

The Eleusinian Mysteries

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**Most Worshipful Grand Master,
Brethren all,**

There were two reasons for the re-“visit” of mine to the Eleusinian Mysteries and the myth they present. One of them was that Eleusis, the location where those Mysteries took place, was chosen to be the European Capital of Culture in 2023 with the title of the festivities under the name “*ELEFSIS Mysteries of Transition*” and the other one was the route of the initiates, the so called Sacred Way, which marks in a symbolic way the transition, that is the birth, the realization and the arrival of the mystic “*Remarkable*” (being a person, an object or an event).

The first appearance of mysteries is lost in the depths of history and the oldest ones date back to ancient Egypt dealing with the myth of Isis and Osiris. The Eleusinian Mysteries are also based on a myth. According to the Homeric Hymn to Demeter to a poem of Circa 600 BC, the goddess Demeter disguised as an old woman and searching for her daughter Persephone who had been carried off by Pluto, the god of the Underworld, came to Eleusis, revealed who she was and angry with men and gods alike shut herself in her temple and brought drought and famine upon all land, until in the end she succeeded in winning the return of her daughter and her sojourn in the upper world for a few months each year. Overjoyed, Demeter made the land fertile again, and taught the Eleusinians august rites to elevate their morals and the cultivation of the earth to improve their material prosperity.

The cult of Demeter differed from the other religious cults of the ancient world in that the faithful were chosen and underwent instruction, and those who were initiated had to swear to keep secret whatever they saw, heard and were taught. Just because of this absolute secrecy they were called Mysteries. So all that we know today is based on those rituals of the festival that were performed in public.

Generally speaking, the basis of all mysteries is the ritual reproduction of a myth, so that together with the personal experience and the symbols presented, they eventually achieve to transmit the essence of a philosophy and a way of life which was in accordance with the urging of Aristotle: *“Do not learn, but suffer and be disposed”*.

Freemasonry, being itself philosophical, ritual and mystical, follows the same method of teaching. The ancient mysteries are certainly not the cradle of Freemasonry, but there were analogies with them. As Brother MACKEY notes, no one claims that there is a direct succession of the Masonic drama from the myth of Eleusis, but there must have been a common source of idea for the origin of both of them.

Today's presentation - approach of the Eleusinian Mysteries aspires to shed light to that timeless path followed by all the initiates starting from the sanctuary of the ancient temples to the East of the Masonic Temple, bringing to light their common source of origin.

The origin of the Greek Mysteries remains obscure and reaches even before the domination of the prehistoric Mycenaean civilization. Some scholars have expressed the opinion that Egypt or Crete is their origin, while most of them agree that the Mysteries in Greece originated from Thrace after the worship of Kaveri Mysteries which functioned in Greece since the era of the Pre Greek Pelasgians, as Strabo mentions and Herodotus confirms. The Orphic theogony was later associated with their worship. They had chthonic origins and appear to have been part of the Pelasgian cult.

According to another point of view, the starting point of the cult of Demeter should be placed in the granary of prehistoric Greece, which was Boeotia and the feast of the Thesmophorians with the exclusive participation of women to it. The change of the character of the cult from rural/ agrarian into another one with a metaphysical dimension has been associated with the activities of the teacher and prophet Epimenides¹ from Crete during the 7th century BC.

¹ Epimenides was a Religious teacher and prophet from Crete (7th century B.C.). His name is mentioned in connection with the purification of Athens from the Cylonian Agos.

Perhaps this is what is implied with the reference made by the goddess to Crete.

All scholars agree that, as I said before, the initiation ritual is based on the myth described in the Homeric hymn *“To Demeter”* which dates back to the end of the 7th century BC. This hymn along with the excavation data are the most reliable sources of information about the Mysteries. The poet of this hymn is familiar with the language of the epic and capable of depicting and arousing deeper emotions and mental states, etc. In particular, the poem *“To Demeter”* testifies to a direct knowledge of Eleusinian worship, so that it can be considered as its official sacred history. That’s because the Hymn to Demeter testifies that since the archaic period the hope of the blissful survival of the mystics after death has been cultivated in the Eleusinian Mysteries. This is exactly a presumption conceived by the Orphics who embraced the Eleusinian myth and developed the idea of the dying and constantly reborn god. This concept was also cultivated by the Pythagoreans and was spread out by Greek philosophy through Plato. The Eleusinian Mysteries therefore represent an earlier stage of the Orphic Mysteries.

*“I begin to praise Dimitra the modest goddess with the beautiful hair,
Herself as well as her slender daughter who was abducted by Adoneus
(or Hades)”*

This was a short excerpt of the hymn that tells the story of the two goddesses, Demeter and her daughter Kore / Kori = Kόρη or Persephone who was the outcome of the union of the goddess Demeter with Zeus. Persephone with her radiant beauty managed to dazzle even the dark, mighty god of the Underworld, Hades, who wanted to make her both his wife and Queen. Hades, with the consent of his brother Zeus, decided to take her with him. The abduction and return of the Daughter constitute the core of the hymn as well as of the sacred rites.

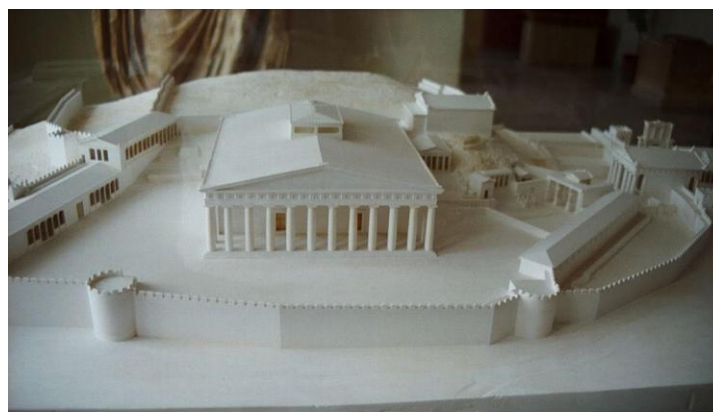


Pinax of Persephone and Hades from Locri, Reggio Calabria, National Museum of Magna Graecia.

The initiation followed a complex pattern of gradual evolution, which was divided into three stages. The preparatory stage with the Lesser Mysteries at Agrai (a quarter in Athens) which took place during Spring and it was a mandatory stage (reminiscent of the first Masonic degree) as a prerequisite for the next one which was the Greater Mysteries at Eleusis that followed in the autumn of the same year. Nothing is known about the initiation rites that were performed except that some kind of reenactment of the abduction of Kore. In a year's time there followed the third and highest stage of initiation called Epoptheia which only those initiates who had been initiated into the Mysteries in the previous year could attain. During the Epoptheia the Hierophantes showed the initiates the greatest mystery, the "*ear of corn in silence reaped*".

The above mentioned Lesser Mysteries at Agrai, that is at the fields, were originally an independent agricultural festival of wheat harvesting. The prevailing view out of a historical point of view is that the reason for their introduction as a cult was the initiation of Hercules. In his tragedy "*Hercules Furens*" Euripides informs us about the initiation of this mythical hero, who intended to go down to Hades in order to capture Cerberus. Diodoros Sikeliotis quotes that Dimitra herself established the Lesser Mysteries in order to purify the hero. This mythical ceremony granted afterwards the right of initiation to all Greeks.

In Autumn, during the Greater Mysteries a procession of the initiates was formed to cover the distance of 19 klms long from Athens to Eleusis. The starting point was at Kerameikos (the Athens ancient cemetery and an important archaeological site nowadays) and from there the people walked all the way to Eleusis along the so called Sacred Way. At different points along the road, where there were altars and shrines, the participants, who were holding torches in their hands, offered sacrifices and chanted hymns in honour of the goddess. This procession ended at the great outer court of the Eleusis Sanctuary and this long walk symbolized the wanderings of the goddess in search for her daughter.



Reconstruction of sacred area of Eleusis Roman age

It seems that the approach to sacred places, places of mysticism and revelations, is realized through a long journey imprinted in the human consciousness. Just like the symbolic journeys in masonic events. The Sacred Way is the oldest known street in Europe and is still in use nowadays. We assume that it was shaped during the Late Helladic Period (1600 -1100 BC). This road retains its name since the antiquity and is the link that leads from the olive tree of the goddess Athena and Erechtheus, that is from Athens, to the “*great power of the Sea*”, to the breath of Evmolpos and to the “*ear of cob in silence reaped*”.

The traveler is always “*on the move*” like Dionysus as well as Kore and Demeter but also like the man himself in society and life. It is the beginning of the work of the stoic saying “*Enthon Skapte*” that is “*Dig within*” and then you can sense the path as a personal, secret experience.

The procession of the initiates, being symbolically an endless pious procession, looked as if it had started from all parts of the Earth and of all the times and was proceeding to the precinct of the Sanctuary, in order to secretly resurrect or to openly continue, an interrupted for centuries but still bright and strikingly substantial ceremony A ceremony which is repeated during the Great Passion and mourning of the Christian religion, in search of the Immortal and of the Logos/Word, which is suddenly lost from our eyes.

The entrance of the initiates to the sanctuary was through the Greater Propylaea which was the main and impressive entrance to the Sanctuary, a close copy of the central section of the Propylaia of the Acropolis of Athens. In front of them there was the Kallichoron Well mentioned in the Homeric Hymn and the Eschara that is an altar shaped like a well, where gods received sacrifice. Then the procession passed through the Lesser Propylaea (a smaller Gate to the main part of the sanctuary) which was supported on Caryatids, that is sculpted female figures serving as an architectural support. To the right of the Lesser Propylaea there was the sacred cave of Plutoneion and right next to it still is the Agelastos Petra, which is a small rock projecting above the surface of the road, where according to the tradition, Demeter sat down to rest when she arrived at Eleusis. The initiates continued their way to the Telesterion, the most sacred and important edifice in the Sanctuary, the core of it and the place where the rites took place and the main temple of Demeter was found. The site of the Telesterion was covered with dirt for a long time after the site was abandoned and was brought to light during the 19th century. Strabo the Greek geographer and Vitruvius, the Roman architect report that Iktinos, the famous architect of classic Greece had made the plans for the Telesterion.

Now, it is extremely difficult to reconstruct the ceremonies and their philosophical background. Taking into consideration the traces left by the foundations of the ancient builders as well as our surrounding ruins, we will try to approach basic stages and symbols of the myth of the Mysteries. What is of importance and you should always bear in mind when it comes to the Eleusinian Mysteries is that the initiates returned to their home nobler in spirit, contented, less fearful of death and with raised hopes of a better life.



Relief with a representation of Demeter and Daughter, 1st half of the 5th century BC. © Acropolis Museum.

The Eleusinian Mysteries operated on two levels. The first one is the natural one where the agricultural element is dominant. Namely it is the worship of goddess Demeter who produces all the goods necessary for the development of civilization. The second one, being superior, is associated with the spiritual development of man and man's inner philosophical questions. If the people worshiped in the person of Demeter the Mother Earth of agriculture, the initiates discerned in her face the light of sky, the Mother of Souls, the Mother of the cosmogenic gods and their own spiritual aspects. They i.e. the

initiates, experience in this process pain and grief for a lost part of themselves, emotions which renders them another character and this dramatic change takes place in the invisible Underworld. In other words, the experience of the participation to the mysteries marks the return to unity.

Based on the cultivation of cereals and the miracle of the seed that is buried and sprouted in a new body, the idea of rebirth and the fate of the deceased is built. The human kind is looked upon as an earthly element not because it is mortal but because it is alive since it was born from Mother Earth and returns to her. Because everything that comes from the Great Mother is full of life and everything that returns to Earth acquires life again.

This image, before even projecting in Eleusis in the form of Demeter, exists since the beginning of time as Diktynna, Astarte, Kyveli, Rea, Nate, etc., in other words as Great Goddesses of all the peoples of the earth.

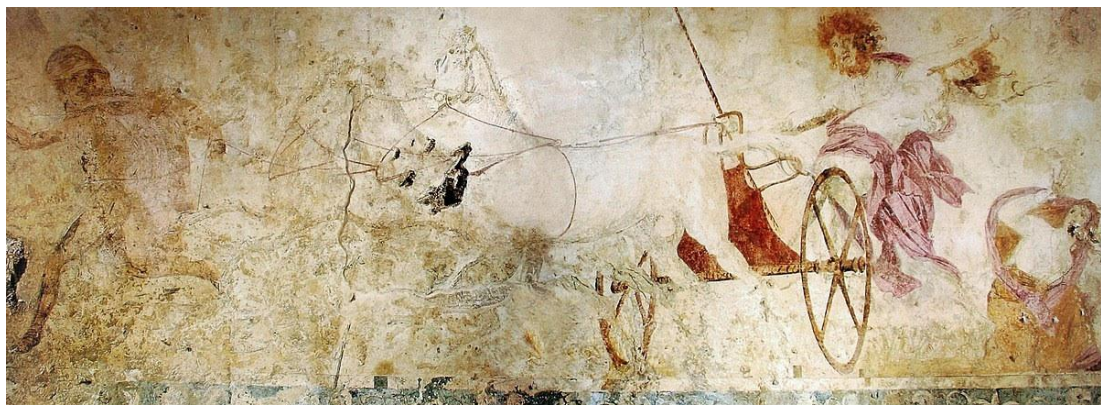
Legend has it that time is actually divided into three parts and according to it one of them corresponds to the period of time when Persephone lived in Hades and in the other two ones when she lived

with her Mother. But as you know there don't exist three seasons in the solar calendar. This tripartite division can only be used as a reminder of an earlier era when the lunar calendar was in use according to which there were three seasons corresponding to the three aspects of the goddess, that is the three phases of the Moon. One of them corresponded to the young Daughter that grows up, the second one to the mature Woman as a full moon that is dominant in the world and the third one as an old woman whose powers decrease, following the reduction of the moon. Kore-Dimitra-Hecate are the three female figures of the Homeric poem.

The myth of Persephone now refers to the history of the human soul, its birth, death and resurrection. Sharing her life between Hades, Earth and Heaven, Persephone became the archetype of the human soul. The Eleusinian mysteries move now from one stage to the other, namely from the study of the phenomena of nature to the study of the phenomena of the soul.

The idea of the divine origin of the soul and its ability to be redeemed from the cycles of reincarnations and to finally return to the gods, testifies, according to the Orphics, to a fall from the sphere of influence of the gods to the sphere of existence of the mortal beings. The genealogy of the Kore (Persephone) originating from Zeus and Demeter shows an influence of the Orphics, reminding us of one of their sayings: *"I am the child of Earth and of the starry Sky"*. The Orphics, by the way, had a set of religious beliefs and practices originating in the ancient Greek Thracian and Hellenistic world, associated with the mythical poet **Orpheus**, who is said to have descended into the Greek underworld and, like Persephone, managed to return.

After this not short, but necessary introduction, we can focus on the images of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the main event of which is the **abduction** of Persephone from Hades, the master of the underworld.



Hades abducting Persephone, wall painting in the small royal tomb at Vergina. Macedonia, Greece

The abduction allegorizes the expansion of the world into the Synpan (Universe), that is the fertilization of the new level. At the same time it also allegorizes the appearance of a connecting substance between the various levels. This is the role played by the Soul. In Plato, this is exactly how the function of the soul is defined i.e. as the connecting link between spirit and material, as the famous philosopher quotes in his famous works: *The Laws* and *Phaedrus*.

The abduction has the character of a Hierogamy = “holy marriage between two gods”. The new marriage teaches us and forces us to become different from what we usually are and also to take a taste of the experience of an escape to another paradoxical reality.

Persephone embroiders a veil adorned by her mother Nature. It is a reflection of the world of Ideas that is used as a means to convey a concept. It is thus underlined that she possesses all knowledge. Porphyrios, a neoplatonic philosopher, identifies this veil with that carried by young virgins during the ancient Athenian procession of Panathenaean matching the latter’s route with the path of the gods. That is, by studying and knowing nature, we understand the Implicit = Ἀρρητο. While Core is speaking to her friends, the Oceanids about Love, a young handsome man, Narcissus makes his appearance. Enchanted the little goddess by his sight she approaches to admire him and then the boundaries of the worlds fall, the earth is torn, Hades projects with his chariot, grabs her and begins the descent-fall into the material world.

Let's look at these symbols one by one.

What actually was Narcissus? The seer Teiresias had prophesied that he would live to a ripe old age, as long as he did not know himself. It inevitably reminds us of the biblical Genesis where the protoplasts, innocent as children, had been told that they would live eternally as long as they did not eat from the Tree of Knowledge. What, after all, is this knowledge that costs the fall?

What does Narcissus finally see in a mirror? Plotinus and Proclus, both neoplatonic philosophers, presented the reflection function of consciousness as a reflection of the spirit in itself. What happens when the Core smells the flower? Does she perceive or see her chthonic or her complement part of herself and this view, the perception of this different existence, causes complete detuning and falling into the “Tartars” (Hell)? A fall that lasts and will last until the balance of the two worlds or the two selves i.e. the celestial and the chthonic, is achieved? In such a way so as each one of them can contribute to the understanding of the other. It was Plato who expressed the problem of otherness: The meaning of “*This*” can only be conceived in relation to the meaning of the “*Other*” i.e. in association with the multiplicity of the forms of the “*Other*” being.

So our mirage or optical illusion is a knowledge. It is the self-view of the soul that gives birth to the material world, desires to know it and seeks a relationship with it. A relationship that should be an expression of Love and not violence. On the other hand, the relationship between Persephone and Narcissus highlights precisely that the phrase “*Know Thyself*” finally illuminates the invisible kingdom and this glow unites the kingdoms and manifests them in the form of the whole World.

As a matter of fact,, it is Eros himself who drives Adonea's (Hades) chariot, in other words it is the force that unites and coordinates all creation. Its name is 'Fanis', from the Greek verb '*fainomai* = appear myself', “reveal” and it is associated with flow and motion and thus it denotes the idea of cosmic motion that separates the elements in order to mix them again. On the other hand, the soul descends to develop its powers and to adorn what is beneath it. In Timaeus, one of Plato’s works, it seems that the initial descent of the soul is a necessary process of understanding the world. With the glow - which is symbolized as the blur of the soul on matter, ie the marriage of Persephone and Hades - the body becomes an accomplice, a brother and not a prisoner of the soul. It is a “*sign*” of the soul’s restless property, according to the expression of the Orphics, but also a proof of its immortality according to Plato.

The drama of the abduction takes place in front of the Plutoneion Cave. Both the appearance of God and the worship of the deity Eleutho, which is associated with childbirth and freedom, define the Cave as a two-way border, the gateway to two worlds and thus related to a New Birth which possesses a central place in the eschatology of the Orphics. Just as Heraclitus notes: “*The same road that leads upwards also leads downwards*”.

“Agelastos Petra” is not far from the entrance of the cave. It is where she (Demeter), the mother in pain, sat taking the form of an old grieving woman to take a rest, as I said, and mourn her daughter. The Stone, in combination with the two-way path of the cave, becomes a symbol of the Navel of the Earth, the center of the world, that is, the boundaries of chthonic life with the spiritual one. At this point it is possible to experience both the rupture and at the same time the communication between the levels of the worlds.

From this place i.e. from the Aghelastos Petra, the goddess is led to the Palace, that is the temple of Demeter which was at the Telesterion. She finds herself in front of the maid Iamvi or Vavvo, and then, after her jokes and her obscene dance that made her laugh, smiling Iakhos, a minor deity of some cultic importance, unexpectedly appears between her legs. Lekatsas P. considers obscene dance as a relic of erotic orgies and that it conveys the image of an Egyptian

funeral dance, where, among the figures that are displayed to the dead there appear the female genitals, as a ritual survival of an ancient intermarriage and connects the scene with the so-called *gefyrismoi* (γεφυρισμοί). (*Gefyrismoi* took place near the bridge of Kifisos where people were waiting for the pilgrims on their way back from Eleusis, told dirty jokes in memory of the above mentioned *Iamvi's* jokes and obscene dance). The scene seems to indicate that life is constantly being reborn. This causes the joy of life and the smiling of the Goddess. *Dimitra* knows, first of all, that her daughter will finally return.

Then the goddess receives the drink of *Kykeon*, interrupting her fast. The word comes from the verb *Κυκέω* ('*Kykeo*') which means to stir, to mix dissimilar edible substances. *Kykeon* is composed of different things and not moving. I think that in this case, the message of the mystic to the humans is not to get stuck and not to degenerate into staticity, inaction and immobility. For this reason it was obligatory to drink the *Kykeon*.

The roles and images of *Demeter* and *Persephone* were by no means distinct, but were often blurred and in some cases identical. It was a duality that existed only for the uninitiated. In their depictions, *Dimeter* is covered with a veil while her daughter has it lifted. This identification denotes that every soul has a lower part that is directed towards the body and a higher part that is directed towards the imaginary world. This world is the Divine Intellect, made of the same substance as God and that's why it does not change. With its first energy it controls the body and with the second one it studies and keeps distinct the search target.

We can divide the ceremonies of Eleusis into three sections in which the hierophante (priest) performed the mystic rites: a) The *dromena* (things done), a dramatic reenactment of the *Demeter/Persephone* myth, b) the *deiknumena* (things shown), displayed sacred objects, which symbolized the presence of the goddess in the temple, and c) the *legomena* (things said) that is, the mystic utterances which were heard. At the beginning of them, it was the phrase that vibrated the space at the opening of the ceremonies and still continues to vibrate every mystical holy place: *EKAS OI EVILOI* that forbade those who were not initiated to approach and consequently they left. At the culmination of the ceremonies, the Hierophant "*being amidst flames*", he pronounced aloud and cried out the great and unspoken mysteries by saying: "HOLY ETEKE POTNIA KOURON, VRIMO VRIMON" that is: The Holy Mother gave birth, the Powerful (mother) the powerful (son). Dazzled the mystics also cried out towards the sky: *YE* and towards the Mother Earth: *KYE*, that is, give rain and be fruitful. The lights went out, the Hierophant returned illuminated in a sudden light and presented the above mentioned "*ear*

of cob in silence reaped” («στάχυς τεθρευισμένος εν σιωπή»), the most sacred gift of the goddess.

The silent demonstration of this particular plant was the personification of the earth cycle, which dies and is reborn. It was a symbol of the inexhaustible creative power of the goddess. It expressed the ancient message of the mysteries: “*From One Everything, from All One*”. The presence of cob symbolized the birth and rebirth of man, according to the ancient belief that human life is in direct relation to the plant world. It is the constant cycle of life from the wilting and mourning of the barren land to the vegetation of it and its fruiting. It is the change that occurs in every change either inside or outside of us.

With this incomparable symbol, both unity and the sense of whole were absolutely completed in the thought of the initiates, that is both the unit and at the same time the multitude, which, according to the properly instructed ones, is entitled to be called Soul. It completed and confirmed the connection of the Mysteries with the fertility and cultivation of the earth. The ritual show of Epopeteia, that is the initiation of highest level, was completed with the reunion of Kore-Dimiter.

The Fire around the Priest in the ritual scene symbolizes and at the same time reminds of the attempts made by Dimiter to immortalize Dimofontas, the son of king Keleus who had offered Demeter hospitality in his Palace at Eleusis. And, the reason why there are fires in inside the Telesterion is to transmit the message of rebirth to ordinary initiates.

At the closing of the ceremonies, the words KOGX OM PAX were uttered. Words that seem inexplicable and have not been definitively interpreted. Some of the scholars think that they originate from Sanskrit, based on the assumption that they are three utterances of the name of the Supreme Being. Others say that they accompanied the whole Ieropraxia = sacred act of a religious nature, as a wish and interpret them as “*may God grant that your desires be fulfilled*” or “*the judgement was made*”. Finally, according to an explanation based on the Pelasgian dialect, the phrase may have the meaning: “*Nothing beyond that one*”.

At the end of it the hymn refers to two commands of the goddess.

The first one is addressed to Triptolemus, an Eleusinian prince, commanding him to teach the cultivation of cereals throughout the earth. The legend ranks Triptolemus as the first apostle in history. Dimiter introduces him to her cult and he becomes her first priest. He also gave him a chariot, which was dragged by winged dragons and with a large amount of wheat to sow throughout the universe.

Triptolemus means in Greek “*plow three times in a circle*”. He is the one who dares three times. He dares through three purges, three journeys to the worlds known at that time, that is the land, the sea and Hades (underworld).



The Eleusinian trio: Persephone, Triptolemus and Demeter on a marble bas-relief from Eleusis, 440–430 BC. National Archaeological Museum of Athens

The worship of the goddess spread throughout Greece. Sowing is an archetypal image deeply rooted in our consciousness. At the same time it is a symbolic act, a ritual intervention in the process of life as well as of nature, with the aim of its multiplication and reproduction, which could be paralleled with the alchemical Great Work. Aristotle considers agricultural art as “*mother of all sciences*”.

We have representations of the chariot in a multitude of ancient vases. We find such a chariot in the tragedy of Euripides ‘Medea’. The depiction of the chariot is reminiscent of that of Plato with the two horses of the soul, and, also, that of Avraxa, one of the Gnostics, and it also resembles depictions of Zeus

Meilichios (the “Zeus the Easily-Entreated”) of the Lesser Mysteries. In other words here is denoted the man with his two natures as well as his duty to control his opposing internal forces towards a useful result, always with sweetness and harmony. Thus cultivation refers to spiritual work.

In the second commandment of the goddess we read: “*Demeter initiated everyone into her revered mysteries, which are not allowed to be neglected, inquired or publicized*”. And, as a matter of fact, this principle was strictly observed by the ancient writers.

No secrets were ever revealed about the Eleusinian Mysteries!. Their inner core remains secret and we miss it as Mrs. Papaggeli, an archaeologist who works at Eleusis, emphasizes: “*The deeper content of the initiation will never be fully clarified. Maybe because it was more of an experience beyond any possibility of explicit description. There is no doubt that initiation was an intense spiritual experience which enriched the psychic world of the initiate in the present life and gave him hope for his afterlife .*”.

We can imagine the weight that was lifted on the shoulders of the first Mystagogues, that is priests at the service of the goddesses, who arrived and stayed here, where they undertook the sleepless guarding

of all those values and all those symbols that would ensure for humanity a perfect moral, spiritual and creative unity of its entire history. Or else the coming from the distant past and unshakable conviction of all the Greek initiates, that the Eleusinian most sacred mysteries were literally those which ensure the “*continuation of the human race*”, would have absolutely no meaning.

At the end of the ceremonies, the initiates returned home in small groups, reflecting on the events, the experience they acquired, sharing with their companion thoughts and feelings on what they saw, felt and heard.

They had watched the drama of the goddess, their care of the earth and were wondering:

“*What about us?*” What do these ceremonies mean and, most importantly, what can all this have to do with the various actions that took place and the modern man? What does all this mean for all of us as people who are absorbed by the difficulties, the occupations, the tasks of daily life, etc.?



Triptolemos and Kore Louvre

The Cycle of life and of the sun, the sowing, the mysteries of Persephone, the Acacia, the Master Xiram - Osiris who constantly falls down as a result of the blows of Typhoon and is constantly reborn stronger and with a fuller life and Persephone who constantly returns to her Mother, are timeless images that are sensed through the centuries. This scene allegorizes the constant rebirth of souls. He, that is Osiris, is often enslaved, imprisoned, “dies”, gets dismembered, but Isis constantly assembles the members again. In the minds of the initiates, death no longer marked the end but the beginning of a new existence. At the same time, it also symbolized the course of man through the difficulties and the struggle of life.

The attempts of Demeter to immortalize Dimofontas, as mentioned above and, also, the similar efforts of Thetis who also tried to immortalize Achilles, another hero, were not possible to be successful. Perhaps the failure in these two indicative cases, suggests that immortality is achieved by practice, activity and work in the human world. Here is a substantial first lesson that was planned to pass secretly through the mysteries.

Each person is responsible for himself. Everyone should ask themselves the question: what kind of soil is myself that like Triptolemus I am expected to cultivate? And the answer will correspond to the results of the efforts that will be made.

The cycle of activities means freedom of will, action, creation and responsibility for the result. Active life opposes Death. Active life just as we say in our own terminology: “*stonemason*”. Through all of them life is reborn and becomes better. “*Tell me what you do so I can tell you who you are*”, this is the symbolism of the Cultivator and the Sower. Just as Persephone leaves the earth as a Kore and returns to it as a Queen. That is the time when the invisible Hades is renamed as Pluto.

Natural Death is the return of the special to the general and also the return of the individual to its gender as Plato quotes in his work: *Phaedo*. Life, on the other hand, is the projection of the special into the general, the exit from the indefinite generality. In other words, life gains its actual meaning. The ceremonies **show** how the One is manifested in the “Many” and how the “Many” contain the One within them. That was the symbolism of the grain.

The joy of the return or salvation of the soul does not mean the absence of death or its denial, but its fulfillment, in the sense of completing the cycle of activity and eventually returning to the *One*, as Plato beautifully conveys this course, in his myth of Hero.

Heraclitus denied the dualism of two completely different worlds. He said in a loud and clear voice: *I see nothing but an eternal becoming*. There is no contradiction between material and immaterial, “*It is wise to confess that Everything is always One*”.

The concept of a “*single circular becoming*” ceases to be so difficult to understand today, and the thought of the dark, that is hard to understand, Heraclitus is illuminated by modern physics. The unity of life is also the source of happiness and immortality that the rites symbolize.

According to Heraclitus, everything is in motion and is continuously flowing. It is essential for the concept of change that

what undergoes a change, in this case the body, to retain its identity during the process of changing. Just as Narcissus saw himself in the liquid element and was lost being passionate for his variable image, a man, in the same way, while wishing passionately to find his material nature, loses the opportunity to reveal his invisible and immortal self.

Movement is the characteristic of the soul, which (soul) is manifested or perceived in two ways like light: sometimes through the actions of the body and sometimes as energy. All the symbols of the mysteries present this dual nature of soul and its final unity as well.

Life and death are inseparable parts in a continuous cycle, in a rhythmic process and that's why we must rejoice in each phase of our life for its uniqueness and for the knowledge and experience it offers us. The mysteries focused on breaking the illusion that we live a separate life and, what is more, on consolidating the feeling of a single and universal life. The liberation from the fear of death, the knowledge of its nature and the events of the afterlife as well as the knowledge of the mysteries of life, are what give happiness to the present life of every cultivator or stonemason.

The course of the return ended by arriving in Athens and crossing the Holy Gate again. Walking among the funerary monuments of Kerameikos as |Demetrioi / followers of Dimiter", the initiates returned to themselves, that is they returned to purity and in this way they completed the initiation process. And, as Palamas, a famous Greek poet notes in his own symbolic way:

*"Graves full of energy, graves, full of life!
I do not crash In front of you and I do not shudder
I do not feel my knees getting loose because of fear
I do not see that I was created as soil from the soil
and that I am surrounded by Infinity which I cannot feel
I know that I am human and what life costs,
I know I'm a human being and I'm proud of it!
And when our great god and the **Sun** of Athens
Rises at noon, full of light above the graves,
I do not find another side, more holy, more virgin
to rejoice in our sun and to cry aloud about
his divine glory and the glory of life,
different from these both deserted and blessed graves!"*

Regarding the relationship between the Mysteries in general and the Eleusinian Mysteries in particular on the one hand and modern Masonry on the other, we must exclude any case of functional correlation, in terms of structure, succession and any other kind of connection between the ancient mysteries, of any origin, with Masonry, since Masonry, by definition originates *"from itself"*. This is a generally accepted suggestion also put forward by MACKEY.

We must recognize the existence of a straight line of thought that permeates the entire history of the human spirit. This, of course, is due to the finding of common elements such as symbols, events, etc. since Freemasonry is the guardian of what has been evaluated as right and has been conquered by the human intellect. Elements like the ones mentioned above that were piously preserved and eventually reached us either via underground, that is, through the mysteries, or overtly, through the various philosophical schools, or through theater, literature and art.

As an echo of the Eleusinian Mysteries, we can read today in masonic texts: “... *it falls... but it is constantly reborn...*” and you can also hear the ode:

*“You think the buried wheat is dying...
For some time it rots and stays inside the earth...
Before the new sprout finds the air
And the “young” rod brings new seed
Do not cry in vain. Do not be very sad.
The dead ones will live again.”*

Next to the Masonic symbol of the cob (Shibboleth) or the violent passing, actually abduction, of the Fellowcraft to the Lodge of the Master Masons, we also find the POMEGRANATE.

Hades (or Pluto), the god of Underworld, shortly before the departure of his beloved, offers her to taste some POMEGRANATE. This offering is actually a symbolic marriage and is interpreted as a symbol of carnal union, marriage and fertility, thus referring to a union of opposites. The ambiguous nature of man is therefore the hidden symbolic meaning of the pomegranate.

Apart from the symbolism that this fruit has in the Semitic peoples, its central symbols, that is, fertility, happiness and the renewal of life, survive to this day. The fruit also has a hidden symbolism that refers to its invisible and rich interior, which symbolizes the invisibility of the soul in the material world but also it symbolizes the wealth that the soul brings to man. In this way the pomegranate reflects the union of the material carrier, that is of the body with the soul. Therefore it is the body that contains the inner powers and the wealth of the soul, giving to these elements the opportunity to manifest and express themselves. The half-open pomegranates signify the realization and manifestation of the psychic powers of the individual but also the work he or she has done with them. This is the Tiling and control performed by the Tyler / outer guardian upon entering the Temple, work that only an experienced Worshipful Master can perform.



Brethren,

Understanding the myth of the Mysteries is, for every initiate, a work of life that is constantly evolving. The initiation in the Mysteries is **unique**, but the adaption of the eternal symbols and ritual events to any modern times, is a work for Delian swimmers i.e. it is a task handled only by capable spiritual people. In view of this assumption, I hope for your understanding.

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