



THE ATHENS GREEK RELIGION SEMINAR, MARCH 3, 2020

**Dr. Julia L. Shear, American School of Classical Studies at Athens:**

### ***Polis and Panathenaia in Hellenistic Athens***

#### **ABSTRACT**

Every year on 28 Hekatombaion, the Athenians made sacrifices to the Athena as part of their celebration of the Panathenaia, their most important festival honouring the goddess. Every fourth year, the occasion was held in a grander form, the Great Panathenaia, which is well known to scholars and frequently mentioned in studies on ancient Athens and on Greek religion. Although the festivities continued for more than 950 years, the scholarship usually focuses on the Panathenaia in the archaic and classical periods and its origins and mythology. When scholars do discuss the celebration during the Hellenistic or Roman periods, there is a general assumption that we all know what it entailed and explicating its development in these periods is not the focus of the scholarship. In this seminar, I focus on the Great Panathenaia in the Hellenistic period and especially on the interrelationship between the festival and the *polis*. As I shall argue, the celebration and city remained closely intertwined in the Hellenistic period. These interrelationships are visible across a range of different areas, such as participation, the games, finances, and honours. As this evidence shows, the festivities reflected developments elsewhere in the city and they remained particularly sensitive to events in the political sphere, as they had been in the archaic and classical periods