



The Athens Greek Religion Seminar, Tuesday January 22, 2019

Elias Koulakiotis, University of Ioannina:

Arrian the priest: Religious expertise in local and imperial context

ABSTRACT

Arrian's priesthood of Demeter and Corè has received little focused attention in modern scholarship, although the priest of Demeter and Corè in Nicomedia, Bithynia, was an illustrious magistrate. In this paper, I shall examine more thoroughly the relationship between Arrian's priesthood, his home city and the cult of the two goddesses, in order to reassess Arrian's religious expertise in the wider framework of the imperial period, a period in which such offices were foundational to the cultural identity of Roman provincial elites.

It seems that this priesthood, held by Arrian the historian, philosopher, and high officer of both the Roman army and the Roman administration, had an important political and religious meaning within the Hadrianic cultural policy; it should be understood as part of an Eleusinian network and as a means for Arrian to underline both the Greekness of his natal city and his own allegiance to the emperor.