



EARLY CHINA SEMINAR
LECTURE SERIES

Fleshing out the Social Identity of Human Sacrificial Victims in Late Shang, China

Daniela Wolin
Yale University

The identity of the more than 10,000 sacrificial victims uncovered at the Late Shang (ca. 1250-1050 BCE) site of Yinxu in Anyang, China has garnered academic interest for almost a century. Sacrificial victims tend to be classified into two broad categories, 人牲 (human sacrifice) and 人殉 (human accompanying-in-death), which conflate a variety of disparate contexts, obscuring the importance of social identity throughout the sacrificial process. This presentation provides a nuanced analysis of the myriad forms and functions of sacrifice in the Late Shang by drawing on evidence from oracle bone inscriptions, mortuary contexts, and human skeletal remains to examine the diverse social identities of the sacrificial victims at Yinxu. Additionally, it explores how these ritual acts of violence altered the relational personhood and collective identity of the victims, participants, and witnesses.



October 6th, 2017 (Friday) 4:30-6:30pm

**403 Kent Hall, 1140 Amsterdam Avenue
Columbia University**

Seminar Co-Chairs:

Jue Guo, Barnard College, Columbia University

Roderick Campbell, Institute for the Study of Ancient World, New York University

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