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Eleusinian Mysteries

General Points

Held in September in honour of Demeter and her daughter Persephone (Kōre)

Ritual

- * Proclamation of a truce - 55 days before Mysteries began so that people could travel in safety to Eleusis
- * Purified themselves in the sea **PIRAEUS**
- * 2 days later - Procession to Eleusis (15 miles north of Athens)
- * Wooden statue of **Iakkhos** - at head of procession - Crowds shouted insults - intended to avert bad luck
- * Fasted and roamed - sang and danced
- * Hall of Mysteries, the **TELESTERION** - by this time in high state of religious emotion - saw Mysteries
- * TELESTERION could only hold 3 000 but believed up to 10 000 followed procession
- * Priest known as the **HIEROPHANTES** " revealer of holy things " began a series of revelations - the holy things were known as the **HIERA**
- * Consisted of " things said " , " things done " , and " things shown "
- * Only initiates **EPOPTAI** were allowed to see the " things shown "

Spiritual Meaning

Quotes

Hymn to Demeter (unknown) " Prosperous is he among men who has seen these things...he who is uninitiated and has no part in the sacred things never has the lot of a like destiny once he has perished and gone "

Sophocles " How thrice blessed are those who pass to Hades after seeing these mysteries, for only to them is it given to have life there, but to others all is evil "

Isocrates " When Demeter came to our land.... she gave us two supreme gifts, grain and the holy rite, which brings its initiates more joyful hopes about the end of life and eternity "

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Strength and secrecy of cult

Evidence

Evidence

Evidence

Cynics

Correspondences to Christianity