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THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES AND RITES

Many writers, and especially those of the Craft, have called attention to the resemblances between the rites of the Ancient Mysteries and those of Freemasonry. Indeed, those resemblances have given rise to much speculation, and it has been suggested by more than one writer that such resemblances are more than accidental. Some of us have long been convinced that Freemasonry, if we may not say that it was historically descended from the instituted Mysteries of antiquity, it at least perpetuates their ministry among us.

The Eleusinian Mysteries - those rites of ancient Greece and afterwards of Rome, of which there is historical evidence dating back to the seventh century before the Christian era bear very striking resemblance, in many points, to the rituals of both Operative and Speculative Freemasonry- As to their origin, beyond the legendary account put forth, there is no reliable trace. Like most great human institutions they grew out of a real human need, to which they ministered, else they could not have held sway for so many ages.

In the opinion of not a few writers an Egyptian source is attributed to them, but of this there is no positive proof though we may infer as much, remembering the influence of Egypt upon Greece. There is a legend that St. John the Evangelist a character honored and revered by Freemasons was an initiate of these mysteries. Certainly, more than one of the early Fathers of the Christian Church boasted of his initiation into these Rites. Even St. Paul was influenced by them, to the extent, at least, of using some of their imagery, and even some of their technical terms, in his Epistles.

The series of articles, to which I have the honor thus to call attention, is one of the first attempts so far made to give a detailed exposition of the ceremonial of the Mysteries of Greece in English. As such they have an interest to Masons, but also to students of antiquity in general, and if the field were familiar, as it is not, these articles would be worthy of special interest for the new materials brought forward- Brother Wright, I need hardly say, is a careful, painstaking, and thorough student, as readers of THE BUILDER can testify, and among his many services to the Craft this study will not be reckoned the least.

Such a writer needs no introduction, but I have much pleasure in emphasizing the importance of these researches in ancient lore, because they make a real contribution to our knowledge. -Joseph Fort Newton.

THE ELEUSINIAN LEGEND

THE legend which formed the basis of the Mysteries of Eleusis, presence at and participation in which, demanded an elaborate form or ceremony of initiation, was as follows:

Persephone (sometimes described as Proserpine and as Cora or Kore) when gathering flowers was abducted by Pluto, the god of Hades, and carried off by him to his gloomy abode; Zeus, the brother of Pluto and the father of Persephone, giving his consent. Demeter (or Ceres), her mother, arrived too late to assist her child or even to catch a glimpse of her seducer, and neither god nor man was able, or willing, to enlighten her as to the whereabouts of Persephone or who had carried her away. For nine nights and days she wandered, torch in hand, in quest of her child. Eventually, however, she heard from Helios (the sun) the name of the seducer and his accomplice. Incensed at Zeus she left Olympus and the gods and came down to scour the earth disguised as an old woman.

In the course of her wanderings she arrived at Eleusis where she was honourably entertained by Keleos, the ruler of the country, with whom and his wife, Metanira, she consented to remain in order to watch over the education of Demophon, who had just been born to the aged king, and whom she undertook to make immortal.

Long was thy anxious search For lovely Proserpine, nor didst thou break
Thy mournful fast, till the far-fam'd Eleusis Received thee wandering.

Orphic hymn.

Unknown to the parents Demeter used to anoint Demophon by day with ambrosia and hide him by night in the fire like a firebrand. Detected one night by Metanira she was compelled to reveal herself as Demeter, the goddess. Whereupon she directed the Eleusinians to erect a temple as a peace offering and, this being done, she promised to initiate them into the form of worship which would obtain for them her goodwill and favour. "It is I, Demeter, full of glory, who lightens and gladdens the hearts of gods and men. Hasten ye, my people, to raise hard by the citadel, below the ramparts, a fane, and

on the eminence of the hill, an altar, above the wall of Callichorum. I will instruct you in the rites which shall be observed and which are pleasing to me."

The temple was erected but Demeter was still vowing vengeance against gods and men and because of the continued loss of her daughter she rendered the earth sterile during a whole year.

What ails her that she comes not home? Demeter seeks her far and wide; And gloomy-browed doth ceaseless roam From many a morn till eventide. "My life, immortal though it be, Is naught!" she cries, "for want of thee, Persephone Persephone !"

The oxen drew the plough but in vain was the seed sown in the prepared ground. Mankind was threatened with utter annihilation and all the gods were deprived of sacrifices and offerings. Zeus endeavoured to appease the anger of the gods but in vain. Finally he summoned Hermes to go to Pluto to order him to restore Persephone to her mother. Pluto yielded but before Persephone left she took from the hand of Pluto four pomegranate pips which he offered her as sustenance on her journey. Persephone, returning from the land of shadows, found her mother in the temple at Eleusis which had recently been erected. Her first question was whether her daughter had eaten anything in the land of her imprisonment, because her unconditional return to earth and Olympus depended upon that. Persephone informed her mother that all she had eaten was the pomegranate pips in consequence of which Pluto demanded that Persephone should sojourn with him for four months during each year, or one month for each pip taken. Demeter had no option but to consent to this arrangement, which meant that she would enjoy the company of Persephone for eight months in every year and that the remaining four would be spent by Persephone with Pluto. Demeter caused to awaken anew "the fruits of the fertile plains" and the whole earth was reclothed with leaves and flowers. Demeter called together the princes of Eleusis Triptolemus, Diocles, Eumolpus, Polyxenos, and Keleos and initiated them "into the sacred rites most venerable into which no one is allowed to make enquiries or to divulge; a solemn warning from the gods seals our mouths."

Although secrecy on the subject of the nature of the stately Mysteries is strictly enjoined, the writer of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter makes no secret of the happiness which comes to all who become initiates: "Happy is he who has been received, unfortunate he who has never received the initiation nor taken part in the sacred ordinances, and who cannot, alas! be destined to the

same lot reserved for the faithful in the darkling abode."

The version of the legend given by Minucius Felix is as follows:

Proserpine, the daughter of Ceres by Jupiter, as she was gathering tender flowers in the new spring, was ravished from her delightful abodes by Pluto; and, being carried from thence through thick woods and over a length of sea, was brought by Pluto into a cavern, the residence of departed spirits, over whom she afterwards ruled with absolute sway. But Ceres, upon discovering the loss of her daughter, with lighted torches and begirt with a serpent, wandered over the whole earth for the purpose of finding her till she came to Eleusis; there she found her daughter and discovered to the Eleusinians the plantation of corn."

In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Persephone gives her own version of the incident as follows:

"We were all playing in the lovely meadows, Leucippe, and Phaino, and Electra, and Ianthe, and Melite, and Iache, and Rhodeia, and Callinchoe, and Melobosis, and Ianeira, and Acaste, and Admete, and Rhodope, and Plouto, and winsome Calypso, and Styx, and Urania, and beautiful Galaxame. We were playing there and plucking beautiful blossoms with our hands; crocuses mingled, and iris, and hyacinth, and roses, and lilies, a marvel to behold, and narcissus, that the wide earth bare, a wile for my undoing. Gladly was I gathering them when the earth gaped beneath and therefrom leaped the mighty prince, the host of many guests, and he bare me against my will, despite my grief, beneath the earth, in his golden chariot; and shrilly did I cry."

On the submission of Eleusis to Athens, the Mysteries became an integral part of the Athenian religion, so that the Eleusinian Mysteries became a Panhellenic institution, and later, under the Romans, a universal worship, but the secret rites of initiation were well kept throughout their history.

The earliest mention of the Temple of Demeter at Eleusis occurs in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, which has already been mentioned. This was not written by Homer but by some poet versed in Homeric lore and its probable date is about 600 B. C. It was discovered a little over a hundred years ago in an old monastery library at Moscow, and now reposes in a museum at Leyden.

Eleusis was one of the twelve originally independent cities of Attica, which

Theseus is said to have united into a single state. Leusina now occupies the site and has thus preserved the name of the ancient city. Theseus is portrayed by Virgil as suffering eternal punishment in Hades but Proclus writes concerning him as follows:

Theseus and Pirithous are fabled to have ravished Helen and to have descended to the infernal regions: i. e., they were lovers of intelligible and visible beauty. Afterwards Theseus was liberated by Pericles from Hades, but Pirithous remained there because he could not sustain the arduous attitude of divine contemplation.

Dr. Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses*, gives, as his opinion, that Theseus was a living character who once forced his way into the Eleusinian Mysteries, for which crime he was imprisoned on earth and afterwards damned in the infernal regions.

The Eleusinian Mysteries seem to have constituted the most vital portion of the Attic religion and always to have retained something of awe and solemnity. They were not known outside Attica until the time of the Median wars, when they spread to the Greek colonies in Asia as part of the constitution of the daughter states, where the cult seems to have exercised a considerable influence both on the populace and on the philosophers. Outside Eleusis the Mysteries were not celebrated so frequently nor on so magnificent a scale. At Celeas, where they were celebrated every third year, a hierophant, who was not bound by the law of celibacy, as at Eleusis, was elected by the people for each celebration. Pausanias is the authority for a statement by the Phliasians that they imitated the Eleusinian Mysteries. They, however, maintained that their rendering was instituted by Dysaules, brother of Celeus, who went to their country after he had been expelled from Eleusis by Ion, son of Xuthus, at the time when Ion was chosen commander-in-chief of the Athenians in the war against Eleusis. Pausanias disputed that any Eleusinian was defeated in battle and forced into exile, maintaining that peace was concluded between the Athenians and the Eleusinians before the war was fought out, even Eumolpus himself being permitted to remain in Eleusis. Pausanias, also, while admitting that Dysaules might have gone to Phlius for some cause other than that admitted by the Phliasians, questioned whether Dysaules was related to Celeus, or, indeed, to any illustrious Eleusinian family. The name of Dysaules does not occur in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, where are enumerated all who were taught the ritual of the Mysteries by the goddess, though that of Celeus is mentioned:

She showed to Triptolemus and Dioeles, smiter of horses, And mighty

Eumolpus and Celeus, leader of people, The way of performing the sacred rites and explained to all of them the orgies.

Nevertheless, according to the Phliasians, it was Dysaules who instituted the Mysteries among them.

The Pheneatians also had a sanctuary dedicated to Demeter, which they called Eleusinian and in which they celebrated the Mysteries in honour of the goddess. They had a legend that Demeter went thither in her wanderings and that out of gratitude to the Pheneatians for the hospitality they showed her, she gave them all the different kinds of pulse, except beans. Two Pheneatians Trisauls and Damithales built a temple to Demeter Thesuria, the goddess of laws, under Mount Cyllene, where were instituted the Mysteries in her honour, which were celebrated until a late period and which were said to be introduced there by Naus, a grandson of Eumolpus.

"Much that is excellent and divine," wrote Cicero, "does Athens seem to me to have produced and added to our life, but nothing better than those Mysteries by which we are formed and moulded from a rude and savage state of humanity; and, indeed, in the Mysteries we perceive the real principles of life, and learn not only to live happily, but to die with a fairer hope." Every manner of writer religious poet, worldly poet, sceptical philosopher, orator all are of one mind about this, far the greatest of all the religious festivals of Greece.

(To be continued)

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PART II THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERTIES

THE Eleusinian Mysteries, observed by nearly all Greeks, but particularly by the Athenians, were celebrated yearly at Eleusis, though in the earlier annals of their history, they were celebrated once in every three years only, and once in every four years by the Celeans, Cretans, Parrhasians, Pheneteans, Phliasians, and Spartans. It was the most celebrated of all the religious ceremonies of Greece at any period of the country's history and was regarded as of such importance that the Festival is referred to frequently simply as "The Mysteries." The rites were guarded most jealously and carefully concealed from the uninitiated. If any person divulged any part of them he was regarded as having offended against the divine law and by the

act he rendered himself liable to divine vengeance. It was accounted unsafe to abide in the same house with him and as soon as his offence was made public he was apprehended. Similarly, drastic punishment was meted out to any person not initiated into the mysteries who chanced to be present at their celebraion, even through ignorance or genuine error.

The Mysteries were divided into two parts-the Lesser Mysteries and the Greater Mysteries. The lesser Mysteries were said to have been instituted when Hercules, Castor, and Pollux expressed a desire to be initiated, they happening to be in Athens at the time of the celebration of the Mysteries by the Athenians in accordance with the ordinance of Demeter. Not being Athenians they were ineligible for the honour of initiation, but the difficulty was overcome by Eumolpus, who was desirous of including in the ranks of the initiated a man of such power and eminence as Hercules, foreigner though he might be. The three were first made citizens, and then, as a preliminary to the initiation ceremony as prescribed by the goddess, Eumolpus instituted the Lesser Mysteries, which then and afterwards became a ceremony preliminary to the Greater Mysteries, as they then became known, for candidates of alien birth. In later times, this lesser festival, celebrated in the month of Anthesterion, at the beginning of spring, at Agra, became a general preparation for the Greater Festival and no persons were initiated into the Greater Mysteries until they had first been initiated into the Lesser.

The ceremonies of the Lesser Mysteries were entirely different from those of the Greater Mysteries. The Lesser Mysteries represented the return of Persephone to earth which, of course, took place at Eleusis, and the Greater Mysteries represented her descent to the infernal regions. The Lesser Mysteries honoured the daughter more than the mother, who was the principal figure in the Greater Mysteries. In the Lesser Mysteries, Persephone was known as Pherrephatta, and in the Greater Mysteries she was given the name of Kore. Everything was in fact a mystery and nothing was called by its right name. Lenormant says that it is certain that the initiated of the Lesser Mysteries carried away from Agra a certain store of religious knowledge which enabled them to understand the symbols and representations which afterwards were displayed before their eyes at the Greater Mysteries at Eleusis.

The object of the Lesser Mysteries was to signify occultly the condition of the impure soul invested with a terrene body and merged in a material nature. The Greater Mysteries taught that he, who, in the present life, is in subjection to his irrational part, is truly in Hades. If Hades, then, is the region of punishment and misery, the purified soul must reside in the region of bliss, theoretically in the present life and according to a deific energy in the next.

They intimated by gorgeous mystic visions the felicity of the soul, both here and hereafter, when purified from the defilements of a material nature and consequently elevated to the realities of intellectual vision.

No one was permitted to attend the Mysteries who had incurred the capital punishment for treason or conspiracy, but all other exiles were permitted to be present and were not molested in any way during the whole period of the Festival. No one could be arrested for debt during the holding of the Festival.

Scarcely anything is known of the programme observed during the course of the Lesser Mysteries. They were celebrated on the 19th to 21st of the month Anthesterion and, like the Greater Mysteries, were preceded and followed by a truce on the part of all engaged in warfare. The same officials presided at both celebrations. The Lesser Mysteries opened with a sacrifice to Demeter and Persephone, a portion of the victims offered being reserved for the members of the sacred families of Eumolpus and Keryce. The main object of the Lesser Mysteries was to put the candidates for initiation in a condition of ritual purification and, according to Clement of Alexandria, they included certain instructions and preparations for the Greater Mysteries. Like the Eleusinian Mysteries, properly so-called, they included dramatic representations of the rape of Persephone and the wanderings of Demeter, in addition, according to Stephen Byzantium, to certain Dionysian representations.

Two months before the full moon of the month of Boedromion, sphondophoroi or heralds selected from the priestly families of the Eumolpides and Keryces went forth to announce the forthcoming celebration of the Greater Mysteries and to claim an armistice on the part of all who might be waging war. The truce commenced on the 15th of the month preceding the celebration of the Mysteries and lasted until the 10th day of the month following the celebration. In order to be valid the truce had to be proclaimed in and accepted by each Hellenic city.

All arrangements for the proper celebration of the Mysteries, both Lesser and Greater, were in the hands of the families of Eumolpides and Keryces. These were ancient Eleusinian families, whose origin was traced back to the time when Eleusis was independent of Athens, and the former family survived as a priestly caste down to the latest period of Athenian history. Its members possessed the hereditary and sole right to the secrets of the Mysteries. Hence the recognition by the State to their exclusive right and privilege to direct the initiations and to provide each a half of the religious staff of the temple. Pausanias relates that following a war between the Eleusinians and

the Athenians when Erectheus, King of Athens, conquered Immaradus, son of Eumolpus, the subdued Eleusinians, in making their submission, stipulated that they should remain custodians of the Mysteries, but in all other respects were to be subject to the Athenians. This tradition is disputed by more modern writers, but it was accepted by the Athenians and acted upon generally, and the right of the two families solely to prepare candidates for initiation was recognized by a decree of the fifth century B. C., the privilege being confirmed afterwards at a convention between the representatives of Eleusis and Athens. The Eumolpides were the descendants of a mythical ancestor, Eumolpus, son of Neptune, who is first mentioned in the time of Pisistrus. On the death of Eumolpus, Ceryx, the younger of the sons was left. But the Keryces claimed that Ceryx was a son of Hermes by Aglamus, daughter of Cecrops, and that he was not a son of Eumolpus.

The members of the family of Eumolpides had the first claim upon the flesh of the sacrificed animals; but they were permitted to give a portion to any one else as a reward or recompense for services rendered. But when a sacrifice was offered to any of the infernal divinities the whole of it had to be consumed by the fire; nothing must be left. All religious problems relating to the Mysteries which could not be solved by the known laws were addressed to the Eumolpides, whose decision was final.

The meaning of the name "Eumolpus" is "a good singer," and great importance was attached to the quality of the voice in the selection of the hierophant, the chief officiant at the celebration of the Mysteries and at the ceremony of initiation, and who was selected from the family of the Eumolpides. It was essential that the formulae disclosed to the initiates at Eleusis should be pronounced with the proper intonation, for otherwise the words would have no efficacy. Correct intonation was of far greater importance than syllabic pronunciation. An explanation of this is given by Maspero who says:

The human voice is pre-eminently a magical instrument, without which none of the highest operations of art can be successful: each of its utterances is carried into the region of the invisible and there released forces of which the general run of people have no idea, either as to their existence or their manifold action. Without doubt, the real value of an evocation lies in its text, or the sequence of the words of which it is composed and the tone in which it is enunciated. In order to be efficacious, the conjuration should be accompanied by chanting, either an incantation or a song. In order to produce the desired effect the sacramental melody must be chanted without the variation of a single modulation: one false note, one mistake in the measure, the introversion of any two of the sounds of which it is composed, and the

intended effect is annulled. This is the reason why all who recite a prayer or formula intended to force the gods to perform certain acts must be of true voice. The result of their effort, whether successful or unsuccessful, will depend upon the exactness of their voice. It was the voice, therefore, which played the most important part in the oblation, in the prayer of definite request, and in the evocation- in a word, in every instance where man sought to seize hold of the god. Apart from a true voice the words were merely dead sounds.

The Hierophant was a revealer of holy things. He was a citizen of Athens, a man of mature age, and held his office for life, devoting himself wholly to the service of the temple and living a chaste life, to which end it was usual for him to anoint himself with the juice of hemlock, which, by its extreme coldness, was said to extinguish in a great measure the natural heat. In the opinion of some writers celibacy was an indispensable condition of the highest branch of the priesthood, but, according to inscriptions which have been discovered, some, at any rate, of the hierophants were married, so that, in all probability, the rule was that during the celebration of the Mysteries and, probably, for a certain time before and after, it was incumbent on the hierophant to abstain from all sexual intercourse. Foucart is of opinion that celibacy was demanded only during the celebration of the Mysteries, although Pausanias states definitely otherwise. In support of Foucart it may be stated that among the inscriptions discovered at Eleusis there is one dedicating a statue to a hierophant by his wife. It was essential that the hierophant should be a man of commanding presence and lead a simple life. On being raised to the dignity he received a kind of consecration at a special ceremony, at which only those of his own rank were permitted to be present, when he was entrusted with certain secrets pertaining to his high office. Prior to this ceremony he went through a special purifactory rite, immersing himself in the sea, an act to which the Greeks attributed great virtue. He had to be exemplary in his moral conduct and was regarded by the people as being peculiarly holy. The qualifications of a hierophant were so high that the office could not be regarded as hereditary, for it would have been an exception to find both father and son in possession of the many various and high qualifications regarded as essential to the holding of the office. The robe of the hierophant was a long purple garment; his hair, crowned with a wreath of myrtle, flowed in long locks over his shoulders, and a diadem ornamented his forehead. At the celebration of the Mysteries he was held to represent the Creator of the world. He alone was permitted to penetrate into the innermost shrine in the Hall of the Mysteries the holy of holies, as it were and then only once during the celebration of the Mysteries, when, at the most solemn moment of the whole mystic celebration, his form appeared suddenly to be transfigured with light before the rapt gaze of the initiated. He alone was permitted to reveal to the fully initiated the mystic objects, the sight of which marked the completion of

their admission into the community. He had the power of refusing admission to those applicants whom he deemed unfit to be entrusted with the secrets. He was not inactive during the intervals between the celebration of the Mysteries. It was his duty to superintend the instruction of the candidates for initiation who, for that purpose, were divided into groups and instructed by officials known as mystagogues. The personal name of the hierophant was never mentioned: it was supposed to be unknown, "wafted away into the sea by the mystic law," and he was known only by the title of the office which he bore. Lucian refers to this in one passage in *Lexiphanes*:

The first I met were a torch-bearer, a hierophant, and others of the initiated, haling Dinias before the judge, and protesting that he had called them by their names, though he well knew that, from the time of their sanctification, they were nameless, and no more to be named but by hallowed names.

In the Imperial inscriptions we find the titles substituted for the proper names. The hierophant was compelled to avoid contact with the dead, in the same manner as the *Cohanim* of the Jewish faith, and with certain animals reputed to be unclean. Contact with any person from whom blood was issuing also caused impurity. He was assisted by a female hierophant, or hierophantide an attendant upon the goddess Demeter and her daughter, Persephone. She also was selected from the family of the *Eumolpides* and was chosen for life. She was permitted to marry and several inscriptions mention the names of children of hierophantides. On her initiation into this high degree she was brought forward naked to the side of a sacred font, in which her right hand was placed, the priest declaring her to be true and holy and dedicated to the service of the temple. The special duty of the female hierophant was to superintend the initiation of female aspirants, but she was present throughout the ceremony and played some part in the initiation of the male candidates. An inscription on the tomb of one hierophantide mentions to her glory that she had set the myrtle crown, the seal of mystic communion, on the heads of the illustrious initiates, Marcus Aurelius and his son, Commodus. Another gloried in the fact that she had initiated the emperor Hadrian.

Next in rank to the hierophant and hierophantide came the male and female *Dadouchos*, who were taken from the family of the *Keryces*. They were the torchbearers and their duty consisted mainly in carrying the torches at the Sacred Festival. They also wore purple robes, myrtle crowns, and diadems. They were appointed for life and were permitted to marry. The male *Dadouchos*, particularly, was associated with the hierophant in certain solemn and public functions, such as the opening address to the candidates for initiation and in the public prayers for the welfare of the state. The office was frequently handed down from father to son. Until the first century, B. C., the

Dadouchos was never addressed by his own personal name, but always by the title of his office.

The Hieroceryx, or messenger of holy tidings, was the representative of Hermes, or Mercury, who, as the messenger of the gods, was indispensable as mediator whenever men wished to approach the Immortals. He also wore a purple-coloured robe and a myrtle crown. He was chosen for life from the family of the Keryces. He made the necessary proclamations to the candidates for initiation into the various degrees and, in particular, enjoined them to preserve silence. It was necessary for him to have passed through all the various degrees as his duties necessitated his presence throughout the ceremonial.

The Phaidantes had the custody of the sacred statues and the sacred vessels, which they had to maintain in good repair. They were selected from one or other of the two sacerdotal families.

Among the other officials were: the Liknophori, who carried the mystic fan; the Hydranoi, who purified the candidates for initiation by sprinkling them with holy water at the commencement of the festival; the Spondophoroi, who proclaimed the sacred truce, which was to permit of the peaceful celebration of the Mysteries; the Pyrphoroi, who brought and maintained the fire for the sacrifices; the Hierauls, who played the flute during the time the sacrifices were being offered they were the leaders of the sacred music, who had under their charge the hynmodoi, the hymnetriai; the neokoroi, who maintained the temples and the altars; the panageis, who formed a class between the ministers and the initiated. Then there were the "initiates of the altar," who performed expiatory rites in the name and in the place of all the initiated. There were also many other minor officials, known by the general name of Melissae, i.e., bees, perhaps so-called because bees, being makers of honey, were sacred to Demeter. All these officials had to be of unblemished reputation and wore myrtle crowns while engaged in the service of the temple.

The officials, whose duty it was to take care that the ritual was punctiliously followed in every detail, included nine Archons, who were chosen every year to manage the affairs of Greece. The first of these was always the King, or Archon Basileus, whose duty at the celebration of the Mysteries it was to offer prayers and sacrifices, to see that no indecency or irregularity was committed during the Festival and at the conclusion to pass judgment on all offenders. There were also four Epimeletae, or curators, elected by the people, one being appointed from the Eumolpides, another from the Keryces, and the

remaining two from the rank and file of the citizens; and ten Hieropoioi, whose duty it was to offer sacrifices.

The sacred symbols used in the ceremonies were enclosed in a special chamber in the Telestrion or Hall of Initiation, known as the Anactoron, into which the hierophant alone had the right to penetrate. During the celebration of the Mysteries they were carried to Athens veiled and hidden from the gaze of the profane, whence they were taken back to Eleusis. It was permitted only to the initiated to look upon these "hiera," as they were called. These sacred objects were in the charge of the Eumolpides family.

Written descriptions, however graphic or eloquent, convey but a faint impression of the wonderful scenes that were enacted; Aristides says that what was seen rivalled anything that was heard. For nine centuries that period of time being divided almost equally between the pre-Christian and Christian eras they were the Palladium of Greek Paganism. In the latter part of their history, when the restriction, as to admission began to be relaxed, and in proportion to that relaxation, their essential religious character disappeared and they became a mere ceremony, their splendour being their principal attraction, until finally they degenerated into a mere superstition. Julian strived in vain to infuse new life into the vanishing cult, but it was too late the Eleusinian Mysteries were dead.

The Festival of the Greater Mysteries, and this was, of course, by far the more important, began on the 15th of the month Boedromion, corresponding roughly with the month of September, and lasted until the 23rd of the same month. During that time it was unlawful to arrest any man present, or present any petition except for offenses committed at the Festival, heavy penalties being inflicted for breaches of this law, the penalties fixed being a fine of not less than a thousand drachmas, and some assert that transgressors were even put to death.

The following was the programme of the Festival:

First Day. The first day was known as the "Gathering" or the "Assembly," when all who had passed through the Lesser Mysteries assembled to assist in the celebration of the greater Mysteries. On this day the Archon Basileus presided over all the cults of the city and assembled the people at a place known as the Poikile Stoa. After the Archon Basileus, with four assistants, had offered up sacrifices and prayers for the welfare of Greece, the following proclamation was made by the Archon Basileus, wearing his robe of office:

Come whoever is clean of all pollution and whose soul has not consciousness of sin. Come, whosoever hath lived a life of righteousness and justice. Come all ye who are pure of heart and of hand, and whose speech can be understood. Whosoever hath not clean hands, a pure soul, and an intelligible voice, must not assist at the Mysteries.

The people were then commanded by the hierophant to wash their hands in consecrated water and the impious were threatened with the punishment set forth in the law if they were discovered, but especially, and this in any case, with the implacable anger of the gods. The Hieroceryx then impressed upon all the duty of observing the most rigid secrecy with respect to all that they might witness and bade all be silent throughout the ceremonies and not utter even an exclamation. The candidates for initiation assembled outside the temple, each under the guidance and direction of a mystagogue, who repeated these instructions to the candidates. Once within the sacred enclosure all the initiated were subject to a purification by fire ceremonial. All wore regalia special to the occasion; this is evident from the wording of inscriptions which have been discovered, but particulars of this regalia are wanting. We know that extravagant and costly dresses were regarded by Demeter with disfavour and that it was forbidden to wear such in the temple. Jewelry, gold ornaments, purple coloured belts and embroideries were also barred, as were robes and cloths of mixed colours. The hair of women had to fall down loose upon the shoulders and must not be in plaits or coiled upon the head. No woman was permitted to use cosmetics.

Second Day. The second day was known as Halade Mystae, or "To the sea, ye mystae" from the command which greeted all the initiated to go and purify themselves by washing in the sea, or in the salt water of the two lakes, called Rheiti, on what was known as "The Sacred Way." A procession was formed in which all joined and made their way to the sea or the lakes where they bathed and purified themselves. This general purification was akin to that practised to this day by the Jews at the beginning of the Jewish year. The day was consecrated to Saturn, into whose province the soul is said to fall in the course of its descent from the tropic of Cancer. Capella compares Saturn to a river, voluminous, sluggish, and cold. The planet signifies pure intellect and Pythagoras symbolically called the sea a tear of Saturn. The bathing was preceded by a confession and the manner in which the bathing was carried out and the number of immersions varied with the degree of guilt which each confessed. According to Suidas, those who had to purify themselves from murder plunged into salt water on two separate occasions, immersing themselves seven times on each occasion. On returning from the bath all were regarded as "new creatures," the bath being regarded as a laver of regeneration, and the initiated were clothed in a plain fawn skin or a sheep skin. The purification, however, was not regarded as complete until the

following day when there was added the sprinkling of the blood of a pig sacrificed. Each had carried to the river or lake a little pig which was also purified by bathing and on the next day this pig was sacrificed. On the Eleusinian coinage, the pig, standing on a torch placed horizontally, appears as the sign and symbol of the Mysteries. On this day also some of the initiated submitted to a special purification near the altar of Zeus Melichios on the Sacred Way. For each person whom it was desired to purify, an ox was sacrificed to Zeus Melichios, the infernal Zeus, and the skin of the animal was laid on the ground by the Dadouchos, and the one who was the object of the lustration remained there squatting on the left foot.

Third Day. On the third day pleasures of every description, even the most innocent, were strictly forbidden, and every one fasted till nightfall, when they partook of seed cakes, parched corn, salt, pomegranates, and sacred wine mixed with milk and honey. The Archon Basileus, assisted again by the four Epimeletae, celebrated in the presence of representatives from the allied cities, the great sacrifice of the Soteria for the well-being of the State, the Athenian citizens, and their wives and children. This ceremony took place in the Eleusinion at the foot of the Acropolis. The day was known as the Day of Mourning and was supposed to commemorate Demeter's grief at the loss of Persephone. The sacrifices offered consisted chiefly of a mullet and of barley out of Rharium, a field of Eleusis. The oblations were accounted so sacred that the priests themselves were not permitted, as was usual in other offerings, to partake of them. At the conclusion of the general ceremony each one individually sacrificed the little pig purified in the sea the night before.

Fourth Day. The principal event of the fourth day was a solemn procession when the holy basket of Ceres (Demeter) was carried in a consecrated cart, the crowds of people shouting as it went along, "Hail, Ceres!" The rear end of the procession was composed of women carrying baskets containing sesamin, carded wool, grains of salt, serpents, pomegranates reeds, ivy boughs, and cakes known as poppies.

Fifth Day. The fifth day was known as the Day of Torches from the fact that at nightfall all the initiated walked in pairs round the temple of Demeter at Eleusis, the Dadouchos himself leading the procession. The torches were waved about and changed from hand to hand to represent the wanderings of the goddess in search of her daughter when she was conducted by the light of a torch kindled in the flames of Etna.

Sixth Day. Iacchos was the name given to the sixth day of the Festival. The "fair young god" Iacchos, or Dionysos, or Sacchus, was the son of Jupiter and

Ceres, and accompanied the goddess in her search for Persephone. He also carried a torch, hence his statue has always a torch in the hand. This statue, together with other sacred objects, were taken from the Iacchion, the sanctuary of Iacchos in Athens, mounted on a heavy rustic four-wheeled chariot drawn by bulls, and, accompanied by the Iacchagogue and other magistrates nominated for the occasion, conveyed from the Caramicus to Eleusis by the Sacred Way in solemn procession. The statue, as well as the people accompanying it, was crowned with myrtle, the people dancing all the way along the route, beating brass kettles and playing instruments of various kinds and singing sacred songs. Halts were made during the procession at various shrines, particularly at a fig-tree which was regarded as sacred, also upon a bridge built over the river Cephissus where the bystanders made themselves merry at the expense of the pilgrims. At each of the shrines sacrifices and libations were offered, hymns sung, and sacred dances performed. Having passed the bridge the people entered Eleusis by what was known as the Mystical Entrance. Midnight had set in before Eleusis was reached so that a great part of the journey had to be accomplished by the light of the torches carried by each of the pilgrims and the nocturnal journey was spoken of as the "night of torches" by many ancient authors. The pitch and resin of which the torches were composed were substances supposed to have the virtue of warding off evil spirits. The barren mountains of the Pass of Daphni and the surface of the sea resounded with the chant: "Iacchos, O Iacchos!" At one of the halts, the Croconians, descendants of the hero Crocon, who had formerly reigned over the Thriasian Plain, fastened a saffron band on the right arm and left foot of each one in the procession. Iacchos was always regarded as a child of Demeter, inasmuch as the vine grows out of the earth. Various symbols were carried by the people, who numbered sometimes as many as thirty and forty thousand. These symbols consisted of winnowing fans the "mystic fan of Iacchos"; plaited reeds and baskets, both relating to the worship of the goddess and her son. The distance covered by the procession was 22 kilometres, but Lyourgus ordered that if any woman should ride in a chariot to Eleusis she should be mulcted in a fine of 8,000 drachmas. This was to prevent the richer women from distinguishing themselves from their poorer sisters. Strange to relate, the wife of Lyourgus was the first to break this law and Lyourgus himself had to pay the fine which he had ordained. He not only paid the penalty but gave a talent to the informer. Immediately upon the deposit of the sacred objects in the Eleusinion at the foot of the Acropolis, one of the Eleusinion priests solemnly announced their arrival to the priestess of the tutelary goddess of Athens Pallas Athene. Plutarch, in commenting upon lucky and unlucky days, says that he is aware that unlucky things happen sometimes on lucky days, for the Athenians had to receive a Macedonian garrison "even on the 20th of Boedromion, the day on which they lead forth the mystic Iacchos."

Seventh Day. On the seventh day the statue was carried back to Athens. The return journey was also a solemn procession and attended with numerous ceremonies. Halts were again made at several places, like the "stations" of Roman Catholic pilgrimage, when the inhabitants also fell into line with the procession. For those who remained behind at Eleusis the time was devoted to sports, the victors in which were rewarded with a measure of barley, it being a tradition that that grain was first sown in Eleusis. It was also regarded as a day of preparation for the initiation ceremony of the following night. The return journey was conducted with the same splendour as the outward journey. It comprised comic incidents, the same as on the previous day. Those who awaited the procession at the bridge over the Athenian river Cephissos exchanged all kinds of chaff and buffoonery with those who were in the procession, indulging in what was termed "bridge fooling." These jests, it is said, were to recall the tactful measure employed by a maid-servant named Iambe, to rouse Demeter from her prolonged mourning. During the Peloponnesian war the Athenians were unable to obtain an armistice from the Lacedaemonians who held Decelea and it became necessary to send the statue of Iacchos and the processionists to Eleusis by sea. Plutarch says: "Under these conditions it was necessary to omit the sacrifices usually offered all along the road during the passing of Iacchos."

Eighth Day. The eighth day was called Epidaurion because it happened once that Aesculapius, coming from Epidaurion to Athens, desired to be initiated and had the Lesser Mysteries repeated for that purpose. It therefore became customary to celebrate the Lesser Mysteries a second time upon this day and to admit to initiation any such approved candidates who had not already enjoyed the privilege. There was also another reason for the repetition of the initiatory rites then. The eighth day was regarded as symbolical of the soul falling into the lunar orb and the repeated initiation, the second celebration of that sacred rite, was symbolical of the soul bidding adieu to everything of a celestial nature, sinking into a perfect oblivion of her divine origin and pristine felicity, and rushing profoundly into the region of dissimilitude, ignorance, and error. The day opened with a solemn sacrifice offered to Demeter and Persephone, which took place within the peribolus. The utmost precision had to be observed in offering this sacrifice as regarding the age, colour, and sex of the victim; the chants, perfumes, and libations. The acceptance or rejection of a sacrifice was indicated by the movements of the animal as it approached the altar, the vivacity of the flame, the direction of the smoke, etc. If these signs were not favourable in the case of the first victim offered other animals must be slain until one presented itself in which all the signs were favourable. The flesh of the animal offered was not allowed to be taken outside the sacred precincts but had to be consumed within the building.

The following is said to have been an Invocation used during the celebration

of the Mysteries:

Daughter of Jove, Persephone divine, Come, blessed queen, and to these rites incline; Only-begotten, Pluto's honoured wife, O venerable goddess, source of life: 'Tis thine in earth's profundities to dwell, Fast by the wide and dismal gates of hell. Jove's holy offspring, of a beauteous mien, Avenging Goddess, subterranean queen. The Furies' source, fair-hair'd, whose frame proceeds From Jove's ineffable and secret seeds. Mother of Bacchus, sonorous, divine, And many form'd, the parent of the vine. Associate of the Seasons, essence bright, All-ruling virgin, bearing heavnly light. With fruits abounding, of a bounteous mind, Horn'd, and alone desir'd by those of mortal kind. O vernal queen, whom grassy plains delight, Sweet to the smell, and pleasing to the sight: Whose holy forms in budding fruits we view, Earth's vig'rous offspring of a various hue: Espous'd in autumn, life and death alone To wretched mortals from thy pow'r is known: For thine the task, according to thy will, Life to produce, and all that lives to kill. Hear, blessed Goddess, send a rich increase Of various fruits from earth, with lovely Peace; Send Health with gentle hand, and crown my life With blest abundance, free from noisy strife; Last in extreme old age the prey of death, Dismiss me willing to the realms beneath, To thy fair palace and the blissful plains Where happy spirits dwell, and Pluto reigns.

Ninth Day. The ninth day was known as the Day of Earthen Vessels because it was the custom on that day to fill two jugs with wine. one was placed towards the east and the other towards the west, and after the repetition of certain mystical formulae both were overthrown, the wine being spilt upon the ground as a libation. The first of these formulae was directed towards the sky as a prayer for rain and the second to the earth as a prayer for fertility.

On the tenth day the majority of the people returned to their homes, with the exception of every third and fifth year, when they remained behind for the Mystery Plays and Sports which lasted from two to three days.

The ancient sanctuary in which the Mysteries were celebrated was burnt by the Persians in B. C. 480 or 479, and a new sanctuary was built, or, at least, begun under the administration of Pericles. Plutarch says that Coroebus began the Temple of Initiation at Eleusis, but only lived to finish the lower rank of columns with their architraves. Metagenes, of the ward of Xypete, added the rest of the entablature and the upper row of columns, and Xenocles of Cholargus built the dome on the top. The long wall, the building of which Socrates says he heard Pericles propose to the people, was undertaken by Callicrates. Cratinus satirised the work as proceeding very slowly:

Stone upon stone the orator has pil'd With swelling words, but words will build no walls.

In the fourth century of the Christian era the temple at Eleusis was destroyed by the Goths at the instigation of the monks who followed the hosts of Alaric.

The revenues from the celebrations must have been considerable. At both the Lesser Mysteries and the Greater Mysteries a charge of one obole a day was demanded from each one attending, which was given to the hierophant. The Hierocceryx received a half obole a day, and other assistants a similar sum.

(To be continued)

THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES AND RITES

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PART III

THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES - THEIR MYSTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

LIFE, as we know it, was looked upon by the ancient philosophers as death. Plato considered the body as the sepulchre of the soul and in the "Cratylus" acquiesces in the doctrine of Orpheus that the soul is punished through its union with the body. Empedocles, lamenting his connection with this corporeal world, pathetically exclaimed:

For this I weep, for this indulge my woe,
That ever my Oh such novel realms should know.

He also calls this material abode, or the realms of generation,

a joyless region,
Where slaughter, rage, and countless ills reside.

Philolaus, the celebrated Pythagorean, wrote:

The ancient theologians and priests testify that the soul is united with the body for the sake of suffering punishment and that it is buried in the body as in a sepulchre

while Pythagoras himself said:

Whatever we see when awake is death, and when asleep a dream.

This is the truth intended to be expressed in the Mysteries. Pindar, speaking of the Eleusinian Mysteries, says:

Blessed is he who on seeing those common concerns under the earth knows both the end of life and the given end of Jupiter.

Psyche is said to have fallen asleep in Hades through rashly attempting to behold corporeal beauty and the truth intended to be taught by the Lesser Mysteries was that prudent men who earnestly employed themselves in divine concerns were, above all others, in a vigilant state and that imprudent men who pursued objects of a different nature were asleep and only engaged in the delusions of dreams and if they happened to die in this sleep before they were aroused they would be afflicted with similar, but still sharper, visions in a future state.

Matter was regarded by the Egyptians as a certain mire or mud. They called matter the dregs or sediment of the first life. Before the first purification the candidate for initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries was smeared with clay or mire, which it was the object of the purification to wash away. While the soul is in a state of servitude to the body it lives confined as it were in bonds through the dominion of this Titanic life. The Lesser Mysteries were intended to symbolize the condition of the soul while subservient to the body and a liberation from this servitude, through purgative virtues, was what the wisdom of the Ancients intended to signify by the descent into Hades and the speedy return from those dark abodes. They were held to contain perfective rites and appearances and the tradition of the sacred doctrines necessary to the perfection or accomplishment of the most splendid visions. The perfective

part, said Proclus, precedes initiation, as initiation precedes inspection.

Dogmatic instruction was not included in the Mysteries: the doctrine of the immortality of the soul traces its origin to sources anterior to the rise of the Mysteries. At Eleusis the way was shown how to secure for the soul after death the best possible fate. The miracle of regeneration rather than the eternity of being was taught.

Plato in the seventh book of the Republic says:

He who is not able by the exercise of his reason to define the idea of the good, separating it from all other objects and piercing as in a battle through every kind of argument; endeavouring to confute, not according to opinion but according to evidence, and proceeding with all these dialectical exercises with an unshaken reason he who cannot accomplish this, would you not say that he neither knows the good itself, nor anything which is properly demonstrated good? And would you not assert that such a one when he apprehended it rather through the medium of opinion than of science, that in the present life he is sunk in sleep and conversant with delusions and dreams; and that before he is roused to a vigilant state he will descend to Hades, and be overwhelmed with sleep perfectly profound?

Olympiodorus in this MS Commentary on the Gorgias of Plato says of the Elysian fields:

It is necessary to know that the fortunate islands are said to be raised above the sea.... Hercules is reported to have accomplished his last labour in the Hesperian regions, signifying by this that having vanquished an obscure and terrestrial life, he afterwards lived in open day, that is, in truth and resplendent light. So that he who in the present state vanquishes as much as possible a corporeal life, through the exercise of the cathartic virtues, passes in reality into the fortunate islands at the soul, and lives surrounded with the bright splendours of truth and wisdom proceeding from the sun of good.

The esoteric teaching was not, of course, grasped by all initiates: the majority merely recognised or grasped the exoteric doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments. Virgil, in his description of the Mysteries in the Aeneid, confines himself to the exoteric teaching. Aeneas having passed over the Stygian lake meets with the three-headed Cerberus. By Cerberus must be understood the discriminative part of the soul, of which a dog, on account of its sagacity, is an emblem. The three heads signify the intellective, dianoetic,

and doxastic powers. "He dragg'd the three mouth'd dog to upper day," i. e., by temperance, continence, and other virtues he drew upwards the various powers of the soul.

The fable of Persephone, as belonging to the Mysteries, was properly of a mixed nature, composed of all four species of fables theological, physical, animistic, and material. According to the arcana of ancient theology, the Coric order, i. e., that belonging to Persephone, is two-fold, one part supermundane and the other mundane.

Proclus says:

According to the rumour of theologians, who delivered to us the most holy Eleusinian Mysteries, Persephone abides on high, in those dwellings of her mother which she prepared for her in inaccessible places, exempt from the sensible world. But she likewise dwells with Pluto, administering terrestrial concerns, governing the recesses of the earth and imparting soul to beings which are of themselves inanimate and dead.

According to Nosselt the following may be taken as the meaning of the myth of Demeter and her lost daughter:

Persephone, the daughter of the all-productive earth (Demeter) is the seed. The earth rejoices at the sight of the plants and flowers, but they fade and wither, and the seed disappears quickly from the face of the earth when it is strewn on the ground. The dreaded monarch of the under world has taken possession of it. In vain the mother Searches for her child, the whole face of nature mourns her loss, and everything sorrows and grieves with her. But, secretly and unseen, the seed develops itself in the lap of the earth, and at length it starts forth: what was dead is now alive; the earth, all decked with fresh green, rejoices at the recovery of her long-lost daughter and everything shares in the joy.

Demeter was worshipped in a two-fold sense by the Greeks as the foundress of agriculture and as goddess of law and order. They used to celebrate yearly in her honour the Thesmophoria, or Festival of Laws.

According to Taylor, the Platonist, Demeter in the legend represents the evolution of that self-inspective part of our nature which we properly determine intellect, and Persephone that vital, self-moving, and animate part which we call soul. Pluto signifies the whole of a material nature, and,

according to Pythagoras, the empire of this god commences downward from the Galaxy or Milky Way. Sallust says that among the mundane divinities Ceres is the deity of the planet Saturn. The cavern signifies the entrance into mundane life accomplished by the union of the soul with this terrestrial body. Demeter, who was afraid lest some violence be offered to Persephone on account of her inimitable beauty, conveyed her privately to Sicily and concealed her in a house built on purpose by the Cyclops while she herself directs her course to the temple of Cybele, the mother of the gods. Here we see the first cause of the soul's descent, viz., her desertion of a life wholly according to intellect, occultly signified by the separation of Persephone and Demeter. Afterwards Jupiter instructed Venus to go and betray Persephone from her retirement that Pluto might be enabled to carry her away, and, to prevent any suspicion in the virgin's mind, he commanded Diana and Pallas to bear her company. The three goddesses on arrival found Persephone at work on a scarf for her mother, on which she had embroidered the primitive chaos and the formation of the world. Venus is significant of desire, which, even in the celestial regions (for such is the residence of Persephone until she is ravished by Pluto) begins silently and fraudulently to creep into the recesses of the soul. Minerva is symbolical of the rational power of the soul; and Diana represents nature, or the merely natural and vegetable part of our composition, both ensnared through the allurements of desire.

In Ovid we have Narcissus, the metamorphosis of a youth who fell a victim to love of his own corporeal form. The rape of Persephone, according to the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, was the immediate consequence of her gathering this wonderful flower. By Narcissus falling in love with his shadow in the limpid stream we behold a beautiful representation of a soul, which, by vehemently gazing on the flowing condition of a material body, becomes enamoured of a corporeal life and changed into a life consisting wholly of the mere energies of nature. Pluto, forcing his passage through the earth, seizes on Persephone and carries her away, despite the resistance of Minerva and Diana, who are forbidden by Jupiter to attempt her deliverance. This signifies that the lapse of the soul into a material nature is contrary to the genuine wish and proper condition. Pluto, having hurried Persephone into the infernal regions, marriage next succeeds. That is to say, the soul having sunk into the profundities of a material nature, there is the union with the dark tenement of the body. Night is with great beauty and propriety introduced, standing by the nuptial couch and confirming the oblivious league. That is to say, the soul, by union with a material body, becomes familiar with darkness and subject to the empire of night, in consequence of which she dwells wholly with delusive phantoms and till she breaks her fetters is deprived of the perception of that which is real and true.

The nine days of the Festival are significant of the descent of the soul. The

soul, in falling from her original, divine abode in the heavens, passes through eight spheres, viz., the inerratic sphere and the seven planets, assuming a different body and employing different energies in each, and finally becomes connected with the sublunary world and a terrene body on the ninth.

Demeter and the art of tillage signifies the descent of intellect into the realms of generation and becomes the greatest benefit and ornament which a material nature is capable of receiving: without the participation of intellect in the lower regions of matter nothing but an irrational soul and a brutal life would subsist.

The teaching of the Mysteries was that virtue only could entitle men to happiness and that rites, ceremonies, lustrations, and sacrifices would not supply the want. Virgil declares that the secret of the Mysteries was the unity of the Godhead. The Mysteries declared that the after life was not necessarily or for all men the shadowy, weary existence which it had hitherto been supposed to be, but that there were rites of purification and sacrifices of a sacramental kind which gave man a better hope for the future. Thus the Eleusinian Mysteries became the chief agent in the conversion of the Greek world from the Homeric view of Hades to a more hopeful belief as to man's state after death.

Pindar says, referring to the Mysteries:

Happy is he who has seen these things before leaving this world: he realises the beginning and the end of life, as ordained by Zeus.

Sophocles wrote:

Oh, thrice blessed the mortals, who, having contemplated these Mysteries, have descended to Hades; for those only will there be a future life of happiness the others there will find nothing but suffering.

Isocrates, in his Panegyrics, says:

Demeter, who came to our country, bestowed on us two priceless gifts, the cultivation of the fruits of the earth, which compelled us to leave our savage state; and the ceremony which brings to the initiated the sweetest consolation at death and the hope of eternity.

(To be continued)

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PART IV THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES INITIATORY RITES

TWO important facts must be set down with regard to the Mysteries: first, the general custom of all Athenian citizens, and afterwards of all Greeks generally and many foreigners, to seek admission in the only possible manner, viz., by initiation; and, second, the scrupulous care exercised by the Eumopides to ensure that only persons duly qualified, of irreproachable, or at any rate, of circumspect character passed the portals. In the earlier days of the Mysteries it was a necessary condition that the candidates for initiation should be free-born Athenians, but, in course of time, this rule was relaxed, until eventually strangers and foreigners, slaves and even courtesans were admitted, on condition that they were introduced by a mystagogue, who was, of course, an Athenian. An interesting inscription was discovered a few years ago demonstrating the fact that the public slaves of the city were initiated at the public expense. Lysias was able without any difficulty to secure the initiation of his mistress Metanira, who was then in the service of the courtesan Nicareta. There always prevailed, however, the strict rule that no one could be admitted who had been guilty of murder or homicide, wilful or accidental, or who had been convicted of witchcraft, and all who had incurred the capital penalty for conspiracy or treason were also excluded. Nero sought admission into the Eleusinian Mysteries! but was rejected because of the many slaughters connected with his name Apollonius of Tyana was desirous of being admitted into the Eleusinian Mysteries, but the hierophant refused to admit him on the ground that he was a magician and had intercourse with divinities other than those of the Mysteries, declaring that he would never initiate a wizard or throw open the Mysteries to a man addicted to impure rites. Apollonius retorted: "You have not yet mentioned the chief of my offenses, which is that, knowing as I do, more about the initiatory rites than you do yourself, I have nevertheless come to you as if you were wiser than I am." The hierophant when he saw that the exclusion of Apollonius was not by any means popular with the crowd, changed his tone and said: "Be thou initiated, for thou seemest to be some wise man that has come here." But Apollonius replied: "I will be initiated at another time and it is (mentioning a name) who will initiate me." Herein, says Philostratus, he showed his gift of precision, for he glanced at the one who succeeded the hierophant he addressed and presided over the temple four years later when Apollonius was initiated.

Persons of both sexes and of all ages were initiated and neglect of the ceremony was regarded almost in the light of a crime. Socrates was reproached for being almost the only Athenian who had not applied for initiation. Persians were pointedly excluded from the ceremony. Athenians of both sexes were granted the privilege of initiation during childhood on the presentation of their father, but only the first degree of initiation was permitted. For the second and third degrees it was necessary to have arrived at full age. So great was the rush of candidates for initiation when the restrictions were relaxed that Cicero was able to write that the inhabitants of the most distant regions flocked to Eleusis in order to be initiated. Thus it became the custom with all Romans who journeyed to Athens to take advantage of the opportunity to become initiates. Even the Emperors of Rome, the official heads of the Roman religion, the masters of the world, came to the Eumolpides to proffer the request that they might receive the honour of initiation and become participants in the Sacred Mysteries revealed by the goddess.

While Augustus, who was initiated in the year B. C. 21, did not hesitate to show his antipathy towards the religion of the Egyptians, towards Judaism and Druidism, he was always scrupulous in observing the pledge of secrecy demanded of initiates into the Eleusinian Mysteries, and on one occasion, when it became necessary for some of the priests of the Eleusinian temple to proceed to Rome to plead before his tribunal on the question of privilege, and, in the course of the evidence to speak of certain ceremonial in connection with the Mysteries of which it was not lawful to speak in the presence of the uninitiated, he ordered everyone to leave the tribunal so that he and the witnesses alone remained. The Eleusinian Mysteries were not deemed inimical to the welfare of the Roman Empire as were the religions of the Egyptians, Jews, and ancient Britons.

Claudius, another imperial initiate, conceived the idea of transferring the scene of the Mysteries to Rome and, according to Suetonius, was about to put the project into execution, when it was ruled that it was obligatory that the principal scenic presentation of the Mysteries must be celebrated on the ground trodden by the feet of Demeter and where the goddess herself had ordered her temple to be erected.

The initiation of the emperor Hadrian took place in A. D. 125, when he was present at the Lesser Mysteries in the spring and at the Greater Mysteries in the following autumn. In September A. D. 129, he was again at Athens when he presented himself for the third degree, as is known from Dion Cassius, confirmed by a letter written by the Emperor himself, in which he mentions a journey from Eleusis to Ephesus made at that time. Hadrian is the only

imperial initiate who persevered and passed through all three degrees. Since he remained at Eleusis as long as it was possible for him to do after the completion of his initiation it is not rash to assume that he was inspired by something more than curiosity or even a desire to show respect.

It is uncertain whether Antonin was initiated, although from an inscription it seems probable that he was and that he should be included in the list of royal initiates. Both Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, father and son, were initiated at the same time, at the Lesser Mysteries in March, A. D. 176, and at the Greater Mysteries in the following September. Septimus Severus was initiated before he ascended the throne.

There was, as stated, three degrees, and the ordinary procedure with regard to initiation was as follows:

In the flower month of spring, Anthesterion, corresponding to February-March, an applicant could, if approved, become an initiate into the first degree and participate in the Lesser Mysteries at the Eleusinion at Agra, near Athens. The ceremony of initiation into the Lesser Mysteries was much less elaborate than the ceremony of initiation into the Greater Mysteries. The candidates had to keep chaste and unpolluted for nine days prior to the ceremony, to which they came offering sacrifices and prayers and wearing crowns and garlands of flowers. Immediately prior to the celebration of the Lesser Mysteries those about to be initiated were prepared by mystagogues, the teachers selected from the families of the Eumolpides and the Keryces, and instructed in the story of Demeter and Persephone, the character of the purification necessary and the preparatory rites, the fast days, with particulars of what food could and must not be eaten, and the numerous sacrifices to be offered up under the direction of the mystagogues. Without this preparation no one could be admitted to the Mysteries. There was, however, neither secret doctrine nor dogmatic teaching in the instruction given. Revelation came through contemplation of the sacred objects displayed by the hierophant, and by the communication of mystic formulae; but the preparation demanded of the initiates, the secrecy imposed, the ceremonies at which they assisted in the dead silence of the night created a strong impression and lively hope in regard to the future life. No other cult in Greece, still less the cold Roman religion, had anything of the kind to offer. In fasting from food and drink before and after initiation the candidates attached to this voluntary privation no idea of maceration or expiation of faults: it was simply the reproduction of an event in the life of the goddess Demeter. Purity was an indispensable condition for all who would enter the temples. Bowls or vases of consecrated or holy water were placed at the entrance for the purposes of aspersion. In cases of special impurity a delay of one or more days in the preparation became necessary

and unctions of oil or repeated immersions in water were administered. In the preparation of candidates for initiation, purification assumed an exceptional importance. Hence several writers have maintained that the primary aim of initiation was the acquirement of moral purity. The outward physical purity, the result of immersion prior to initiation, was but the symbol of the inward purity which should result from initiation. The duty of the mystagogues was to see that the candidates were in a state of physical cleanliness and to see that that condition was maintained throughout the ceremony. According to the inscriptions there appear to have been temples or buildings set apart for the cleansing of candidates from special impurities. After initiation into the Lesser Mysteries the neophyte was permitted to go as far as the outer vestibule of the temple. In the following autumn, if of full age, he could be initiated into the Greater Mysteries, into the second degree, that of *mysta*. This, however, did not entitle the recipients of that honour to join in all the acts of worship or to witness the whole of the ceremonial at Eleusis. A further year had to elapse before the third degree could be taken, before they could become *epoptae*, and see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears the whole of the Greater Mysteries. The Lesser Mysteries were celebrated at Athens on the hill of Agra, to the right of the Stadium in a temple dedicated to Demeter and Persephone. Occasionally when the number of candidates was very large the Lesser Mysteries were celebrated twice in the year in order to give those too late for the ceremony in Anthesterion another opportunity before the Greater Mysteries were held.

At the next celebration of the Greater Mysteries, after having sacrificed to Demeter, the initiate received the second degree and became numbered among the *mystae*. The preliminary to this degree was bathing in the river Ilissus, after which the *Daduchos* instructed each candidate to place the left foot on the skin of an animal which had been sacrificed to Zeus, in which position the oath of secrecy was taken. Jevons, in his *Introduction to the Study of Religion*, says that no oath was demanded of the initiated but that silence was observed generally as an act of reverence rather than as an act of purposed concealment. There seems, however, to be conclusive evidence that an oath of secrecy was demanded and taken, at any rate, in the second and third degrees, if not in the first. Moreover, there are on record several prosecutions of citizens for having broken the pledge of secrecy they had given. Aeschylus was indicted for having disclosed in the theatre certain details of the Mysteries, and he only escaped punishment by proving that he had never been initiated and could not therefore have violated any obligation of secrecy. A Greek scholiast says that in five of his tragedies Aeschylus spoke of Demeter and therefore may be supposed in these cases to have touched upon subjects connected with the Mysteries; and Heraclides of Pontus says that on this account he was in danger of being killed by the populace if he had not fled for refuge to the altar of Dionysos and then

begged off by the Areopagites and acquitted on the ground of his exploits at Marathon. An accusation was brought against Aristotle of having performed a funeral sacrifice in honour of his wife in imitation of the Eleusinian ceremonies. Alcibiades was charged with mimicking the sacred Mysteries in one of his drunken revels, when he represented the hierophant; Theodorus, one of his friends, represented the herald; and another, Polytion, that of the torch-bearer; the other companions attending as initiates and being addressed as Mystae. The information against him ran:

Thessalus, the son of Cimon, of the ward of Laeais, accuseth Alcibiades, the son of Clinias, of the ward of Seambonis, of sacrilegiously offending the goddess Ceres and her daughter Persephone by counterfeiting their Mysteries and shewing them to his companions in his own house, wearing such a robe as the high priest does when he shows the holy things; he called himself high priest, as did Polytion, torch-bearer; and Theodorus, of the ward of Phygea, herald; and the rest of his companions he called persons initiated and Brethren of the Secret; therein acting contrary to the rules and ceremonies established by the Eumolpides, the heralds and priests at Eleusis.

Alcibiades did not appear in answer to the charge, was condemned in his absence and his goods were confiscated. There was quite a panic about this time B. C. 415. Many prominent citizens, Andocides included, were prosecuted. He was included in the indictment against Alcibiades. "This man," said his accuser, "vested in the same costume as a hierophant, has shown the sacred objects to men who were not initiated and has uttered words it is not permissible to repeat." Andocides admitted the charge, turned king's evidence, and named himself and certain others as the culprits. He was rewarded with a free pardon under a decree which Isotmides had issued but those whom he named were put to death or outlawed and their goods confiscated. Andocides afterwards entered the temple and was charged with breaking the law in so doing. He defended himself before a court of heliasts, all of whom had been initiated into the Mysteries, the president of the Court being the Archon Basileus. The indictment was lodged by Cephisius, the chief prosecutor, with the Archon Basileus during the celebration of the Greater Mysteries, when Andocides was at Eleusis. He was acquitted and it is asserted that Cephisius failed to obtain one-fifth of the votes of the Court, the consequence being that he had to pay a fine of 1,000 drachmae and to suffer permanent exclusion from the Eleusinian shrine.

Diagiras was accused of railing at the sanctity of the Mysteries of Eleusis in such a manner as to deter persons from seeking initiation and a reward of one talent was offered to any one who should kill him or two talents to anyone

who should bring him alive.

An ancient theme of oratorical composition and one set even in the sixth century of the Christian era was:

The law punishes with death whoever has disclosed the Mysteries: some one to whom the initiation has been revealed in a dream asks one of the initiated if what he has seen is in conformity with reality: the initiate acquiesces by a movement of the head: and for that he is accused of impiety.

Every care, therefore, was taken to prevent the secrecy of the Mysteries from becoming known to all save initiates. They have, however, come to light in a great measure through the ancient writings and inscriptions. Step by step and piece by piece the diligent researcher has been rewarded by the discovery of disconnected and isolated fragments which, by themselves, supply no precise information, but, taken in the aggregate, form a perfect mosaic. Though it was strictly forbidden to reveal what took place within the sacred enclosure and in the Hall of Initiation it was permissible to state clearly the object of initiation and the advantages to be derived from the act. Not only was the breaking of the pledge of secrecy given by an initiate visited with severe, sometimes even capital, punishment, but the forcing of the temple enclosure by the uninitiated, as happened sometimes, was an offence of equally heinous character. By virtue of the unwritten laws and customs dating back to the most remote periods the penalty of death was frequently pronounced for faults not grave in themselves, but solely because they concerned religion. It was probably by virtue of those unwritten laws that the priests ordered the death of two young Arcanians who had penetrated, through ignorance, into the sacred precincts. This was in B. C. 200 and Rome made war upon Philip V of Macedonia on the complaint of the government of Athens against that king who wished to punish them for having rigorously applied the ancient laws to those two offenders, who were found guilty of entering the sanctuary at Eleusis, they not having been initiated. No judicial penalty, however, was meted out to the fanatical Epicurean eunuch, who, with the object of proving that the gods had no existence forced himself blaspheming into that part of the sanctuary into which the hierophant and hierophantide alone had the right of entry. Aelianus states that a divine punishment in the form of a disease alone overtook him. Horace declared that he would not risk his life by going on the water with a companion who had revealed the secret of the Mysteries.

One of the essential preliminaries to initiation into each degree was fasting. Two days prior to initiation into the second and third degrees were spent by the candidate in solitary retirement when a strict fast was observed. It was a

"retreat" in the strictest sense of the word. Fasting was practised, not only in imitation of the sufferings of Demeter when searching for Persephone, but because of the danger of the contact of holy things with unholy, the clean with the unclean. Thus it was held that even to speak of the Mysteries to the uninitiated would be as dangerous as to allow such unclean persons to take part in the ceremonies. Hence the punishment meted out by the State was in lieu of, or to avert, the divine wrath which such pollution might bring on the community at large. At the entrance to the temple tablets were placed containing a list of forbidden foods. The list included several kinds of fish, including the whistle-fish, gurnet, crab and mullet. The whistle-fish and crab were held to be impure, the first because it laid its eggs through the mouth and the second because it ate filth which other fish rejected. The gurnet was rejected because of its fecundity as witnessed in its annual triple laying of eggs, but, according to some writers, it was rejected because it ate a fish which was poisonous to mankind. It is believed that other fish were forbidden but Prophyry was probably exaggerating when he says that all fish were interdicted. Birds bred at home, such as chickens and pigeons, were also on the banned list as were beans and certain vegetables which were forbidden for a mystic reason which Pausanias said he dared not reveal save to the initiated. The probable reason was that they were connected in some way with the wanderings of Demeter. Pomegranates were, of course, forbidden from the incident of the eating of the pomegranate seeds by Persephone.

The candidates were carefully instructed in these rules beforehand. Originally the instruction of the candidates was in the hands of the hierophant, who, following the example of his ancestor, Eumolpus, claimed the privilege of preparing the candidates as well as that of communicating to them the divine Mysteries. But the constantly increasing number of applicants made it necessary to employ auxiliary instructors, and this work was given over to the charge of the mystagogues, who prepared either one individual or a group of candidates, the hierophant reserving to himself the general direction of the instruction. In the course of the initiation ceremony certain words had to be spoken by the candidates and these were made known to them in advance, although, of course, apart from their context.

Admission to the second degree took place during the night between the sixth and seventh days of the celebration of the Mysteries, when they were led into the temple precincts and the second Archon opened the ceremony with prayers and sacrifices. The candidates were crowned with myrtle and on entering the building an edifice so vast and capacious as to exceed in area the largest theatre of the period they purified themselves by immersing their hands in the consecrated water. The priests, vested in their sacerdotal garments, then came forward. During the first part of the ceremony the candidates were assembled in the outer hall of the temple, the temple proper

being closed. Then a herald came forth and proclaimed: "Away from here all ye that are not purified, and whose souls have not been freed from sin." If any who were not votaries had by chance entered the precincts they now left for if discovered afterwards the punishment was death. In order to make certain that no intruders remained behind all who were present had to answer certain specified questions. Then all again immersed their hands in the consecrated water and renewed the pledge of secrecy. Next they took off their ordinary garments, and girded themselves with the skins of young does, whereupon the priests wished them joy of all the happiness their initiation would bring them and then went away. Within a few minutes the building was plunged in total darkness. Suddenly terrific peals of thunder resounded, shaking the very foundations of the temple; vivid flashes of lightning lit up the darkness and displayed fearful forms, while dreadful sighs, groans, and cries of pain resounded on all sides, like the shrieks of the condemned in Tartarus. The novices were taken hold of by invisible hands, their hair was torn, and they were beaten and thrown to the ground. At last a faint light became visible in the distance and a fearful scene appeared before their eyes. The gates of Tartarus were opened and the abode of the condemned lay before them. They could hear the cries of anguish and the vain regrets of those to whom Paradise was lost forever and could, moreover, witness their hopeless remorse. They saw, as well as heard, all the tortures of the condemned. The Furies, armed with relentless scourges and flaming torches, drove the unhappy victims incessantly to and fro, never letting them rest for a moment. Meanwhile the loud voices of the hierophant, who represented the judge of the world, was heard expounding the meaning of what was passing before them and warning and threatening the initiates. It may well be imagined that all these fearful scenes were so terrifying that very frequently beads of anguish appeared on the brows of the novices. At length the gates of Tartarus closed and the innermost sanctuary of the temple lay open before the initiates in dazzling light. In the midst stood the statue of the goddess Demeter brilliantly decked and gleaming with precious stones; heavenly music entranced their souls; a cloudless sky overshadowed them; fragrant perfumes arose; and in the distance the privileged spectators beheld flowering meads, where the blessed danced and amused themselves with innocent games and pastimes. Among others writers the scene is described by Aristophanes in *The Frogs*:

Heracles: The voyage is a long one. For you will come directly to a very big lake of abysmal depth.

Dionysos: Then how shall I get taken across it?

Heracles: In a little boat just so big; an old man who plies the boat will take

you across for a fee of two oboles.

Dionysos: Oh dear! How very powerful those two oboles are all over the world. How did they manage to get here?

Heracles: Theseus brought them. After this you will see serpents and wild beasts in countless numbers and very terrible. Then a great slough and overflowing dung; and in this you'll see lying anyone who ever yet at any place wronged his guest or beat his mother, or smote his father's jaw, or swore an oath and foreswore himself.... And next a breathing of flutes shall be wafted around you, and you shall see a very beautiful light, even as in this world, and myrtle groves, and happy choirs of men and women, and a loud clapping of hands.

Dionysos: And who are these people, pray?

Heracles: The initiated. It was regarded as permissible to describe the scenes of the initiation, and this has been done by many writers, but a complete silence was demanded as to the means employed to realize the end, the rites and ceremonies in which the initiate took part, the emblems which were displayed, and the actual words uttered and the slightest divergence rendered the offender liable to the strongest possible condemnation and chastisement.

In the course of the ceremony the hierophant asked a series of questions to which written answers had been prepared and committed to memory by the candidates. Holy Mysteries were revealed to the initiates from a book called Petroma, a word derived from *petra*, a stone, and so called because the writings were kept enclosed between two cemented stones. The garments worn by the candidates during the initiation ceremony were accounted sacred, and equal with incantations and consecrated charms in their power to avert evils. Consequently, they were never cast off until torn and tattered. Nor was it usual, even then, to throw them away but it was customary to make them into twaddling clothes for children or to consecrate them to Demeter and Persephone.

Admission to the third degree took place during the night between the seventh and eighth days of the celebration of the Mysteries. This, the final degree with the exception of those called to be hierophants, was known as the degree of *epoptie*. Exactly in what the ceremonial consisted, save in one particular presently to be described, little is known. Hippolytus is practically

the only authority for the main incident of the degree. Certain words and signs were communicated to the initiated which, when pronounced after death, were held to ensure the eternal happiness of the soul.

The most solemn part of the ceremony was that which has been described by some writers as the hierogamy or sacred marriage of Zeus and Demeter, although some have mistakenly referred to it as the marriage of Pluto and Proserpine. During the celebration of the Mysteries the hierophant and the hierophantide descended into a cave or deep recess and, after remaining there for a time, returned to the assembly, surrounded seemingly by flames, the hierophant displaying to the gaze of the initiated an ear of corn and exclaiming in a loud voice: "The divine Brimo has Wiven birth to the holy child Brimos: the strong has Drought forth strength."

"The Athenians," says Hippolytus, "in the initiation of Eleusis show to the epoptes the great, admirable, and most perfect mystery of the epoptie: an ear of corn gathered in silence." The statement is so clear as to leave no doubt whatever on the subject; indeed, it has never been called into question. The presentation of the ear of corn was part of the Mysteries of Eleusis and it was reserved for the epoptes.

Much has been made of this incident by many who can see no beauty in pre-Christian or non-Christian forms of religion, their comments being based mainly on a statement of St. Gregory Nazianus, who stands alone in discerning lewdness in the Eleusinian ceremonial. He says:

It is not in our religion that you will find a seduced Cora, a wandering Demeter, a Keleos, and a Triptolemos appearing with serpents; that Demeter is capable of certain acts and that she permits others. I am really ashamed to throw light on the nocturnal orgies of the initiations. Eleusis knows as well as the witnesses the secret of this spectacle, which is with reason kept so profound.

Apart from this isolated statement the Eleusinian Mysteries have not been charged as many ancient rites were with promoting immorality. In his account of the doings of the false prophet Alexander of Abountichos, Lucian describes how the impostor instituted rites which were a close parody of those at Eleusis and he narrates the details of the travesty. Among the mimetic performances were not only the Epiphany and birth of a god but the enactment of a sacred marriage. All preliminaries were gone through and Lucian says that but for the abundance of lighted torches the marriage would actually have been consummated. The part of the hierophant was taken-by

the false prophet himself. From the travesty it is evident that in the genuine Mysteries in silence, in darkness, and in perfect chastity the sacred marriage was enacted and that immediately afterwards the hierophant came forth and standing in a blaze of torchlight made the announcement to the initiates. 'When came the words from the hierophant:

I have tasted, I have drunk "cyceon." I have taken from the cystus and after having tasted of it I placed it in the calathos. I again took it from the calathos and put it back in the cistus.

This formula, notwithstanding its length, became the "pass word" of the perfect initiate.

Dr. Jevons maintains that this ear of corn was the totem of Eleusis and this view has been adopted by M. Reinach who says:

We find in the texts a certain trace not only of the cult but of the adoration and the exaltation (in the Christian meaning of the word) of the ear of corn.

But he has omitted to quote the texts on which he relies for this assertion. It would be interesting to know why among all the plants which die and revive in the course of a year, wheat was chosen for preference, why the ear more than the grain, why it should be emphasized that it was gathered, for what reason the spectacle was reserved for the epoptae and in what manner it secures or ensures for the individual a blissful existence after death. The demonstration presupposes that the preceding rites and ceremonies were leading up to this supreme display. This practically ended the third degree save that then the epoptae were placed upon exalted seats around which the priests circled in mystic dances. The day succeeding admission into the final degree was regarded as a rigorous fast at the conclusion of which the epoptae also drank of the mystic kukeon and ate of the sacred cakes.

The Greeks laid great stress upon the advantages to be derived from initiation. Not only were the initiates under the protection of the State but the very act of initiation was said to assist in the spreading of good will among men, keep the soul free from sin and crime, place men under the special protection of the gods, and provide them with the means of attaining perfect virtue, the power of living a spotless life, and assure them of a peaceful death and everlasting bliss hereafter. The priests assured all who participated in the Mysteries that they would have a higher place in Elysium, a clearer understanding, and a more intimate intercourse with the gods, whereas the

uninitiated would always remain in outer darkness. Indeed, in the final degree the epoptae were said to be admitted to the presence of and converse with the goddesses Demeter and Persephone. Initiates were placed under the immediate care and protection of the goddess Demeter. Initiation was referred to frequently as a guarantee of salvation conferred by outward and visible signs and by sacred formulae.

According to Theo of Smyrna the full or complete initiation consisted of five steps or degrees:

Again, philosophy may be called the initiation into true sacred ceremonies, and the tradition of genuine mysteries; for there are five parts of initiation; the first of which is previous purgation; for neither are the Mysteries communicated to all who are willing to receive them, but there are certain characters who are prevented by the voice of the crier, such as those who possess impure hands and an articulate voice, since it is necessary that such as are not expelled from the Mysteries should first be refined by certain purgations, but after purgation the tradition of the sacred rite succeeds. The third part is denominated inspection. And the fourth which is the end and design of inspection is the binding of the head and fixing the crown: so that the initiated may, by this means, be enabled to communicate to others the sacred rites in which he has been instructed; whether after this he becomes a torchbearer, or an interpreter of the Mysteries, or sustains some other part of the sacerdotal office. But the fifth which is produced from all these, is friendship with divinity, and the enjoyment of that felicity which arises from intimate converse with the gods. According to Plato purification is to be derived from the five mathematical disciplines, viz., arithmetic, geometry, steretometry, music, and astronomy.

The fee for initiation was a minimum sum of fifteen drachmas, in addition to which there were the usual honoraria to be bestowed towards the various officiating ministers to which reference has already been made. Presumably, also, gifts in kind were made annually to the principal clergy for an inscription of the fifth century B. C. found at Eleusis reads:

Let the hierophant and the torch-bearer command that at the mysteries the Hellenes shall offer first-fruits of their crops in accordance with ancestral usage.... To those who do these things there shall be many good things, both good and abundant crops, whoever of them do not injure the Athenians, nor the city of Athens, nor the two goddesses.

The Telestrion or Hall of Initiation, sometimes called "The Mystic Temple,"

was a large, covered building, about 170 feet square. It was surrounded on all sides by steps which presumably served as seats for the initiated while the sacred dramas and processions took place on the floor of the hall. These steps were partly built up and partly cut in the solid rock: in latter times they appear to have been covered with marble. There were two doors on each side of the hall with the exception of the north-west where the entrance was cut out of the solid rock, a rock terrace at a higher level adjoining it. This was probably the station of those not yet admitted to full initiation. The roof of the hall was carried by rows of columns which were more than once renewed. The Hall itself did not accommodate more than 4,000 people. The building was, perhaps, more accurately designed by Aristophanes as "The house that welcomed the mystae." Strabo's phrase for it was "The holy enclosure of the mystae" and he carefully distinguishes it from the temple of Demeter. It was not the dwelling place of any god and, therefore, contained no holy image. It was built for the celebration of a definite ritual and the Eleusinian Hall of Initiation was therefore the only known church of antiquity if by that term we understand the meeting place of the congregation.