologische Untersuchung, Review of Biblical Literature*

ARTICLES

2017 "Missing Pages: Two Manuscripts of the Samaritan Torah in the Oriental Institute," *Oriental Institute News & Notes* 242, pp. 6-15

TEACHING

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Ancient Magic in Text and Archaeology (with Stefanie Eisenmann, Winter 2024-25)

University of North Carolina Asheville

The Ancient World (Fall 2018, 2020, Spring 2019-20, Maymester 2019)

Latin I-II (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)

Ancient Egyptian Magic and Medicine (Fall 2018)

University of Chicago

Middle Egyptian Texts II (masters and doctoral, Fall 2015)

Teaching assistantships: Ancient Empires: Egypt (undergraduate), Spring 2016; Intro to the Hebrew Bible (masters), Fall 2014; Intermediate Hebrew I (masters and doctoral), Fall 2014; Intro to Middle Egyptian I-II (undergraduate, doctoral), Fall 2013-Winter 2014; The Bible and Western Culture (undergraduate), Fall 2013

Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, University of Chicago

Adult education courses: Jewish Scripts Through History, online, August 2020; History through OI Objects: The Megiddo Gallery, online, May 2020; The World of the Hebrew Bible, hybrid and online, 2015-18

Writing Program, University of Chicago

Undergraduate Writing Intern, 2016-18

Undergraduate Writing Tutor, 2016-17

Pedagogies of Writing Seminar Leader, Summer 2017

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2016-22 Cross/Rantz Fellowship, 2016-2022
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago

2018-19 Jacob Greenberg Memorial Dissertation Year Fellowship
Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies, University of Chicago

2017 Karen Dinal Memorial Award for teaching undergraduate writing
The College, University of Chicago

2011-15 Graduate Fellowship, 2011-2015
Division of the Humanities, University of Chicago

PAPERS AND LECTURES

- 2026 “Empirical Models for Scripturalized Prayer from Egyptian Magical Texts.” Invited paper for seminar “Calling on the Gods: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Prayer in the Ancient World,” KU Leuven, April 30th-May 1st
- 2025 “Compensating for Pluriformity: A Telling Resumptive Repetition from Ptolemaic Egypt.” Paper delivered for the section “Hebrew Scriptures and Cognate Literature” at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 22nd
- 2025 “Trauma and the Erotics of Plot in Judith.” Paper delivered for the section “Ancient Fiction and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative” at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November 24th
- 2025 “What Does Tobit’s Pluriformity Have to Do with Its Fictional Frame?”. Invited paper for the conference “Transmission, Variation, and Transformation of ‘Deuterocanonical’ Literature Over Time,” Association Catholique Française pour l’Étude de la Bible, Metz, France, November 5th-6th
- 2025 “The Demotic Novella in the Garden of Egypt.” Paper delivered for the conference “Romance on the Nile: The Ancient Novel in Egypt—The Novel in Ancient Egypt,” Freie Universität Berlin, September 10th-12th
- 2025 “Beyond Closure: Transtextuality and Openness in the Ending of the Judean and Egyptian Novella.” Paper to be delivered for the session “First Results of the ERC DEMBIB Project” at the conference of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Berlin, Germany, August 12th
- 2025 “Scripturalization and Disenchantment in Numbers 5:11-32 and the Damascus Document.” Paper to be delivered for the session “The Book of Numbers in the Context of Second Temple Literature (EABS),” at the International Society of Biblical Literature meeting, Uppsala, Sweden, June 23rd-27th
- 2025 “Cyclic Composition as Secular Scripture in the Late First Millennium.” Paper to be delivered for the session “Comparing Ancient Chronographic Historiographies from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Judah, and Greece in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods (EABS),” at the International Society of Biblical Literature meeting, Uppsala, Sweden, June 23rd-27th
- 2025 “Ancient Paperbacks? Small Format Scrolls in Qumran and Demotic Egyptian Literature.” Paper to be delivered for the session “Ancient Near East” at the International Society of Biblical Literature meeting, Uppsala, Sweden, June 23rd-27th

- 2024 with José Rafael Saade, “‘Gardener, do your work!’: Egypt and the Persian Paradise.” Invited paper for session “Symbolic Spaces Associated with Paradise,” delivered at the European Association of Biblical Studies Annual Meeting, July 16th
- 2023 “Philology as Leisure in the Book of Ruth.” Paper delivered at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, USA, Nov. 11th-21st
- 2023 “Are All Texts Rivers? The Ending of MT Esther and the Multitextuality of Prose Fiction in the Hellenistic Period.” Paper delivered at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, USA, Nov. 11th-21st
- 2023 with José Rafael Saade, “Egypt as Garden in the (Post-)Achaemenid Conceptualization of Space and History.” Paper delivered at the European Association of Biblical Studies Annual Meeting, July 12th
- 2023 “Rethinking the Ending of Esther in Light of Demotic Egyptian Papyri.” Invited paper delivered at the Tagung der Fachgruppe für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft für Theologie, Berlin, March 4th
- 2022 “A ‘véritable cycle romanesque?’ The Relationship between P. Krall and P. Spiegelberg Reconsidered.” Paper delivered at the 14th International Demotic Congress, Heidelberg, Sept. 6th
- 2022 “Egyptian Scribes Writing Northwest Semitic.” Invited lecture delivered at the Lehrstuhl “Geschichte Israels in der altorientalischen Welt,” Theologische Fakultät, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, July 28th
- 2021 “Group Writing as Text-Making Technique.” Paper delivered at the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities Scholars’ Colloquium, Online, Nov. 5th
- 2021 Respondent to Sunwoo Lee, “Pain in Egyptian Literary Narratives,” given in the Affect and the Emotions Workshop, University of Chicago, April 7th
- 2021 “*Mouvance* and the Storyteller’s Art in Manuscripts of a Demotic Novella.” Paper delivered at the Early Text Cultures reading group (Oxford), “Writing Orality” Series, Online, Feb. 18th
- 2020 “The Visual Possibilities of Narrative in the Demotic *Battle for the Prebend of Amun*.” Paper delivered at the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities Scholars’ Colloquium, Online, Nov 6th-8th
- 2020 “Finding God in Nineveh: A Case Study in Judean and Egyptian Prophetic Imagination.” Invited paper delivered at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Online Nov. 21st-24th
- 2020 “When Storytelling Becomes Canonical: Changing Fortunes of the Novella in Hellenistic and Roman Judea and Egypt.” Paper delivered at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Online, Nov. 21st-24th

- 2020 “Between the Cosmopolitan and the Vernacular: Private Literature in the Post-Iron Age Southeastern Mediterranean.” Paper delivered online American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Meeting, Online, Nov. 18th-21st
- 2020 “Genre Matters: Jonah as Novella.” Paper delivered at the Southeastern Commission on the Study of Religion Annual Meeting, Feb. 28th-Mar. 1st
- 2019 “Books without Authors: Who Wrote (and Read) the First Novels?” Lecture given at the Brown Bag Lecture series, Ramsey Library, University of North Carolina Asheville, February 14th
- 2018 “‘Suit the action to the word, the word to the action’: A New Reading of a Northwest Semitic Incantation in Egyptian Script (P. BM 10042, col. XII).” Paper delivered at the American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Meeting, Nov. 14th-17th
- 2018 “Envisioning a Compiler at Work: Scribal Features of Papyrus Amherst 63.” Paper delivered at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Nov. 18th
- 2018 “Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: A Manuscript-Based Overview.” Lecture given at the Critical Editions for Digital Analysis and Research Symposium, University of Chicago, May 4th
- 2011 “‘The Earth from Which He Was Taken’: The Shift of Speaker in Genesis 3:22-23.” Paper delivered at the Southwestern Conference on Religious Studies Annual Meeting, March 5th

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

- 2025 “Romance on the Nile: The Ancient Novel in Egypt—Egypt in the Ancient Novel,” funded by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, Freie Universität Berlin, September 10th-12th (with Frederic Krueger)
- 2024 “Demotic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” organized by the ERC Advanced Grant DEMBIB project, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, May 13th-15th
- 2018 “Middle Eastern History and Theory Conference,” Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago, May 4th-5th (with Carl Bryant Shook)

PANELS ORGANIZED

- 2025 Perspectives and Prospects on a Scroll Approach to the Formation of the Hebrew Bible. 25th Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Berlin, August 11th-15th

PANEL DISCUSSANT

- 2018 “Digital Humanities and Middle Eastern Studies” Panel at the Middle Eastern History

and Theory Conference, University of Chicago, May 5th

- 2018 “Which Way Forward: Digital Humanities and Middle Eastern Studies” Roundtable. Middle Eastern History and Theory Conference, University of Chicago, May 4th

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2014-18 Entry editor, Chicago Demotic Dictionary, Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (formerly the Oriental Institute), University of Chicago
- 2017-18 Database editor, Critical Editions for Digital Analysis and Research (CEDAR), OCHRE Data Systems, Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, University of Chicago

Research assistantships: Daniel Schwartz, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (visiting scholar in the Jewish Studies Program, University of Chicago), 2017; Steve Vinson, Indiana University at Bloomington, 2016-17

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2025 Monograph reviewer, Archaeology and Biblical Studies series, Society of Biblical Literature
- 2023-25 Peer reviewer, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
- 2021-23 Advisory board member for working group “Comparing Ancient Chronographic Historiographies from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Judah, and Greece in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods,” European Association for Biblical Studies Research Group
- 2015-20 Public outreach and content specialist, Museum of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (formerly the Oriental Institute), University of Chicago

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- 2020 Cohort member, First Year Pilot Program, University of North Carolina Asheville
- 2017-18 Coordinator, Hebrew Bible Workshop, University of Chicago
- 2015-16 Graduate Student Advisory Committee, Museum of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, University of Chicago

INVITED PARTICIPATION

- 2018 “Digital Editions, Digital Corpora, and New Possibilities for the Humanities in the Academy and Beyond,” a 2018 NEH Institute for Advanced Technology in the Digital Humanities, Perseus Project, Tufts University, July 16th-27th
- 2018 Chicago-Yale Pentateuch Colloquium, Yale Divinity School, Feb. 25th-27th

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- 2021 "Literature in Ancient Egyptian Society." Online talk given for the Oriental Institute Literature Workshop, February 13th
- 2020 "Who Are the Samaritans?" Online talk given for the Oriental Institute Sunday Seminar, August 16th
- 2020 "Biblical Hebrew." Online talk given for the Oriental Institute Language Seminar, May 31st
- 2020 "Judean and Egyptian Novellas of the Achaemenid and Hellenistic Periods." Online lecture delivered for the Oriental Institute Members' Lecture series, April 8th
- 2018 "Science and Technology of Writing in Ancient Egypt." Lecture given at the Teacher Cohort Academy, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, July 11th
- 2017 "Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt." Talk given for the Oriental Institute Public Scholars program, Homewood Public Library, Homewood IL, June 20th
- 2017 "The First Biblical Manuscripts." Gallery talk given for the Oriental Institute Gallery Talk series, May 5th
- 2017 "Building the Pyramids." Talk given for the Oriental Institute Public Scholars program, Itasca Public Library, Itasca IL, February 16th
- 2016 "Medicine and Magic of Ancient Egypt." Talk given for the Oriental Institute Public Scholars program, Acorn Public Library, Oak Forest IL, November 11th
- 2016 "What Can Ancient Egypt Tell Us About the Bible?" Talk given at the Oriental Institute Volunteer's Day, March 14th
- 2016 "Ancient Israel Outside the Bible." Talk given for the Oriental Institute Gallery Talk series, March 3rd

ANCIENT LANGUAGES

Aramaic (Old, Biblical, Imperial)

Coptic

Egyptian (all phases)

Greek

Hebrew

Latin

Phoenician/Punic

Ugaritic