

PEF EVENT

Thursday 15th May 2025, 6pm

THE BETH-ZATHA VASE & THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN: MEMORIES OF PAGAN JERUSALEM

- Nathanael Vetta, King's College London
- PEF, 5-6 Dreadnought Walk, Greenwich, London SE10 9FP
- Free, please email rsvppef@gmail.com to reserve your ticket/s



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More information

The Jewish, Christian and Muslim periods of Jerusalem's history are well-known. But few are aware that in the second and third centuries CE Jerusalem was a pagan city. In 130 CE the Emperor Hadrian built the Roman colony *Aelia Capitolina* on the ruins of Jerusalem. While little is known about *Aelia*, the Palestine Exploration Fund houses one of its most intriguing artefacts: the Beth-Zatha vase. Discovered in a cave by the pool of Beth-Zatha – mentioned in John 5:2 – this remarkable vase busily decorated with cultic symbols gives us a glimpse of lost pagan Jerusalem. Could this unique artefact cast fresh light on how Jews and Christians – like the author of John's Gospel – clung to their visions of Jerusalem as Rome sought to erase memory of it? Join us as we piece together this mysterious chapter in Jerusalem's past through the testimony of the Beth-Zatha vase.

About the speaker

Nathanael is currently Lecturer in Bible, Gender and the Arts at King's College, London where he teaches introductory and postgraduate courses in biblical literature, women and gender and material culture in the ancient world. His research focuses specifically on the world of Jesus and the Gospels, and generally on literary, social and material approaches to ancient Judaism and early Christianity. He is currently writing his second book, 'Jesus and Jerusalem'.

HOW TO FIND US

THE PEF is situated on the south bank of the River Thames, 5 minutes' walk from the Cutty Sark. It is accessible by DRL at Cutty Sark and Greenwich stations, the Overground at Greenwich station, and by Riverbus at Greenwich Pier.

