



THE ATHENS GREEK RELIGION SEMINAR, Tuesday September 7, 2021
at 17h Athens time (via Zoom link).

Patrik Klingborg, Hedvig von Ehrenheim & Axel Frejman Uppsala University/Swedish Institute at Athens:

Ritual Uses of Water at Greek Sanctuaries

ABSTRACT:

Scholars have long highlighted the importance of water for rituals in Greek sanctuaries but more needs to be known about when and how this was used in practice. Beside purifications, which have been at the centre of scholarly attention, several other ritual activities could also require water, e.g. the cleaning of images, libations and divination in sanctuaries. Considering the importance attributed to water in rituals at Greek sanctuaries this paper aims to explore which ritual activities involved water, as well as how and where. In order to do so the paper begins with the use of water as a purificatory agent for humans and things. Thereafter it turns to the offering of water, or water mixed with wine, to the gods in the form of libations. Finally, we will examine the few instances where water was used as a medium in divinatory practices at sanctuaries. Throughout the paper we argue that these activities were located on a continuum from mundane to ritual and can be viewed within a chrono-spatial framework where they at key points functioned as audio-visual cues in order to structure activities. To achieve this we closely and critically studied the empirical material, in particular epigraphical and literary, supported by archaeological and iconographic evidence.

To register, contact Katerina.gabierakis@sia.gr