



THE ATHENS GREEK RELIGION SEMINAR, Tuesday March 30, 2021 at 17h Athens time (via Zoom link).

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HERA AT OLYMPIA: CULT AND COLLECTION

The Archaic temple of Hera at Olympia, its cult, and the statues displayed within it were described at some length by Pausanias in the second century CE (Paus. 5.16-20). The historical and religious questions raised by Hera's cult and games have received less attention than archaeological ones raised by the temple and the large collection of statues inside it. Though it has long been understood that the statues were assembled in the Hera temple at a late date (the first century BCE or the first half of the first century CE), I would like to suggest in this talk that the cult of Hera at Olympia is also late in origin: rather than an age-old tradition, it can be reinterpreted as an example of the invention of tradition by a Greek community (the *polis* of Elis) under Roman rule. Combining a new cult of Hera with the preexisting cult of Zeus at Olympia follows the "his-and-hers" trend seen in many Greek cults of the late Hellenistic and early imperial periods.

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