

CANAANITES AND NEOPAGANS IN CANAAN:  
A COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO ISRAELI MOVEMENTS  
OVER THE PAST CENTURY

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Abstract

In the past century, two movements have glorified pagan mythology in the Land of Israel – the Canaanites, who first formed in the 1940s, and the Neopagans, who have been active since the late 20th century. Both movements opposed the conventional form of “Judaism” in Israel, while reviving and appropriating ancient traditions. The current comparative study examines the similarities and differences between these two countermovements. Their differences lie in the nature of their organization and activity, as well as their ideologies and values. While the Canaanites operated within an ideological and publication-oriented dimension, emphasizing politics of a combative-oppositional character, the Neopagans offer ritualistic lifestyle and practices, which highlight an affinity to nature and a positive inclusive approach. In addition, the Canaanites’ nationalistic spirit contrasts the Neopagans’ universalism, and, accordingly, the former have revived Canaanite mythology, while the latter combines traditions from different cultures.