

TENET22

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Eleusinian Mysteries

*Nicola Bizzi - Francis William Hamilton
Guido Maria St. Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi*

Issue N.10



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Since the most remote times, the entire long history of the European, Mediterranean and Near Eastern religious experience has been characterized by the presence and diffusion of mystery cults. They were generally characterized by a common order, by a common basic rule, consisting in the fact that the set of beliefs or foundations of the cult, of the founding myths, of the religious practices, and the true nature of the teachings and the revelatory message of the Deities should be reserved, to different degrees, for the Initiates. The initiates were admitted and entered a particular community of new men. Initiates were distinguished from the profane, from those who had not had access to the Mysteries (by choice, by impediment or for other reasons of a legal or social nature), and who as such swore a solemn oath and had the obligation to remain silent, not to reveal or profane the secret, which had to remain ineffable.

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It is correct, yes, to speak of Eleusinian Mysteries, but we should - in a broader sense - speak of Eleusinity. The deepest roots of Eleusinity lie in the culture and civilization of the ancient pre-Greek people of the Aegean Sea; they were all ethnically similar populations, characterized by black hair and olive complexion, who, since the most remote times, inhabited the Cyclades islands, Crete, continental Greece and the coasts of Asia Minor. These populations were all part of the Cretan Empire of the Minos, and, above all, had two elements that united them: the cult of the ancient Titan Gods (overthrown, according to Hellenic tradition, in a war called Titanomachy by Zeus and the new Olympian Gods) and the designation of their progenies through the female line (Matriarchy). Another underlying line of their culture was the common identification with the same sacred lineage, heir to a grandiose previous civilization.

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Much has been written and theorized about the mystery cults of Mediterranean antiquity. There is a vast number of studies and essays signed by the most authoritative anthropologists and historians of religions in this regard, but we must underline how the guidelines of the majority of these works are influenced by two substantial limitations. The first is constituted, despite the abundance of classical Greek and Latin sources on religious matters, by the fact that ancient authors and chroniclers such as Herodotus, Pausanias, Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus and Polybius, while addressing the interpretation of myths and doctrines religious, they never go into detail about the rituals, contents and initiatory knowledge when speaking of mystery cults. And if they sporadically do so, they still maintain an attitude of closure and confidentiality on certain issues which, in the profane eyes of our contemporaries, could even appear "silenced". Instead, it is an obvious attitude of respect, derived above all from their adherence to the rule and vow of silence. The majority of certain authors, in fact, had personally received a mysterious initiation (and in some cases more than one), and were therefore well aware of the limes, the boundary line beyond which it was not licit to go when writing about the Gods.



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by Guido Maria Stelvio Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi

As was highlighted in the essay *From Eleusis to Florence: the Transmission of Secret Knowledge, in the Eleusinian Mystery Tradition* humanity is considered the daughter of the ancient Titan Gods, defeated by the new Olympic Gods in an epic war, the Titanomachy, narrated to us by Hesiod in his *Theogony*, but whose memory and profound echo has always been present in all the traditions of ancient peoples, from the Mediterranean to the Near East, from Asia to the Americas. In particular, Eleusinian Tradition attributes the creation of this humanity to the four sons of the Titan God Hyaphethos (Iapetus, in Greek *Ἰαπετός*): Atlas (in Greek *Ἄτλας*), Menoetius (in Greek *Μενοίτιος* or *Μενοίτης*), Prometheus (in Greek *Προμηθεύς*) and Epimetheus (in Greek *Ἐπιμηθεύς*), who created man and woman in their image and likeness.

Eleusinity teaches us that Atlas gave man Knowledge and Life, Menoetius both internal and external Strength, Prometheus the male seed and Epimetheus the female seed. The Titans then, jointly, gave humanity the "Night", a term that expresses a concept superior to that of "soul" that we commonly understand, the very concept of the titanic divine essence, which, through and thanks to the work of these four Titans dwell in every man today.

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by Nicola Bizzi

Marcus Tullius Cicero, initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries, referred to them in his writings, not only in relation to their work of civilizing human customs, but also to the knowledge of the "principle of life" and the hope of a happy survival after death which initiation was able to confer: "There was nothing better than those Mysteries, by which, having emerged from a rough and inhuman life, we were educated and softened to civilization, and therefore they are called initiations, because we have known the principles of life in their true essence; and we have not only learned how to live with joy, but also how to die with a better hope". The primacy of the Eleusinian Mysteries over all the other mysterious realities of antiquity is also highlighted by Pausanias (110-180 AD, another famous Initiate into the Mysteries of the Two Goddesses): "By as much as the Gods are superior to heroes, by as much the Eleusinian Institution is superior to the others that refer to the veneration of the Divinities"

A Single Primordial Tradition? _____ **60**

by Nicola Bizzi

According to the Eleusinian Mystery Tradition, it is not at all true that all the religions, that have been formed and/or differentiated over time, would indiscriminately originate from that "primordial religion" enunciated by the Pythagorean-Platonic vision, as they are presumed adaptations of the Palaios Logos in the form of one Hieros Logos specific to each individual spiritual form. Furthermore, it would be an aberration just to think so. If we correctly identify that original Primordial Titanic religion in the most authentic Titanic religion which arose and established itself in that golden age when the Titan Gods still reigned with justice over this world, with the first traumatic breaking of the golden chain of Tradition occurred with the Titanomachy and with the victory of the Olympic Gods, the vast majority of the religions that arose and developed and succeeded one another among the various civilizations did so under the aegis of the latter, and not certainly under that of the defeated Titan Gods. Therefore, they have clearly distanced themselves from the Palaios Logos and the Primordial Tradition, adapting to doctrinal compromises and pollutions which have allowed the respective priestly castes to survive and exercise their control over the masses of the faithful ones, but have thus inexorably and inextricably linked to the katabasic path. These religions have given their followers only the illusion of possession of the Sophia Aionia, of the Sapiientia Aeterna, while in reality they have clearly distanced themselves from it. If some legacy of the Palaios Logos, of the Primordial Titanic Tradition, can be partially recognized in such religions or doctrines, it represents only a pale and weak shadow.



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Starting from the 1990s, the Mother Eleusinians, for a whole series of reasons that I will explain, decided to undertake a gradual policy of opening up to the profane world, starting from Italy. In essence, they have publicly revealed themselves, making themselves available for open discussion with other initiatory realities and making available to historians and scholars part of their enormous cultural and documentary heritage available. And, at the same time, they began cycles of public conferences and the publication of various books through a network of their own cultural associations. An operation, the latter, which also includes the publication of Nicola Bizzi's essays, which was authorized and legitimized by the Order of the Eleusinian Mothers. Such a decision - which apparently in the Eleusinian and mystery spheres in general has not found unanimous consensus and agreement - must not lead to easy misunderstandings: the Mother Eleusinians will never spread their initiatory secrets in the profane world, they will never reveal to those who are not capable of receiving its own rites and rituals. Anyone who believes or hopes otherwise is surely deluding himself or acting in bad faith. As Nicola Bizzi explains well, the esoteric and initiatory knowledge is by its nature secret, but secrecy is not only aimed at preserving something from the profane.

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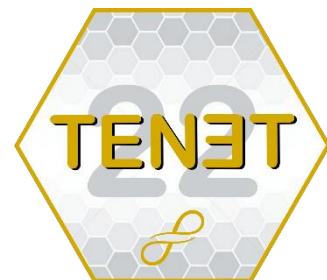
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Eleusinian Mysteries

Since the most remote times, the entire long history of the European, Mediterranean and Near Eastern religious experience has been characterized by the presence and diffusion of mystery cults. These cults generally characterized by a common order, by a common basic rule, consisting in the fact that the set of beliefs or foundations of the cult, of the founding myths, of the religious practices, and the true nature of the teachings and the revelatory message of the Deities should be reserved, to different degrees, for the Initiates, for those who were admitted and entered a particular community of new men. The Initiates were distinguished from the profane, from those who had not had access to the Mysteries (by choice, by impediment or for other reasons of a legal or social nature), and swore a solemn oath and had the obligation to remain silent, not to reveal or profane the secret, which had to remain ineffable.

The most famous - and at the same time the longest-lived - of the mystery cults of antiquity was that of the Eleusinian Mysteries, in honor of the Two Goddesses, the Mother and the Daughter, Demeter and Kore-Persephone.

The Eleusinian Mysteries, established by the Goddess Demeter herself in 1216 BC, take their name from Eleusis (today's Eleusina), a town in Attica about twenty kilometers from Athens. Here, according to the Tradition, the Goddess arrived at the end of her long wandering in search of her Daughter, kidnapped in Sicily, near Enna, by Hades, the God of the underworld, by will of Zeus, who wanted to prevent the completion of the his mission of redemption and



liberation of humanity. Demeter, in the guise of an old woman, was welcomed at court by King Celeus and Queen Metanira and was entrusted with the task of acting as nurse to the last-born of the royal family, Demophoon. She later revealed herself in her true form, she commanded that a temple be built for her and proclaimed, with the Discourse of Revelation, the institution of the Sacred Mysteries. At the same time, she obtained the return of her daughter, but only for part of the year, as Hades had tricked her into eating the seeds of a fairy pomegranate which bound her to the Underworld.

The Eleusinian Mysteries offered initiates a path of elevation and awareness and, above all, the gift of the immortality of the soul.

The Little Mysteries were held in the month of Antesterion (February). The initiates-to-be, after a long preparation, were subjected to purifying ceremonies. Once they received the initiation, they became Mystai, becoming part of the community of the faithful ones. The Great Mysteries were held in the month of Boedromion (September-October). They were reserved for the Mystai who, after adequate preparation which included fasting and purifications, underwent a real death ritual, a journey to the Underworld which allowed them to access the second degree of initiation, the Epopteia, which means "contemplation". The Epopte is in fact "he who has seen", who can contemplate himself and the Gods, who he can see with the eyes of the soul.

The Eleusinian Mysteries rapidly spread throughout the Mediterranean area, becoming, in the imperial Roman age, the main mystery. The Mother Sanctuary of Eleusis, on which numerous Temples and Sanctuaries depended throughout the Empire, became an essential beacon of Knowledge. Eleven Emperors, from Octavian Augustus to Hadrian, from Marcus Aurelius to Gallienus, up to Julian, were initiated there, as well as great figures such as Pausanias, Marcus Tullius Cicero, the philosophers Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus and the great scientist and philosopher Hypatia of Alexandria.

The Mother Sanctuary of Eleusis was formally closed in 380 AD. from the Pritan of the Hierophants Nestorius, following the Christian persecutions which culminated with the infamous Edict of Thessalonica. From that moment on, the Eleusian Mystery Tradition, with its teachings and rituals, went underground, surviving like a karst river through the dark centuries of the Middle Ages and reaching the modern and contemporary age.



THE MYSTERIES

by **Nicola Bizzi**

Since the most remote times, the entire long history of the European, Mediterranean and Near Eastern religious experience has been characterized by the presence and diffusion of mystery cults. They were generally characterized by a common order, by a common basic rule, consisting in the fact that the set of beliefs or foundations of the cult, of the founding myths, of the religious practices, and the true nature of the teachings and the revelatory message of the Deities should be reserved, to different degrees, for the Initiates. The initiates were admitted and entered a particular community of new men. Initiates were distinguished from the *profane*, from those who had not had access to the Mysteries (by choice, by impediment or for other reasons of a legal or social nature), and who as such swore a solemn oath and had the obligation to remain silent, not to reveal or profane the secret, which had to remain ineffable.

Another common characteristic of many mystery cults of antiquity, a characteristic sometimes not understood or misrepresented by modern anthropologists and historians of religions, is their nature as true revealed religions and of a salvific, messianic and eschatological character. In them, in fact, the initiatory action, and with it the acquisition and gradual understanding of the message of the Divinities, was destined to create a liberating reality offered to the individual - and, consequently, to the entire community - in response to the existential issue and problems existential concerning the connection between life and death. Through the various degrees of Initiation (which always had to be "gradual"), the adept reached the vision of the Deities and the understanding of their message. And the constant presence of the figure of a Divinity who incarnated among mortals, following a path that included birth, death and a resurrection, guaranteed the Initiates' "liberation", that is, the overcoming of the human state, of the individual limitation that death and resurrection of the God it symbolized; a resurrection that indicated a birth - or, better, a rebirth - beyond death and beyond this world, proving that human life does not consist of mere survival.

As I have explained in many of my essays, a fundamental mistake by modern anthropologists, from James Frazer onwards, has been the mere association of mystery cults with the cyclical nature and seasons, and consequently with the principles and concepts of fertility. In truth, it is only an exoteric and markedly popular interpretation of myth and ritual, which was presented to the profane as part of the processions and celebration of public holidays that characterized every mystery religion (events in which even those who were Initiates yet). In reality, behind certain symbols that could recall the cycles of nature and the fertility of the fields, there were important allegories and initiatory truths that were well known to the adepts, but which were completely incomprehensible to the layman and therefore easily associated to natural or "agrarian" concepts.

In fact, the mystery cults cannot be understood if we do not keep in mind that, precisely because of the presence in their systems of an initiatory path, they were characterized by a

double doctrine: one for the profane and one for the Initiates.

The Mysteries of Isis and Osiris are particularly known. They are of Egyptian origin and especially widespread in the imperial Roman Era, the Mysteries of Adonis and Astarte, of Syriac origin, the Mysteries of Attis and Cybele, of Anatolian origin, up to the Mysteries of Aphrodite in Cyprus, to the Mysteries of the Dioscuri in Amphissa, to those of Hecate in Aegina, to the Dionysian Mysteries, to those of the Cabiri of Samothrace and those of Mithras, of Persian origin, which found an extraordinary diffusion throughout the Roman Empire, especially among the ranks of the army. But, among the various and multiple mystery cults of antiquity, none ever achieved fame, notoriety and diffusion, and at the same time secrecy and impenetrability to profane eyes, equal to that of the Eleusinian Mysteries. So much so that it has been stated by the most authoritative scholars that the very foundations of Western Culture and Tradition rest in them.



Terracotta votive plaque from Eleusis dating back to the 4th century BC, known as the Ninnion Tablet, depicting scenes from the Mysteries (Athens, National Archaeological Museum)



A great Initiate to the Sacred Mysteries, the rhetorician Publius Elius Aristides (117-180 AD), wrote: «Eleusis is the common Témenos of the whole Earth; among the divine things granted to men, it is the most venerable and most brilliant that exists. In what other more wonderful place have myths been sung, or have more sublime representations touched the soul? Where have we seen sights rival more happily the words heard, those stupendous scenes, accompanied by ineffable apparitions, contemplated by innumerable generations of fortunate men and women?»¹

“The valleys of Demeter Eleusina are a common good”, proclaims a chorus of Sophocles². And again, Sophocles writes: “O thrice happy are the mortals who after having contemplated these *Mysteria* will descend into Hades; only they will be able to live there; for everyone else everything will be suffering”³. “The sacrosanct Rites of Eleusis - writes Proclus - promise the initiates that they will enjoy the help of Kore once they are freed from their bodies”⁴. “Happy is he who possesses, among men, the vision of these Mysteries; he who is not initiated into the Holy Rites will not have the same fate when he remains, once dead, in the humid darkness” recites the Homeric Hymn to Demeter⁵.

As the great Irish esotericist John Heron Lepper wrote, “It could be said that the existence of secret or closed societies, in which certain teachings or certain practices are transmitted to selected people and subjected to tests, responds to a very general tendency of human nature”⁶. This is undoubtedly true, but it is not a completely exhaustive explanation, as the birth and diffusion, in the ancient world, of rites of a mysterious nature, based on the principle of initiation as a prerogative for access to certain knowledge, does not it can be explained exclusively from an anthropological and sociological perspective.

Ezio D'Intra, in his introduction to the Italian edition of Victor Magnien's work *The Mysteries of Eleusis*, rightly underlined that “ancient man in general, and the spiritual hierarchies of the past in particular, had access to experiences of Sacred with a frequency, a certainty and a lucidity that made them absolutely incomparable to those - maimed, occasional and fleeting, or distorted by prejudices, or artificially self-induced by strange internal gymnastics - which constitute that expanse, mostly marshy and unhealthy, of modern spiritualism”⁷.

In the classical world and in pre-Christian antiquity, man was closer to the Gods and, at the same time - in a real exchange and union - the Gods were closer to man. And it was from the Gods that men had received precise teachings, rules and doctrines and the answers to the

¹ Publius Aelius Aristides: *Eleusinos*, t. I^o, p. 256, ed. Dindorf

² Sophocles: *Antigone*: 1120.

³ Sophocles: *Fragment 719* Dindorf, 348 Didot.

⁴ Proclus: *On Plato's Republic*. Ed. Kroll, II^o, p. 185, 10.

⁵ *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 480-482.

⁶ John Heron Lepper: *Les Sociétés Secrètes de l'Antiquité à nos jours*. Ed. Payot, Paris 1933.

⁷ Victor Magnien: *Les Mystères d'Eleusis*. Ed. Payot, Paris 1938.



greatest questions that humanity, since its exit from the caves, had begun to ask itself: Who are we? Where do we come from? Where do we go?

By "mysterious" we mean a series of cults, religious practices and rites that developed and spread in antiquity throughout the Greek and Mediterranean world, in the ancient Near East, and later throughout the Hellenistic area and in the Roman Empire, whose roots lie in the pre-Greek cultures of the Aegean, Crete and the Anatolian coast. Cults, religious practices and rites were necessarily characterized by an initiatory path, which gave gradual access both to certain knowledge and to a consequent personal elevation, and by the most rigorous practice of silence, to which all Initiates were devoted, which did not allow anyone who did not access to teachings, revelations and everything that happened in the context of ceremonies.

The term derives from the Greek *μυστήριον* (*mysterion*), later Latinized into the form *mysterium*. The etymology of the word dates back to an Indo-European root (*my-*), which had the meaning, of onomatopoeic origin, of "to close one's mouth" (from which, for example, the term *mute* derives). From this root the Greek terms *μύω* [*myo*] ("to initiate into the Mysteries"), *μύησις* [*myesis*] ("initiation") and *μύστης* [*mystes*] ("initiated") were derived. The verb *myo* was in fact used in its absolute form with the meaning of "to close the mouth" or "to close the eyes", and in these terms the esoteric character of certain rites is well understood which, as a scholium to Aristophanes confirms, "they were called *Mysteries* due to the fact that the listeners had to close their mouths and not tell any of this to anyone"⁸.

Participation in the ancient Mysteries, as Piero Coda underlined, normally exhibits the following characteristics:

- 1) it demands an initiation (*μύησις*);
- 2) it is expressed in precise rites;
- 3) it implies the obligation to keep quiet about the things seen and heard during them;
- 4) it provides participation in salvation (*σωτηρία*) through the joining (of the initiate) to the destiny of suffering (*πάθη*) and rebirth of the Divinity;
- 5) it introduces one into a community strictly separated from the non-Initiated ones;
- 6) it ensures immortal life⁹.

As Aimé Solignac wrote, "the unifying principle of the multiple senses assumed by the words *μυστήριον*, *μύησις*, *μύστης*, *μύστικός*, *μύστικώς*, is the idea of a more or less immediate communication of the Divine to man and of a 'arcane initiation of man to the Divine, to his actions and to his very being"¹⁰.

⁸ Aristophanes: *The Frogs* (*Βάτραχοι*), 456.

⁹ Piero Coda: *The Logos and Nothingness*. Ed. Città Nuova, Rome 2003.

¹⁰ Aimé Solignac: *Mystère* (in *Mystère et Mystique*, D.S. n. 12, 1983). [11] Vetius Valens: *Anthologiarum libri*, IV°, 11.



*Eleusinian marble relief depicting Demeter, Kore and Triptolemus, 5th century BC
(Athens, National Archaeological Museum)*

A phenomenon, that of mystery cults, is extremely complex and articulated and took shape in



different ways, depending on the places and times, while always maintaining the common underlying characteristics that I listed earlier, the most important of which is always it was the secrecy. A characteristic which, moreover, has always been inherent since the most remote times among the ancient Mediterranean populations.

The ancient Hellenes did not conceive that anyone could participate, without distinction and without precautions, not only in the foundations of religions and spiritual doctrines, but also in Philosophy, the sciences and the arts.

The great Greek Initiate and astrologer of the 2nd century Vettius Valens, in his Anthologies, thus referred to this need for secrecy: *"I ask you for an oath, Oh illustrious brother, to you and to those whom I lead, as a Mystagogue, towards the harmony of heaven. I ask you for the oath in the name of the celestial vault, of the circle with the twelve signs, of the Sun, of the Moon, of the five wandering stars that guide our entire life, for providence itself and the sacred necessity of keeping all this in secret, and of do not communicate it to the ignorant, but only to those who are worthy, who can guard and respond rightly, and confer on me, Valens, who revealed these things, an imperishable and eminent renown, recognizing that it was I who enlightened"*¹¹.

In the Greek world and in the broader Aegean-Mediterranean context, all the arts, from that of metallurgy, understood as the fusion and processing of metals (the object of very secret, elitist and mysterious brotherhoods), to that of construction, from medicine to that of construction of ships, as Victor Magnien observed, were not accessible to everyone¹². According to what Eustazio reports, in Rhodes there were secret arsenals, access to which was not permitted to the public and anyone who violated their doors without due authorization was put to death.

Even poets expressed themselves in a language that was not very accessible to the common man. In fact, the rhetorician and philosopher Maximus of Tiro stated that *"the works of poets and philosophers are all full of enigmas, and I prefer their modest respect for the truth to the overly open speech of their contemporaries; in fact, the myth deals more conveniently with those realities that human weakness cannot grasp..."*¹³.

According to this great philosopher and scholar of the 2nd century, poets in fact imparted the same teaching as wise men and philosophers. They *"under the name of poets are actually philosophers, who use a fascinating art instead of discursively exposing the things whose knowledge is difficult for us"*¹⁴. And, even if he wanted to exclude the poets from his ideal state, Plato wrote in his dialogue Ion that they *"are simply interpreters of the Gods"*¹⁵.

¹¹ Vezio Valente: Anthologiarum libri, IV^o, 11.

¹² Victor Magnien: Work cited

¹³ Speeches by Massimo Tirio, Platonic Philosopher, translated by Signor Piero De Bardi, Count of Vernio, Florentine Academician. Ed. Appresso i Giunti, Venice 1642.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Plato: Ion, 534.



Even the secret of Medicine for the ancient Greeks, and subsequently also for the Romans, was comparable to that of the Mysteries and an intimate relationship linked both Medicine, Science in general and Philosophy to religion and mystery traditions in particular. In fact, it is no coincidence that the greatest philosophers, the greatest doctors and the greatest scientists of antiquity began mystery cults, and in particular the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The secret of the Mysteries, like that of Philosophy, Science or Medicine, as Magnien observed paraphrasing the great Emperor Julian, was justified in the thought of the ancients by the fact that *"nature itself loves to hide, and the truth cannot be seen without effort and without effort: therefore, those who have found this truth must not reveal it too easily to others and expose it in too explicit terms. Truth, divine by nature, and conferring great power on those who possess it, is too high for vulgar and vile men; not only do they not deserve to possess it, but moreover they could despise it if they obtained it without any effort: it must therefore be kept away from them. The truth even surpasses the faculties of ordinary men: only well-prepared and well-tested people must share it"*¹⁶.

Nicola Bizzi



Nicola Bizzi, born in Stockholm (Sweden) on February 17th, 1972, graduated in History at the University of Florence, has been involved for many years in studies and research in the ancient mystery and religious traditions of the Mediterranean area. Writer, lecturer, columnist and publisher, he is the founder and owner of Edizioni Aurora Boreale, a publishing house for which he edits the series of mystery and initiatory studies Telestérion and the series of political studies Politeia. He founded the journals Aesyrr and Novum Imperium, of which he was editorial director for several years. He is director of the Eleusinian Study Center for Mediterranean Cultures Sidera Tau 8, professor at the Eleusinian Mother School in Florence and holder of the chair of Mysterical and Traditional Cults at the Free Italian University of Esoteric Studies in Lecce. He is the author of various historical and esoteric essays, including *The crisis of the Republic of Parties: from the collapse of the Berlin Wall to Tangentopoli*; *New World Disorder*; *Brothers Arvales*; *Half-relief and entire doctrine: the Pythagoreans in Florence*; *Egypt and the Eleusinian Mysteries*; *The Minoans in America and the memories of a lost civilization*; *The Minoan thalassocracy: the historical-archaeological divide and rule*; *From Eleusis to Florence: the transmission of a secret knowledge*; *Mystery Tradition and Philosophy*; *Thomas Paine and the Origins of Freemasonry*; *The Strict Templar Observance, Florence and the Unknown Superiors*; *Atlantis and other pages of forbidden history*; *Hypatia of Alexandria and the enigma of Saint Catherine*; *Al Ma'mun: a great Pythagorean initiate leading Islam*; *The Way of Eleusis: the path of elevation and the degrees of Initiation into the Mysteries*. He has edited various television and radio broadcasts on themes of the Western Tradition and on the mysteries of ancient civilizations and collaborates with numerous magazines, including *Archeomisteri*, *Iside*, *Satormagazine* and *Anubi Magazine*. He can be contacted by email edizioniauraboreale@gmail.com

¹⁶ Victor Magnien: Work cited.



THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF ELEUSINITY

by **Nicola Bizzi**

It is correct, yes, to speak of Eleusinian Mysteries, but we should - in a broader sense - speak of *Eleusinity*.

The deepest roots of Eleusinity lie in the culture and civilization of the ancient pre-Greek people of the Aegean Sea; they were all ethnically similar populations, characterized by black hair and olive complexion, who, since the most remote times, inhabited the Cyclades islands, Crete, continental Greece and the coasts of Asia Minor. These populations were all part of the Cretan Empire of the Minos, and, above all, had two elements that united them: the cult of the ancient Titan Gods (overthrown, according to Hellenic tradition, in a war called Titanomachy by Zeus and the new Olympian Gods) and the designation of their progenies through the female line (Matriarchy). Another underlying line of their culture was the common identification with the same sacred lineage, heir to a grandiose previous civilization.

With the collapse of the Minoan Empire, which occurred around 1,500 BC, and with the descent from the North (Danube plain, present-day Ukraine and the Caucasus area) of new populations who were ethnically and culturally foreign to the Aegean area (Achaeans, Aeolians, Ionians, Dorians, etc.), all enslaved to the cult of those that the Aegeans considered "usurper" Gods, a great phase of tension and struggle began which reached its peak in 1,184 BC, with the conclusion of what is commonly known as the Trojan War.

The latter was not simply a conflict dictated by commercial reasons or by a mere desire for conquest, but rather a war that saw two completely different and irreconcilable worlds pitted against each other: on one side a coalition of invading populations united by the cult of the new usurper Gods, determined to annihilate everything that did not conform to their own vision of the world; on the other the last bastion of the Aegean-Minoan culture, a union of similar populations whose intent was to strenuously defend their own cultural and religious identity (the cult of the ancient Titan Gods) and their own heritage of values.

With the disastrous fall of Troy, that was the greatest religious and cultural center of the Lelegic-Pelasgian and Aegean populations, the great heritage of wisdom of these civilizations was secretly transferred to Attica, in a small town overlooking the Gulf of Salamis: Eleusis. It is here, in fact, that Tradition says that the Titan Goddess Demeter arrived, incarnated in human guise, in search of her daughter Kore, taken away from her by the Olympian Gods - on the orders of Zeus - to prevent her mission of redemption of humanity from being fulfilled. And it is also here, in the same year of Her arrival (1,216 BC) that the Goddess instituted the Sacred Mysteries, pronouncing the Discourse of Revelation. From that moment on, Eleusis became the greatest point of reference for all those who recognized themselves in the "One and True Faith", or in the cult of the ancient Titan Gods, becoming a center of initiation and cultural irradiation without precedent in the ancient world. So much so that, from all over the then

known world, they began to go there in thousands to be initiated. And, by extension, throughout the then known world, Eleusinian Temples and Sanctuaries began to arise and prosper.



Cretan seal from the Minoan period

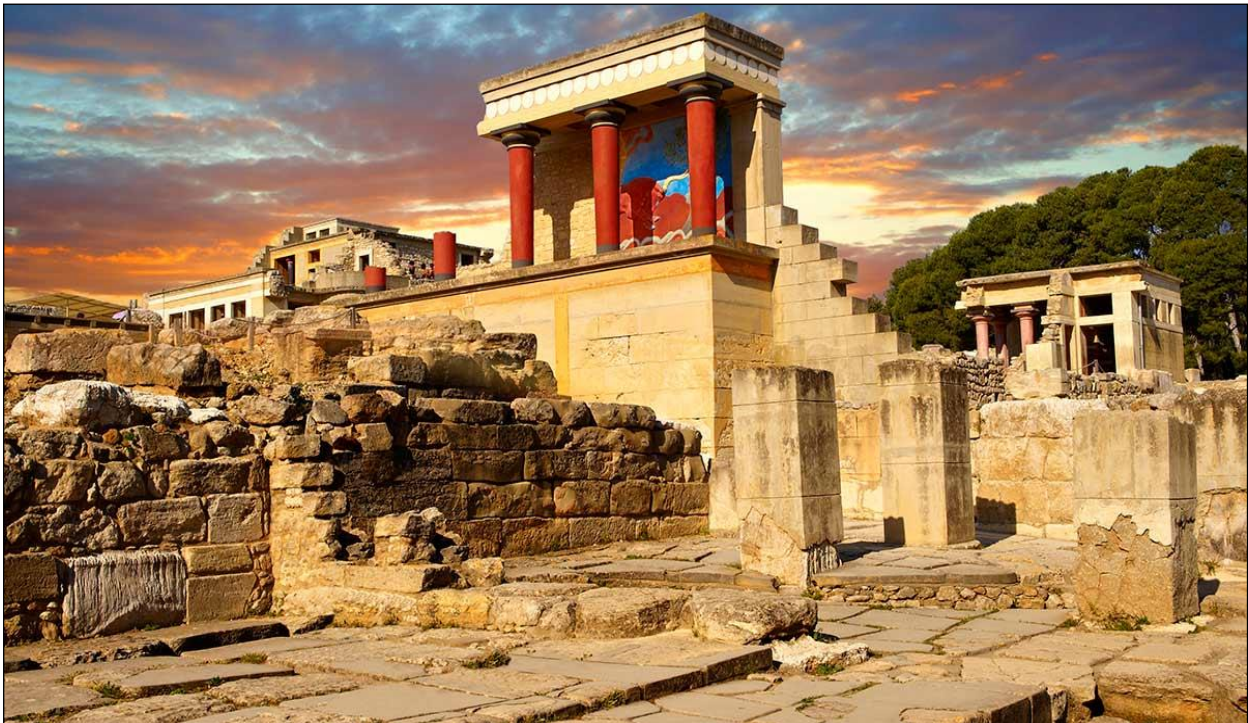
Eleusinity gradually expanded, through various historical phases, reaching all the coasts of the Mediterranean and all the regions of Europe, up to the misty lands of the North. There is, in the Eleusinian context, a precise schematization of these phases. The phase preceding 1,216 BC is called the phase of the "Proto-Eleusinian Consciousness". It was followed by the phases called "Old Eleusinian" (1,216 - 780 BC) and "Middle Eleusinian" (780 - 360 BC), in which the progressive expansion of the cult towards the Western Mediterranean, Sicily, Magna Graecia and the coasts of North Africa began. Then, there was the phase called "New Eleusinian" (360 BC - 50 AD), during which there was the great propagation of the cult in all the territories subject to Rome. Finally came the phase called "Late Eleusinian" (50 AD - 380 AD), during which there was the maximum expansion of the cult among the popular classes of the entire Empire, but which also saw the beginning, with the seizure of power by the Christians, of the great persecutions against all the ancient religions, including the Eleusinian one. Persecutions that culminated in the year 395, with the desecration and definitive destruction of the Telestérion and the other sacred places of Eleusis.

The origin of the Sacred Mysteries is therefore to be found in Crete and not in Egypt, as many historians of religions have erroneously written and hypothesized, based on the misleading

interpretation of some passages in the works of Diodorus Siculus and Iamblichus. As the origin of the cult of the Two Goddesses, the Mother and the daughter, is in Crete. The Eleusinian Mysteries spread, yes, also in Egypt, but they were officially instituted there in a late period, under the reign of Ptolemy I, thanks to the intercession of the Hellenistic sovereign (who had been initiated there) and of the Prytan of the Hierophants of the time, the Eumolpides Timotheus, who, as Tacitus attests, came specifically from Eleusis to Alexandria to solemnly preside over the Rites¹.

As Enzo Lippolis² points out in relation to the Cretan origin of the cult, historical testimonies explicitly speak of the Mediterranean island in relation to the development of the Eleusinian mystery ritual forms.

In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, when «the daughters of Celeus, son of Eleusis»³, having arrived near the sacred Kallichoron spring to draw water, not recognizing the true divine nature of the Goddess, question her about her identity, she answers them: «Gift (Δῶς) is my name: so indeed, my venerable mother called me; and from Crete, on the broad surface of the sea, I came without wanting it. With violence and coercion, against my desire, the pirates took me away»⁴, thus attesting - both symbolically and materially - her origin from the sacred land of the Minos.



Crete: the remains of the Palace of Knossos

¹ Publius Cornelius Tacitus: Histories, IV°, 83.

² Enzo Lippolis: *Mysteria: Archaeology and Cult of the Sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis*. Ed. Bruno Mondadori, Milan 2006.

³ Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 105.

⁴ Ibidem, 121-124.



Regardless of the indication contained in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, according to which the Goddess arrived in Eleusis incarnated in the guise of an old woman coming from Crete, what Diodorus Siculus writes is fundamental, confirming that according to the Cretans of his time «*the mysterious initiations from Crete were transmitted to other men*» and continues by maintaining that «*the initiation celebrated in Eleusis by the Athenians, almost the most famous of all, that of Samothrace and that celebrated in Thrace among the Ciconians (...) are all transmitted in secret, while in Knossos, in Crete, since the most ancient times there was the custom of celebrating these initiations openly for all, and the Mysteries, which among other peoples are celebrated with the prohibition of being revealed, among them were not kept hidden from anyone who wanted to have knowledge of them*»⁵.

Diodorus, who presumably was not initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries and who in many passages of his works also commits not insignificant interpretative errors regarding Eleusinity, here instead affirms an important double truth. Namely, not only that the Eleusinian Mystery Tradition and its rituals have their roots in the Minoan civilization of Crete, but also that, in that historical phase prior to 1216 BC which in the mystery sphere is called the "Proto-Eleusinian Consciousness", the Rites were not cloaked in the rigorous secrecy and vow of silence that later distinguished them. The cult, in fact, necessarily became mysterious only after the abduction of Kore and the arrival of the Goddess Demeter in Eleusis, who there, in 1216 BC, institutionalized the Rites under this new guise to defend and protect the Tradition and a complex heritage of wisdom that otherwise, due to the changed historical and political conditions, risked being destroyed or, even worse, falling into enemy hands. Therefore Victor Magnien is perfectly right when he states with conviction that «*the Mysteries of Eleusis are a new form of a cult that is in reality very ancient*»⁶.

This is a factor that has been recognized and confirmed also by the Hungarian historian of religions Károly Kerényi, who in one of his essays wrote: «*In antiquity the Cretan origin of the Eleusinian, Samothracian and Thracian - that is, Orphic - Mysteries was recognized in the fact that in Knossos (...) everything that was kept secret in those other Mysteries was openly accessible to everyone*»⁷.

In reality, things were not exactly in the simplistic terms expressed by Kerényi (a historian who, in my opinion, often fell into gross interpretative errors), since in Crete and in all the territories under the control or influence of the Minoan Empire the religious teachings, although - as we have said - less cloaked in secrecy and vows of silence - were not easily accessible or impartible to foreigners.

⁵ Diodorus Siculus: *Historical Library*, V°, 77,3.

⁶ Victor Magnien: *Les Mystères d'Eleusis*. Ed. Payot, Paris 1938.

⁷ Károly Kerényi: *Dionysus: Archetype of Indestructible Life*. Ed. Adelphi, Milan 2010.



Minoan votive statuettes (Iraklion, Archaeological Museum)

The exquisitely Cretan origin of the Eleusinian Mysteries is also fully attested by archaeological finds and numerous other pieces of evidence. Already in 1934, the great Swiss Hellenist Georges Méautis, professor at the University of Neuchatel and a Pythagorean initiate, wrote in his treatise *Le Mystères d'Eleusis*: «*The Telestherion, or initiation hall, has an architecture essentially different from that of other Greek temples in general: in reality, it is a large hall surrounded by steps on which the initiates sat, with the roof supported by a certain number of columns placed inside. Where should we look for the origin of this very particular construction? Most likely in Crete. The French excavations of Mallia, in fact, have brought to light a hall of considerable size that seems to have been the prototype of the Telestherion. This room measures ten meters in length, is supported by six columns and is preceded by a vestibule. Furthermore, a room in the Palace of Knossos, called the "Crypt of the Pillars", has a similar layout. (...) It is therefore not surprising that the particular layout of the Telestherion also came from Crete*»⁸.

The great Italian archaeologist Carlo Anti, professor and rector of the University of Padua, also came to the same conclusions a few years later, in 1943. Anti, starting from a completely different point of view, that is, from the study of the theatrical structures of the first and second Palace of Phaistos, of the second Palace of Knossos, of the theatrical tribune of the square of Gurnià and of the theatrical steps of the Agora of Lato and from the influences they had on the

⁸ Georges Méautis: *Les Mystères d'Eleusis*. Ed. de la Baconnière, Neuchatel 1934.



first known examples of Greek theatre, came to find and document the direct derivation, both stylistic and architectural, of the first phases of the Telestherion of Eleusis from these buildings⁹.

Moreover, it is not only perfectly plausible, but even obvious that the same cultural, sacred and religious basis, such as that which characterized the Minoan-Cretan civilization and that which determined the rise of Eleusis and its Sacred area, gave rise to the construction of temple and ceremonial structures built with the same architectural criteria, with the same forms and with the same functions. And the Telestherion of Eleusis, it must be remembered, was not properly or limitedly a Temple intended for the cult of a particular Deity, but - and this is its absolute peculiarity - a sacred building intended for Initiation ceremonies and for this purpose conceived and designed to accommodate numerous people, the place where the initiates received a real ritual death and were reborn to a new life, after having met, physically and tangibly, the Deities.

Already twelve years before the publication of Méautis's essay and twenty- one years before the publication of Carlo Anti's first conclusions, in 1922, the great Swedish archaeologist Axel Waldemar Persson (1888-1951), confirming the direct derivation of the Eleusinian Mysteries from Crete, already attested in the 19th century by the German philologist and mythologist Georg Friedrich Creuzer (1751-1858)¹⁰, thus summarizes his point of view on the question:

«In my opinion, the following points, which briefly summarize the results of our research, support the correctness of the thesis according to which the Mysteries have Cretan origin:

- 1) the oldest Telestérion is pre-Hellenic;*
- 2) the name Eleusis refers to pre-Hellenic Crete, and certain vases for ceremonial use, the kernoi and the sprinklers for sacrifices, are used both in the Eleusinian and Minoan cults;*
- 3) the shape of the Telestérion is certainly a development of the so-called Minoan theatres;*
- 4) the Anàktoron is identical to the Cretan repositories;*
- 5) the purifications of the Eleusinian cult come from Crete, where they originally belonged to the Minoan tradition;*
- 6) a double ancient tradition derives the Mysteries from Crete: Diodorus is independent of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, while Isocrates (Paneg., 28 b) depends on it, as do Dionysius of Halicarnassus (I°, 61) and the Scholia of Servius»¹¹.*

⁹ Carlo Anti: Eleusis and the Greek theatre. Ed. R. Accademia d'Italia, Rome 1943.

¹⁰ See A Körte: Archiv. für Relig., XVIII°, 1915, p. 118.

¹¹ Axel W. Persson: Der ursprung der Eleusinischen Mysterien (Archiv für Religionwiss, 1922, p. 308).



Graphic reconstruction of the Telestèrion of Eleusis

Nicola Bizzi



Nicola Bizzi, born in Stockholm (Sweden) on February 17th, 1972, graduated in History at the University of Florence, has been involved for many years in studies and research in the ancient mystery and religious traditions of the Mediterranean area. Writer, lecturer, columnist and publisher, he is the founder and owner of Edizioni Aurora Boreale, a publishing house for which he edits the series of mystery and initiatory studies Telestèrion and the series of political studies Politeia. He founded the journals Aesyrr and Novum Imperium, of which he was editorial director for several years. He is director of the Eleusinian Study Center for Mediterranean Cultures Sidera Tau 8, professor at the Eleusinian Mother School in Florence and holder of the chair of Mystical and Traditional Cults at the Free Italian University of Esoteric Studies in Lecce. He is the author of various historical and esoteric essays, including *The crisis of the Republic of Parties: from the collapse of the Berlin Wall to Tangentopoli*; *New World Disorder*; *Brothers Arvales*; *Half-relief and entire doctrine: the Pythagoreans in Florence*; *Egypt and the Eleusinian Mysteries*; *The Minoans in America and the memories of a lost civilization*; *The Minoan thalassocracy: the historical-archaeological divide and rule*; *From Eleusis to Florence: the transmission of a secret knowledge*; *Mystery Tradition and Philosophy*; *Thomas Paine and the Origins of Freemasonry*; *The Strict Templar Observance, Florence and the Unknown Superiors*; *Atlantis and other pages of forbidden history*; *Hypatia of Alexandria and the enigma of Saint Catherine*; *Al Ma'mun: a great Pythagorean initiate leading Islam*; *The Way of Eleusis: the path of elevation and the degrees of Initiation into the Mysteries*. He has edited various television and radio broadcasts on themes of the Western Tradition and on the mysteries of ancient civilizations and collaborates with numerous magazines, including *Archeomisteri*, *Iside*, *Satormagazine* and *Anubi Magazine*. He can be contacted by email edizioniauraboreale@gmail.com



THE MEANING OF THE MYSTERIES AND THE LIMITATIONS OF MODERN HISTORIANS

by **Nicola Bizzi**

Much has been written and theorized about the mystery cults of Mediterranean antiquity. There is a vast number of studies and essays signed by the most authoritative anthropologists and historians of religions in this regard, but we must underline how the guidelines of the majority of these works are influenced by two substantial limitations. The first is constituted, despite the abundance of classical Greek and Latin sources on religious matters, by the fact that ancient authors and chroniclers such as Herodotus, Pausanias, Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus and Polybius, while addressing the interpretation of myths and doctrines religious, they never go into detail about the rituals, contents and initiatory knowledge when speaking of mystery cults. And if they sporadically do so, they still maintain an attitude of closure and confidentiality on certain issues which, in the profane eyes of our contemporaries, could even appear "silenced". Instead, it is an obvious attitude of respect, derived above all from their adherence to the rule and vow of silence. The majority of certain authors, in fact, had personally received a mysterious initiation (and in some cases more than one), and were therefore well aware of the *limes*, the boundary line beyond which it was not licit to go when writing about the Gods. "On these Mysteries - Herodotus writes - which I know without exception, let my mouth observe a religious silence"¹. And certain other authors, such as Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, Iamblichus, Virgil and the Flavian Emperor Julian himself, when dealing with religious topics, did so as initiates, addressing other initiates, and therefore used a deliberately sibylline language, rich in symbols and metaphors. A language which, however, was perfectly understandable for their interlocutors, who held the correct keys of interpretation.

A Platonic letter expresses itself as such: "It is necessary to speak to you in an enigmatic form, so that, if something were to happen to the tablet, ending up in some recess of the sea or the land, the one who reads it does not understand anything"². In fact, as Soranus of Ephesus confirms to us, «sacred things are revealed to consecrated men. The profane cannot deal with it before being initiated into the Sacred Rites"³.

The second and main limitation that modern historians of religion suffer from is purely cultural. Two thousand years of Christianity and the prevailing monotheistic culture have in fact shaped the consciences and mindset of Western man to such an extent that, by addressing issues such as the spirituality and religiosity of the ancients, he is unable to fully understand how the Greeks and the Romans conceived and lived the relationship with the Transcendent and often

¹ Herodotus: Histories, II^o, 170.

² Plato: Letters, 2.

³ Soranus of Ephesus: Life of Hippocrates.

falls into the trap of the presumed moral superiority of Christianity.

A trap which, precisely because of the acquired cultural training, both at school and family level, leads him to mistakenly consider monotheism as a natural evolution of Western spirituality and an overcoming, in a positive and qualitative sense, of ancient "myths" and ancient "superstitions" based on ignorance. A trap into which both scholars with a "secular" approach and those with a Catholic, or in any case Judeo-Christian, education and approach inexorably fall. Both the former and the latter, in fact, base their studies, research and interpretations on the denial of the existence of the Gods and on the consequent assumption that, in the context of the ancient rites, they did not *really* manifest themselves in the eyes of the Initiates and faithful ones.



*Plato and Aristotle in a detail of Raphael's fresco
The School of Athens (Vatican, Room of the Signatura)*

It is sad to note how historians and scholars, who were initiated into Freemasonry, have often fallen into this trap (with the due exceptions of great enlightened minds such as Robert Ambelain, Jean Marie Ragon or Arturo Reghini). One presumes they should have acquired, especially if they rose to high degrees, the most correct interpretations for the interpretation of the relationship with the Transcendent.

I generally disagree with the analyzes and interpretations of the mystery cults of antiquity provided to us by Walter Burkert, professor of History of Religions and Greek Philosophy at



the University of Zurich, in his numerous essays, also published in Italy. But his denunciation of the survival, in the study of mystery religions, of some stereotypes and preconceptions that absolutely must be questioned, since they lead us, at best, to partial truths, if not to real misunderstandings.

The first stereotype denounced by Burkert is the one that sees mystery religions as "late", typical of late antiquity, the imperial period or the late Hellenistic period, *"when the brilliant Greek mind was giving way to the irrational"*⁴. Nothing could be further from the truth, because, as we will see in the following pages, the birth of the main mystery cults is to be placed in a very archaic era, precisely between the 13th and 12th centuries BC, in that delicate moment of transition between the of the Bronze Age and that of the Iron Age, a hinge in the history of humanity which everywhere saw incredible revolutions and transformations of a political, social, religious and, last but not least, climatic and environmental nature.

The second stereotype denounced by the Swiss scholar is that according to which mystery religions are "eastern" in origin, style and spirit. It is true that regions such as Anatolia, Persia or Egypt could in the past be defined as "eastern" on the basis of a purely Europocentric point of view, and that Egypt in particular was seen by some ancient authors as the cradle of civilization and religion. But we must agree with Burkert when he writes that even the so-called "eastern" mystery cults (the Mysteries of Isis and Osiris for Egypt, those of Attis and Cybele for Anatolia and those of Mithras for Persia) *«they seem to reflect the more ancient model of Eleusis»*⁵.

Finally, the third stereotype denounced by Burkert concerns the presumption that the birth and spread of mystery religions was dictated by a "spiritualist" turn, a fundamental change in the religious attitude of the ancient Mediterranean peoples functional or preparatory to the rise of Christianity. A stereotype that is linked to the unfounded theories of a hypothetical or presumed late-ancient "crisis" of "pagan" religiosity and which is the result of a distorted Christian-centric vision that is well connected to the cultural limitations that I discussed earlier. We can therefore agree with Burkert when he claims that *"the constant use of Christianity as a reference system when it comes to mystery religions leads to distortions"*⁶.

By continuing to read the next chapters, you will learn to see ancient religiosity from an unexpected and surprising perspective and you will understand how mystery religions represented a never-before-reached pinnacle of religious sentiment and the relationship between Man and the Transcendent, between Cosmos and Microcosm. In religious terms, the Mysteries ensured an immediate encounter with the Divine.

⁴ Walter Burkert: Ancient Mystery Cults.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.



*Marble bust of the Goddess Demeter,
Roman imperial copy from a Greek original, 4th century BC.*



It is no coincidence that a great Initiate, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, considered the Mysteries as one of the religious forms in which we can be certain that the Gods care about us⁷.

Nicola Bizzi



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⁷ Marcus Cornelius Fronto: Letters, 3, 10.



MESSIANITY AND ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES

by **Nicola Bizzi** and **Guido Maria St. Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi**

As was highlighted in the essay *From Eleusis to Florence: the Transmission of Secret Knowledge*¹, in the Eleusian Mystery Tradition humanity is considered the daughter of the ancient Titan Gods, defeated by the new Olympic Gods in an epic war, the Titanomachy, narrated to us by Hesiod in his *Theogony*, but whose memory and profound echo has always been present in all the traditions of ancient peoples, from the Mediterranean to the Near East, from Asia to the Americas.

In particular, Eleusian Tradition attributes the creation of this humanity to the four sons of the Titan God Hyaphethos (Iapetus, in Greek Ιαπετός): Atlas (in Greek Ἄτλας), Menoetius (in Greek Μενόϊτιος or Μενόϊτης), Prometheus (in Greek Προμηθεύς) and Epimetheus (in Greek Ἐπιμηθεύς), who created man and woman *in their image and likeness*.

This is what the Sacred Texts write about it: «*Prometheus took a part of Night, a part of Water and a part of Earth, kneaded them and shaped a figure in the image and likeness of him and his brothers. Presola, her brother, Atlante, blew into her mouth, giving her sacred breath, while her brother, Menethios, surrounded her with nerves and muscles and, standing her up, called her a man. Similarly, Epimetheus created woman*»².

The Texts continue: «*...took the beasts that roamed the soil of Taea (on Earth, ed.), remodeled them in their imprint and likeness and, seeing them Lan and Thn (female and male, ed.), called them Taahiv and Skefsket (man and woman, ed.). Thus, they perpetuated themselves, thus the human progeny of the Blue West was born*»³.

Eleusinity teaches us that Atlas gave man Knowledge and Life, Menoetius both internal and external Strength, Prometheus the male seed and Epimetheus the female seed. The Titans then, jointly, gave humanity the "Night", a term that expresses a concept superior to that of "soul" that we commonly understand, the very concept of the titanic divine essence, which, through and thanks to the work of these four Titans dwell in every man today.

Another significant passage, which refers to the Titan God Menoetius, reports the following:

...who girded the mortal race of Hyaphethe with nerves and muscles, You were, after Phlemethe (Prometheus, n.d.a.) shaped it and Hathlanthe gave it breath, to raise it on its feet, and erect you placed it before You, and, seeing her defenseless, you placed your spear in her hand. Which God placed his weapon in the hands of his creature? You alone, oh most famous

¹ Nicola Bizzi: *From Eleusis to Florence: the Transmission of Secret Knowledge*. Vol. I°. Ed. Aurora Boreale, Florence 1917.

² From a secret Eleusian Mother papyrus.

³ Ibid.



Tan, gave all your trust"⁴.

Following the Titanomachy and the religious overthrow that followed with the victory of the new Olympic Gods and with the establishment, both on a religious and social level, of the patriarchal regime, the Ancient Titan Gods, although defeated and partly imprisoned in Tartarus, they never abandoned their human children. Mystery Tradition teaches us, in fact, that two attempts were led by the Titans to redeem humanity and save it from the darkness of the cult of the new Gods.

In this chapter we will address the messianic role played by deities such as Leto, Demeter and Kore-Persephone precisely in the context of these attempts at redemption, but to do so we must necessarily start from afar.

The first of these attempts was to envisage the birth of a Savior, a redeeming Divinity who would lead humanity to Salvation and a return to full self-consciousness. This redeeming Divinity should have been generated by the Goddess Leto (Λητώ), also known in classical times as Lada or Latona, the sweetest of the Titanic Divinities, the «*Lady of the Night Darkness with the Brown Mantle*»⁵.

Leto, or Letho, whose name, according to Guido Maria Stelvio Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi⁶, derives from Αανθαναω (Aanthànao, i.e. "hidden star"), is a stellar Goddess of Titanic lineage. The word "Titania" always appears in front of her name, which must be distinguished from the more generic word "Titana". According to the Hierogonia of the Eleusinian Mother, and also according to the archaic Aegean-Mediterranean tradition, Titania Leto was generated, together with her sister Asteria (Ἄστερία), by the Titan Keys (Κοῖος, Ceòs, Coiòs), and by the Titan Phoebe (Φοίβη, Phoebe). This is confirmed in Hesiod's Theogony in verses 404-410.

Keys is the Titan of albino (white, daylight) light and He, like His Kingdom, represents the Celestial Pole of our galaxy. That is, it is identified with the constellation Draco (Dragon), whose most famous star is Thuban Giogo del Cielo, or Alpha 11 Draconis, which was the ancient North Star. Phoebe is instead the Titan of the light of Darkness. Among her names there are those of "Silvery", "Bright", "Shining", "Nocturnal" one.

Letho's sister, the Titan Asteria (from Ασθρ = Asthr, Aster, i.e. "astro", "star"), is the Goddess «*of the Starry Night with the blue peplos*»⁷, also called "Honorata", to whom the God Ennosigeo-Poseidon donated, according to Tradition, a small floating island on the sea, which he anchored to the seabed. This islet, one of the Cyclades, initially bore the same name as the Titan Goddess, namely Asteria, and later changed its name to Delos.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ From a secret Eleusinian Mother papyrus.

⁶ Guido Maria Stelvio Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi: Titania Letho, Eleusinian Mother Goddess. In Aesy n. 3 (September-October 2012).

⁷ From a secret Eleusinian Mother papyrus.



The birth of the Goddess Leto on the island of Delos in an engraving by Diana Scultori Ghisi (1547-1612)

Paredra of Leto was the Titan God Kreys (Κριως, Kriôs, "ram", or Κρειος, Kreios, "master", "lord"), also called Megamedes ("Great Lord").

As Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi always underlines⁸, we know well that in the classical Hellenic period and also in the Doric period (and perhaps even earlier in the Mycenaean period), there was insistence on attributing the paternity of Letho's children to Zeus. But this was not the case in the archaic Aegean-Minoan, Pelasgian, Lelegico-Cycladic and Lelegico- Anatolian periods. The Hellenic authors carried out this distortion both for clear reasons of pride of lineage and with political-religious intentions, in a manner that was entirely functional to the political, military and cultural control that the new "Greek" culture, with its "Olympic" religiosity, exercised. on the indigenous Pelasgian and Lelegian populations of mainland Greece, the coasts of Anatolia and the Aegean islands. This operation of "syncretic" substitution was also facilitated by the fact that both Kreys and Zeus were represented, in the most archaic iconography, with the head of a ram on a human body.

In Egypt, Letho was known as the Goddess Uadjet (a name later Greekized into Uto, Utit or Buto), i.e. the Cobra Goddess, equivalent to the concept of "Darkness", similar to the Uraeus worn on the crowns of the pharaohs. Erroneously considered originally as a local deity of the

⁸ Guido Maria Stelvio Mariani of Costa Sancti Severi: cited article.



city of Per-Uadjet, built on the Nile delta, about twenty kilometers north of Sais (later called Βούτος in the Ptolemaic age, today's Tell El Farain), it became, at moment of the unification of the predynastic kingdoms, the protective Goddess of the Pharaoh and the personification of Lower Egypt, as the Vulture Goddess Nekheb was of Upper Egypt.

The Mystery Tradition of the Eleusinian Mother teaches us that the Goddess, to fulfill her mission of redemption of humanity, descended from the Celestial Pole (the star Thuban), arriving at the North Pole of the Earth of the human perishable. There she assumed the external form of a snow-coated wolf and descended from the North, crossing vast Europe, until reaching the Mediterranean coasts, where she was supposed to give birth to the Redeemer, the powerful divine son conceived with the Titan Kreys.

Zeus and the Goddess Hera were warned by some of their messengers and, made aware of what was about to happen, they were frightened and terrified, like all the other Olympian Gods. They were in fact aware of the existence of an ancient prophecy, which read: *"If Titania Letho generates a single child, the kingdom of Zeus will be overwhelmed, annihilated, and covered by the earth"*⁹.

So it was that Hera and Zeus, to avoid the feared return of the Titan Gods, prohibited anyone (Gods, Demigods and their mortal slaves) from giving asylum to the Goddess.

After having arrived on the Aegean coasts in the shape of a she-wolf, Titania Letho assumed, upon completion of Her Mission, an external human form. But all the "doors" of the Mediterranean world closed in her face and everywhere she was rejected and chased away. She had no choice but to head to the Cyclades islands, but there she too encountered refusals, as each of the mortals feared the wrath and revenge of the Lord of Olympus. Only on the rock of Delos, in open defiance of Zeus and Hera, she was welcomed and protected by her sister Asteria.

Her ordeal lasted for nine nights (symbolically the number 9 represents a "small cycle"), lying on the green slopes of the small Mount Kynthos. In the meantime, the Olympic Gods worked with magic to break Letho's generating force, and to divide it into two parts: in fact, if she were to generate more than one born, the prophecy would have been nullified. Only on the tenth night, Tradition always tells, did the Goddess manage to give birth with pain, grasping with her hands the tufts of grass on the slopes of Kynthos, where she was lying, while her eyes looked at the sky from which she was descent. But it was a twin birth: Zeus had partly won. Thus, it was that the Goddess generated two divine twins from the Titan Kreys,: Kynthia Artemi (Ἄρτεμις, Artemis) and Kynthios Phoebus (Φοῖβος).

According to a different version, Kynthia Artemi would have been born a few hours before Kynthios Phoebus, not in Delos, but on a nearby island, at the time called Ortyx (this island was later called Rhenaiia, while today it is known as Rhenia), and would have helped the Divine

⁹ Ibid.

Mother to give birth to her brother.



Latona and the Frogs, painting by David Teniers the Younger (1610-1690)

However, all sources agree in reporting that, regardless of the order by Zeus and Hera, the *Great Midwife Eileithyia* (Εἰλειθυία) arrived from the Cretan city of Amnisos to the aid of Titania Letho, the Goddess of life. This very ancient tradition, of Cycladic and Aegean origin, was very widespread among both the Pelasgians and the Lelegians. The latter, whose totemic emblem was the wolf, venerated the Goddess Letho herself in her wolf aspect. And the divine twins born from Ella took on Aegean-Cycladic-lelegic names derived from the site that had given them birth, namely Delia and Delios (the Delic gemini) and *Kynthia* and *Kynthios* (from Mount Kynthòs).

The Homeric Hymn to Apollo¹⁰ narrates the wanderings of the Goddess in this way:

*The immense space was travelled by Leto
during the pains of childbirth; and she asked whether she wanted to offer
one of these lands of refuge to his son.
But they trembled fearfully and no one
dared, no matter how rich, to welcome Phoebus.*

¹⁰ Homeric Hymn to Apollo, 45-65.



*Finally, the august Leto arrived at Delos,
and she, while questioning, uttered winged words:
«Delos, would you perhaps like to be the home
of Phoebus Apollo my son
and build a shining temple for him in you? Of course, no one
will ever come to honor you. I don't believe
you are rich in herds or flocks;
neither crops produce nor harvests nor many trees.
But if you hosted a temple of the darting Apollo,
all the mortals would come and offer you massacres
by gathering together; and always a fragrant smoke
of fat victims will arise from you, and you will be able to feed
your people at foreign hands,
so little fertile, so stingy is your soil."
So she spoke; and happy was Delos, and replied:
"Leto, of Ceos mighty illustrious daughter;
I would be happy to host the birth
of the archer numen: in fact, my name is obscure,
almost unknown among men;
famous, honored instead that's how I would become."*

As Guido Maria St. Mariani of Costa Sancti Severi highlights, "As soon as he was born, Kynthios already had with him the Great Silver Bow and the quiver full of darts, like subsidiary appendages of himself! Instantly he climbed at a quick pace to the summit of Kynthòs, in the middle of the night. The Great Arch shone, spreading a silvery glow all around, a cold light that illuminated the night. With this act Kynthòs automatically became Phoebus the Illuminator, the Great Archer, the Hekatebolos ("far-striking"), the Hekaergos ("far-striking"), the Argyrotoxos ("of the silver bow"), the Lycos (Wolf of the Lelegi), the Guanokaites "with cerulean hair" (this is how his hair is described, like the hair of the Pelasgian lineage)"¹¹.

Only later, as the Eleusinian Pritan Mother always observes, did the Dorians-Greeks attribute blond hair to this God, in fact changing his symbolism into that of a solar Phoebus and erasing his stellar nature, given that "Stellar Deities" meant only one thing: Titans, a Greek word derived from the Lelegico-Cretan term Tan. However, they forgot to change the bow of this solar Phoebus with a gold one, which instead remained silver. Initially, Greek culture identified him with the sun's rays, then later, avoiding the Titan God Helios, they identified Phoebus himself with the Sun. Obviously the subsequent Roman authors maintained this misleading interpretation in their works which drew heavily on Hellenic culture, despite it was clear that he was a nocturnal deity (Kynthios Phoebus was born on the tenth night of the Goddess' labor).

¹¹ Guido Maria Stelvio Mariani of Costa Sancti Severi: cited article.



Furthermore, the Greeks of Olympic culture and religion attempted, and fully succeeded, to assimilate the figure of Kynthios Phoebus to that of one of their Nordic divinities, a simple shepherd God and nothing more, Apollo (Ἀπόλλων), who certainly nothing could connect to the Sun, much less to Delos. From here it is clear that a good part of the interpretation that modern mythologists and religious historians have given us of the so-called "classical mythology" is fundamentally incorrect and needs to be rewritten.

So far, we have seen how the first attempt at the redemption of humanity by the Titan Gods was not successful due to the plots of the Olympic Gods, and how the Goddess Leto, instead of generating the God that everyone was waiting for, gave birth on the island of Delos two Divine Twins: Artemis and Phoebus. As important as these two Divinities proved to be for humanity, they were unable to fulfill the mission of recovery and redemption that would have fallen to the Divine Child. The strength and power that the latter should have had, in fact, turned out to be split into the two new Divinities and it was not possible to carry out the desired mission. The Olympic Gods had thwarted what they considered a terrible prophecy which, if it had come true, would have decreed the end of their dominion. But we will see how their temporary victory has generated a new prophecy, even more terrible than the first. But, before explaining what it is, let's focus on the following passage, taken from Book VI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

*And since then, everyone, men and women, fear the manifesting
of divine wrath and with greater zeal everyone pays honors
to the tremendous power of the Goddess mother of twins;
and as it happens, from the recent event they go back to the previous ones.
«Even in the lands of fertile Lycia», says one, «it happened
once upon a time that the peasants despised the Goddess at their own risk.
The matter is little known, truly so, due to the modesty of the characters,
yet surprising. With my own eyes I saw the swamp and the place
famous for the prodigy. My father, too old now
to face the journey, had ordered me to bring him
from Lycia some thoroughbred oxen and had given me as a guide
a man from that region. While I was scouring the pastures with him,
here an old altar caught my eye in the middle of a lake
blackened by the fire of rituals and surrounded by a fluttering of reeds.
My guide stopped, whispering fearfully:
«Protect me, please», and like him I too whispered «Protect me».
But then I asked him to whom the altar was consecrated, if to some Naiad,
to a Faun or a local Deity. He replied to me:
«It is not to a God of the mountains, my boy, that this altar is sacred:
the Goddess who was once banished from the world by the consort of Jupiter
considers it her own, the Goddess who was welcomed in her wanderings from Delos,
when like a floating island she lightly wandered.
There, leaning on a palm and the Pallas tree,*



*Latona gave birth to twins, despite her stepmother.
And it is said that from there, after giving birth, to escape Juno
she would flee carrying her children, those two divine beings, in her bosom.
Having reached the homeland of the Chimera, in the territory of Lycia,
under the fiery sun that burned the fields, exhausted from running,
due to the oppressive heat, she felt parched with thirst:
her hungry children had emptied her breasts of all her milk.
Luckily, she saw in the distance, at the bottom of a valley,
a small lake: some farmers were harvesting osier filled with buds, rushes and marsh algae.
Having approached, the Titan's daughter bowed down,
bending one knee to the ground to draw water and drink.
But that mob forbade her, forcing her to reply:
«Why do you deny me water? Everyone has the right to it.
Nature has given to no one as property the sun and the air
or clear water: I have approached a common good
and despite this I beg you to give me a gift. I did not intend to wash
my tired body and limbs here,
but only to quench my thirst. I speak, yes, but my mouth is dry
and the throat is all a fire, so much so that the voice can barely pass through.
A sip of water will be nectar for me, and I will have to admit
of having regained my life: with the water you will give it to me.
And at least have mercy on these who tend from my breast
their little arms." And at that moment the little ones held out to her.
Who wouldn't be moved by the sweet words of the Goddess?
Those on the other hand, faced with prayers, persist in the prohibition
and they add threats if she would not leave, and insults her on top of that.
And as if that wasn't enough with hands and feet
they muddy the lake and with malice from the bottom of its bed
they raise the mud by jumping here and there.
Anger makes Ceo's daughter forget her thirst:
she no longer pleads with those unworthy people, she does not lower herself further
to speeches that humiliate a Goddess; she raises his palms to her stars and:
«May you live forever in this pond!» she shouts.
And the vow comes true: since then they have enjoyed being in the water,
sometimes to dive with the whole body to the bottom of the pond,
others stick their heads out or swim on the surface of the water,
often they stop on the shore, often to dive back
in the freezing lake. But they never stop exercising
their gossips in arguments and without any shame,
even being underwater, underwater they try to curse.
Their voice has become hoarse, their swollen cheeks swell*

and the same insults dilate their enormous mouths even more. The head is sunken into the shoulders, the neck seems to be missing; the back is green and the belly, which is almost the entire body, is whitish: having assumed the appearance of frogs, they wallow in the mud of the marsh."¹²

Three aspects are listed in the narrative: Mere, Pond and Swamp. They, according to the interpretation of Guido Maria Stelvio Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi, have a very specific esoteric and revelatory meaning.

The Pond represents the condition of the human community, and through this the single individuals, whose life is the daily repetition of a routine without any sense of goal. That is, it is the condition of the so-called common man, who leads his monotonous and repetitive life in work activities, without worrying about the great goals of the Universe, about the so-called "thoughts bigger than himself". The pond is under the aegis of Zeus, it is his territory where mankind is compared to the repetitive way of life of frogs.



Latona and the Frogs, painting by the Flemish School (18th century)

¹² Publius Ovid Naso: Metamorphoses, Book VI

The Swamp is the condition of perdition, resulting from the pond, the lowest level to which humanity can descend, already set towards self-destruction by its own institutions; the lowest level of civil respect, of any value of honesty. The Swamp, from which it is no longer possible to ascend, is the territory of Hades.

The Mere represents the noblest concepts of our and your atavistic conscience and memory (remember the Lake of the Titan Mnemosyne, and her Source, in which souls can drink to quench their thirst and then access the Elysian Fields).

Ovid's passage speaks of "Mere" and not of "Lake", because in the material world it is a rare element, and reserved only for those few who have the desire to evolve above the mass insensitive to the great works of thought. In the midst of a human species that has become stupid and ignorant of great concepts, Titania Letho has created this "Pond" of Atavistic Consciousness for all those who want to access it. She created it in an enemy land under the yoke of Zeus, and she placed her Altar there in the open air, an Altar of comfort and hope. She created it not in a large and rich city, not surrounded by an imposing and rich temple, but in a



Phoebus kills the Serpent Phytton, in a 16th century engraving



very humble place, devoid of all pride and all wealth, reminding us that She humbled herself there, and that she was poor and deprived of everything, wandering and pursued. And that she had repressed her divine and stellar power to accept the humble human condition. And only afterwards, having lost all hope of saving that part of humanity that was deviant and adept of Zeus, she found herself forced to judge them for what they were.

According to the Pritan of the Hierophants of the Mother Eleusinians, and as the ancient Mystagogues and Hierophants already supported in the past, the "Pond of Frogs" also symbolizes a terrible prophecy regarding the inevitable collapse and end of the fifth human civilization (the current one). A prophecy that I am not allowed to report here, but which is nevertheless very similar to another prophecy made by the Goddess Kore-Persephone to the Eleusinian Mother:

*"Truly I tell you that a time will come when a new race will reign over the brown land with vast lands. At that time the lineage of man will be a vague and uncertain memory"*¹³.

A prophecy, this - let me say - is more relevant than ever, if we consider the disturbing events that the whole world has been experiencing since the autumn of 2019.

Leto, within living memory, was the first Deity to incarnate in the human form, with all the limitations that a fragile mortal body can entail. And in this body, She wandered through the lands of mortals, suffered hunger and thirst. She was hindered, offended and humiliated and finally managed to give birth to her children. She was followed, several centuries later, by the incarnation of Demeter and Kore-Persephone, in what is considered, in the Eleusinian context, as the second attempt at redemption of humanity by the Titan Gods.

The Mystery Tradition narrates, as we have seen, that in Hanebu (Crete), on a field plowed three times, the Goddess was united in a Hieros-gamos (sacred marriage) with a chosen mortal, Iasion (Jason). From their union Plutos was generated, a mythical divine figure symbolizing wealth, not material, but internal and spiritual, the very Archetype of Knowledge. The great Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, particularly active in the Caesarian and Augustan ages, in the fifth book of his Historical Library, entitled On the Islands, focuses on the birth of this divine figure, which however has always been seen in the Eleusinian context as purely symbolic in such a way :

"They say that Pluto was born in Tripolos of Crete to Demeter and Iasion and his birth is told in two different ways. Some state that the land, sown by Iasion and receiving the appropriate care, produced such an abundance of fruit that those who saw it gave a special name to the large quantity of fruit that had been born and called it wealth (πλοῦτος in the Greek language, ed.): this is why it has been handed down to posterity that those who have procured more than necessary have wealth. Others, however, say that from Demeter and Iasion a child called Pluto was born, who was the first to teach them to take care of possessions, to accumulate and defend riches, while previously everyone had paid little attention to gathering riches in large quantities and

¹³ From a secret Eleusinian Mother papyrus.

guard them carefully"¹⁴.



*Artemis the Huntress, also known as Diana of Versailles.
Roman marble copy from the 2nd century AD. from a bronze original by Leocare
(Paris, Louvre Museum)*

The intrinsic and esoteric content of these words will not escape the eyes of Initiates and the most attentive readers. Pluto represented in synthesis the intrinsic value of Knowledge and the richness of the spirit. It was thanks to the figure of this Divine Child that humanity began to cultivate its intellect and better understand the divine richness that is preserved within us all.

¹⁴ Diodorus Siculus: Bibliotheca Historica, Book V.



But Plutos won't be the long-awaited new Redeemer either. Having learned of Hyeros-gamos and the birth of Plutos, Zeus did not delay, as we have seen previously, in striking by lightning Jason and persecuting the Goddess everywhere.

Demeter managed to escape to Sicily, in the mythical plain of Nysa (near Enna), where she generated - from Ennosigeo-Poseidon - Kore, the Maiden of Maidens, the Word, the Truth, the Purity.

Aware of the role that this Divine Maiden would have had, the Gods of Olympus, one day, while Kore was busy picking some daffodils in a meadow, ordered Hades and Hermes to kidnap her to remove her from the control of the Mother.

Demeter searched for her Daughter for nine days and nine nights, enduring the violence of the Olympic Gods who wanted to prevent her from becoming the "Seeker". It was only the Goddess Hekhate who took pity on Her and advised Her to consult with the Titan Hyperion (later, in tradition, replaced with Helios), who said to the Goddess: *"Among those who dare to call themselves Gods in our place, the culprit is only Zeus."*

Demeter then decided to incarnate in an old woman and, starting from Enna (which, esoterically, in the Eleusinian context means the Beginning, the Departure), she wandered through the cities of men, finally reaching Eleusis (the Arrival).

The theologians and Initiates of the Eleusinian Wisdom and Mystery Schools have always been aware of the fact that it was certainly not accidental on the part of the Goddess Demeter, the choice of Eleusis as the place of "arrival", from which to start and transmit to humanity the message of the Sacred Mysteries. The small town of Eleusis, overlooking the Gulf of Salamis, in fact, in the 12th century BC, represented a sort of ethnic and religious "enclave", being populated exclusively by inhabitants of Aegean-lelegical lineage faithful to the ancient Titanic religion of Cretan derivation. This while in many other places in Attica and throughout Greece the Mycenaean populations who progressively descended into Greece from the North and the Danube regions already predominated. These populations, which - as we have seen - were characterized by cults and clearly patriarchal social patterns, in open antithesis with the most ancient and authentic Aegean religion.

Moreover, the choice of Sicily as the place of Kore's birth was not even accidental, and therefore symbolically as the place of the beginning, of the departure, of the genesis of that already written and immutable path that would lead to the arrival and revelation of the divine message.

Sicily (and especially Enna) and Eleusis are esoterically and inextricably linked by a single thread. It is always Diodorus Siculus who, in his Book V, can help us understand how ancient and strong this bond was:

"The clearest evidence of the fact that Kore's abduction took place in Sicily would be the following: the Goddesses stayed on this island because they extraordinarily loved it. According to the myth, Kore's abduction took place in the meadows near Enna. This place is near the city,



superior to the others in the beauty of violets and all kinds of flowers, worthy of the Goddess. It is said that, due to the scent of the flowers that bloom there, the dogs, used to hunting, are unable to follow the trail because they are prevented from physically perceiving the scent. The meadow we are talking about is flat in the center and very rich in water; while elevated at the edges, it falls sheer with cliffs on all sides. It seems to lie in the center of the entire island, so some call it the navel of Sicily. In its vicinity there are sacred groves surrounded by swamps and a large cave in which there is a chasm that leads underground in a northerly direction: according to the myth Pluto left here with his chariot when he kidnapped Kore. (...) Pluto, having committed the abduction, transported Kore on his chariot near Syracuse: he tore the earth, quickly sank into Hades and caused a spring called Cyane to flow, near which the Syracusans celebrate a famous festival every year (...) . After the abduction of Kore, Demeter, since she could not find her Daughter, lit torches from the craters of Etna, went to many places on earth and benefited the men who offered her the best hospitality (...)".

Diodorus Siculus (Book V) also quotes the verses of the tragic poet Carcinus, who had stayed several times in Syracuse and had been able to see with his own eyes the zeal and devotion of the Syracusans in celebrating sacrifices and festivals in honor of the Two Goddesses, the Mother and Daughter:

"They say that once Demeter the mysterious maiden / Pluto kidnapped with hidden counsel, / sank into the recesses of the black earth; / for the desire of the missing girl, her Mother, / searched for her throughout the whole earth; / Sicily on the Etnean mountains / full of fire with arduous currents / all cried; sorrowful for the girl, / deprived of grain, she consumed the lineage dear to the Gods. / Where the Goddesses are still honored today."

The sacred story of the rape of Kore, of the viaticum of sorrow of the Mother and of the arrival of the Goddess in Eleusis is - on a profane level - narrated in an exemplary manner by the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, a text by an unknown author whose writing dates back according to the historians to the 7th century BC, but which certainly derives from a long and previous oral tradition which only in that era was codified in the "Homeric" Greek language. It is part of a larger collection of thirty-three ancient Greek hymns called "Homeric" due to the linguistic style that they share with the works attributed to Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, with which they also share the poetic meter used, the dactylic hexameter. But it is necessary to keep in mind, as Filippo Cassola¹⁵ underlines, that the text of the Homeric poems is preserved in numerous codes, or groups of codes, to a large extent independent, through which we can reconstruct the Alexandrian editions (and, according to some, also the Athenian edition), and from even more numerous papyri, while the manuscripts of the Homeric Hymns date back to a particular archetype of the 9th century and, in the specific case of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, we only have a manuscript from the 15th century.

¹⁵ Filippo Cassola (ed.), *Homeric Hymns*. Ed. Mondadori, Milan 1997

Tradition tells that Demeter, still in the guise of an old woman, was welcomed into the court of Celeus, the King of Eleusis, and that she was entrusted with the task of raising little Demophoon, the last born of the royal family. The Goddess did not raise him with milk, but with sacred breathing and immersing him in a sacred blue and glacial fire.



Dante Gabriel Rossetti: *Proserpine*, 1874
(London, Tate Britain)

One night, the mother, driven by curiosity, was induced by her human nature to spy on the Goddess' actions. She saw this sacred blue fire and, not understanding what was happening to her, fearing for the life of the child, she let out a cry of terror. The Goddess, indignant, then placed the child on the ground and revealed herself to those present in her true essence and in her authentic appearance. Shocked and terrified, those present tried throughout the night to appease the wrath of the Goddess, until the moment in which, having taken the child back into her arms, Demeter pronounced what has gone down in history as the *Speech of Revelation*, handed down by the Eleusinians via mysterious ways.

The behavior of Metanira who, driven by concern and curiosity, had determined the interruption of the miraculous rearing of the child, who the Goddess would have transformed into an equal making him immortal. As Enzo Lippolis¹⁶ observes, this hides a precise initiatory metaphor and introduces the theme of death and detachment, of the interruption of a process of growth and knowledge which is and must continue to be secret due to the uncertainty and ignorance of human nature. The consequence of this interruption is represented by the wrath of the Goddess and the apparently unfinished nature of her mission as divine nurse, which requires the establishment of a suitable ritual process to keep it propitious. Demeter herself therefore reveals forms and contents of cult and ritual, also showing men hidden truths that can only be known and understood through an adequate initiatory path, that of the Mysteries. The Goddess, in fact, after having manifested herself to the Eleusinians in her true nature, arranged for a Temple to be built for her near the Kallikhoron source - where she had met, upon her arrival in the city in the guise of an old woman, the daughters of the King of Eleusis Celeus who had led her to the palace - and established the Sacred Mysteries, giving life to the most long-lived and venerable mystery and initiatory tradition that history remembers.

At Eleusis Demeter obtained the restitution of her Daughter, but only for eight months out of her twelve, having tasted, during her stay in Hades, the seeds of a forbidden pomegranate offered to her by Hades. The Maiden's Redemption role had thus been compromised, but not entirely.



*Votive Pinax depicting Persephone and Pluto
(Taranto, Archaeological Museum)*

After the offense of the kidnapping and the tasting of the forbidden fruit, Kore, the Word, the essence of Truth and Purity, was transformed into Persephone or, in an archaic form,

¹⁶ Enzo Lippolis: *Mysteria: Archeology and Cult of the Sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis*. Ed. Bruno Mondadori, Milan 2006.



Phersefhassa ("Ruin", "Slaughter", "Revenge"). From that day, she would remain Kore for the Eleusinians, but she would forever be Persephone for the false Gods and all their followers.

Thus goes a passage from a mystery text: *"Word of the Daughter: Oh, Eleusis listen! This is the voice of the Daughter. Listen then, Oh Eleusis! For the people of the children of the Titans, We are Kore, the Maiden of Maidens. For the false Gods and for the peoples of the earth who have enslaved themselves to them by worshiping them, We are Phersefhassa"*¹⁷.

Guido Maria Stelvio Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi

Guido Maria Stelvio Mariani di Costa Sancti Severi was born in Novara on 4 August 1943. Mythologist and researcher in the field of the ancient religious traditions of the Mediterranean populations, he was the founder, in 1988, of the Center for Eleusinian Studies Madre Sideralis Tau 8. Writer and lecturer, he is the author of numerous essays on the ancient civilization and mystery cults. He presides over and directs the Mother Eleusinian School and is, through direct family line, the 73rd Pritan of the Mother Eleusinian Hierophants.

¹⁷ From a mystery papyrus preserved by the Mystery Schools of the Eleusinian Mothers.

THE HISTORICAL PRIMACY OF THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES

by **Nicola Bizzi**



Marcus Tullius Cicero

Marcus Tullius Cicero, initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries, referred to them in his writings, not only in relation to their work of civilizing human customs, but also to the knowledge of the "principle of life" and the hope of a happy survival after death which initiation was able to confer: *"There was nothing better than those Mysteries, by which, having emerged from a rough and inhuman life, we were educated and softened to civilization, and therefore they are called initiations, because we have known the principles of life in their true essence; and we have not only learned how to live with joy, but also how to die with a better hope"*¹.

The primacy of the Eleusinian Mysteries over all the other mysterious realities of antiquity is also highlighted by Pausanias (110-180 AD, another famous Initiate into the Mysteries of the Two Goddesses): *"By as much as the Gods are superior to heroes, by as much the Eleusinian Institution is superior to the others that refer to the veneration of the Divinities"*².

The Mysteries of the Two Goddesses, the Mother and the Daughter, found an unprecedented diffusion throughout the ancient world, soon leaving the narrow Hellenic context and arriving in Rome as early as 496 BC, when, as a result of a serious famine, the soothsayers questioned

¹ Marcus Tullius Cicero: On the Laws, II°, 14, 36.

² Pausanias: Periegesis of Greece, X°, 31, 11.



the Sibylline Books, which as a response categorically indicated the necessity, for the sake of the salvation of the homeland and the community, of the introduction into the Eternal City of the cult of Demeter and Kore- Persephone, soon identified in their Latin form of Ceres and Proserpine. But already in the archaic and mysterious priestly college of the Fratres Arvales, one of the oldest and most respected in Rome, the secret cult of the Goddess Dia, an occult form of the Eleusinian Demeter, was practiced³.

As Cicero always confirms to us, *"Our ancestors always wanted the Mysteries of Ceres and the Rites dedicated to her to be performed with the greatest religious observance. Since they had been received from Greece, they were always celebrated by Greek priestesses, and everything in them was named by Greek names"*⁴. And again: *"And let no one begin except, as is done for Ceres, through Greek Rites"*⁵.

The great Roman biographer Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus tells us that the Emperor Claudius, famously initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries, was even determined to transport the entire Sanctuary of Eleusis to Rome⁶. Fortunately, he did not succeed and gave up his intention, which would have represented, both in the eyes of the clergy and the faithful, a real sacrilege, but his devotion to the Mother and Daughter and their Mysteries characterized his entire life and his human and political choices.

There were many Roman Emperors who initiated themselves into various mystery cults, even of Egyptian or oriental origin, but the number of them who decided to initiate themselves into the Eleusinian Mysteries, sometimes not stopping at the Mysteria, but also reaching high degrees, is truly impressive, and it is an indication of the great importance and consideration that the leaders of the Empire have always attributed to the sacredness of these Mysteries.

Apart from the aforementioned Claudius, whose first wife Plautia Urgulanilla, of Etruscan origins, was also a fervent Eleusinian, the initiation into the Sacred Mysteries of Octavian Augustus is attested by many ancient authors. Suetonius always narrates that he was not a simple Initiate, but that he went so far as to assume high degrees of dignity within the Mysteries: *"Initiated in Athens, he later learned, in the tribunal, of the privilege of the priests of the Attic Ceres, and having to discuss more secret matters, dismissed his council and assembly, and listened alone to those who disagreed"*⁷.

The inscription on a base in the sacred area of Eleusis on which the statues of Augustus and his wife Livia, probably also initiated into the Sacred Mysteries, rested, mentions the Emperor as *euergétes*, "benefactor".

³ Nicola Bizzi: Fratres Arvales. Ed. Aurora Boreale, Florence 2024.

⁴ Marcus Tullius Cicero: For Balbus, 55.

⁵ Marcus Tullius Cicero: On the Laws, II°, 24.

⁶ Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus: Claudius, 25.

⁷ Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus: Augustus, 93.



*Portrait of Plautia Urgulanilla, first wife of the Roman Emperor Claudius and fervent Eleusinian Initiate of the Mother Rite
(from Guillaume's Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum Rouille, 1553)*

Even the historian Lucius Cassius Dio, writing about Augustus, attests to us that “[after the battle of Actium] he administered Greek affairs and participated in the Mysteries of the Two Goddesses”⁸. And, he reports that, when the Indian Zamoras arrived in Athens to receive the Initiation into the Sacred Mysteries in the very presence of the Emperor, Augustus made sure that the ceremony could take place at a different time from the usual one: “Zamoras was initiated into the Mysteries of the Two Goddesses, which were celebrated on a date that was not the traditional one thanks to Augustus, who was himself an Initiated”⁹.

In fact, it is historically attested that the Initiation of Augustus took place immediately after the battle of Actium, the famous naval clash which took place on September 2nd, 31 BC, which put an end to the civil war between the young Octavian and Mark Antony, who had allied himself with Cleopatra. And, as Enzo Lippolis reports, the relationship between Octavian and the Athenian community, which had been part of the faction of the rival Mark Antony, seems to have been mediated above all by the Eleusis and his clergy¹⁰, very probably because the defeated also notoriously belonged to the number of Initiates. In fact, the Eleusinian initiation of Mark Antony is also attested, which occurred after the battle of Philippi, at the end of the autumn of 42 BC; an initiation which is also solemnly represented on the reliefs of the famous silver patera of Aquileia. Moreover, Plutarch of Chaeronea also mentions it when he tells us that “with his happy and amiable character he turned to listen to the eloquent orators and

⁸ Lucius Cassius Dio: Roman History, LI°, 4,1.

⁹ Ibidem, LIV°, 9.

¹⁰ Enzo Lippolis: *Mysteria: Archeology and cult of the sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis*. Ed. Bruno Mondadori, Milan 2006.



attended the competitions and initiations"¹¹.

It would take too long here to list the names of all the high political and military officials who, in the Roman Republican age, were initiated into the Sacred Mysteries. As Giulio Giannelli wrote, the interest and devotion that the Eleusinian Mysteries were capable of inspiring in those who could approach them did nothing but increase their fame, notoriety and authority, and Eleusis soon became, already in the Republican age, the destination of a pilgrimage for those who sought, among the religions of the time, the one that best reconciled the most ancient traditions with the new needs of the spirit¹². And being initiated into the Mysteries of the Two Goddesses soon also became a title of honor in Rome for the most elite and cultured men. Even if, as Giannelli always observed, it is necessary to distinguish the different purpose that the exponents of Roman nomenclature and culture wanted to achieve by initiating themselves into the Mysteries: for some it could certainly have been the achievement of a certain social status, a way to to be noticed or in any case to show off, but I believe that the vast majority of those who initiated themselves did so by pursuing a real and sincere spiritual need, pursuing a knowledge of the sacred that the traditional religion of Rome was not always able to satisfy.

We cannot help but remember the Initiation of Lucius Cornelius Sulla, which took place on September 84 BC, mentioned as follows by Plutarch: *"He landed at Piraeus and, having been initiated, purchased the library of Apellicho of Teos, which included most of the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus, who at the time were not yet well known to the general public"*¹³.

A fervent Eleusinian and Initiate of a high degree, was the aforementioned Marcus Tullius Cicero, who received the *spice of life* in Eleusis between 79 and 77 BC.

In those same years - some sources even say together with Cicero - Titus Pomponius Atticus, a great Roman writer and famous man of letters, was also initiated, and a few years later Appius Claudius Pulcher, Cicero's predecessor in the government of Cilicia, also received initiation.

Returning to the Imperial Age, Suetonius informs us that Lucius Domitius Enobarbus, better known as Nero, who was initiated into the Mithraic Mysteries, during his journey to Greece did not dare to be initiated into Eleusis *"since the impious and criminals are banished from initiation from the voice of the Herald"*¹⁴. The last of the Julio-Claudians, guilty of matricide, certainly feared the wrath of the Two Goddesses if he had transgressed this rule.

Of the Flavian dynasty, only the initiation of Domitian is known (*"Domitian witnessed the Mysteries"*), mentioned by Victor Magnien citing the *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellenique* as a source¹⁵. But it was under the Antonine dynasty that the bond between Eleusis and Rome

¹¹ Plutarch of Chaeronea: Antony, 23.

¹² Giulio Giannelli: The Romans at Eleusis, in Proceedings of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Turin, vol. 50, 1915.

¹³ Plutarch of Chaeronea: Sulla, 26.

¹⁴ Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus: Nero, 34.

¹⁵ Victor Magnien: Les Mystères d'Eleusis. Ed. Payot, Paris 1938.

became as solid as ever and that Romanism was deeply cloaked in the religious spirit, thought and Philosophy of Hellas. Marcus Ulpius Trajan, Publius Elius Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus and Commodus were in fact all initiated into the Sacred Mysteries. If some of them stopped at the Mysta, the case of Antoninus Pius and the philosopher Emperor Marcus Aurelius was very different, who reached at least the Epopeteia, and above all of Hadrian, who after his Initiation was Archon in Athens in 111-112 AD¹⁶ and even held high priestly positions.



Marble bust of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, also an Initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries

¹⁶ Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum, III^o, 1096; Helios Spartanus: Life of Hadrian, XIX^o, 1; Lucius Cassius Dio: LXIX, 16, 1.



As Lippolis attests to us, Hadrian was initiated into the small Mysteries in 112 or 113¹⁷, probably in conjunction with the assumption of his office as Archon and reached the second degree of Initiation, that of the Epoptheia, by 128, participating actively involved in the ritual celebrations of the Mysteries on the occasion of his visits to Athens, attested according to the chronicle in 124, 128 and 131. In his coinage, he sometimes took on the iconography of Ploutos, adding the indication "ren" to his name, dissolved in renatus (reborn), a clear allusion to the rebirth he experienced with the initiatory experience.

Thus narrates the historian Helios Spartanus: "[The Emperor Hadrian] sailed towards Asia and the islands near Greece, and presided over the celebration of the Mysteries of Eleusis, like Heracles and like Philip of Macedon"¹⁸.

In honor of his young beloved Antinous, who was initiated into the Sacred Mysteries in 128 (then tragically disappeared and deified by will of the Emperor himself), the Antinóeia festivals were established in Eleusis, with the creation of a place of worship outside the Sanctuary and with the location of a statue of the young man in a niche at the entrance to the underground building, right next to the Great Propylaea.

Hadrian's devotion towards Eleusinity was sincere and profound and he contributed with great dedication in a notable way to the expansion and embellishment of the Sanctuary of Eleusis, its Temples and the structures of the entire sacred area, which in his happy years of reign reached its maximum splendor.

Enzo Lippolis, citing as a source Kevin Clinton's excellent study on Eleusinian epigraphy¹⁹, mentions a Mystagogo of the Sanctuary of Eleusis belonging to the Kerykes family, exercising the functions of *Ieréus Epí Bomó*, honored by a statue and an inscription which traces the cursus honorum of a career lasting over sixty years, located in the area of the Sanctuary between 177 and 180. From this inscription, we learn that Memmius - this was the name of the Mystagogue - took part in ritual celebrations in which Hadrian had been present and who took part in the Initiations of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus²⁰. In fact, they were most probably initiated together in 176 by the same Hierophant (almost certainly Ioulios) who, in office from 168 until at least 192, was exalted by three epigrams for having protected and defended, by transporting them to Athens, the Hyeras from plundering and from the devastation of the Sanctuary by the Costoboci barbarians in the summer of 170.

Marcus Aurelius worked hard for the reconstruction of the Sanctuary and the Temples of the Sacred Area, as attested by a scholium of Sopater in the *Panathenaic Oration* of Aelius Aristides, in which it appears that the Emperor, who had studied in Athens and who had

¹⁷ Enzo Lippolis: Work cited.

¹⁸ Helios Spartanus: Life of Hadrian, 13.

¹⁹ Kevin Clinton: Eleusis. The Inscriptions on Stone. Documents of the Sanctuary of the Two Goddesses and Public Documents of the Deme. Ed. Archaeological Society at Athens Library, Athens 2005.

²⁰ Enzo Lippolis: Work cited.



honored the city as a disciple honors his master, among his merits he could include restorations and the gift of rich decorations to the Sanctuary of Eleusis²¹.

In the past, the news was very widespread that Marcus Aurelius, despite not having been a Hierophant, would have been allowed to access the most secret and inviolable area of the Telestérion of Eleusis, the Anaktoron. Marcus Aurelius, who had Herod Atticus as his Mystagogue, belonging to the Kerykes Tribe, to whom he had promised to initiate himself into the Sacred Mysteries in a letter addressed to him already during the Danube War, was undoubtedly the great continuer of Hadrian's work of embellishment and the growth of the structures of the Sanctuary, a work which earned him, in addition to the fame of a great Philosopher and Initiate that he had already gained, also the one of a great benefactor of Eleusinity. As highlighted by Juan Manuel Cortés Copete of the University of Seville, there are numerous works that bear his signature: from the full reconstruction of the Telestérion after the devastation of the Costoboci up to the completion of the Great Propylaea²², and he was glorified in Eleusis with one splendid and imposing clipeated marble bust which was placed in the pediment of these; bust still visible today within the archaeological area.

The exact date of the initiation into the Mysteries of Antoninus Pius is not known, but a long dedicatory inscription commissioned by the Aeropagus, the Boulé and the Démos, the institutional bodies of Athens, between 162 and 169 honors a Hierophant, mentioned as L. Flavius Leosthenes, twice ambassador to Rome to Antoninus and awarded the stróphion (therefore invested with his office) in the presence of the Emperor himself, who must therefore have already been initiated. According to Enzo Lippolis²³, it would be the same Hierophant who initiated Lucius Verus into the Sacred Mysteries, welcomed into the *ghénos* of the Eumolpids in 162 or 166 (more probably in the first date). In any case, the initiation into the Mysteries of Antoninus Pius is attested by an epigraphic inscription found at Eleusis, a celebratory inscription of a Hierophant (unfortunately the name is missing, having probably been reported in the missing last lines) who, in addition to having made himself meritorious in the defense of the Fatherland, he also had the pride of having initiated the emperor Ἀντωνῖνον. And it is also attested by the presence in Eleusis of a series of statues celebrating Antoninus Pius and his relatives.

Another inscription, mentioned by Victor Magnien, relating to the aforementioned Mystagogus Memmius (here mentioned as L. Memmius Toricius) "*descendant of Daduchi, of Strateghi and of Agonotheti*", who was also eponymous Archon and Epimeletes of Hadrian's Gymnasium, he also indicates that he was present at the Initiation of Lucius Verus²⁴, which took place in 162 or 166, the only two dates in which we know with certainty of his stay in Attica.

²¹ Schol. Aristides: Panathenaic, 183, 2.

²² Juan Manuel Cortés Copete: Marcus Aurelius, benefactor of Eleusis. Article for Gerión - Revista de Historia Antigua.

²³ Enzo Lippolis: Work cited.

²⁴ Victor Magnien: Work cited.

The sequence of Emperors, who were initiated into the Sacred Mysteries of Eleusis, continues with the Dominus ac Deus Septimius Severus, who “went to Athens, driven there by a taste for studies and sacred things”²⁵. It seems certain, as Giannelli documented, that his initiation took place several years before the energetic Senator of Leptis Magna earned the imperial throne.



Eleusis: clipeated bust of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, originally placed on the pediment of the Great Propylaea

A great Eleusinian was, in a subsequent era, Publius Licinius Egnatius Gallienus, Emperor from 253 to 268. Lover and protector of the arts and of the culture, he always felt very close to the Hellenic world and its spirituality, so much so that he was personally Athens, the roles of Eponymous Archon and member of the Aeropagus. He was initiated into the Sacred Mysteries at Eleusis in 265, as attested by a series of Antoninians issued on that date which portray him with a crown of wheat and the unmistakable symbol of the three mysterious ears. But already, as soon as he took office, a new Hadrian appeared in the eyes of the Eleusinians of all the provinces of the Empire. He conceived an ambitious plan of moral and religious transformation through which he believed it was possible to bring the Empire back to the enlightened lordship of the Antonines. On a religious level, he focused a lot on the valorization of Eleusinity, since he believed that only it could satisfy the spiritual needs of the popular masses, removing them from the pernicious influence of Christianity.

²⁵ Giulio Giannelli: Article cited.



As Guido Migliorati confirms to us, the term *sacra* with which Gallienus' biographer Trebellius Pollio identifies the object of the Emperor's interest during his stay in Athens is precisely the Eleusinian Mysteries. And the epigraphic drafting of a letter sent to the Athenians by Gallienus in 265, the year of his Initiation, refers precisely to Eleusis, the content of which is related to the Emperor's concern that the greatest *Témenos* of humanity were guaranteed the protection of a military detachment and adequate fortification works. The curator of the Eleusinian epigraphic draft of this letter to the Athenians was Marcus Junius Minucianus, a great scholar and initiate into the Sacred Mysteries, son of the rhetorician and sophist Nicagoras of Athens, who in turn, as Philostratus attests, was a *τοῦ Ἐλευσινίου ἱεροῦ κήρ υξ*²⁶, a *Hiérokeryx* of the Sanctuary of Eleusis, therefore a Pelorian, the third degree of the Eleusian Initiation. A family, therefore of consolidated Eleusinian tradition and of priestly rank, since even the son of Minucian, Nicagoras II^o, sophist and Neoplatonic philosopher who lived at the time of Constantine, is mentioned in an Egyptian inscription as *Δαδοῦχος*²⁷, torch bearer, a qualification of the *Epopteia*.

Gallienus continued the just fight of his predecessors against Christianity, but changed his tactics, that is, trying to bring Christians back to reason and to bring them benevolently back into the orbit of the State. However, he did not stop fighting *superstitio* on the basis of principles and, anticipating Julian, most likely on the advice of the priestly authorities of Eleusis, he took up the weapons of controversy against the new cult, entrusted to the Philosophy of the time in the person of its highest representative, Plotinus, famously initiated into the Sacred Mysteries, personal friend of Gallienus and his wife Salonina (also an initiate). In fact, he immediately proved to be against the violent persecutions carried out by previous Emperors, in particular by his father Valerian, and actually promulgated some edicts which, anticipating the one that Galerius would later issue in Serdica (an edict, moreover, of markedly Eleusinian inspiration), granted to the Christians a certain freedom of worship, even going so far as to have some confiscated properties returned to them.

This enlightened Emperor died, treacherously killed by a conspiracy, in 268 and with him his great dream of the moral, cultural and religious rebirth of the Empire died and a plan was interrupted which, if completed, would probably have made Eleusinity the primary religion of the state, thus changing the course of history.

The possible Eleusinian initiation of his successors is not attested (but not therefore excludable a priori), at least until Marcus Aurelius Numerianus, younger son of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Carus and predecessor of Diocletian.

While an Eleusinian initiation of Diocletian is not attested, although not unlikely, his wife Prisca (erroneously passed off as Christian by a certain patristic hagiography) and his daughter Valeria, second wife of the Emperor Galerius, both made Eleusinian, were certainly Eleusinian.

²⁶ Lucius Flavius Philostratus: *Lives of the Sophists*, 628.

²⁷ IGC, 4770; OGIS, 720-721; SEG XXXVII, 1650.

kill by Licinius. I spoke extensively about these two great Eleusine Martyrs in a chapter of the first volume of my essay *From Eleusis to Florence*.



Silver medallion depicting the Emperor Publius Licinius Egnazio Gallieno and his wife Cornelia Salonina, both fervent Eleusinians

The great Emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus, whose advent had been prophesied by the Goddess Demeter herself many centuries before, was undoubtedly one of the greatest standard bearers of Eleusinity, as well as the last great defender of Tradition, religious freedom and the imperial identity itself. He was initiated into the Sacred Mysteries in 355, on the advice of his Mystagogo, the Neoplatonic philosopher Maximus. He had met Maximus, to whom he remained linked throughout his life by a deep affection and sincere friendship, already in 351, during a trip to Ephesus, being introduced by him, together with Chrysanthus, into the study

of the Mysteries and lamblic Theurgy. As the rhetorician Libanius wrote, from Maximus Julian "he heard about the Gods and demons, about the beings who, in truth, created this universe and keep it alive, he learned what the soul is, where it comes from, where it goes, what makes it fall and what raises it, what depresses it and what exalts it, what imprisonment and freedom are for it, how it can avoid one and reach the other. Then he rejected the nonsense he had believed in until then to implant the splendor of truth in his soul"²⁸.



Gold solidus issued by Emperor Julian

After having been initiated into the Mysteries of Mithras, he arrived in Athens, where he met the Neoplatonic philosopher Priscus, a great initiate of the Eleusinian Mother Rite, who welcomed him into his house and introduced him to his family. As Emperor, Julian wanted him with him and Priscus, as Eunapius tells us, will be present with Maximus at his deathbed, consoling his final hour.

At the suggestion of Maximus, Julian went to Eleusis in September 355 to meet the Pritan of the Hierophants then in office, the great Nestorius, who initiated him into the Sacred Mysteries of the Two Goddesses. As Eunapius always tells us, in the temple of Demeter and Persephone, having completed the ritual purifications and crowned with myrtle, he participated in the symbolic meal, drank the Kykeon and met the famous Hierophant, who explained to him the

²⁸ Libanius: Oration XVIII^o, 18.



complicated symbolism of the ceremony and introduced him to the Mysteries²⁹. He then visited the Peloponnese, saying he was convinced that Philosophy had abandoned "neither Athens, nor Sparta, nor Corinth" and that its springs still bathed the thirsty Argos³⁰.

The Pritan of the Hierophants Nestorius, as Guido Giannelli attests to us, always remained very close to Julian, who had him accompany him to Gaul and had him as a precious collaborator to obtain the favor of Greece in its successful revolt against the hated Constantius³¹.

In those years, in 361 or 362 according to Giannelli, Vettio Agorio Pretestato and his wife Aconia Fabia Paolina were initiated into the Sacred Mysteries, again by the Pritan of the Hierophants Nestorius. Pretestato deserves particular mention here, as this Civis Romanus of a noble senatorial family was at the same time an extraordinary figure of politician, philosopher and writer, Initiate and Priest of various cults and mystery rites and a standard bearer and staunch defender of traditional religiosity from constant attacks tighter than Christianity. His career, both from a political and religious point of view, was so extraordinary that, with the justice of his actions and his actions, he even earned the respect of many Bishops and high Christian authorities.

The funerary altar of Pretestato and his wife, today kept in the Capitoline Museums, reports the *cursus honorum* of this extraordinary character. In the political field he was Quaestor, *Corrector Tusciae et Umbriae* and Consularis (Governor) of Lusitania, Proconsul of Achaia from 361 (on the occasion of this appointment, the great philosopher Himerius dedicated a speech to him) and Praefectus Urbi in the two-year period 367-368; in 384 he was Praetorian Prefect for Italy and Illyricum, and finally elected Consul for 385, a position which however he never held as he died at the end of 384.

During his mandate as Praefectus Urbi, Pretestato returned the basilica of Sicinino (S. Maria Maggiore) to the Bishop of Rome Damasus and put an end to the fratricidal struggle between the Christian sects, having the rival Bishop Ursinus expelled from Rome (while still guaranteeing an amnesty to his followers), thus restoring peace to the city. He had all the private structures built by Christians on the Gentile temples removed and had the Portico of the Dei Consenti in the Forum restored with the utmost care.

In 1834 the architrave of the Portico was brought to light with the following inscription attesting to the restitution of the place by Pretestato: "*Deorum Consentium sacrosancta simulacra cum omni loci totius adornatione cultu in formam antiquam restituto Vettius Praetextatus, vir clarissimus, Praefectus urbi reposuit curator Longeio vir clarissimus, consulari*".

²⁹ Eunapius: *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, V. Eunapius, also an Eleusinian Initiate, respecting the practice of hieronimia, in this passage does not mention the name of the Pritan of the Hierophants, but it is attested that it was Nestorius, in that moment not long into office. The same Eumolpid Nestorius, the last Pritan officially in office, who twenty-five years later, at the height of the persecutions, formally closed the Sanctuary, leading the Eleusinity into the clandestinity phase.

³⁰ Julian: *Panegyric of Eusebia*, 119 bc.

³¹ Giulio Giannelli: Article cited.



Although it was a simple restoration of the structures damaged by the Christian carelessness and hatred, this choice was highly symbolic, as the Dei Consentii were the protectors of the senatorial class and thus the aim was to reaffirm, in contempt of the intolerant "anti-pagan" policies of the imperial hierarchies, a strong link between the Gods and the organs of the State.

As Praetorian Prefect, continuing what he had already started in Rome, he began investigations throughout Italy into the demolitions of Gentile Temples at the hands of Christians, managing in many cases to bring justice and have those responsible punished.

In the religious field, he held the positions of Pontiff of Vesta and Sol Invictus, he was augur and curial of Hercules. He was initiated into the Mysteries of the Magna Mater Cybele and the Mysteries of Mithras, reaching the rank of Pater Sacrorum and holding the position of Pater Patrum, central authority of the Mithraic cult. The sources also indicate him as Hierophant of the Goddess Hecate, Neochorus of the Mysteries of Isis and Serapis, Initiate to the Mysteries of Dionysus and, as we have seen, between 361 and 362, to the Eleusinian Mysteries.

It is not attested by certain documentation that Pretestatus, in the context of the Eleusinity, reached hierophantic degrees, and therefore those late sources which indicate a «pretested Hierophant» who according to the Byzantine writer of the Justinian age, Giovanni Lido would have taken part as Pontiff, together with Sopater of Apamea, in the ceremonies for the foundation of Constantinople³².

As Proconsul of Achaëa, Vettius Agorius Pretestatos appealed against the edict of Valentinian I of 364 concerning the prohibition of nocturnal sacrifices in Greece, on the grounds that such a prohibition would have been intolerable to the Hellenes, who in this way would no longer have been able to celebrate the most sacred of the Mysteries, the Eleusinian ones. As Zosimos confirms to us in the *Historia Nea*, thanks to the action of Pretestato Valentinianus withdrew the provision.

He was a great friend of the writer or orator Quintus Aurelius Simmachus, also a great defender of Tradition, with whom he had an intense exchange of letters which has been partially preserved, and he actively collaborated, as well as with Simmachus, with Virio Nicomachus Falavianus and with other exponents of his cultural circle to the amendment and transmission of the texts of traditional culture, publishing among other things a Latin version of Aristotle's *Analytics* in the adaptation written by the philosopher Themistius. He has also been immortalized in literature as the main character of Macrobius' *Saturnalia*.

Pretestato was both respected and feared by the Christians and Sophronius Eusebius Jerome reports that, ironically addressing Pope Damasus I, who criticized him for his "pagan" intransigence, he told him "*Elect me Bishop of Rome, and I will become a Christian*"³³.

³² Giovanni Lido: De Mensibus, 4.2.

³³ Sophronius Eusebius Jerome: Contra Johannem Hierosolymitanum, 8.



After the interlude of the enlightened years of Julian's reign, there were no more Emperors of proven Eleusinian faith, with the sole exception of Flavius Eugenius, proclaimed Augustus of the West in 392 following the death of Valentinian II. Eugene, fervent Eleusinian and tenacious defender of traditional cults and the spirit of the *Mos Maiorum*, went down in history for his desperate attempt to overthrow the criminal Theodosius and thus restore religious tolerance and freedom for the ancient cults in the sign of a continuation of Giuliano's work.

The list of all the authoritative figures who, during the more than four centuries of life of the Roman Empire, were initiated into the Sacred Mysteries of Eleusis would be very long, and a list that included the most illustrious personalities of the entire world would be interminable. Greek and Hellenistic before the advent of Octavian Augustus on the imperial throne. This is therefore not the most appropriate place to attempt such a list, but we cannot help but remember that Philip II³⁴ and Olympias, father and mother of Alexander the Great, and Demetrius I Poliorcetes of Macedonia³⁵ received initiation, and that the sovereigns of the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt were all fervent Eleusinians, starting from Ptolemy I Soter, who solemnly inaugurated the Rites in Alexandria in the presence of the Pritan of the Hierophants of Eleusis, the eumolpide Timothy. Hiero, Tyrant of Syracuse, as well as a great scholar and patron, was Hierophant of the Two Goddesses. Alexander the Great, however, was sensationally refused initiation, as he was considered impure for some of his crimes.

Besides the heroic and mythological traditions that saw figures such as Heracles and Asclepius as initiates, the greatest philosophers of the Hellenic world embraced Eleusinity, starting with Plato, Socrates and Cleanthes, and, in particular, the vast majority of philosophers of the Platonic school and neo-Platonic: Pseusippus, Xenocrates, Philo of Larissa, Antiochus of Ascalon (Cicero's *Mystagogus*), Alexander of Aphrodisias, Plotinus, Porphyry, Amelius, Olympiodorus, Iamblichus, Syrianus, Damascus, Plutarch of Athens, Priscus, Proclus, Asclepigonia, Aedesius of Cappadocia, Sopater of Apamea) and numerous of the greatest writers, chroniclers and men of letters, from Herodotus to Pausanias, from Plutarch of Chaeronea to Apuleius, from Callimachus to Himerius, from Isocrates to Saturninus According to Salustius.

The greatest scientists of antiquity were Eleusinians, from Archimedes of Syracuse to Theon of Alexandria (father of the sublime Hypatia, also an initiate and extraordinary philosopher and scientist) and the greatest doctors, from the father of Medicine Hippocrates of Kos to Galen of Pergamum.

Galen wrote in one of his famous works, addressing one of his disciples: *«Pay your attention now more than if, receiving the initiation of Eleusis or Samothrace, or of any other holy Teleté, you were completely absorbed by the gestures and words of the Hierophants, considering this Teleté [which you are about to receive] as in no way inferior to those, convinced that it can*

³⁴ Tito Livio: *Ab Urbe condita*, XXI^o, 47.

³⁵ Plutarch of Chaeronea: *Demetrius*, 25.

*equally well make known the wisdom, providence and power of the Demiurge of living beings; and above all think that this Teleté that I now administer, I myself discovered it"*³⁶. And again, in another text of his: «*And this is not surprising, since some non-initiates have dared to read the Mystery Books. But those who wrote these books did not write them for the profane, and I have not written the foregoing for those who are not educated in the first principles.*"³⁷



Bust of Ptolemy I Soter
(London, British Museum)

³⁶ Galen: De usu partium, VII°, 14.

³⁷ Galen: De simpl. medical temper ac facult., VII°, Proemium.



Galen and Hippocrates, fathers of Medicine, both Initiates into the Eleusinian Mysteries, in a 13th century fresco (Anagni, crypt of the Cathedral of Santa Maria)

Demosthenes, the great Athenian politician and orator of the 4th century BC, also an initiate, wrote that *"those who have not been initiated can know nothing about the Mysteries by hearsay"*³⁸.

Returning to Rome, the Eleusinian initiation of Marcus Tullius Cicero is well known, to which I will make various references throughout this book, but less known are those of Publius Virgil Maron, of Marcus Porcius Cato, of Publius Papinius Statius, of Macrobius (which took place when Eleusinity had already necessarily gone underground) and of Quinto Orazio Flacco. The latter, in his Odes, wrote that he would not have had the courage to face the dangers of the sea in the company of someone who had desecrated the Sacred Mysteries of the Goddess Demeter³⁹.

³⁸ Demosthenes: Against Neera, 79.

³⁹ Horace: Odes, III^o, 2, 27.



In essence, the primacy and superiority of Eleusinity and its Mysteries can be well summarized by a passage from *De facie quae in orbe lunae apparet*, the most cryptic and initiatory text by Plutarch of Chaeronea: "all the men he knew, dedicating themselves to the study of the Sacred Texts and being initiated into the Mysteries, they could not be listed in one day..."⁴⁰.

Nicola Bizzi



Nicola Bizzi, born in Stockholm (Sweden) on February 17th, 1972, graduated in History at the University of Florence, has been involved for many years in studies and research in the ancient mystery and religious traditions of the Mediterranean area. Writer, lecturer, columnist and publisher, he is the founder and owner of Edizioni Aurora Boreale, a publishing house for which he edits the series of mystery and initiatory studies *Telestérion* and the series of political studies *Politeia*. He founded the journals *Aesyrr* and *Novum Imperium*, of which he was editorial director for several years. He is director of the Eleusinian Study Center for Mediterranean Cultures *Sidera Tau 8*, professor at the Eleusinian Mother School in Florence and holder of the chair of *Mysterical and Traditional Cults* at the Free Italian University of Esoteric Studies in Lecce. He is the author of various historical and esoteric essays, including *The crisis of the Republic of Parties: from the collapse of the Berlin Wall to Tangentopoli*; *New World Disorder*; *Brothers Arvales*; *Half-relief and entire doctrine: the Pythagoreans in Florence*; *Egypt and the Eleusinian Mysteries*; *The Minoans in America and the memories of a lost civilization*; *The Minoan thalassocracy: the historical-archaeological divide and rule*; *From Eleusis to Florence: the transmission of a secret knowledge*; *Mystery Tradition and Philosophy*; *Thomas Paine and the Origins of Freemasonry*; *The Strict Templar Observance, Florence and the Unknown Superiors*; *Atlantis and other pages of forbidden history*; *Hypatia of Alexandria and the enigma of Saint Catherine*; *Al Ma'mun: a great Pythagorean initiate leading Islam*; *The Way of Eleusis: the path of elevation and the degrees of Initiation into the Mysteries*. He has edited various television and radio broadcasts on themes of the Western Tradition and on the mysteries of ancient civilizations and collaborates with numerous magazines, including *Archeomisteri*, *Iside*, *Satormagazine* and *Anubi Magazine*. He can be contacted by email edizioniauraboreale@gmail.com

⁴⁰ Plutarch of Chaeronea: *On the face that appears in the Moon*, XXVI°, 16



A SIGLE PRIMORDIAL TRADITION?

by **Nicola Bizzi**

Many schools of esoteric and initiatory thought, both in the East and in the West, tend to support the existence of a Single Primordial Tradition and a hypothetical transcendent unity of religions. However, the Mystery Tradition of the Mother Eleusinians has always strongly opposed such a vision. And in this chapter we will explain why.

Moreno Neri, in his excellent and well-considered preface to the recent re- edition, by Edizioni Aurora Boreale, of Arturo Reghini's essay *On Western Tradition*¹, writes verbatim:

"The branch of Western Tradition, which is a single aspect of the unique and universal Tradition, has not lost its effectiveness and is still certainly the most compliant with the spiritual constitution and the most adherent to the fate and duty of an Italian and to its structure spiritual psychophysics. Before arriving at what René Guénon called "Primordial Tradition", Frithjof Schuon "Transcendent Unity", Raphael "Single Universal Tradition", it would be necessary to follow one's own tradition, the one most suited to one's nature, training and historical-cultural roots".

This is an impeccable analysis from a Latomistic and Pythagorean point of view, and which can certainly be accepted or shared also from an Eleusinian point of view except on two particular "nodes": the question of the alleged *uniqueness* of Tradition and of a presumed "transcendent unity" of religions. Regarding these "nodes", the Eleusinian point of view is rather clear and clear: we believe that the theorizations of Guénon, Schuon and Raphael, mentioned by Moreno Neri, reflect that fallacious cultural orientation which, in the wake of the syncretistic tendencies of late antiquity and the rediscovery during late medieval and Renaissance times of the Hermetic Tradition (which never had anything to do with either the Eleusinity or the Mystery Tradition in general), is linked to that deleterious relativistic attitude, unfortunately also adopted by various initiatory orders and also by Freemasonry, which historically resulted in the delusional idea of a presumed transcendent unity of religions in the sign of an equally presumed "Single Primordial Tradition" also contemplated by the Pythagoreans, in particular by late Pythagoreanism. An idea, the latter, that the Eleusinians have always abhorred and strongly refuted.

According to the Eleusian Mystery Tradition, it is not at all true that all the religions, that have been formed and/or differentiated over time, would indiscriminately originate from that "primordial religion" enunciated by the Pythagorean-Platonic vision, as they are presumed adaptations of the Palaios Logos in the form of one Hieros Logos specific to each individual spiritual form.

¹ Arturo Reghini: *On Western Tradition*. With preface by Moreno Neri and introductory essay by Nicola Bizzi. Aurora Boreale Editions, Florence 2018.

Furthermore, it would be an aberration just to think so. If we correctly identify that original Primordial Titanic religion in the most authentic Titanic religion which arose and established itself in that golden age when the Titan Gods still reigned with justice over this world, with the first traumatic breaking of the golden chain of Tradition occurred with the Titanomachy and with the victory of the Olympic Gods, the vast majority of the religions that arose and developed and succeeded one another among the various civilizations did so under the aegis of the latter, and not certainly under that of the defeated Titan Gods. Therefore, they have clearly distanced themselves from the Palaios Logos and the Primordial Tradition, adapting to doctrinal compromises and pollutions which have allowed the respective priestly castes to survive and exercise their control over the masses of the faithful ones, but have thus inexorably and inextricably linked to the katabasic path. These religions have given their followers only the illusion of possession of the *Sophia Aionia*, of the *Sapientia Aeterna*, while in reality they have clearly distanced themselves from it. If some legacy of the Palaios Logos, of the Primordial Titanic Tradition, can be partially recognized in such religions or doctrines, it represents only a pale and weak shadow.



Piero di Cosimo: *The Myth of Prometheus*, ca. 1515.
(München, Altepinacothek)

The most authentic Primordial Tradition, the one linked to the ancient Titanic cult, managed to survive and perpetuate itself certainly not thanks to the multiple religions that arose and developed after it, but *despite* them. Indeed, in the history of the last millennia, it has always been the object of systematic persecutions by them and their priestly castes, since nothing can scare the new usurping Gods and the priestly castes of the religions subservient to them



more than an awareness, on the part of humanity, of its true titanic nature and its potential, of a reunion of humanity with its true Primordial Tradition.

If we agree with Gemisto Pletho and the Pythagoreans on the real existence of an uninterrupted golden chain of the transmission of Tradition (a chain of which, as Eleusinians, we have been and continue to be the main actors), we identify with it, yes, the transmission of a *Primordial Tradition*, but certainly not the same *Sophia Aionia*, the same *Sapientia Aeterna* enunciated by the Byzantine Philosopher-Initiate and before him by the entire line of Pythagorean-Platonic continuity.

Although the true and definitive forced Christianization of imperial Roman society saw its peak under the reign of Theodosius, finding full legal "legitimation" with the infamous and criminal Edict of Thessalonica of 380 AD. (what the scholar Fabio Calabrese rightly defined in one of his articles as "the most infamous act in history"²). This dramatic catabasic and obscurantist involution of European civilization had decidedly deeper roots. If Constantine and his successors had metaphorically opened the door to the monster's cage and Theodosius had decisively thrown it open, allowing it to come out and unleash its dogmatic and persecutory fury, this monster had already been nestling in the folds of human history for some time. I am referring to a tentacled and creeping monster with many names and many faces, emblem of every counter-initiatory principle, which since the defeat of the ancient Titan Gods at the hands of the usurping Olympic Gods, has punctually raised its head again with its own emissaries of turn (Zeus, Dionysus, Amenophis IV, better known as Akhenaten, Moses, Paul of Tarsus, up to the prophet of Islam Muhammad), working incessantly in the direction of a submission of humanity and a darkening of consciences, with an objective not only aimed at mere domination or political power, but also and above all at wanting to prevent humanity from reclaiming that fire once returned to it by Prometheus, from eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, thus becoming fully aware of himself and of that titanic part that is naturally inherent in every man and every woman and which is just waiting to be awakened.

As noted by L.M.A. Viola in various of his works and, in particular, in his introductory essay to the *Treatise on the Laws* of Gemisto Pletho³, according to the Pythagorean-Platonic vision, humanity would have known in its early days an "Integral Divine Truth", in a paradigmatic time in which the Eternal Logos would reveal himself entirely in the Palaios Logos, in the "original immanent Divine Word", constituting the perfection of a "primordial religion", by virtue of the possession of the *Sophia Aionia*, of the *Sapientia Aeterna*. And up to this point there may be a certain concordance with the Eleusinian vision. But, according to the Pythagorean-Platonic vision, all the religions that have formed and/or differentiated over time would originate indiscriminately from this "primordial religion", as they are adaptations of the Palaios Logos in the form of a Hieros Logos specific to each individual spiritual form.

² Fabio Calabrese: How the Ancient World became Christian. Article on www.eretiche.net.

³ L.M.A. Viola: Introductory Essay to Giorgio Gemisto Pletone: *Treatise on the Laws*. Ed. Victrix, Forlì 2012.



*Friedrich Heinrich Füger: Prometheus Gives Fire to Humanity, 1817
(Kessel, Neue Galerie)*

And a single golden chain of "Divine Wise Men" (in the context of which Pythagoras would have had a fundamental role) would have allowed the uninterrupted transmission of the "original Divine Wisdom" in the many differentiated expressions that it has assumed in the different nations and among different peoples.

Again, according to this vision, paraphrasing some concepts expressed by Plato in the Politics, humanity would proceed according to a catabasic envelope⁴, established by "God", the same

⁴ The term Catabasis, associated with the concepts of descent and involution, derives from the ancient Greek term κατάβασις ("descent"), formed from κατα- ("down") and βαίνω ("to go"), and therefore literally means "go down". In ancient Greek literature it mainly indicated the descent into Hades of a living person, a recurring topical motif in many texts. In fact, we find the first literary example of Catabasis in the 11th book of the Odyssey, even if Ulysses does not actually enter the kingdom of the dead, stopping on the threshold. However, the descents into the Underworld of Orpheus, in search of his wife Eurydice, and that of Heracles, in the context of his last labour, remained famous. The motif was then taken up by the great Initiate Publius Virgil Maron who, in the VI book of the Aeneid, has Aeneas enter Hades alive, where he meets Dido, and the Elysian Fields, where the hero meets his father Anchises, who gives him



"God" who would have created the world and men, for which light of the "Divine Truth", and the tradition in the religious institutions of the various civilizations, would gradually become obscured, to the point of its complete concealment in the external life of men. And, in this inexorable katabasic context, the fullness of the light of the "Divine Wisdom" of the origins would be cyclically re-actualized, for increasingly limited periods and spaces and involving increasingly smaller parts of men and civil and religious institutions.

Due to this presumed katabasic covering, the traditional civilizations would have known - again according to this distorted interpretation - various phases of decadence and related crises, due to which progressive degradations of their state of original perfection would have been produced. This same katabasis would have caused that humanity would progressively move away from its "divine state" to leave room for the emergence of its "titanic" (sigh!) element, which would overlap with an "ancient nature" and a "primordial order".

Here it is absolutely necessary to clarify things, because we are faced with a vision that is not only initiatically incorrect, but also and above all profoundly distorted of reality and the state of affairs. A "vision" that I have no hesitation in defining as counter-initiatory and markedly Olympic, if not downright Dionysian, which overturns for its own use and consumption a whole series of concepts and initiatory truths typical of Eleusinity and the most authentic Western Tradition.

As I highlighted in the fourth part of the first volume of my essay *From Eleusis to Florence: The Transmission of Secret Knowledge*, as long as the Titans reigned over this world, humanity lived in the fullest and most total harmony and in symbiosis with its creators. Only following the religious upheaval that originates from the Titanomachy and the victory of the new usurping Olympic Gods did the deleterious and nefarious concept of hubris originate. And this is because, from that moment on, any attempt, whether by the defeated Titans to redeem and free humanity, or by the latter to raise their heads, to open their eyes and to relight the torch of Knowledge, was inevitably seen by the new rulers as an intolerable act of arrogance and pride, an "impious" act and therefore to be punished severely.

We Eleusinians have always rejected, categorically and forcefully, the principle of a presumed transcendent unity of religions, as well as the aberrant idea that there could be an "absolute esotericism" deriving from a presumed all-encompassing and unitary "Single Primordial Tradition", both in the forms and ways in which it was proclaimed and celebrated by the ancient Pythagorean Tradition first and by many personalities of Humanism and the Renaissance afterwards, and in how it was theorized at the beginning of the 20th century by René Guénon in his *Doctrine of Unity Metaphysics of Eternal Wisdom*. And even less so as it was more recently outlined by Frithjof Schuon in his essay *Transcendent Unity of Religions*⁵.

shows his future descendants, from Romulus to Augustus. But the most well-known Catabasis is certainly the one carried out by Dante Alighieri in his *Comedy*: a journey into the afterlife that the poet-Initiate takes accompanied by Virgil.

⁵ Frithjof Schuon: *Transcendent Unity of Religions*. Ed. Mediterranee, Rome 1980.



Paris Nogari: Allegory of silence, fresco from 1582 (Vatican, Hall of the Swiss).

The work recalls the danger of the word and the risk of committing sins.

The stork with the egg in its mouth next to man it reinforces the concept. Having to carry the precious charged (the shell contains a secret), it cannot make sounds under penalty of its destruction.

For us Eleusinians there is, yes, a Primordial and original Tradition, but we recognize it and identify it *exclusively* with the pre-Olympian, and therefore pre-Hellenic, Titanic religion. That great common religion which, before the religious and cultural overthrow brought about with the Titanomachy and with the consequent institution of the social system of patriarchy and the cult of new usurping Gods, was practiced and transmitted by all the peoples of the Blue West, therefore by all the European, Mediterranean and Near Eastern peoples, from the misty lands of Scotland to North Africa, from the Iberian peninsula to the mountain ranges of the Caucasus, from Egypt to the Danube valley, from Crete to Anatolia. That same religion transmitted in a golden age to humanity by the Titan Godly creators, by those Titan Gods of the lineage of Iapetus who created man in their own image and likeness and raised him to his feet, in full dignity, placing their hands in his hands. same weapons and their own instruments of power and infusing them, as a truly indelible mark, with their own vital and spiritual essence. Not only,



therefore, the gift of life and the immortality of the soul, but also Knowledge, reasoning and reason, the ability to learn and distinguish good from evil, truth from lies. The ability to learn and follow that one basic commandment that the Great Father Uranus left to the mortal children of the lineage of Iapetus: «*It is proper for fish, wild animals and flying birds to devour one another. But to you I give Justice, the Truth with a wide pupil*»⁶.

Without delving into the details of the revelations and the content of the initiatory teachings (which, for understandable reasons, I would not be allowed to do), it is still worth explaining a specific and fundamental concept here. One of the fundamental rules of Eleusinites, one of the first and basic mystery teachings that was given to those who received the salt of life in Eleusis, was to understand the meaning of the word *why*. Knowing how to find the courage to question everything, not being afraid to ask the reason for things, the reason for anything, had to be the first requirement of an Initiate. It is precisely with reasoning, with asking ourselves the *why* of all things, even those that may apparently seem simple and devoid of arcana, that we can truly understand them from every aspect.

In Eleusinites there is no dogma of faith, and the *Semnas* exist precisely to be revealed and understood through a specifically established initiatory path.

Whether we like it or not, despite millennia of counter-initiatory conditioning and uninterrupted domination of the new usurping Gods, who over the centuries have gradually manifested themselves under various forms and expressions, sowing false doctrines and generating new false "prophets" (and, with them, new religions founded on dogma and submission, on obscurantism and oppression), that spark, that Titanic Divine essence present in every man, has never been extinguished, and has represented for humanity, even in the darkest phases of its history, the only hope of redemption and liberation. That same titanic divine essence which, paradoxically (but certainly not by chance) is identified by the counter-initiatory traditions and by the Hellenic religion (irremediably contaminated by the Olympic-Dionysian pollution) as an "absolute evil", if not actually as something of "beastly" and "brutal" which would distract men from a presumed "divine state".

According to the Eleusian Mystery Tradition, humanity was in fact created by Atlas, Menoetius, Prometheus and Epimetheus, the four sons of the Titan God Iapetus. And this Tradition teaches us that Atlas gave man Knowledge and Life, Menoetius the Strength, both internal and external, Prometheus the male seed and Epimetheus the female seed. The four Titans then, jointly, gave humanity the "Night", a term that expresses a concept superior to that of "soul" that we commonly understand, the very concept of the Titanic Divine Essence, a perennial and immortal quid, as devoid of the axis of time, which, through and thanks to the work of these four Titans, still dwells today in every man, son of the Lineage of Iapetus. That same divine essence that still today so frightens the defenders of counter-initiatory traditions, so much so

⁶ Nicola Bizzi: From Eleusis to Florence: the Transmission of Secret Knowledge. I° Volume. Ed.



that they associate it with something "bestial" and "misleading", while in reality it represents the exact opposite.

Nicola Bizzi



Nicola Bizzi, born in Stockholm (Sweden) on February 17th, 1972, graduated in History at the University of Florence, has been involved for many years in studies and research in the ancient mystery and religious traditions of the Mediterranean area. Writer, lecturer, columnist and publisher, he is the founder and owner of Edizioni Aurora Boreale, a publishing house for which he edits the series of mystery and initiatory studies Telestérion and the series of political studies Politeia. He founded the journals Aesyr and Novum Imperium, of which he was editorial director for several years. He is director of the Eleusinian Study Center for Mediterranean Cultures Sidera Tau 8, professor at the Eleusinian Mother School in Florence and holder of the chair of Mysterical and Traditional Cults at the Free Italian University of Esoteric Studies in Lecce. He is the author of various historical and esoteric essays, including *The crisis of the Republic of Parties: from the collapse of the Berlin Wall to Tangentopoli*; *New World Disorder*; *Brothers Arvales*; *Half-relief and entire doctrine: the Pythagoreans in Florence*; *Egypt and the Eleusinian Mysteries*; *The Minoans in America and the memories of a lost civilization*; *The Minoan thalassocracy: the historical-archaeological divide and rule*; *From Eleusis to Florence: the transmission of a secret knowledge*; *Mystery Tradition and Philosophy*; *Thomas Paine and the Origins of Freemasonry*; *The Strict Templar Observance, Florence and the Unknown Superiors*; *Atlantis and other pages of forbidden history*; *Hypatia of Alexandria and the enigma of Saint Catherine*; *Al Ma'mun: a great Pythagorean initiate leading Islam*; *The Way of Eleusis: the path of elevation and the degrees of Initiation into the Mysteries*. He has edited various television and radio broadcasts on themes of the Western Tradition and on the mysteries of ancient civilizations and collaborates with numerous magazines, including *Archeomisteri*, *Iside*, *Satormagazine* and *Anubi Magazine*. He can be contacted by email edizioniauraboreale@gmail.com



ON THE WAY TO ELEUSIS: REGAINING THE ROOTS OF THE WESTERN TRADITION

by **Francis William Hamilton**

Nicola Bizzi, an attentive historian and a tireless researcher in the field of ancient religious traditions of the Mediterranean area, has put his signature to numerous interesting publications, but he is, above all, known for being the author of *From Eleusis to Florence: the Transmission of Secret Knowledge*, a work that is nothing short of monumental and unique in its kind, whose first volume, released in Italy in November 2017, and translated into English only a few months ago, has quickly become a true, real best seller, meeting a diffusion that is going beyond all expectations. even well beyond the Italian borders.

But Nicola Bizzi is not just a historian and a writer. He is also - and above all - an Initiate in multiple esoteric disciplines, an esteemed Freemason and - this is an even more considerable aspect - he belongs, both by a personal initiatory journey of more than thirty years and by family tradition, to the Order of the Eleusinians Mother, one of the oldest, most respected and impenetrable initiatory initiatives in the entire West.

Starting from the 1990s, the Mother Eleusinians, for a whole series of reasons that I will explain, decided to undertake a gradual policy of opening up to the profane world, starting from Italy. In essence, they have publicly revealed themselves, making themselves available for open discussion with other initiatory realities and making available to historians and scholars part of their enormous cultural and documentary heritage available. And, at the same time, they began cycles of public conferences and the publication of various books through a network of their own cultural associations. An operation, the latter, which also includes the publication of Nicola Bizzi's essays, which was authorized and legitimized by the Order of the Eleusinian Mothers.

Such a decision - which apparently in the Eleusinian and mystery spheres in general has not found unanimous consensus and agreement - must not lead to easy misunderstandings: the Mother Eleusinians will never spread their initiatory secrets in the profane world, they will never reveal to those who are not capable of receiving its own rites and rituals. Anyone who believes or hopes otherwise is surely deluding himself or acting in bad faith. As Nicola Bizzi explains well, the esoteric and initiatory knowledge is by its nature secret, but secrecy is not only aimed at preserving something from the profane.

Secrecy is also aimed at preserving the profane themselves (those who have not been initiated and who therefore do not possess the correct keys to access certain teachings and certain truths) from two fundamental dangers: madness and death. In fact, anyone who approaches the Sacred Mysteries without being ready, runs both dangers. Precisely for this reason, as the great Initiate Virgil tells us in the *Aeneid*, the priests of the sacred grove where the door that



gave access to the Underworld was located shouted to the profane as Proserpina approached: "*Procul este, profani!*" ("*Step away, you profane people!*").

Just as no one who is not a true Initiate can survive the approach of a Divinity, no one among the non-Initiates could maintain their mental clarity and not risk slipping into the abyss of madness by becoming aware of certain truths that would upset their own *forma mentis* and one's profane vision of things and the world.

The policy of partial opening of the Eleusinian Mother towards the profane world, according to those directly involved, intends to be aimed above all at clarifying the many misinformation and inaccuracies written regarding the Eleusinian Mysteries by religious historians such as Kerényi, Burkert, Macchioro and Clinton, but, mostly, to counter the delusional theses which have been advanced on the Mysteries by figures such as Robert Gordon- Wasson, Albert Hoffman and Carl Ruck, and to respond to the proliferation, in the wake of Aleister Crowley, of numerous so-called "Eleusinian" organizations (especially here in the United States) who, in reality, do practice aberrant New Age doctrines without rhyme or reason and have nothing to do with authentic Eleusinity.

Obviously, these are the "official" reasons for this partial opening. In my opinion, the "unofficial" ones are very different and I believe that they are based on the consideration that the time may now be ripe for a certain awakening of awareness.

If, on the one hand - following this "openness" - in recent years there has been a cautious but growing interest in the Mother Eleusinians on the part of some academic institutions (mainly American, Greek and British) and on the part of some university professors, historians and philologists who have evidently seen in it an extraordinary potential research opportunity, it is at least curious to note how in certain environments of the so-called "pagan traditionalism", especially in Italy, the openness of the Eleusinian Mothers to the profane world and their very decision to reveal themselves, to come out into the open, aroused a wave of dismay and, above all, a certain fear mixed with disbelief. And I'll try to explain the reason why.

A wave of dismay certainly not because - and this would absolutely have been more understandable or justifiable - they wanted to accuse the Eleusinians of having revealed who-knows-what initiatory secrets to the profane world (which in any case - and I know for sure - has never been done), but rather because the same Eleusinian doctrinal message, as it was exposed in a clear and linear manner by Nicola Bizzi in his essays, did not fail to profoundly undermine the preconceived and now consolidated schemes that many "pagan traditionalists" have adopted and made their own over time. Preconceived schemes largely due to the reading of the works of Julius Evola, Johann Jakob Bachofen, Alfred Rosenberg, Giustiniano Lebano, Giuliano Kremmerz, and to the idealization of an alleged "Italic Tradition" of solar and Indo-European origin (and - since here we go, why not? - even "hyperborean"!).



Arnold Böcklin: *The Sacred Grove*, 1882
(Basel, Kunstmuseum)

Accustomed to reading exclusively the interpretations - often inaccurate and misleading - that both modern historians of religions and the aforementioned authors of the Eleusinian mystical experience and the related Mystery Tradition have spread for decades, many "pagan traditionalists", while acting - of course - in all good faith, do struggle to understand one of the very foundations of the Western Mystery Tradition: the dualism and conflict between Titan Gods and Olympic Gods and, another not negligible thing, the contrast between Matriarchy and Patriarchy. And, another crucial point, the absolutely pre-Greek and non-Indo-European origin of the mystery cults and related doctrines.

Just as I was preparing, at the kind request of Nicola Bizzi, to write this text as a preface to his new essay *The Way of Eleusis*, he informed me, first via e-mail and then in some telephone conversations, of an interesting exchange of messages which had on an important independent Italian site, *Ereticamente* (www.ereticamente.net), which hosts numerous interventions and studies on History, Mythology and Western Tradition, following the publication of one of his articles entitled *A single primordial Tradition?* An article taken from a chapter of his essay, in which the Author exposes the Eleusinian point of view regarding the claims, by many historians and esotericists, to identify a presumed single primordial Tradition connected with an equally presumed transcendent unity of all religions.



A reader of the site writes, in a rather polemical tone:

"I am not a Christian and I am not interested in defending an Abrahamic point of view, but from the point of view of the pre-Abrahamic pluralist Tradition (mistakenly called "paganism") your views are absolutely considered foreign, as you place at the center of the question a sort of Manichaeic dualism between the Titans and the Olympic Gods, a dualism unknown in the Greco-Roman, Mediterranean and obviously also Indo-European plural pantheon. In this dualism you claim the pre-eminence of a presumed titanic, matriarchal and matrilineal initiatory Tradition, placing it as the only and true Tradition. On this point, we already note a certain exclusivism found in Abrahamic monotheisms, exclusivity which does not disconcert me as I believe it to be "useful" and inherent to certain traditional manifestations, but which can be disconcerting if associated with a kind of anti-exclusivist metaphysics such as it was the pre-Abrahamic one, to which you are referring. In short, I see a strong contradiction here: this clear contrast between solar and chthonic cults, which Evola also discussed, placing it at the basis of its morphology of ancient societies, is simply overturned in favor of the female element. But, while Evola placed the antecedence of a primordial unity at the basis of reasoning and therefore a reduction of opposites in its marked dualism, you place at the basis of reasoning the irreducibility of this dualism to any form of superior synthesis recognizing only in your Titanism (can I call it that?) the true Tradition. A bit as if a Hindu only recognized the tradition deriving from the Asuras, accusing the Devas of being "patriarchal" impostors. But this comparison can be made for all traditions, including Indo-European and Mediterranean ones, which see the clash between Gods and Titans as a fundamental moment in their metaphysics..."

Nicola Bizzi's rather polite response, articulated and explanatory, is visible on the site in question and I will not stay here to summarize it, since the content of this book itself, in its entirety, already answers these and many other potential doubts and questions.

As Nicola Bizzi very well explains in another of the chapters of his book, the deepest roots of Eleusinity lie in the culture and civilization of the ancient pre-Greek peoples of the Aegean Sea. They were all ethnically similar populations, characterized by black hair and olive complexion, who, since ancient times, inhabited the Cyclades islands, Crete, mainland Greece and the coasts of Asia Minor. Populations that were all part of the Cretan Empire of Minos, and who, above all, had two elements that united them: the cult of the ancient Titan Gods (dethroned, according to Hellenic Tradition, with a war called Titanomachy by Zeus and the new Olympic Gods) and the designation of one's offspring through the female line (Matriarchy). Another underlying theme of their culture was the common identification in the same sacred lineage, heir to a grandiose previous civilization. All populations who, in what has gone down in history as the Trojan War, took sides in defense of the last bastion of their own tradition, civilization and religiosity, desperately fighting against the Achaeans and other invading peoples, bearers of a cultural model opposed to antagonistic to the Aegean one.



*Giandomenico Tiepolo: Procession of the Trojan Horse, 1760
(London, National Gallery)*

In fact, another thing which is never sufficiently clarified in the historical context is the fact that the conflict narrated by Homer in the *Iliad*, rather than a commercial war, was a war of religion and the mortal clash between two opposing models of society and civilization and irreconcilable with each other. On the one hand, a vast confederation of populations of Aegean lineage, direct heirs of the Cretan Minoan Empire and characterized, as we have said, by a social model based on matriarchy and the cult of the ancient Titan Gods; on the other, a heterogeneous alliance of populations not of Mediterranean origin, who settled in mainland Greece during various successive waves of migration, united not only by bellicosity, but also by a patriarchal social model and the cult of the new usurping Olympic Gods.

If there is no understanding of this dualism and this irreconcilability of cultural and religious models that characterized the dramatic transition between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age during the 12th century BC, Nicola Bizzi rightly writes, the essence of Eleusinity and its Mysteries cannot be really understood.

After the fall of Troy, Eleusis became the last bastion of this Sacral Lineage. The choice of this small town overlooking the Gulf of Salamis, where, according to Mystery Tradition, the Goddess Demeter arrived incarnated in human form in 1216 BC to institutionalize the Mysteries, was not accidental at all. In a Greece, now largely dominated by those invaders who had banded together to fight against Troy, Eleusis represented, ethnically and culturally, a sort of enclave of Aegean culture. As archaeological excavations have attested, here the cult of the Two Goddesses, the Mother and the Daughter, was already attested since at least the 15th century BC. And certain secret documents and sacred objects, which were preserved in the city of Priam, had been transported to Eleusis in conjunction with the fall of Tarua of the



Teucrians, ensuring that they did not fall into the hands of enemies and thus allowing the perpetuation, according to a thread that would never be interrupted, the "Single and True Doctrine".

In summary, I wonder, where is it written that there must necessarily have existed a single, widespread and idyllic "pre-Abrahamic pluralist tradition" (said to be, more or less erroneously, "paganism") to which the reader is referring? Is he perhaps referring to the respect and the tolerance that existed, both legally (thanks to the observance of the *Mos Maiorum*) and culturally in Republican Rome and in the first centuries of the Empire towards different doctrines and religious confessions? If so, I can only partially agree with him, even considering that the Roman one, although characterized by a certain religious pluralism, was a profoundly patriarchal society, generated by a lineage of Indo-European origin and (despite the preponderant Etruscan influence in the early of its political, social and religious institutions) strongly contaminated by the cult of divinities decidedly similar to the Olympic Gods; a contamination that can be seen, moreover, in the Capitoline Triade itself. And the Roman civilization, remaining in the Mediterranean context, was certainly not the first to arise, develop and decline. It was in fact preceded by multiple civilizations whose history has always been characterized by religious wars whose underlying element has always been attributable to the dualism of the Titans - Olympic Gods, or in any case "Old Gods" - "New Gods".

Furthermore, it is not at all true - as the reader claims - that this dualism was unknown "*in the plural Greco-Roman, Mediterranean and obviously also Indo-European pantheon*". First of all, because there has never been a single "Greek-Roman plural pantheon" nor even a "Mediterranean" one. It is one thing to talk about the traditional Roman-Latin *religio*, which consisted, rather than in a religious doctrine as we can understand it today, in a real legal contract between the State and the Divinities, aimed at achieving and maintaining the *Pax Deorum*. It is one thing to talk about the many mystery cults present and well spread and rooted in Rome and in every province of the Empire. Cults that interested and involved a large part of the population and which based their initiatory teachings and rituals precisely on this dualism. A dualism that was well known to Homer, Hesiod, Socrates, Plato and many other great initiates, philosophers and men of letters of antiquity.

If we fall into the "Indo-European" discussion, then, we must necessarily consider that not only has there never existed a generic pantheon that could boast of this definition, but also that it was a common characteristic of all religious traditions of Indo-European origin a certain demonization of the ancient defeated Gods (the Titans), as a function of the glorification of the new victorious Gods. A demonization whose reflection we also fully find in Greek culture, in the context of a certain pro-Olympic literature.



*Frederic Leighton: The Return of Persephone, 1891
(Leeds, Leeds Art Gallery)*

The Indo-European origin has therefore never been an "anti-exclusivist" metaphysics, but exclusivist to the nth degree, as it not only excluded and marginalized the defeated Titanic Deities, even going so far as to make unrealistic distortions of the most ancient mythological events (attributing, for example to Zeus the presumed paternity of a whole series of Divinities who never actually had anything to do with him or with the other Olympians), but excluded and marginalised, demonizing it, even the titanic element which is inherent in every human being (the same immortal soul, according to the Eleusian Mystery Tradition), passing it off as something negative, brutal, I dare say, almost demonic!

It is therefore incorrect to state that "*all traditions, including Indo-European and Mediterranean ones, see the clash between Gods and Titans as a fundamental moment in their metaphysics...*".



If anything, it would be more correct to state that the religious traditions of Indo-European origin (therefore not of Mediterranean origin) base their metaphysics not on the clash between the Olympic Gods and the Titan Gods, but rather on the glorification of the victory of the former and on the demonization of the latter, the defeated.

As Nicola Bizzi underlined in his essay, what can be considered the most authentic Primordial Tradition of the Eleusinian Mystery Tradition, the one linked to the ancient Titanic cult, has managed to survive and perpetuate itself certainly not thanks to the multiple religions that have arisen and developed after it, but despite them. Indeed, in the history of the last millennia, it has always been the object of systematic persecutions by them and their priestly castes, since nothing can scare the new usurping Gods and the priestly castes of the religions subservient to them more than an awareness, on the part of humanity, of its true titanic nature and its potential, of a reunion of humanity with its true Primordial Tradition.

If we agree with Gemisto Pletho and the Pythagoreans about the real existence of an uninterrupted golden chain of the transmission of Tradition (a chain of which the Eleusinians were and continue to be the main actors), we can rightly identify with it, yes, the transmission of a *Primordial Tradition*, but certainly not the same *Sophia Aionia*, the same *Sapientia Aeterna* enunciated by the Byzantine Philosopher-Initiate and before him by the entire line of Pythagorean-Platonic continuity.

Even if the true forced Christianization of Imperial Roman society saw its peak under the reign of Theodosius, finding full legal "legitimation" with the infamous and criminal Edict of Thessalonica, this dramatic katabasic and obscurantist involution of European civilization definitely had deeper roots. If Constantine and his successors had metaphorically opened the door of the monster's cage and Theodosius had decisively thrown it open, allowing it to come out and unleash its dogmatic and persecutory fury (thus performing what Fabio Calabrese has rightly defined as the most infamous of History), this monster had already been lurking for some time in the folds of history, even in what our reader would define as "pre-Abrahamic" traditions. I am referring - to use the words of Nicola Bizzi - to a tentacled and creeping monster with many names and faces, emblem of every counter-initiatory principle, which since the defeat of the ancient Titan Gods by the usurping Olympic Gods, punctually raised its head with its own emissaries on duty (Zeus, Dionysus, Amenophis IV, better known as Akhenaten, Moses, Jesus Christ, up to the prophet of Islam Muhammad), working incessantly in the direction of a sub-mission of humanity and a darkening of consciences, with an objective not only aimed at mere domination or political power, but also and above all at wanting to prevent humanity from regaining possession of that fire once returned to it by Prometheus, from eating the forbidden fruit of 'Tree of Knowledge, thus becoming fully aware of oneself and of that titanic part that is naturally inherent in every man and every woman and which is just waiting to be awakened.

Finally, regarding the references to Julius Evola and the clear contrast between solar and chthonic cults that he placed at the basis of his morphology of ancient societies, it is obvious that in the Eleusinian vision it is reversed in favor of the female element. But it was certainly not



the Eleusinians who overthrew anything. If anything, it is Evola's vision that is based on conceptions and axioms that are decidedly overturned compared to those of the ancient Mediterranean tradition. In this regard, I would recommend, not only our reader, but also all those interested in an in-depth study on certain themes, to read Piero Fenili's excellent essay *The Errors of Julius Evola*, published in 1991 in two issues of the new series of a magazine of initiatory studies *Ignis*, directed at the time by Roberto Sestito.

Subsequently, the reader continues his intervention, posing a series of other legitimate questions:

"A final point on which I have serious doubts: I legitimately think it is your self-certification regarding an alleged authentic Eleusinian lineage of which you would be the last Italic representatives. This would mean a kind of Copernican revolution in European spirituality but, since I wasn't born just yesterday, I strictly distrust anyone who professes to be initiated into a regular initiatory organization that has survived for more than two millennia and is even operational today. In short, allow me to have at least one strong doubt on this point. Not that it is not possible that authentic mysterious veins might have reached us in very limited environments (...), but, given the countless counterfeits and pseudo initiatory chains of which 99.99% of organizations boast for pure proselytism, you would be a more than exceptional case and would involve possession of texts and knowledge not accessible to scholars, both academic and esoteric. In short, I wonder, if your qualifications are also hypothetically real, why no one has ever noticed such a gigantic initiatory possibility. In short, some irrefutable evidence is needed to affirm certain lineages... Finally, I conclude, apologizing for the length, clarifying that I have no prejudices whatsoever, but I also consider your assurance in dealing with episodes so far back in time to be very suspicious, so much so that it reminds me of certain theosophical digressions dictated by "higher unknowns" ...

Kind regards, without any controversy."

Definitely a strange environment, that of the so-called Italian "pagan traditionalism" (at least if seen through the eyes of an unrepentant American like me!). An environment in which readings of the works of Evola and Kremmerz are often preferred rather than the living and immortal sources of Hesiod, Plato, Plutarch, Virgil or Proclus. An environment in which great authors and interpreters of the most authentic "pagan" spirituality such as Thomas Taylor, John Toland, Robert Graves or Friedrich Creuzer (not to mention Marsilio Ficino and Giorgio Gemisto Pletone) are often ignored and in which an irrational prejudice dominates unchallenged anti-Masonic which even led to the marginalization and placing on the index of the works of a giant of initiatory and traditional thought like Arturo Reghini! An environment in which we can easily find everything and the opposite of everything, and whose glue, instead of being a true and authentic research and understanding of the origins of Tradition, is often reduced to being exclusively a sterile opposition to Christianity... but in the name of what? In the name of an idealized and romantic, I dare say almost "pastoral" "paganism", in which all the Gods, without any distinction, go arm in arm and run happily through the Elysian Fields!



Forgive me for this outburst, but you will understand how justified it is after reading certain things!

Apart from the fact that our reader demonstrates that he has not read works such as *From Eleusis to Florence* or other essays by Nicola Bizzi or otherwise authorized by the Eleusinian institutions (otherwise he would have already had the answers to all his questions), the question of survival and of the clandestine perpetuation, in an organic and organized form, of some strands of the pre-Christian Mystery Tradition, and of the Eleusinian one in particular, from antiquity until today through an uninterrupted thread, is absolutely not - as has been erroneously stated by some hypothesized - a "self-certification" of the Eleusinian Mother. These are documentable historical events which have also affected other "pagan" Traditions, primarily Pythagoreanism (Jean Marie Ragon, who was both a Freemason and an Eleusinian Initiate, famously documented, for example, the entire history of the perpetuation of the Pythagorean Order, from the 5th century AD until the second half of the 19th century), the Orphic Eleusinity (which was also secretly handed down within some monastic orders, including the Camaldolese) and other realities such as Isidism and Hermeticism. These are historical events that in Freemasonry, at certain levels, we know very well, even if - understandably - they are not talked about, if not only in passing and in a low voice, in the Blue Lodges. But, at the same time, it is an issue which, in a historical and academic context such as the Western one, pervaded and inevitably deeply marked by two millennia of prevailing Judeo-Christian culture, has always represented a sort of "taboo".

Many great historians and researchers, among whom we can include Edgar Wind, Eugenio Garin, Frances Yates, Károly Kerényi, Mircea Eliade, Walter Burkert, have often found themselves faced with the truth, glimpsing its significance. But, realizing that they could find themselves dealing with an overall picture that was not only extremely complex but also potentially explosive and dangerous - an overall picture that probably went beyond not their understanding, but rather the very limits of their cultural formation and their mindset - they preferred not to face it head-on, choosing more comfortably to go around it. But - History teaches us - a mountain cannot be climbed by simply hitting its slopes with an ice ax and ignoring its summit, just as Sultan Mehmet II did not conquer the mighty walls of Constantinople by practicing with a manual drill small holes on their base!

Especially Frances Yates and Eugenio Garin managed to see this symbolic peak, but, for a whole series of reasons known only to them (but which we can legitimately guess), they deliberately chose not to climb it completely, preferring to rest on its buttresses. Yates, a talented scholar but with some interpretative limitations, rested on a buttress called Hermeticism. And she settled into it so well that she ended up seeing Hermes Trismegistus and his doctrine almost everywhere, interpreting in a hermetic key writings, events and historical facts that in reality had nothing to do with Hermeticism, or branding as "Hermetists" great figures and Initiates of the past who actually followed and practiced very different doctrines, from the Pythagorean to the Eleusinian one.



Giorgio Gemisto Pletho

In my opinion, Eugenio Garin - and this can be clearly realized from his books - well understood the height and dimensions of the peak he proposed to climb, but he also understood its intrinsic danger. Translated into less metaphorical terms, he was able to fully understand the reality of the survival in an organic and organized form of the pre-Christian Mystery Tradition through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He also understood how fully bringing such a reality back to light could jeopardize his university career and his reputation as an academic. A free choice, his (even if questionable) choice, to partially remedy which he still wanted to insert in his numerous essays on Humanism and the Renaissance some fleeting but clear signals that attest to how much he really understood the issue.

Many other historians who have addressed (it would be more correct to say that they believe they have addressed) the theme of the Eleusinian Mysteries and the related mystery-initiatory tradition, have limited themselves - always wanting to speak in metaphors - to fleetingly observe the narrow panorama that they saw from their narrow window, without even seeing the imposing and unclimbed peak that rose on their horizon.

Nicola Bizzi, in a specially dedicated chapter of this essay, explains very well what are the limitations that certain contemporary historians find themselves having to face when dealing with issues relating to the sphere of the sacred of the ancients.

I can say with a certain knowledge of the facts that in the freemasonry context the coming out of the Mother Eleusinity arouse neither an excessive outcry nor a wonder. If anything, it generated a certain surprise, because many did not expect it and still today wonder what the real reasons for such a decision could have been. Many Brothers, in fact, "know" that, in the past, there have been, both in Europe and here in the United States, confrontations (but also heated clashes) between the leaders of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and the Rite of Memphis and Misraim and exponents of the Eleusinian institutions. Just as the cases of Free



Masons who asked to be initiated into the Sacred Mysteries were not rare. But, as Nicola Bizzi specified in his introductory essay to the recent republication of a text by Arturo Reghini, if in the history of recent centuries there have been quite a few Freemasons who have approached Eleusinity or who have asked to be initiated into it (and we could mention some famous names that would certainly surprise readers, laymen and otherwise), it has always been very rare for an Eleusinian to approach Freemasonry or to ask to be initiated into it. And this is because a certain consideration exists in the Eleusinian context which can be summarized more or less as follows: why go and drink from the putrid and muddy waters of the mouth when we have always quenched our thirst with the clear, pure and limpid waters of the source?

The coming out into the open of the Mother Eleusinians, to answer our reader, really represented a Copernican revolution (a little curiosity that perhaps he doesn't know: Mikołaj Kopernik was an Eleusinian Initiate!), the effects of which have already been perceptible for some time, but which are certainly destined to amplify in the years to come.

As I wrote earlier, there are already several university teachers and researchers, both in Europe and in America, who have been able to seize the extraordinary opportunity of collaboration with the Eleusinian institutions. And among them we can also include the undersigned, who has been working in the university sector for twenty-five years now.

I personally contacted them after reading the English edition of the first volume of *From Eleusis to Florence*. I was pleasantly surprised by the fact that they responded to me after less than two days, replying without hesitation to all my pressing questions that initially, could have given the impression of a real interrogation. Naturally, I qualified, both professionally and initiatory, and we began a close exchange of emails, which was followed - to my even greater surprise - by an invitation to Florence, where I went with my wife and our daughter at the end of the month of May this year.

I have been interested in and have been involved in ancient mystery cults for a lifetime (I mainly owe my entry into Freemasonry, which took place way back in the 1980s, to this interest). I only knew briefly about the initiatory reality of the Eleusinian Mothers. I had learned on several occasions and from various sources about the perpetuation of their Tradition, but I admit that I was completely unaware of the exact historical dynamics. I believed, in my imagination, that they were literally unapproachable, unattainable, like mythical characters, a sort of "superior unknowns" that no one can see or meet, and you can imagine my surprise when I found myself in front of very normal people. (apart from their extraordinary erudition and preparation in the historical, esoteric and initiatory fields). Fathers and mothers of families, with absolutely "normal" jobs and activities, perfectly inserted into their social context. In my perhaps naive fantasizing, this was not how I imagined the direct and legitimate heirs and perpetuators of a Tradition which included among its ranks Plato, Pausanias, Cicero, Porphyry, Plotinus, Proclus, numerous Roman Emperors and extraordinary figures such as the great philosopher and scientist Hypatia of Alexandria. But then I stopped telling tales and remembered that, after all, we were in the 21st century.



I had already been to Florence, but only once, when I was studying at university. I remember that I was dazzled and fascinated by its beauty and its treasures, but I would never have imagined that most of the men who made it great and that many of its most important buildings, monuments and artistic masterpieces were the expression of that Mysterious Tradition in to which I then dedicated years of study!

This year I spent five truly unforgettable days with my family in the Renaissance Capital, during which Nicola Bizzi and his other Eleusinian brothers, with incredible affability, kindness and availability, acted as guides, accompanying us to visit the city and its its most mysterious and esoteric places. And, of course, they continued to answer many of my many questions, clarify many of my doubts and curiosities. Until one evening, after an excellent dinner in a villa on the hills of the city, in a place called Fiesole, they decided to show me what they defined as only "a part" of their archives. In a large room used as a library, with large dark wooden bookcases on the walls filled to the ceiling with books, both ancient and modern, they opened some large folders full of manuscripts. Written in both Latin and Italian, they dated back to between the 15th and 18th centuries. I was able to examine letters, documents of various kinds, ancient minutes of ritual sessions, initiations, celebrations of ceremonies and sacred festivals with splendid seals in lacquer wax, bearing very particular signs and symbols, many of which were completely unknown to me. . And I was able to verify, touch first-hand, also thanks to their patient explanations, the evidence of a real initiatory filiation, across at least the last three-four centuries, of some of their families.

I would have spent entire days (if not weeks or months!) in that room if I had had the chance. But at a certain point, giving a fleeting glance at the clock, I realized that it was already half past two in the morning. Out of respect for my family (my wife and daughter were literally exhausted after a whole day spent walking around the streets of Florence) and so as not to abuse the hospitality of these extraordinary people too much, I decided to call a taxi which he would take us to our hotel.

That night, I must admit, I could not go to sleep such was my emotion. I wandered around like a troubled soul until eight in the morning, nervously shuttling between the bed and the balcony of the room, with ten thousand thoughts in my head and, above all, many new questions that I would have liked to ask the Eleusinians. But in the end I calmed down, feeling gratified by what I had had the opportunity to listen and see, happy to have managed to gain the trust of these people. I realized, in my head, that although I would have to leave for the United States that same afternoon, my relationship of discussion and collaboration with the Mother Eleusinians was just beginning and that I would certainly have the opportunity to continue it.

I felt very excited because at that dinner I also had the opportunity to meet in person what is, in sacral succession, the 73rd Pritan of the Hierophants of the Eleusinian Mother, an elderly man with affable and kind ways, profound culture and extremely lively and penetrating gaze. He had not been introduced to me as such, but only by his name, and only during our conversation he did reveal to me, to my great amazement, who he actually was.



I think back now, while I write these lines, to the doubts and questions (certainly legitimate) that that reader of the *Ereticamente* site asked himself. His distrust may be understandable, because actually, in the world, and especially in the United States, there are numerous initiatory organizations of dubious nature which not only do not carry forward doctrines based on solid foundations, but which often abuse credulity (and bank accounts) of its followers. But, if I myself could have had some doubts or perplexities regarding the reality of the initiatory lineage of the Eleusinian Mothers, I must admit that they completely vanished that evening of May 30th, when that archive was shown to me.

The reader in question wrote verbatim: *"given the countless counterfeits and pseudo initiatory chains of which 99.99% of organizations boast for pure proselytism, you would be a more than exceptional case and would involve the possession of texts and knowledge not accessible to scholars, both academic and esoteric ones"*.

Well, I was able to ascertain that not only the Eleusinians do not do any proselytism (they are very strict when it comes to initiations: to be admitted to their reality two years of preparation are needed and they only accept, on average, no more than two or three new Initiates every year), and above all the "texts" to which the reader alludes are indeed there! And I was able to ascertain that not only that they exist, but that they have also been made largely accessible to scholars, both academic and esoteric ones!

Among other things, I had confirmation of the fact that the Eleusinians are in possession of some manuscripts from the 17th and 18th centuries which consist of transcriptions of some classical works that have officially been lost. However, Nicola Bizzi explained to me that it could also be counterproductive to publish them. When you have in your hand a manuscript transcription of a text written for example in the 18th century, can this constitute evidence? For many critics and academic philologists, it would not be and would not find credit, but only discredit. Although, if you think about it, almost all of it is ancient pre-Christian Greek and Roman literature has come to us through Arabic, Byzantine or Latin transcriptions dating back to the Middle Ages and subsequent centuries. By publishing certain material today, one would run - according to the Eleusinians - the risk of ending up like that English scholar who in the 19th century published the Sibylline Books, a medieval manuscript copy of which he claimed to have inherited from his family: no one believed him and even today he is accused (by the few who remember this story) of having made it all up!

As Nicola Bizzi wrote in one of his articles, the Mystery Schools of the Mother Eleusinians, surviving the Christian persecutions of the late Roman Empire and necessarily going underground to continue to exist and perpetuate themselves, have handed down and preserved over the centuries a vast heritage of ancient texts and documents which have remained completely unknown to the profane world until today. Texts and documents that were originally kept in the libraries and archives of the Mother Sanctuary of Eleusis and its priestly schools, as well as other important Temples and Sanctuaries of Eleusis in Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt, Italy and other regions of the Mediterranean, and who were saved from destruction and made safe by diligent Priests and Initiates, often at the risk of their own lives.



When the Christians took political power in Rome, coming to firmly acquire the reins of the Empire in their hands, it is sadly known that from being persecuted they transformed into persecutors and undertook a series of growing discriminatory actions towards all other doctrines, traditions and religions which until that moment had been fully protected by the authorities and institutions of the State and had peacefully coexisted for centuries under the banner of tolerance, mutual respect and the *Mos Maiorum*, which represented one of the cornerstones of the Empire itself and of Roman universality. Starting from the 4th century AD, and especially after the promulgation, in 380 AD, by Theodosius and Gratian of the infamous edict of Thessalonica which imposed Christianity as the only religion, effectively prohibiting all others from continuing to exist, a large part of the then known world was thus preparing to fall into an absolutely unprecedented grip of single, exclusive and darkening thought, and to slide under a heavy cloak of intolerance and persecution. From Theodosius onwards, everything that was attributable to traditional religiosity and spirituality, from works of art to sacred architecture, from philosophy to literature, up to the simple expressions of ancient popular religiosity, was derogatorily branded as "pagan" and fact prohibited, destroyed, subjected to censorship and *damnatio memoriae*.

The sad story of the destruction of the Serapeum of Alexandria and its famous Library and the assassination of Hypatia, an extraordinary figure of Eleusinian Initiate and eminent philosopher and scientist, who was barbarically raped and massacred by Christian monks under the orders of the Alexandrian Patriarch Cyril - today venerated by Church as Saint! - is only the best-known case of a long and endless trail of blood and repression that lasted for centuries.

Everywhere - continues Nicola Bizzi - from the 4th to well into the 7th century, both in the East and in the West, Temples were sacked, set on fire and demolished, Priests martyred and libraries relentlessly set on fire. Culture, History teaches us, has always been the first victim of hatred and intolerance. The loss of the cultural and religious heritage of the Greco- Roman classicism was truly immense and incalculable at that time, and it has been estimated that only a small part of ancient literature survived and was preserved, including that of a scientific and religious nature.

Faced with the slow and inexorable collapse of a model of civilization that had guaranteed for centuries the plurality of thought and full freedom of worship and expression, and the systematic destruction of Temples, Sanctuaries and Libraries, most of the ancient religions and traditions mysterious ones, primarily the Eleusinian one (both in its Mother expression and in those derived from it, i.e. the Orphic, the Samothracian and the Pythagorean), but also the Isiac, the Mithraic and other minor ones, did not take long to understand that the path of clandestinity it would have been the only way to save what could be saved.

Of course, not all the mystery religions of antiquity managed to save their institutions and their textual and wisdom heritage in the same way, or in any case not all of them had the means, time, possibilities and resources necessary to be able to do so, entering the clandestinity in a dramatic historical moment in which it had become extremely dangerous to profess - even in private and within the home - one's own faith and religiosity. Some traditions, in fact, could



not withstand the impact of persecution and the violence of the Christian repressive campaign and, seeing the majority of their leaders and their priestly class arrested, imprisoned or exterminated, ended up dispersing or dissolving. Others certainly fared better at the beginning, but they still failed to perpetuate and transmit their heritage of values and knowledge for a period of time longer than that of a few generations, or in any case for no more than a few centuries, ending up running out or to be absorbed by some of the many Christian heretical currents, in particular those of the Gnostic movement. However, the case of the Mother Eleusinians, on the one hand, and the Pythagorean Eleusinians, on the other, was different, whose survival in clandestinity is attested and documented by multiple sources. These were, in fact, the strongest and most thoroughly organized initiatory institutions of antiquity, they were certainly not without resources and important political protections and, above all, they were the most determined to preserve and safeguard their enormous wisdom and doctrinal heritage.

As Nicola Bizzi continues to explain in a chapter of his essay *The Way of Eleusis*, the Eleusinian ecclesial institutions and the related mystery schools, after the closure, in 380 AD, of the Mother Sanctuary of Eleusis by the last Pritan of the Hierophants *officially* in office, Nestorius the Great, effectively moved into the Platonic Academy of Athens, founded at the same time as the closure of the Sanctuary by the Neoplatonic philosopher Plutarch of Athens, who was Nestorius' nephew and from whom he had inherited both the knowledge and the sacral title. The Athenian academic institution represented a safe haven for the Eleusinians and their mystery schools until the time of Justinian, and when, by decree of the latter, the Academy was suppressed, safe protections and alternative locations were already ready.

A similar path was also undertaken by the Pythagorean Order, even if it had long since distanced itself from the Mother Eleusinity for political and doctrinal reasons, no longer recognizing the superior authority of Eleusis for some centuries.

However, let us now return to focusing on the Mother Eleusinians. With the entry into clandestinity of the Eleusinian ecclesiastical institutions, at the end of the 4th century AD, an entry into clandestinity which was most likely agreed or negotiated with the Christian authorities in exchange for a formal closure of the Sanctuary of Eleusis, it was possible to safeguard and make security not only the Hierà (the sacred objects of Eleusinity, among which there were real objects of "power") and the huge treasures kept in the cells of the Temples. Also the archives and libraries of what had been for sixteen centuries the main religious and initiatory center of the entire Mediterranean area, of what was not by chance considered "the témenos of humanity". In fact, when not many years later, in 396 AD, Alaric's Visigoths, at the instigation of some Christian bishops, sacked and destroyed the Sanctuary of Eleusis, they were unable to get their hands on the Hiera or the treasure, nor on the precious secret documents that they intended to steal on behalf of their instigators. Everything had already been taken away and placed safe, and the barbarian hordes limited themselves to destroying the sacred statues and setting fire to the now empty buildings. Similarly, it also happened for

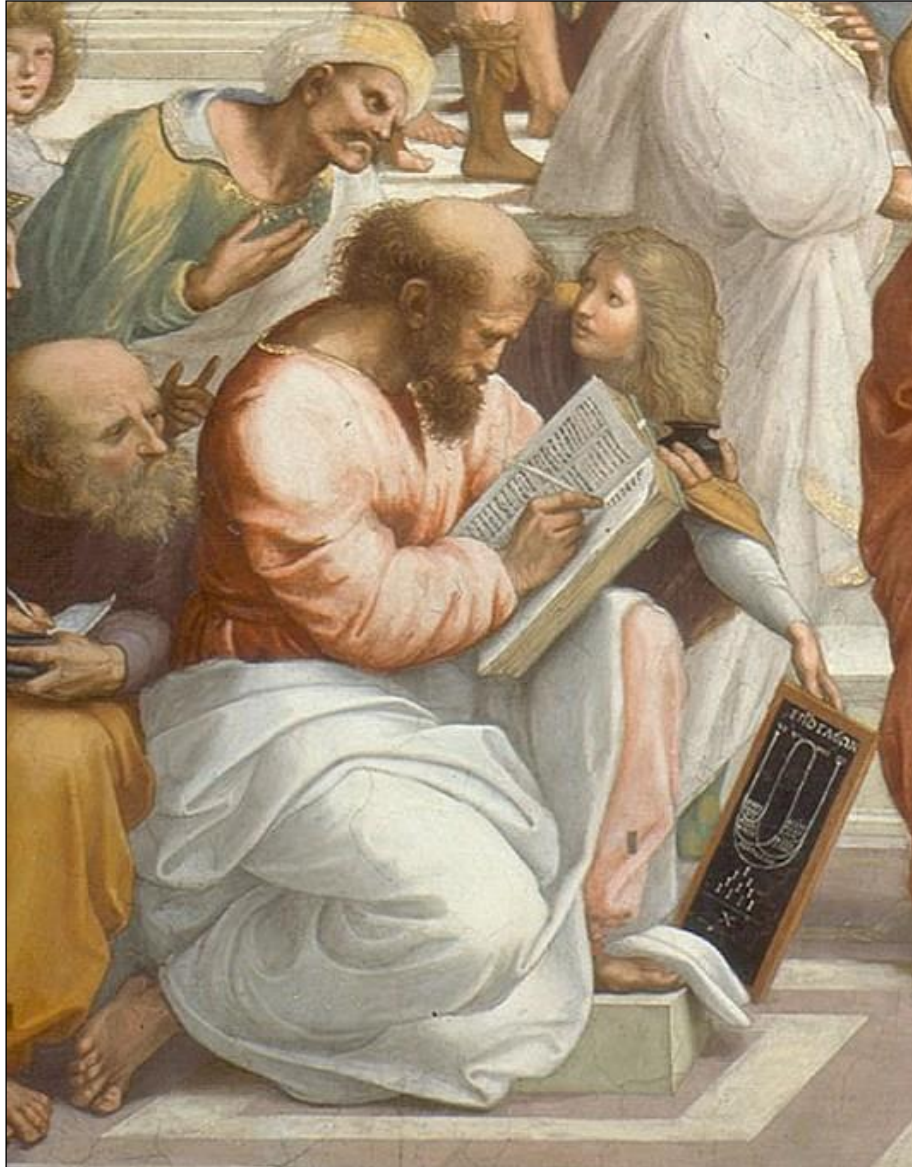


the other main Temples and Sanctuaries of Eleusinity, whose archives and libraries were largely secured by the Priests before Christian hatred inexorably fell on these sacred buildings.

Limiting ourselves to the Sanctuary of Eleusis, which had been continuously in activity since 1216 BC. to 380 AD, therefore a truly remarkable period of time, and which had prestigious initiatory and priestly schools under its control, the mass of documents and papyri preserved in its libraries must have been decidedly impressive, certainly not inferior to those of the famous Library of Alexandria. Unfortunately, we do not have a precise estimate, but we know that there were kept, in addition to a large number of sacred and mystery texts, numerous masterpieces of ancient literature, as well as a notable repertoire of historical works, chronicles, scientific and mathematical treatises, philosophical works and geographical maps, as well as of course the meticulous archives relating to centuries and centuries of initiatory and religious activity. Unfortunately, we do not even have a precise estimate of how much of this textual material was saved in the Platonic School of Athens and how much was transferred to other places considered safer. We only know how much of this heritage has been preserved today, thanks to the diligence and dedication of numerous generations of scribes and archivists of the Eleusian Mother School, which arrived and took root in Italy in the 15th century and is still present and operating in Florence and in other cities.

But the Mother Eleusinians know very well that the numerous books and documents in their possession represent only a small part of the original collection. It is in fact attested by numerous chronicles and documents from the Renaissance period and subsequent centuries that during the dark ages of the Middle Ages, for purely security reasons, many texts were also entrusted to small groups of European families (mostly "extended" families, on the model of the phratries), descended by bloodline from the eight priestly Tribes of Eleusis. And among these were several of what over time became known as some of the most prestigious noble houses in Europe. Families destined to have a decisive role in the complex historical events of that time.

But certain groups of families and noble houses who, directly or indirectly, could boast descent from the eight Primary Tribes of Eleusis and who from 380 AD. onwards they had the task of transmitting, defending and preserving at all costs (alongside and in parallel with the legitimate Eleusinian ecclesial institutions that went underground) the Eleusian Mystery Tradition in the delicate and difficult phase of this clandestinity, apart from certain, limited and even risky ones "identity" statements, however partly concealed by symbolism and in any case never completely obvious, occurred in the Renaissance era (think of the Medicis in Florence, the Estes in Ferrara, the Guise-Lorraines in France, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta in Rimini, the Da Varanos in Camerino, Giorgio Gemisto Pletone, Piero Della Francesca, Leon Battista Alberti, etc.), have never publicly revealed themselves in this guise, and it was moreover unthinkable that they would do so. In fact, they have always had to watch their backs and protect and defend themselves on multiple fronts, both against the Catholic Church and against other opposing initiatory realities.



*Pythagoras in a detail of Raffaello Sanzio's fresco The School of Athens
(Vatican, Apostolic Palaces, Room of the Signatura)*

It has been often and insistently spoken, in certain essays more wrongly than rightly defined as "conspiracy", of certain "bloodlines" which, since incredibly remote times, would divide the destinies of the world, often controlling and managing political events. of states from behind the scenes or through third parties. These bloodlines are anything but in harmony with each other, as they embody different interests and different objectives, and whose conflict has always given rise to hidden and underground wars whose reflection has often been embodied by open conflicts between armies and nations, or which in any case represented the origin and the hidden triggering causes of them. Well, there is certainly some truth in all this, but these are issues that are rarely perceived or understood by the masses, or in any case by those who are not detached from certain and narrow initiatory contexts. Those who believe they know, or those who only have a partial and often distorted picture of this reality, often improperly speak of phantom "Illuminati", or of secret "brotherhoods of the all-seeing eye",



without realizing that such "brotherhoods" (let's call them that) have always had, in the last millennia, a tenacious and equally determined opponent in Eleusinity and its Mystery Tradition. But, if there is the tendency to talk little about Eleusinity, or in any case to talk about it in a distorted and distorted way in historical and historical-religious essays, in the vast archipelago of literature and essays that have flourished in recent decades regarding the various bloodlines and powers occultists who are believed to have been fighting each other since time immemorial to compete for control and the destinies of the planet, it is rare to find mention of the Eleusinians. Those who look for information about it in "profane" non-fiction often find themselves faced with a wall of impenetrable secrecy. Yet, apparently, it was precisely the Eleusinians, through some groups of families and related bloodlines, who had a decisive influence, through the secret work of their *Unknown Superiors* (the leaders of the Ecclesial Institution of the Mother Eleusinians) , often infiltrated even within the Church, on the main facts and events of History, from the advent of Humanism to the Renaissance, and, through the work of their "Pythagorean" derivation, to influence in an often direct manner the birth of numerous secret and initiatory societies of the 18th century, from the Bavarian Illuminatis of Adam Waishaupt to the Illuminatis of Berlin and Avignon of Dom Pernety, up to the "Egyptian" Freemasonry of Raimondo Di Sangro and Cagliostro. And, according to some interpretations which for the moment the Eleusinians do not intend to confirm or deny, these bloodlines, directly or indirectly attributable to the eight Primary Tribes of Eleusis, would certainly not have been completely unrelated to epochal events such as the "discovery" of America, the French Revolution and the American Revolution.

As it has already been mentioned, the numerous books and documents in the possession of the Eleusian Mother School today preserved in Florence represent only a small part of the original collection that we know to have existed until 380 AD. preserved in the libraries and archives of the Sanctuary of Eleusis. The entry into clandestinity of the Eleusinian ecclesial institutions and the related mystery schools, the security measures adopted several times during the Middle Ages to safeguard the immense wisdom heritage of the Eleusinity and other factors, such as primarily the dispersion between the various European districts of the ancient Primary Tribes of priestly rank of Eleusis and their disguise and confusion, in some cases in total anonymity or, in others, in the context of important dynasties and aristocratic families, they meant that a vast patrimony of texts was increasingly divided up, ending up in various private libraries, therefore accessible exclusively by the respective holding families, but not by others. A 19th century manuscript, preserved in the archives of the Eleusinian Mother School of Florence, reads in this regard in one of its passages: *"every family, club or school has always been rigorously jealous of its own cultural heritage, always ready to take the missing to one's knowledge without giving anything in exchange."* To this we must add the fact that, over time, events such as wars, revolutions, looting, thefts (often on commission), fires, floods and earthquakes have led to the inevitable compromise if not the destruction of large parts of the said heritage. Finally, we know for certain that some significant parts of it have ended up in the hands of rival or adverse initiatory organizations and of the Catholic Church itself, in particular of the Society of Jesus (Athanasius Kircher docet!).



Since it is not possible to present a complete picture of the contents of certain archives, Nicola Bizzi in his essay limited himself to speaking exclusively of the material kept by the Eleusina Madre School of Florence, largely coming from the libraries of the Eleusina Madre family of Prytanic priestly rank of the Mariani of Costa Sancti Severi, descended by bloodline from the Eleusina Primary Tribe of the Keryx.

The Eleusinian texts preserved in Florence are mostly of a religious, theological-mythological, ceremonial and ritual nature. There are sacred texts from Eleusinity, some of which are preserved in their entirety, others in scattered fragments reported in medieval codices; there are collections of sacred hymns, prayers and religious songs; there are ritual and ceremonial calendars, concerning religious holidays and ceremonies, including those of an initiatory nature, establishing the content and carrying out of the ceremonies themselves. Among the texts of a theological- mythological nature, there are cosmogonic and theogonic treatises concerning the origin of the Gods and the Universe, texts relating to the creation of humanity, texts on the nature and characteristics of the Gods, and collections of prophecies and prophecies, with truly impressive contents. Then there are numerous treatises of a scientific nature (astronomical, mathematical and geographical), philosophical texts, historical chronicles relating to the Eleusinian ecclesial institutions and their priestly hierarchies and, finally, texts that we could define as purely historical and literary in nature, acquired in ancient times from the archives of the Sanctuary of Eleusis and preserved in the clandestinity phase due to the importance that was attributed to their contents.

The vast majority of these texts are, for obvious and understandable reasons, covered by the rigor of the initiatory secret and, consequently, have never been and probably never will be accessible to profane environments, or in any case foreign to the mystery schools themselves, despite the fact that the Eleusinians Mother have admitted and confirmed its existence on several occasions. But, within the framework of that gradual opening of the Eleusine Mother institutions to the profane world that we have mentioned - an opening thanks to which the publication of numerous articles and some essays was made possible - the decision was made to gradually make available to the public, but above all researchers and scholars, a part of this vast textual heritage. This decision, made at the top of the Institution, does not concern, nor will it probably ever concern, the texts of a strictly initiatory nature of the Eleusinity, which for various and obvious reasons are destined to remain secret, but rather a limited number of works of a historical, geographical, scientific and literary, not directly connected with the Eleusian Mystery Tradition and its Doctrine, but nevertheless acquired over the centuries by the Mystery Schools and diligently preserved and conserved by them.

I can say, in a certain sense, that I was "responsible" for the publication of *The Way of Eleusis*. The ancient forms of initiation have always been, in addition to a personal interest of mine which led me to approach Freemasonry in 1984, also the founding theme of numerous of my researches. I even held some university seminars on this topic in the United States in 2006 and 2007, finding great interest in this regard from my students in the Cultural Anthropology course.



Thomas Cole: The Titan's Goblet, 1833
(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art)

I had noticed that Nicola Bizzi had dedicated an entire chapter of the first volume of his essay *From Eleusis to Florence* to the question of the Eleusinian Initiation and, during one of our meetings in Florence I took the liberty of asking him: *"Why don't you create a specific text on this topic, expanding what you have already written with new data and new information? Why don't you try to write an easy-to-understand book, not necessarily aimed at a limited academic audience, but rather at all those potentially interested in the topic, a book that explains - obviously within the limits of what is allowed to be said without breaking any secrecy rules initiatory - what the Eleusinian Initiation really was and is, what its meanings are, and above all it clarifies once and for all, integrating the classical sources in this regard with the confidential information in possession of your School, on the real structuring in degrees of the Eleusinity elevation path?"*

He thought about it for a moment and then told me: *"Yes, it's possible, I gladly accept this challenge. On one condition, however: you will write the preface."*

Well, in less than a month Nicola Bizzi was able to write a true masterpiece: a precious, learned, profound and authoritative essay, but also extraordinarily clear and fluent. An essay in my opinion indispensable for all those who intend to approach one of the most fascinating, mysterious and enigmatic themes of ancient religiosity. For all those who intend to fully



understand the message and meanings of what Plotinus believed to be the clearest path of elevation towards the knowledge of the Divine and towards the liberation of the Soul.

Francis William Hamilton

Detroit, US, July 25th 2019.

Francis William Hamilton

Francis William Hamilton was born on February 9th, 1964, in Boston, Massachusetts, US, where he graduated in Anthropology in 1987. He has researched native cultures in New Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Brazil and collaborates with various private research institutions, both in the United States and in Europe. He is an associate professor of Cultural Anthropology at Wayne State University in Detroit, US.



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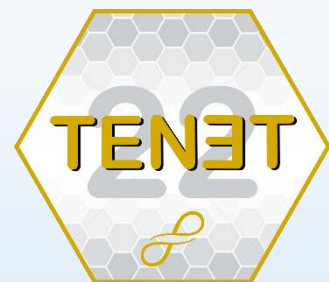
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