New rituals, new religion? Death’s dominion during the Copper Age of the southern Levant

Lecturer: Yorke Rowan

Kershaw Lecture in Near East Archaeology

Friday, October 23, 3:00 p.m.
Location: Fine Arts Building, Room 126, University at Albany

Dynamic and continuously renegotiated, religion is often expressed through ritual performance. In the archaeological record, ritual paraphernalia, iconography and sacred built or natural space provide evidence for understanding the human need to materialize the ethereal nature of religious belief. During the late prehistoric periods in the southern Levant (modern Israel, Palestine, Jordan), an increase in ritual practice suggests a dramatic change during a time of demographic expansion and economic intensification. At the same time, elaborate new rituals surround death and disposal of the human body. In this lecture, rituals surrounding death, secondary burial, and the iconography of burial equipment during the Chalcolithic period (c. 4500-3600 BCE) offer insights into a period of high ritual intensification.