



human development in landscapes
GRADUATE SCHOOL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KIEL

BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIUM
Monday, 16th of July 17.00

**THE TIMING OF ATHENIAN ACROPOLIS FESTIVALS IN THE CONTEXT OF
LANDSCAPE, ASTRONOMY AND MYTH**
Dr. Efrosyni Boutsikas, University of Kent

The paper considers the performance of nocturnal festivals held in the Athenian Acropolis in the context of their visible landscape and night sky. The myth and cult of the daughters of the mythical king of Athens, Erechtheus who lived on the Acropolis, establish his deceased daughters as goddesses who are owed cult by the Athenians. In the myth, the girls are equated with the Hyades, a prominent star cluster in the constellation of Taurus, which they form after their deaths. This study examines whether these mythical astronomical connections can be verified by the timing of the festivals and the layout of key structures on the Athenian Acropolis. To explicate this, the context of the Acropolis is explored as fully as possible, through the visual arts, the literary myths, the festival calendar, and the natural landscape and night-sky, so as to determine whether the movement of the celestial body mentioned in myth was indeed visible from the Acropolis during the time when the cult rites in question were performed there. In this way, the surroundings of the Athenian Acropolis –visible by the participants of the nocturnal rites– offer a new understanding of the relationship between Greek cosmology, landscape, astronomy and ritual practice.

Venue: Lecture room 204, Leibnizstraße 1, CAU Kiel