

The Athens Greek Religion Seminar, Tuesday December 13, 2016.

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The Adonia: phenomenological readings of Greek religion (Abstract)

The Athenian Adonia were a complex festival that included activities of seemingly unrelated character: growing plants, laughter, partying, lamentation, funeral processions, and climbing up and down rooftops. This lecture examines the Adonia in their entirety without placing disproportionate emphasis on any single element of the festival. It discusses the choice of performing rites on rooftops, the involvement of Adonis figurines, the purpose of the lamentations and the causes for merriment. The interpretation of the festival is disentangled from specific historic events and practices. Instead the rites are examined through the prism of basic emotional responses. This lecture shows that religious rituals addressed ontological questions, which we need to acknowledge in our analyses of Greek religion.