

GUEST LECTURE

The Venus of prehistoric times? The female figurines in the Pottery Neolithic

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Research Group „Archaeology of the Levant“
Austrian Archaeological Institute

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Universitätszentrum Theologie, HS 47.11
(Heinrichstr. 78/I)

THE LECTURE

The southern Levant in the Pottery Neolithic (ca. 6300–5200 cal BC) saw an unprecedented frequency and homogenization in anthropomorphic depictions. Seated female figurines (often referred to as ‘Mother Goddess figurines’) uncovered in large quantities at Shaar Hagolan and at other sites ascribed to the Yarmukian culture are a prominent example of early artistic expression and have been frequently interpreted in light of the ‘Great Goddess Hypothesis’. However, the corpus of Neolithic anthropomorphic female figurines is much more varied and crosslinks between individual iconographic traditions become apparent. In this lecture, current interpretative models regarding function and meaning will be re-evaluated based on the detailed analysis of archaeological contexts and iconographic parallels in the southern Levant and beyond.

KATHARINA STREIT

Dr. Katharina Streit studied Archaeology and Anthropology. Afterwards, she worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the Martin Buber Society of Fellows at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Since 2020, she has been working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Austrian Archaeological Institute of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. 2013–2016, she was the director of the Ein el-Jarba excavations, and since 2017, she has been co-directing the Austrian Excavations at Tel Lachish together with Dr. Felix Höflmayer. Her research focuses on transregional interactions from the Chalcolithic to the Iron Age in the southern Levant.



Female figurine from Shaar HaGolan, Pottery Neolithic (6400–5800 BCE) (IAA: 2002-1187)
Photographer: D. Harris (in: Garfinkel – Ben-Shlomo – Korn 2010, cover)

CONTACT

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