



UCD School of Geography Seminar Series

Lookout Armageddon: Christian Zionist Pilgrimage to the Battlefields and Blooming Landscapes of Tel Megiddo

Dr Tristan Sturm

Date: Thursday, 8th of February

Time: 15:00 – 16:00

Format: In-person

Where: E003, Newman Building

Zoom link: <https://ucd-ie.zoom.us/j/66192911567>

In the American Christian Zionist imaginary of the apocalypse, Tel Megiddo (the battlefield site for Armageddon), and the landscape of the Jezreel Valley that extends from it, figure centrally in the performance of their geopolitical visions of the Middle East and nationalism for Israel. Through over eight years of ethnographic engagement with Christian Zionist pilgrims in Israel and Palestine, I ask how these pilgrimage performances at Megiddo are not just representations of past and future geopolitical visions, but are also embodied and performative remakings of premillennial dispensationalist narrative upon the Tel Megiddo landscape lookout. The geopolitical memories of how the Jezreel valley is performed as portending an apocalyptic future is bookended by its performance as fulfilling the Jewish prophecy of making the “Land Bloom.” The valley’s agricultural success after Zionist settlement is interpreted both as justifying Jewish claims to territory and also as having fulfilled part of the apocalyptic prophecy that Jews will return to Israel and once again make it flourish. It is argued that these two events, the past Jewish agricultural success of the Jezreel valley and the future battlefield of Armageddon, are connected through a present representation of landscape that sees the Jewish territorial presence on the landscape as portending the apocalypse.



Biography

Tristan Sturm is Senior Lecturer in Geography at Queen's University Belfast. He is the Director of the MA in Geopolitics and a Fellow at the the Centre for Apocalyptic and Postapocalyptic Studies (CAPAS) at the University of Heidelberg. He is interested in apocalyptic thought related to climate change, conspiracies, and religious movements in the USA and Israel/Palestine. He has published over 30 academic articles and is co-author of the book, *Apocalyptic Conspiracism* (forthcoming with Bloomsbury), and co-editor of *Mapping the End Times* (Routledge) and *The Handbook of Apocalypticism and Millennialism* (forthcoming Bloomsbury). He has disseminated his findings in the *Toronto Star*, *Haaretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, *National Post*, *THE Magazine*, *BBC Radio 4*, *ITV*, *BBC Newsline*, among other media spaces.