

SYMPOSIUM PHILOSOPHIAE ANTIQUAE NONUM ELEUSINIUM

“The Eleusinian Mysteries: Religion, Ideology, State Cult, Administration, Finance.

Aspects of a Constitutive Element in Athenian and Panhellenic Identity”

(September 26- October 3 , 2007)

The ninth meeting in the series SYMPOSIA PHILOSOPHIAE ANTIQUAE is announced under the superscribed title.

The aim is to reexamine and reappraise the origin, nature and significance of the Eleusinian Mysteries both in themselves, as a special religious phenomenon, and with respect to all capital dimensions of their importance, in connection (a) with the thought currents and philosophical developments during the Archaic and Classical Period; (b) with the evolving ideology of Hellenism; (c) with their assumption on the part of the Athenian State as a major communal cult. The relationship of a Mystery cult with the standard, open, national worship will have to be investigated afresh. The absorption of such a cult by common religion, and by state religion in particular, raises revealing questions about the character of ancient natural religion.

The original or in -grafted Bacchism of the Mysteries still needs further clarification as does their Orphic affiliation. On the other hand, their civic appropriation poses problems regarding the ideological use made of them, the position and role of their priesthood and its relation to the older clan structure of society, and also their administrative and financial institutionalization. Finally, the Mysteries' projection as a datum of panhellenic, and potentially (and aspiringly) universal, meaningfulness implicates issues of Athenian influence and human receptivity in both strategic and cultural terms.

For its fuller elucidation the subject clearly calls for an interdisciplinary approach – religious, philosophical, historical, with history of ideas, art history, political history all mutually contextualized in the framework of the ancient Greek mysteric religious experience of reality and of the corresponding philosophical speculation on being.

The form of the conference will follow the established pattern. Two-hour individual sessions are divided in about an hour of presentation, another of discussion for each one of the invited participants' paper. Proceedings will be published.

The Symposium will be held this coming summer, between September 26 and October 3 , 2007. Its venue will be announced later.