THURSDAY AUGUST 30
(Room 6B.1.62)
09.30-09.40: Welcome (Anne K. Gudme and Jesper Høgenhaven)
09.40-10.30: Stefania Ermidoro, Newcastle: "I feel wonderful drinking beer, in a blissful mood...": Drinking and Banqueting in Ancient Mesopotamia.
10.30-11.20: Göran Eidevall, Uppsala: Prophetic perspectives on drinking parties in ancient Israel and Judah
11.20-11.30: Short Break
11.30-12.20: Frederik Poulsen, Copenhagen: Wine at the Foreign Court: The Motif of Drinking in the Diaspora Stories
12.20-13.20: Lunch Break
13.20-14.10: Nathan MacDonald, Cambridge, The Drink Offering: An Example of Ritual Change?
14.10-15.00: Hans Jørgen Lundager Jensen, Aarhus: Wine as sign and code in the Hebrew Bible
15.00-15.30: Coffee and Tea
15.30-16.20: Sarah Kragh Dedieu, Copenhagen: Breast Milk and Breastfeeding as Metaphor
16.20-17.10: Søren Holst, Copenhagen: Drinking the Deluge: Thirsting for the Water of Life in the Odes of Solomon
17.10-17.20: Short Break
17.20-18.00: End of Day 1 Discussion

FRIDAY AUGUST 31
(Room 8B.0.16)
09.30-10.20: Jesper Høgenhaven, Copenhagen: Abstinence from Drinking in the Hebrew Bible
10.20-11.10: Claudia Bergmann, Erfurt: No Cheers in the World to Come?: The Question of Drink and Drinking in Texts about the Meal in the World to Come
11.10-11.20: Short Break
12.10-13.00: Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, Copenhagen: Downing One’s Destiny: Drinking and Judgement in the Hebrew Bible

_Format: 35-minute papers followed by 15 minutes for discussion_
"I feel wonderful drinking beer, in a blissful mood...": Drinking and Banqueting in Ancient Mesopotamia
Stefania Ermidoro, Newcastle
This paper sets out to provide a comprehensive survey of the drinking scenes described in the ancient Mesopotamian literary texts. By means of a thorough analysis of the available sources, the distinguishing features of these convivial moments will be contextualised within their broader social frame, with the purpose of identifying their literary as well as cultural significance.

Prophetic perspectives on drinking parties in ancient Israel and Judah
Göran Eidevall, Uppsala
Several passages in the prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible appear to condemn habitual excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages, especially among the rich and mighty in society. As pointed out by Olof Bäckersten (2008) it would be erroneous (and anachronistic) to understand these prophecies primarily in terms of anti-alcohol propaganda. In most cases, the main problem would rather seem to be irresponsible behavior in times of crisis. Instead of worrying about the nation’s relations to foreign nations, and/or to YHWH, the leaders (allegedly) indulged in parties characterized by heavy drinking. In this paper I approach from another angle than Bäckersten. My main focus will be the feasts that are described in such negative terms. Taking Amos 6:4-7 as my point of departure, I shall discuss to what extent this description could be connected to an institution called marzēaḥ, which is attested in various parts of the Ancient Near East during two millennia. In the next some additional texts will be discussed (including Isa 5:8-10 and 28:1-4), in an attempt to reconstruct the character and the social function of symposion-like drinking parties in ancient Samaria and Jerusalem.

Wine at the Foreign Court: The Motif of Drinking in the Diaspora Stories
Frederik Poulsen, Copenhagen
The Diaspora stories in the Bible contain considerably different views of Jewish life in foreign lands. While some stories seem rather open to assimilation into the host society, others stress the importance of upholding a distinct Jewish identity, for instance, by keeping dietary laws. The paper investigates the manner in which the drinking of wine at the foreign court points to diverse attitudes to Jewish life abroad. Joseph apparently assimilates thoroughly into Egyptian culture, sharing meals with the locals and adopting the custom of using a special cup for both drinking and divination (Gen 43:32-34; 44:5). In a similar manner, Esther shows no explicit interest in preserving the basic practices of traditional faith. Nevertheless, drinking wine with the pagan king constitutes a central element in Esther’s attempt to prevent persecution of the Jews (e.g. Esth 5:1-8; 7:1-10). Daniel, by contrast, insists on keeping kosher and refuses to eat from the king’s table (Dan 1). Drinking water instead of wine serves as a symbol for true obedience to God’s will.
The Drink Offering: An Example of Ritual Change?
Nathan MacDonald, Cambridge

According to Sirach 50.14–15, the drink offering is the climactic conclusion of the sacrificial offering. In the earliest layers of P, however, the drink offering is almost entirely absent. How did the drink offering undergo this transformation? In this paper, I will seek to examine what we do and do not know about the Israelite drink offering, and how assumptions about ritual contribute to the histories we reconstruct.

Wine as sign and code in the Hebrew Bible
Hans Jørgen Lundager Jensen, Aarhus

In the Hebrew Bible wine occupies a special place, similar to and different from other neighboring alimentary categories such as bread, meat, and fruit. While bread was the epitome of basic food and ordinary, daily life, wine was also an essential part of joyous celebrations and an ambivalent seducer. Inspired by Lévi-Strauss’ ‘culinary triangle’ and his treatment of honey in Amazonian mythology, my paper will throw light on a selection of biblical texts, mostly narratives, where wine plays an important part.

Breast milk and breastfeeding as metaphor
Sarah Kragh Dedieu, Copenhagen

Breast milk and breastfeeding metaphors are well used in the Book of Isaiah, though often overlooked in exegetical work and biblical translations. Through a diverse understanding of metaphor theory, iconographic exegesis and historical and cultural knowledge of breastfeeding practices in the Ancient Near East and related cultures, the presentation tries to clarify when and how breast milk and breastfeeding images are used in Isaiah as well as other parts of the Old Testament.

"Drinking the Deluge: Thirsting for the Water of Life in the Odes of Solomon"
Søren Holst, Copenhagen

The Odes of Solomon, a collection of hymn-like poems from a 2nd century CE Egyptian or Syriac Christian environment, draws on images of thirst, drinking, and the quenching of thirst, as well as other aspects of both water and wine, in its depiction of the believer’s situation. Frequently, the imagery is paradoxical, as when in Ode 6, a global flood threatening to destroy everything, is drunk by the faithful who find it to be the water of life. The paper examines this and other passages and the function of their metaphorical language.

Abstinence from Drinking in the Hebrew Bible
Jesper Høgenhaven, Copenhagen

Generally speaking, Hebrew Bible texts do not convey a negative view of wine or alcoholic drinks. However, certain passages deal with undesirable consequences of excessive drinking, and although one can hardly speak of abstinence from drinking alcoholic drinks as an ideal in the Hebrew Bible
as such, abstinence seems occasionally to be emphasized as recommendable. Abstinence motifs and their significance have perhaps sometimes been overlooked, because the world of the Hebrew Bible was often interpreted as having a positive view of creation and the material world in contrast to the Greek and Hellenistic cultures. This presentation will examine some exegetical consequences of overstating this difference between the Hebrew Bible and the Hellenistic world to which it belongs, and revisit some of the relevant texts in this perspective.

No Cheers in the World to Come?: The Question of Drink and Drinking in Texts about the Meal in the World to Come
Claudia Bergmann, Erfurt
Early Jewish extra-biblical texts develop rich imagery of food and feasting in the World to Come. This feast for the righteous will take place at important locations such as the mountain of God or the Garden Eden, the texts tell us, phantastic food such as Leviathan, manna, or fruits from the Tree of Life will be served. Curiously absent are, however, liquid items. Neither water nor wine nor any other kind of drink are mentioned explicitly. What will - in the imagination of the early authors - the righteous drink in the World to Come? Why do the texts avoid the question of drink and drinking? And what does it mean that one text from Qumran, 1QSa, which has been interpreted as one prominent text about this otherworldly feast, does mention the consumation of "new wine"?

Yahweh in the Wine Press: Reflecting on Isaiah 49:26a and 63:6 in the Context of Ancient Alcohol Production
Rebekah Welton, Exeter
This paper argues that Isa 49:26a and 63:6 have been misunderstood and mistranslated. While these verses have been taken to describe drunkenness, they should rather be interpreted in relation to Yahweh’s role as a wine-maker. A Cognitive Linguistics approach is used to identify word meaning according to its context and usage by the word-user, rather than relying on root meaning or cognate words. It is the metaphorical transformation of a non-alcoholic liquid, in these cases blood, into inebriating wine that is at play in these passages. As a result, these verses become threats of the total transformation, and thus destruction, of Yahweh’s enemies into a consumable item.

Downing One’s Destiny: Drinking and Judgement in the Hebrew Bible
Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, Copenhagen
This paper explores the relationship between judgment, punishment and drinking in the Cup of Wrath motif in the Hebrew Bible (Jer 25:15-29; Isa 51:17-23; Jer 49:12; Ez 23:31-34; Sl 75:8) and related texts (e.g. Num 5:11-31; Exodus 32:19-20). The investigation is inspired by the psychologist Paul Rozin’s observation that when we eat and drink “the world enters the self” and it traces the connection between ingestion and transformation in the Cup of Wrath motif and similar texts in the Hebrew Bible.