



## ATHENS GREEK RELIGION SEMINAR



**THE ATHENS GREEK RELIGION SEMINAR, Tuesday, January 27, 2026**

**Eleni Fassa**

***From Syria to Macedonia: relocation, transformation and interaction in the cult of Atargatis***

### **ABSTRACT**

In this lecture, I will explore the relocation story of the Syrian goddess, a prominent “nomadic deity” of the Greco-Roman *oikoumene*. During the early Hellenistic period the Hierapolitan cult spread into the traditional Greek world, with Macedonia being one of the first regions to embrace the worship of Atargatis. The crossing of cultural boundaries, however, necessitated various adaptations and negotiations between local traditions, regional dynamics and global influences. First, I will present the surviving evidence from Hellenistic and Roman Macedonia, analyzing the strategies of assimilation in the divine migration, particularly the delicate balance between local identity and exotic elements. Next, I will examine the interactions between the Syrian Goddess and the indigenous deities, with a focus on her manifold relationships with the powerful Mother Goddesses of the region. Lastly, I will address the challenges posed by cross-cultural divine encounters, including the open-minded attitudes, the tensions stemming from the dominant culture’s inward-facing tendencies, and the perceived or imposed boundaries shaping the new cultic and cultural experiences brought into the Macedonian religious landscape.

**The seminar takes place Tuesday, January 27, 2026, 17.00 (Athens) in a hybrid format with live presence at the Swedish Institute at Athens and online via Zoom.**

**To participate (in-person or via Zoom), please register at:**  
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