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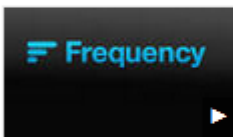
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Persephone

This article is about the Greek goddess. For other uses, see *Persephone* (disambiguation).

In Greek mythology, **Persephone** (/pərˈseɪfəniː/, *per-SEH-fə-nee*; Greek: Περσεφόνη), also called **Kore** (/ˈkɔːriː/; “the maiden”),^[n 1] is the daughter of Zeus and the harvest goddess Demeter, and is the queen of the underworld. Homer describes her as the formidable, venerable majestic queen of the underworld, who carries into effect the curses of men upon the souls of the dead. Persephone was abducted by Hades, the god-king of the underworld.^[1] The myth of her abduction represents her function as the personification of vegetation, which shoots forth in spring and withdraws into the earth after harvest; hence, she is also associated with spring as well as the fertility of vegetation. Similar myths appear in the Orient, in the cults of male gods like Attis, Adonis and Osiris,^[2] and in Minoan Crete.

Persephone as a vegetation goddess and her mother Demeter were the central figures of the Eleusinian mysteries that predated the Olympian pantheon and promised to the initiated a more enjoyable prospect after death. Persephone is further said to have become by Zeus the mother of Dionysus, Iacchus, or Zagreus, usually in orphic tradition. The origins of her cult are uncertain, but it was based on very old agrarian cults of agricultural communities.

Persephone was commonly worshipped along with Demeter and with the same mysteries. To her alone were dedicated the mysteries celebrated at Athens in the month of Anthesterion. In Classical Greek art, Persephone is invariably portrayed robed, often carrying a sheaf of grain. She may appear as a mystical divinity with a sceptre and a little box, but she was mostly represented in the act of being carried off by Hades.

In Roman mythology, she is called Proserpina, and her mother, Ceres.

1 Name

1.1 Etymology

In a Linear B (Mycenean Greek) inscription on a tablet found at Pylos dated 1400–1200 BC, John Chadwick reconstructs^[n 2] the name of a goddess **Preswa* who could be identified with Persa, daughter of Oceanus and finds speculative the further identification with the first



Persephone or “the deceased woman” holding a pomegranate. Etruscan terracotta cinerary statue. National archaeological museum in Palermo, Italy

element of Persephone.^[4] *Persephonē* (Greek: Περσεφόνη) is her name in the Ionic Greek of epic literature. The Homeric form of her name is *Persephoneia* (Περσεφονεία,^[5] *Persephoneia*). In other dialects she was known under variant names: *Persephassa* (Περσεφάσσα), *Persephatta* (Περσεφάττα), or simply *Korē* (Κόρη, “girl, maiden”).^[6] Plato calls her *Pherepapha* (Φερέπαφα) in his *Cratylus*, “because she is wise and touches that which is in motion”. There are also the forms *Periphona* (Πηριφώνα) and *Phersephassa* (Φερσεφάσσα). The existence of so many different forms shows how difficult it was for the Greeks to pronounce the word in their own language and suggests that the name has probably a Pre-Greek origin.^[7]

Persephatta (Περσεφάττα) is considered to mean “female thresher of corn,” going by “perso-” relating to Sanskrit “parsa”, “sheaf of corn” and the second constituent of the name originating in Proto-Indo European “*-g^wn-t-ih”, “to g^{wh}en” - to strike.^[8]

An alternative etymology is from φέρειν φόνον, *pherein*

phonon, “to bring (or cause) death”.^[9]

Another mythical personage of the name of *Persephone* is called a daughter of *Minyas* and the mother of *Chloris*, a nymph of spring, flower and new growth.^[9] The *Minyans* were a group considered autochthonous, but some scholars assert that they were the first wave of Proto-Greek speakers in the 2nd millennium BC.^[10]

1.2 The Roman Proserpina



Cinerary altar with tabula representing the rape of Proserpina. White marble, Antonine Era, 2nd century CE. Rome, Baths of Diocletian

The Romans first heard of her from the Aeolian and Dorian cities of *Magna Graecia*, who used the dialectal variant *Proserpinē* (Προσεπίνη). Hence, in Roman mythology she was called *Proserpina*, a name erroneously derived by the Romans from *proserpere*, “to shoot forth”^[11] and as such became an emblematic figure of the Renaissance.

At *Locri*, perhaps uniquely, *Persephone* was the protector of marriage, a role usually assumed by *Hera*; in the iconography of votive plaques at *Locri*, her abduction and marriage to *Hades* served as an emblem of the marital state, children at *Locri* were dedicated to *Proserpina*, and maidens about to be wed brought their *peplos* to be blessed.^[12]



Statue of Isis-Persephone with a sistrum. Heraklion Archaeological Museum, Crete

1.3 Nestis

In a Classical period text ascribed to *Empedocles*, c. 490 – 430 BC,^[n 3] describing a correspondence among four deities and the classical elements, the name *Nestis* for water apparently refers to *Persephone*: “Now hear the four-fold roots of everything: enlivening *Hera*, *Hades*, shining *Zeus*. And *Nestis*, moistening mortal springs with tears.”^[13]

Of the four deities of *Empedocles*’ elements, it is the name of *Persephone* alone that is taboo—*Nestis* is a euphemistic cult title^[n 4]—for she was also the terrible Queen of the Dead, whose name was not safe to speak aloud, who was euphemistically named simply as *Kore* or “the Maiden”, a vestige of her archaic role as the deity ruling the underworld.

2 Titles and functions

The epithets of *Persephone* reveal her double function as chthonic and vegetation goddess. The surnames given to her by the poets refer to her character as Queen of the lower world and the dead, or her symbolic meaning of the power that shoots forth and withdraws into the earth. Her common name as a vegetation goddess is *Kore* and in *Arcadia* she was worshipped under the title *Despoina* “the mistress”, a very old chthonic divinity. *Plutarch* identifies her with spring and *Cicero* calls her the seed of the fruits

of the fields. In the Eleusinian mysteries her return is the symbol of immortality and hence she was frequently represented on sarcophagi.^[9]

In the mystical theories of the Orphics and the Platonists, Kore is described as the all-pervading goddess of nature^[14] who both produces and destroys everything and she is therefore mentioned along or identified with other mystic divinities such as Isis, Rhea, Ge, Hestia, Pandora, Artemis, and Hecate.^[15] The Orphic Persephone is further said to have become by Zeus the mother of Dionysus, Iacchus, Zagreus,^[9] and the little-attested Melinoe.^[16]

2.1 Epithets

As a goddess of the underworld, Persephone was given euphemistically friendly names.^[17] However it is possible that some of them were the names of original goddesses:

- **Despoina** (*dems-potnia*) “the mistress” (literally “the mistress of the house”) in Arcadia.
- **Hagne**, “pure”, originally a goddess of the springs in Messenia.^[18]
- **Melindia** or **Melinoia** (meli, “honey”), as the consort of Hades, in Hermione. (Compare Hecate, Melinoe)^[17]
- **Melivia**^[17]
- **Melitodes**^[17]
- **Aristi cthonia**, “the best chthonic”.^[17]
- **Praxidike**, the Orphic Hymn to Persephone identifies Praxidike as an epithet of Persephone: “Praxidike, subterranean queen. The Eumenides' source [mother], fair-haired, whose frame proceeds from Zeus' ineffable and secret seeds.”^{[19][20]}

As a vegetation goddess she was called:^{[18][21]}

- **Kore**, “the maiden”.
- **Kore Soteira**, “the savior maiden” in Megalopolis.
- **Neotera**, “the younger ” in Eleusis.
- **Kore of Demeter Hagne**, in the Homeric hymn.
- **Kore memagmeni**, “the mixed daughter” (bread).

Demeter and her daughter **Persephone** were usually called:^{[18][21]}

- **The goddesses**, often distinguished as “the older” and “the younger” in Eleusis.
- **Demeters**, in Rhodes and Sparta

- **The thesmophoroi**, “the legislators” in the Thesmophoria.
- **The Great Goddesses**, in Arcadia.
- **The mistresses** in Arcadia.^[22]
- **Karpophoroi**, “the bringers of fruit”, in Tegea of Arcadia.

3 Origins of the cult



Gold ring from Isopata tomb, near Knossos, Crete, 1400–1500 BC. Depicted are female figures dancing among blossoming vegetation; Heraklion Archaeological Museum

The myth of the abduction of the vegetation goddess is Pre-Greek as evident in the Syro-Mesopotamian mythology of the abduction of the goddess of fertility and harvest, Ishtar (also Ashtar, Astarte and Inanna). The place of the abduction is different in each local cult. The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* mentions the “plain of Nysa”.^[23] The locations of this probably mythical place may simply be conventions to show that a magically distant chthonic land of myth was intended in the remote past.^{[21][24]} Demeter found and met her daughter in Eleusis, and this is the mythical disguise of what happened in the mysteries.^[25]

Persephone is an old chthonic deity of the agricultural communities, who received the souls of the dead into the earth, and acquired powers over the fertility of the soil, over which she reigned. The earliest depiction of a goddess who may be identified with Persephone growing out of the ground, is on a plate from the Old-Palace period in Phaistos. The goddess has a vegetable-like appearance, and she is surrounded by dancing girls between blossoming flowers.^{[26][27]} A similar representation, where the goddess appears to come down from the sky, is depicted on the Minoan ring of Isopata.

In some forms Hades appears with his chthonic horses. The myth of the rape of Kore was derived from the idea that Hades catches the souls of the dead like his booty,



Rape of Persephone. Hades with his horses and Persephone (down). An Apulian red-figure volute krater, c. 340 BC. Antikensammlung Berlin

and then carries them with his horses into his kingdom. This idea is vague in Homer, but appears in later Greek depictions, and in Greek folklore. “Charos” appears with his horse and carries the dead into the underworld.^{[28][29]}

The cults of Persephone and Demeter in the Eleusinian mysteries and in the Thesmophoria were based on very old agrarian cults. An earlier agrarian procession led by a priest, is depicted on a Minoan vase from the end of the New Palace Period.^[30] Ancient cults like age-old cults of the dead, with worship of animal-headed gods and rituals for the new crop, had their position in Greek religion because they were connected with daily or seasonal tasks and consecrated by immemorial practices. The powers of animal nature fostered a belief in nymphs, and in gods with human forms and the heads or tails of animals. In the Arcadian cults, it seems that Demeter and Persephone were the first of a series of daemons with the same nature.

A lot of ancient beliefs were based on initiation into jealously-guarded mysteries (secret rites) because they offered prospects after death more enjoyable than the final end at the gloomy space of the Greek Hades. It seems that such religious practices were introduced from Minoan Crete,^{[31][32]} Similar practices appear also in the Near East. However, the idea of immortality which appears in the syncretistic religions of the Near East did not exist in the Eleusinian mysteries at the very beginning.^{[33][34]}

3.1 Near East - Minoan Crete

In the Near eastern myth of the primitive agricultural societies, every year the fertility goddess bore the “god of the new year”, who then became her lover, and died immediately in order to be reborn and face the same destiny. Some findings from Catal Huyuk since the Neolithic age,



Lady of Auxerre Louvre-An Archaic (640 BC) image from Crete. A version of a Minoan Goddess who may be identified with Kore

indicate the worship of the Great Goddess accompanied by a boyish consort, who symbolizes the annual decay and return of vegetation.^[35] Similar cults of resurrected gods appear in the Near East and Egypt in the cults of Attis, Adonis and Osiris,^[36] In Minoan Crete, the “divine child” was related to the female vegetation divinity Ariadne who died every year.^[37] The Minoan religion had its own characteristics. The cult was aniconic, the principal deities were female, and they appeared in epiphany called chiefly by ecstatic sacral dances, by tree-shaking and by baetylic rites.^[38]

The daemons were a part of the religious system. They were considered divine, and they were connected with gods or goddesses of hunting. In the Minoan seals or jewellery, are depicted animal-headed daemons^[39] or hybrid creatures. Some of these depictions seem similar to Near Eastern depictions, especially with the well known Babylonian daemons. A young Minotaur is depicted on a seal from Knossos.^[40] Depictions of daemons between lions, of men between daemons, and processions of daemons, appear also on Mycenaean seals and jewellery, and in Phigalia of Arcadia.^[41]

The most peculiar feature of the Minoan belief in the divine, is the appearance of the goddess from above in the dance. Dance floors have been discovered in addition to “vaulted tombs”, and it seems that the dance



The "Harvesters vase" from *Agia Triada* (1600-1500 BC). Heraklion Archaeological Museum

was ecstatic. Homer memorializes the dance floor which Daedalus built for Ariadne in the remote past.^[42] On the gold ring from Isopata, four women in festal attire are performing a dance between blossoming flowers. Above a figure apparently floating in the air seems to be the goddess herself, appearing amid the whirling dance.^[43] An image plate from the first palace of Phaistos, seems to be very close to the mythical image of the *Anodos* (ascent) of Persephone. Two girls dance between blossoming flowers, on each side of a similar but armless and legless figure which seems to grow out of the ground. The goddess is bordered by snake lines which give her a vegetable like appearance and also recall the arrangement of snake tubes which have been found in Minoan and Mycenaean sanctuaries. She has a large stylized flower turned over her head, and the resemblance with the flower-picking Persephone and her companions is compelling.^[26] The depiction of the goddess is similar to later images of "Anodos of Pherephata". On the Dresden vase, Persephone is growing out of the ground, and she is surrounded by the animal-tailed agricultural gods *Sileno*.^[44] It seems that in Crete there were festivals designated in a way corresponding to the later Greek types of festival names.^[26] An agrarian procession is depicted on the "Harvesters Vase" or "Vase of the Winnowers" from the last phase of the New Palace Period (LM II), which was found in *Hagia Triada*. Men are walking two by two with their tool-rods on their shoulders. The leader is probably a priest with long hair carrying a stick, and dressed in a priestly robe with a fringe. A group of musicians participate singing,

and one of them holds an Egyptian sistrum.^{[30][45]}



The so-called "Ring of Minos" from *Knossos*. (1500-1400 BC). A male and two female figures, in the "cult of the tree". Heraklion Archaeological Museum

The Minoan vegetation goddess *Ariadne* was closely connected with the cult of the divine child, and with the "cult of the tree". This was an ecstatic and orgiastic cult, which seems to be similar to its relative in the Syrian cult of *Adonis*.^[46] *Kerenyi* suggests that the name *Ariadne* (derived from *ἀργή*, *hagne*, "pure"), was an euphemistical name given by the Greeks to the nameless "Mistress of the labyrinth" who appears in a Mycenaean Greek inscription from *Knossos* in *Crete*. The Greeks used to give friendly names to the deities of the underworld. *Cthonic Zeus* was called *Eubuleus*, "the good counselor", and the ferryman of the river of the underworld *Charon*, "glad".^[29] *Despoina* and "Hagne" were probably euphemistic surnames of *Persephone*, therefore he theorizes that the cult of *Persephone* was the continuation of the worship of a Minoan Great goddess. The labyrinth was both a winding dance-ground and, in the Greek view, a prison with the dreaded *Minotaur* at its centre.^{[47][48]} It is possible that some religious practices, especially the mysteries, were transferred from a Cretan priesthood to *Eleusis*, where *Demeter* brought the poppy from *Crete*.^[49] Besides these similarities, *Burkert* explains that up to now it's not known to what extent one can and must differentiate between Minoan and Mycenaean religion.^[50] It seems that the Minoan vegetation goddess *Ariadne* was absorbed by more powerful divinities.^[51] She survived in Greek folklore as the consort of *Dionysos*, with whom she was worshiped in some local cults. In the *Anthesteria* *Dionysos* is the "divine child".

In historical times the Minoan "cult of the tree", was almost forgotten. It existed in some local cults like the cult of the vegetation goddess *Helena Dendritēs* (*dendron*, "tree") in *Rhodes*, and a cult of *Artemis* in the *Peloponnese*. In this cult, *Artemis* is hanged from a tree, just like *Ariadne* in Greek mythology, who was hanged from a tree when she was abandoned by *Theseus*.^[52]

3.2 Mycenaean Greece



Two women or goddesses on a chariot. Fresco from Tiryns, 1200 BC. National Archaeological Museum of Athens



Procession of women with animal-masks, or of hybrid creatures. Detail from the marble veil of Despoina at Lycosura

It seems that the Greek deities began their career as powers of nature, but then they were given other functions and attributes by their worshippers.^[51] The powers of animal nature fostered a belief in nymphs, whose existence was bound to the trees or the waters which they haunted, and in gods with human forms and the heads or tails of animals. The ancient gods with tails of animals who stood for primitive bodily instincts, were considered to protect the flocks and herds, and some of them survived in the cult of Dionysos (Satyrs and Seilinoi) and Pan (the goat-god). Such figures were believed to give help to men who watched over crops and herds, and later they were below

the Olympians.^[53]

There is evidence of a cult in Eleusis from the Mycenaean period,^[54] however, there are not sacral finds from this period. The cult was private and there isn't any information about it. As well as the names of some Greek gods in the Mycenaean Greek inscriptions, also appear names of goddesses, like "the divine Mother" (the mother of the gods) or "the Goddess (or priestess) of the winds", who don't have Mycenaean origin.^[25] In historical times Demeter and Kore were usually referred to as "the goddesses" or "the mistresses" (Arcadia) in the mysteries.^[21] In the Mycenaean Greek tablets dated 1400–1200 BC, the "two mistresses (potniai) and the king" are mentioned. John Chadwick believes that these were the precursor divinities of Demeter, Persephone and Poseidon.^[55]

Persephone was conflated with Despoina, "the mistress", a chthonic divinity in West-Arcadia.^[32] The megaron of Eleusis, is quite similar with the "megaron" of Despoina at Lycosura.^[25] The names Demeter and *Kore* are Greek, and this probably indicates that the Greeks adopted these divinities during their wandering, and that they were later fused with local divinities in the ancient cults.^[56] The Arcadian cults come from a more primitive religion, and evidently the religious beliefs of the first Greek-speaking people who entered the region, were mixed with the beliefs of the indigenous population. Most of the temples were built near springs, and in some of them there is evidence of the existence of a fire, which was always burning. At Lycosura, a fire was burning in front of the temple of Pan (the goat-god).^[18] In Eleusis, in a ritual, one child ("pais") was initiated from the hearth. The name *pais* (the divine child) appears in the Mycenaean inscriptions,^[25] and the ritual indicates the transition from the old funerary practices to the Greek cremation.^[57]



Perspective reconstruction of the temple of Despoina at Lycosura: The acrolithic statues of Demeter (L) and Despoina (R) are visible at the scale in the cella

The two goddesses, were closely related with the springs and the animals. At Lycosura on a marble relief on the veil of Despoina appear figures with the heads of different animals obviously in a ritual dance, and some of them hold a flute. These could be hybrid creatures or a procession of women with animal-masks.^[58] Similar processions of daemons, or human figures with animal-

masks appear on **Mycenean** frescoes and gold rings.^{[59][60]} It seems that Demeter and Kore, were the first of a series of **daemons** with the same nature, just as **Artemis** was the first of the **nymphs**.^[18]

Demeter and Persephone, were the two Great Goddesses of the **Arcadian** mysteries. **Despoine** was one of her surnames just as the surname of Persephone **Kore**.^[61] Her name was not allowed to be revealed to the uninitiated, and she was daughter of Demeter, who was united with the god of the storms and rivers **Poseidon Hippios** (horse).^[62] In **northern European** folklore, the river spirit of the underworld appears frequently as a horse. The union of the fertility goddess with the beast which represents the masculine fertility, is an old **Near Eastern** myth, which appears in many primitive agricultural societies. The ritual copulation in **Minoan Crete** was related to moon-goddesses like **Europa** and **Pasiphae**, but this cult was almost forgotten by the Greeks. It survived in the myths of the hybrid creature **Minotaur**, and of the abduction of the **Phoenecian** princess **Europa** by the white bull (**Zeus**).^[37] The animal-headed gods were depicted in the local cults of isolated **Arcadia**, or in **Crete** in the depiction of the dog-headed **Hecate**.^[63] The animal masks were substituted by masks representing human faces, as it appears in the temple of **Artemis Orthia** at **Sparta**. Dancing girls used these masks during the annual "vegetation ritual".^[64]



Triptolemus, Demeter, and Persephone by the Triptolemos Painter, c. 470 BC

The Minoan "cult of the tree" appears also in **Mycenean** seals and jewellery, however, it isn't known if this cult in Greece was similar with the Minoan. Later the cult of **Dionysos** was closely associated with trees, specifically the **fig tree**, and some of his bynames exhibit this, such as **Endendros** or **Dendritēs** (*dendron*, "tree").^[65] According to **Pherecydes** of **Syros**, the second element of his name is derived from *nūsa*, an archaic word for "tree".^[66] It is possible that the meaning of tree was re-interpreted to the name of the mountain **Nysa**, the birthplace of **Dionysos**, according to the **axis mundi** of **Indo-European** mythology.^[67] In Greek mythology **Nysa** is a mythical mountain with an unknown location.^[24] *Nysion* (or *Mysion*),

the place of the abduction of **Persephone** was also probably a mythical place which didn't exist on the map, a magically distant **chthonic** land of myth which was intended in the remote past.^[21] An image plate from the first palace of **Phaistos**, seems to be very close to the mythical image of the **Anodos** (ascent) of **Persephone**. Two girls dance on each side of a similar but armless and legless figure which seems to grow out of the ground. She has a large stylized flower turned over her head.^[26] The depiction of the goddess is similar with later images of "Anodos of **Pherephata**". On the **Dresden vase** **Persephone** is growing out of the ground, and she is surrounded by the animal-tailed agricultural gods **Silenois**.^[44]

It seems that in **Crete** there were festivals designated in a way corresponding to the later Greek types of festival names.^[26] An agrarian procession is depicted on the "Harvesters Vase" or "Vase of the Winnowers" from the last phase of the **New Palace Period** (**LM II**), which was found in **Hagia Triada**. Men are walking two by two with their tool-rods on their shoulders. The leader is probably a priest with long hair carrying a stick, and dressed in a priestly robe with a fringe. A group of musicians participate singing, and one of them holds an **Egyptian sistrum**.^{[30][45]}

4 Greek mythology

4.1 Abduction myth



Sarcophagus with the abduction of Persephone. Walters Art Museum. Baltimore, Maryland

Persephone used to live far away from the other deities, a goddess within **Nature** herself before the days of planting seeds and nurturing plants. In the **Olympian** telling, the gods **Hermes** and **Apollo** had wooed **Persephone**; but **Demeter** rejected all their gifts and hid her daughter away from the company of the **Olympian** deities.^[68] The story of her abduction by **Hades** against her will, is traditionally referred to as the **Rape of Persephone**. It is mentioned briefly in **Hesiod's Theogony**,^[69] and told in considerable detail in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. **Zeus**, it is said, permitted **Hades**, who was in love with the beautiful **Persephone**, to carry her off as her mother **Demeter** was not likely to allow her daughter to go down

to Hades. Persephone was gathering flowers with the Oceanids along with Artemis and Athena—the *Homeric Hymn* says—in a field when Hades came to abduct her, bursting through a cleft in the earth.^[70] Demeter, when she found her daughter had disappeared, searched for her all over the earth with torches. In most versions she forbids the earth to produce, or she neglects the earth and in the depth of her despair she causes nothing to grow. Helios, the sun, who sees everything, eventually told Demeter what had happened and at length she discovered the place of her abode. Finally, Zeus, pressed by the cries of the hungry people and by the other deities who also heard their anguish, forced Hades to return Persephone.^[71]

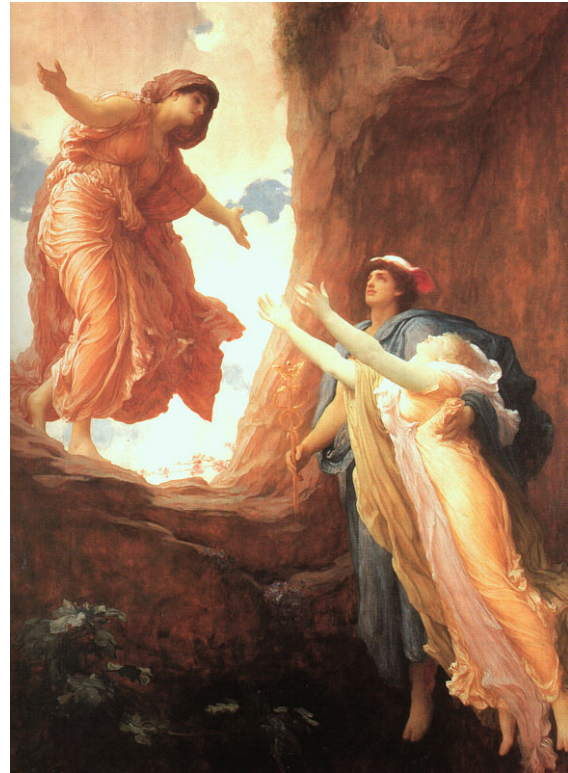


Oil painting of Hades abducting Persephone. Oil on wood with gilt background. 18th century. Property of Missing Link Antiques.

Hades indeed complied with the request, but first he tricked her, giving her some pomegranate seeds to eat. Persephone was released by Hermes, who had been sent to retrieve her, but because she had tasted food in the underworld, she was obliged to spend a third of each year (the winter months) there, and the remaining part of the year with the gods above.^[72] With the later writers Ovid and Hyginus, Persephone's time in the underworld becomes half the year.^[73]

Various local traditions place Persephone's abduction in a different location. The Sicilians, among whom her worship was probably introduced by the Corinthian and Megarian colonists, believed that Hades found her in the meadows near Enna, and that a well arose on the spot where he descended with her into the lower world. The Cretans thought that their own island had been the scene of the rape, and the Eleusinians mentioned the Nysian plain in Boeotia, and said that Persephone had descended with Hades into the lower world at the entrance of the western Oceanus. Later accounts place the rape in Attica, near Athens, or near Eleusis.^[71]

The Homeric hymn mentions the *Nysion* (or *Mysion*), probably a mythical place which didn't exist on the map. The locations of this mythical place may simply be con-



The return of Persephone, by Frederic Leighton (1891)

ventions to show that a magically distant chthonic land of myth was intended in the remote past.^[21] Before Persephone was abducted by Hades, the shepherd Eumolpus and the swineherd Eubuleus, saw a girl being carried off into the earth which had violently opened up, in a black chariot, driven by an invisible driver. Eubuleus was feeding his pigs at the opening to the underworld when Persephone was abducted by Plouton. His swine were swallowed by the earth along with her, and the myth is an etiology for the relation of pigs with the ancient rites in Thesmophoria,^[74] and in Eleusis.

In the hymn, Persephone returns and she is reunited with her mother near Eleusis. Demeter as she has been promised established her mysteries (orgies) when the Eleusinians built for her a temple near the spring of Callichorus. These were awful mysteries, which were not allowed to be uttered. The uninitiated would spend a miserable existence in the gloomy space of Hades, after death.^[n.5]

In some versions, Ascalaphus informed the other deities that Persephone had eaten the pomegranate seeds. When Demeter and her daughter were reunited, the Earth flourished with vegetation and color, but for some months each year, when Persephone returned to the underworld, the earth once again became a barren realm. This is an origin story to explain the seasons.

In an earlier version, Hecate rescued Persephone. On an Attic red-figured bell krater of c. 440 BC in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Persephone is rising as if

up stairs from a cleft in the earth, while Hermes stands aside; Hecate, holding two torches, looks back as she leads her to the enthroned Demeter.^[75]

The 10th-century Byzantine encyclopedia *Suda* introduces a goddess of a blessed afterlife assured to Orphic mystery initiates. This Macaria is asserted to be the daughter of Hades, but no mother is mentioned.^[76]

4.2 Interpretation of the myth



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

In the myth Pluto abducts Persephone to be his wife and the queen of his realm.^[77] Pluto (Πλούτων, *Ploutōn*) was a name for the ruler of the underworld; the god was also known as Hades, a name for the underworld itself. The name *Pluton* was conflated with that of Ploutos (Πλούτος *Ploutos*, “wealth”), a god of wealth, because mineral wealth was found underground, and because Pluto as a chthonic god ruled the deep earth that contained the seeds necessary for a bountiful harvest.^[77] *Plouton* is lord of the dead, but as Persephone’s husband he has serious claims to the powers of fertility.^[78]

In the Theogony of Hesiod, Demeter was united with the hero Iasion in Crete and she bore Ploutos.^[69] This union seems to be a reference to a hieros gamos (ritual copulation) to ensure the earth’s fertility.^[78] This ritual copulation appears in Minoan Crete, in many Near Eastern agricultural societies, and also in the Anthesteria.^[n 6]

Nilsson believes that the original cult of Ploutos (or Pluto) in Eleusis was similar with the Minoan cult of the “divine child”, who died in order to be reborn. The child was abandoned by his mother and then it was brought up by

the powers of nature. Similar myths appear in the cults of Hyakinthos (Amyklai), Erichthonios (Athens), and later in the cult of Dionysos.^[80]

The Greek version of the abduction myth is related to corn – important and rare in the Greek environment – and the return (ascent) of Persephone was celebrated at the autumn sowing. Pluto (Ploutos) represents the wealth of the corn that was stored in underground silos or ceramic jars (*pithoi*), during summer months. Similar subterranean *pithoi* were used in ancient times for burials and Pluto is fused with Hades, the King of the realm of the dead. During summer months, the Greek *Corn-Maiden* (Kore) is lying in the corn of the underground silos, in the realm of Hades and she is fused with Persephone, the Queen of the underworld. At the beginning of the autumn, when the seeds of the old crop are laid on the fields, she ascends and is reunited with her mother Demeter, for at that time the old crop and the new meet each other. For the initiated, this union was the symbol of the eternity of human life that flows from the generations which spring from each other.^{[81][82]}

4.3 The Arcadian myths



From L-R, Artemis, Demeter, Veil of Despoina, Anytus, Tritoness from the throne of Despoina at Lycosura. National Archaeological Museum of Athens

The primitive myths of isolated Arcadia seem to be related to the first Greek-speaking people who came from the north-east during the bronze age. Despoina (the mistress), the goddess of the Arcadian mysteries, is the daughter of Demeter and Poseidon *Hippios* (horse), who represents the river spirit of the underworld that appears as a horse as often happens in northern-European folklore. He pursues the mare-Demeter and from the union she bears the horse Arion and a daughter who originally had the form or the shape of a mare. The two goddesses were not clearly separated and they were closely connected with the springs and the animals. They were related with the god of rivers and springs; Poseidon and especially with Artemis, the Mistress of the Animals who was the first nymph.^[1] According to the Greek tradition a hunt-goddess preceded the harvest goddess.^[83] In Arcadia, Demeter and Persephone were often called *Despoinai* (Δέσποινας, “the mistresses”) in historical times. They are the two Great Goddesses of the Arcadian cults, and evidently they come from a more primitive religion.^[21] The Greek god Poseidon probably substituted the companion (*Paredros*, Πάρεδρος) of the Minoan Great goddess^[84] in the Arcadian mysteries.



Seated goddess, probably Persephone on her throne in the underworld, Severe style ca 480–60, found at Tarentum, Magna Graecia (Pergamon Museum, Berlin)

4.4 Queen of the Underworld

Persephone held an ancient role as the dread queen of the Underworld, within which tradition it was forbidden to speak her name. This tradition comes from her conflation with the very old chthonic divinity Despoina (the mistress), whose real name could not be revealed to anyone except those initiated to her mysteries.^[62] As goddess of death she was also called a daughter of Zeus and Styx,^[85] the river that formed the boundary between Earth and the underworld. Homer describes her as the formidable, venerable majestic queen of the shades, who carries into effect the curses of men upon the souls of the dead, along with her husband Hades.^[86] In the reformulation of Greek mythology expressed in the *Orphic Hymns*, Dionysus and Melinoe are separately called children of Zeus and Persephone.^[87] Groves sacred to her stood at the western extremity of the earth on the frontiers of the lower world, which itself was called “house of Persephone”.^[88]

Her central myth served as the context for the secret rites of regeneration at Eleusis,^[89] which promised immortality to initiates.

5 Cult of Persephone

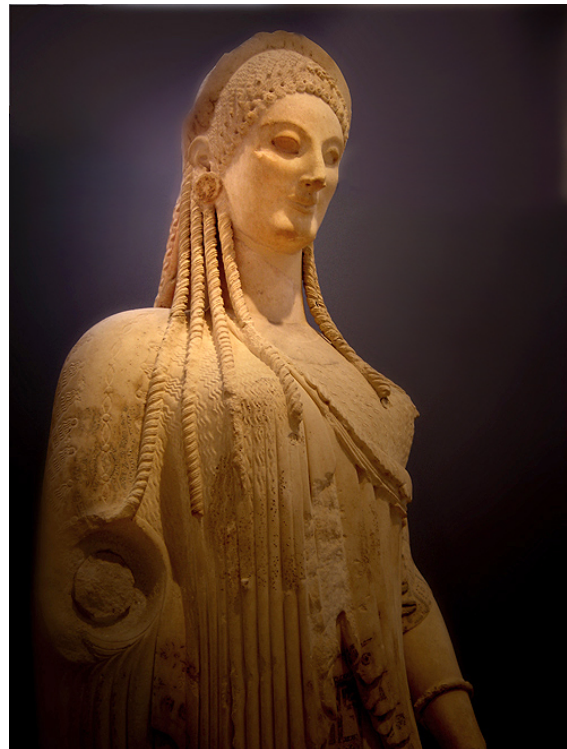
Persephone was worshipped along with her mother Demeter and in the same mysteries. Her cults included agrarian magic, dancing, and rituals. The priests used special vessels and holy symbols, and the people participated with rhymes. In Eleusis there is evidence of sacred laws and other inscriptions.^[25]

The Cult of Demeter and the Maiden is found at Attica, in the main festivals Thesmophoria and Eleusinian mysteries and in a lot of local cults. These festivals were almost always celebrated at the autumn sowing, and at full-moon according to the Greek tradition. In some local cults the feasts were dedicated to Demeter.

5.1 Thesmophoria

Main article: Thesmophoria

Thesmophoria, were celebrated in Athens, and the festi-



Kore, daughter of Demeter, celebrated with her mother by the *Thesmophoriazousae* (women of the festival). Acropolis Museum, Athens

val was widely spread in Greece. This was a festival of secret women-only rituals connected with marriage customs and commemorated the third of the year, in the month Pyanepsion, when Kore was abducted and Demeter abstained from her role as goddess of harvest and growth. The ceremony involved sinking sacrifices into the earth by night and retrieving the decaying remains of pigs that had been placed in the *megara* of Demeter (trenches and pits or natural clefts in rock), the previous year. These

were placed on altars, mixed with seeds, then planted.^[90] Pits rich in organic matter at Eleusis have been taken as evidence that the Thesmophoria was held there as well as in other *demes* of Attica.^[91] This agrarian magic was also used in the cult of the earth-goddesses *potniai* (mistresses) in the *Cabeirian*, and in *Knidos*.^[92]

The festival was celebrated over three days. The first was the “way up” to the sacred space, the second, the day of feasting when they ate pomegranate seeds and the third was a meat feast in celebration of *Kalligeneia* a goddess of beautiful birth. Zeus penetrated the mysteries as *Zeus-Eubuleus*^[90] which is an euphemistical name of *Hades* (*Chthonios Zeus*).^[17] In the original myth which is an etiology for the ancient rites, Eubuleus was a swineherd who was feeding his pigs at the opening to the underworld when Persephone was abducted by Plouton. His swine were swallowed by the earth along with her.^[74]

5.2 Eleusinian mysteries

Main article: [Eleusinian mysteries](#)

The Eleusinian mysteries was a festival celebrated at the



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

autumn sowing in the city of Eleusis. Inscriptions refer to “the Goddesses” accompanied by the agricultural god Triptolemos (probably son of Ge and Oceanus),^[93] and “the God and the Goddess” (Persephone and Plouton) ac-

companied by *Eubuleus* who probably led the way back from the underworld.^[94] The myth was represented in a cycle with three phases: the “descent”, the “search”, and the “ascent”, with contrasted emotions from sorrow to joy which roused the *mystae* to exultation. The main theme was the ascent of Persephone and the reunion with her mother Demeter.^[81] The festival activities included dancing, probably across the *Rharian* field, where according to the myth the first corn grew.

At the beginning of the feast, the priests filled two special vessels and poured them out, the one towards the west, and the other towards the east. The people looking both to the sky and the earth shouted in a magical rhyme “rain and conceive”. In a ritual, a child was initiated from the hearth (the divine fire). It was the ritual of the “divine child” who originally was *Ploutos*. In the Homeric hymn the ritual is connected with the myth of the agricultural god *Triptolemos*^[57] The high point of the celebration was “an ear of corn cut in silence”, which represented the force of the new life. The idea of immortality didn't exist in the mysteries at the beginning, but the initiated believed that they would have a better fate in the underworld. Death remained a reality, but at the same time a new beginning like the plant which grows from the buried seed.^[25] In the earliest depictions Persephone is an armless and legless deity, who grows out of the ground.^[95]

5.3 Local cults

Local cults of Demeter and Kore existed in Greece, Asia Minor, Sicily, Magna Graecia, and Libya.

- **Attica:**^[21]
 - Athens, in the mysteries of *Agrae*. This was a local cult near the river *Ilissos*. They were celebrated during spring in the month *Anthesterion*. Later they became an obligation for the participants of the “greater” Eleusinian mysteries. There was a temple of Demeter and Kore, and an image of *Triptolemos*.^[96]
- Piraeus: The *Skirophoria*, a festival related to the *Thesmophoria*.
- Megara: Cult of Demeter *thesmophoros* and Kore. The city was named after its *megara*.^[97]
- Aegina: Cult of Demeter *thesmophoros* and Kore.
- Phlya, near Koropi, in the mysteries of *Phlya*: These have very old roots, and were probably originally dedicated to Demeter *Anesidora*, Kore, and Zeus- *Ktesios*, who was the god of the underground stored corn. Pausanias mentions a temple of Demeter-*Anesidora*, Kore *Protogone*, and Zeus *Ktesios*. The surname



Demeter drives her horse-drawn chariot containing her daughter Persephone at Selinunte, Sicily 6th century BC

Protagonos, indicates a later Orphic influence. It seems that the mysteries were related to the mysteries of Andania in Messene.^[98]

• Boeotia:

- Thebes, which Zeus is said to have given to her as an acknowledgement for a favour she had bestowed upon him.^[99] Pausanias records a grove of Cabeirian Demeter and the Maid, three miles outside the gates of Thebes, where a ritual was performed, so-called on the grounds that Demeter gave it to the Cabeiri, who established it at Thebes. The Thebans told Pausanias that some inhabitants of Naupactus had performed the same rituals there, and had met with divine vengeance.^[100] The Cabeirian mysteries were introduced from Asia Minor at the end of the archaic period. Nothing is known of the older cult, and it seems that the Cabeiri were originally wine-daemons. Inscriptions from the temple in Thebes mention the old one as Cabir, and the new one as son (pais), who are different.^[98] According to Pausanias, Pelarge, the daughter of Potnieus, was connected with the cult of Demeter in the Cabeirian (potniai).^[92]
- A feast in Boeotia, in the month *Demetrios* (Pyanepsion), probably similar with the Thesmophoria.
- Thebes: Cult of Demeter and Kore in a feast named Thesmophoria but probably different.

It was celebrated in the summer month *Bukattios*.^{[21][101]}

• Peloponnese (except Arcadia)^[21]

- **Hermione:** An old cult of Demeter Chthonia, Kore, and *Klymenos* (Hades). Cows were pushed into the temple, and then they were killed by four women. It is possible that Hermione was a mythical name, the place of the souls.^[17]
- **Asine:** Cult of Demeter Chthonia. The cult seems to be related to the original cult of Demeter in Hermione.^[17]
- **Lakonia:** Temple of Demeter *Eleusinia* near Taygetos. The feast was named *Eleuhinia*, and the name was given before the relation of Demeter with the cult of Eleusis.
- **Lakonia at Aigila:** Dedicated to Demeter. Men were excluded.
- **near Sparta:** Cult of Demeter and Kore, the Demeters (*Δαμάτρες*, “Damaters”). According to Hesychius, the feast lasted three days (Thesmophoria).
- **Corinth:** Cult of Demeter, Kore and Pluton.^[17]
- **Triphylia in Elis:** Cult of Demeter, Kore and Hades.^[17]
- **Pellene:** Dedicated to the *Mysian* Demeter. Men were excluded. The next day, men and women became naked.
- **Andania in Messenia** (near the borders of Arcadia): Cult of the Great goddesses, Demeter and *Hagne*. *Hagne*, a goddess of the spring, was the original deity before Demeter. The temple was built near a spring.

• Arcadia^[18]

- **Pheneos:** Mysteries of Demeter *Thesmia* and Demeter *Eleusinia*. The Eleusinian cult was introduced later. The priest took the *holy book* from a natural cleft. He used the mask of Demeter *Kidaria*, and he hit his stick on the earth, in a kind of agrarian magic. An Arcadian dance was named *kidaris*.
- **Pallantion** near Tripoli: Cult of Demeter and Kore.
- **Karyai:** Cult of Kore and Pluton.^[17]
- **Tegea:** Cult of Demeter and Kore, the *Karpophoroi*, “Fruit givers”.
- **Megalopolis:** Cult of the Great goddesses, Demeter and *Kore Sotira*, “the savior”.
- **Mantineia:** Cult of Demeter and Kore in the fest *Koragia*.^[102]

- **Trapezus:** Mysteries of the Great goddesses, Demeter and Kore. The temple was built near a spring, and a fire was burning out of the earth.
- near **Thelpusa** in Onkeion: Temple of Demeter Erinys (vengeful) and Demeter Lusia (bathing). In the myth Demeter was united with **Poseidon Hippios** (horse) and bore the horse Arion and the unnamed. The name **Despoina** was given in West Arcadia.
- **Phigalia:** Cult of the mare-headed Demeter (black), and **Despoina**. Demeter was depicted in her archaic form, a Medusa type with a horse's head with snaky hair, holding a dove and a dolphin.^[103] The temple was built near a spring.
- **Lycosura,**
Main article: **Despoina**
Cult of Demeter and **Despoina**. In the portico of the temple of **Despoina** there was a tablet with the inscriptions of the mysteries. In front of the temple there was an altar to Demeter and another to **Despoine**, after which was one of the Great Mother. By the sides stood **Artemis** and **Anytos**, the Titan who brought up **Despoine**. Besides the temple, there was also a hall where the Arcadians celebrated the mysteries^{[104][105]} A fire was always burning in front of the temple of **Pan** (the goat-god), the god of the wild, shepherds and flocks. In a relief appear dancing animal-headed women (or with animal-masks) in a procession. Near the temple have been found terracotta figures with human bodies, and heads of animals.^[18]
- **Islands**
 - **Paros:** Cult of Demeter, Kore and Zeus-Eubuleus.^[17]
 - **Amorgos:** Cult of Demeter, Kore and Zeus-Eubuleus.^[17]
 - **Delos:** Cult of Demeter, Kore, and Zeus-Eubuleus. Probably a different feast with the name **Thesmophoria**, celebrated in a summer month (the same month in Thebes). Two big loaves of bread were offered to the two goddesses. Another feast was named *Megalaria*.^{[21][101]}
 - **Mykonos:** Cult of Demeter, Kore and Zeus-Buleus.
 - **Crete :** Cult of Demeter and Kore, in the month **Thesmophorios**.
 - **Rhodes:** Cult of Demeter and Kore, in the month **Thesmophorios**. The two goddesses are the **Damaters** in an inscription from **Lindos**
- **Asia Minor**
 - **Knidos:** Cult of Demeter, Kore and Pluton.^[17] Agrarian magic similar to the one used in **Thesmophoria** and in the cult of the **potniai** (**Cabeirian**).^[21]
 - **Ephesos :** Cult of Demeter and Kore, celebrated at night-time.^[106]
 - **Priene:** Cult of Demeter and Kore, similar to the **Thesmophoria**.^[21]
- **Sicily**
 - **Syracuse:** There was a harvest festival of Demeter and Persephone at Syracuse when the grain was ripe (about May).^[107]
 - A fest *Koris katagogi*, the descent of Persephone into the underworld.^[21]
- **Magna Graecia**
 - **Epizephyrian Locri:** A temple associated with childbirth; its treasure was looted by **Pyrrhus**.^[108]
 - Archaeological finds suggest that worship of Demeter and Persephone was widespread in Sicily and Greek Italy.
- **Libya**
 - **Cyrene:** Temple of Demeter and Kore^[21]

6 Ancient literary references

- **Homer:**
 - **Iliad:**
 - “the gods fulfilled his curse, even Zeus of the nether world and dread Persephone.” (9, line 457; A. T. Murray, trans)
 - "Althea prayed instantly to the gods, being grieved for her brother's slaying; and furthermore instantly beat with her hands upon the all-nurturing earth, calling upon Hades and dread Persephone" (9, 569)
 - **Odyssey:**
 - “And come to the house of Hades and dread Persephoneia to seek sooth saying of the spirit of Theban Teiresias. To him even in death Persephoneia has granted reason that ...” (book 10, card 473)
- **Hymns to Demeter**^[109]
 - **Hymn 2:**
 - “Mistress Demeter goddess of heaven, which God or mortal man has rapt away Persephone and pierced with sorrow your dear heart?(*hymn 2, card 40*)

- **Hymn 13:**
 - “I start to sing for Demeter the lovely-faced goddess, for her and her daughter the most beautiful Persephoneia. Hail goddess keep this city safe!” (hymn 13, card 1)
- Pindar^[109]
 - **Olympian:**
 - “Now go Echo, to the dark-walled home of Phersephona.”(book O, poem 14)
 - **Isthmean:**
 - “Aecus showed them the way to the house of Phersephona and nymphs, one of them carrying a ball.”(book I, poem 8)
 - **Nemean:**
 - “Island which Zeus, the lord of Olympus gave to Phersephona;he nodded descent with his flowers hair.”(book N, poem 1)
 - **Pythian:**
 - “You splendor-loving city, most beautiful on earth, home of Phersephona. You who inhabit the hill of well-built dwellings.”(book P, poem 12)
- Aeschylus^[109]
 - **Libation bearers:**
 - Electra: “O Phersephassa, grant us indeed a glorious victory!” (card 479)
- Aristophanes^[109]
 - **Thesmophoriazusae:**
 - Mnesilochos: “Thou Mistress Demeter, the most valuable friend and thou Pherephatta, grant that I may be able to offer you!” (card 266)
- Euripides^[109]
 - **Alcestis:**
 - “O you brave and best hail, sitting as attendand Beside’s Hades bride Phersephone!” (card 741)
 - **Hecuba:**
 - “It is said that any of the dead that stand beside Phersephone, that the Danaids have left the plains to Troy.” (card 130)
- Bacchylides^[109]
 - **Epinicians:**
 - “Flashing thunderbolt went down to the halls of slender-ankled Phersephona to bring up into the light of Hades.” (book Ep. poem 5)

- Vergil^[110]
 - **The Aeneid:**
 - “For since she had not died through fate, or by a well-earned death, but wretchedly, before her time, inflamed with sudden madness, Proserpine had not yet taken a lock of golden hair from her head, or condemned her soul to Stygian Orcus.” (IV.696-99)

7 Gallery

- Hades abducting **Persephone**, wall painting in the small royal tomb at Vergina. Macedonia, Greece
- Italy. Renaissance relief, Rape of Persephone. Brooklyn Museum Archives, Goodyear Archival Collection

8 Modern reception

In 1934, Igor Stravinsky based his melodrama *Perséphone* on Persephone’s story. In 1961, Frederick Ashton of the Royal Ballet appropriated Stravinsky’s score, to choreograph a ballet starring Svetlana Beriosova as Persephone.

Persephone also appears many times in popular culture. Featured in a variety of young adult novels such as “Persephone”^[111] by Kaitlin Bevis. “The Goddess Test” by Aimee Carter, “The Goddess Letters” by Carol Orlock, and “Abandon” by Meg Cabot, her story has also been treated by Suzanne Banay Santo in “Persephone Under the Earth” in the light of women’s spirituality. Here Santo treats the mythic elements in terms of maternal sacrifice to the burgeoning sexuality of an adolescent daughter. Accompanied by the classic, sensual paintings of Frederic Lord Leighton and William-Adolphe Bouguereau, Santo portrays Persephone not as a victim but as a woman in quest of sexual depth and power, transcending the role of daughter, though ultimately returning to it as an awakened Queen.^[112]

Main article: [Persephone in popular culture](#)

9 See also

- Rape of Persephone
- Anthesphoria, festival honoring Proserpina, and Persephone
- Potnia
- Inanna

10 Notes and references

Notes

- [1] *Cora*, the Latinization of *Kore*, is not usually used any more in modern English.
- [2] The actual word in Linear B is pe-re-^*82 or *pe-re-swa*; it is found on the PY Tn 316 tablet.^[3]
- [3] Empedocles was a Greek pre-Socratic philosopher who was a citizen of Agrigentum, a Greek colony in Sicily.
- [4] Kingsley 1995 identifies *Nestis* as a cult title of Persephone.
- [5] Hom. Hymn. to Demeter 470:
“Awful mysteries which no one may in any way transgress or pry into or utter, for deep awe of the gods checks the voice. Happy is he among men upon earth who has seen these mysteries; but he who is uninitiate and who has no part in them, never has lot of like good things once he is dead, down in the darkness and gloom”.
- [6] “This is the time when Zeus mated with Semele, who is also Persephone, and Dionysos was conceived. It is also the time when Dionysos took Ariadne to be His wife, and so we celebrate the marriage of the Basilinna (religious Queen) and the God”.^[79]

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 - **File:Kore55.jpg** *Source:* <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Kore55.jpg> *License:* CC-BY-SA-3.0 *Contributors:* Ricardo André Frantz (User:Tetraktys), 2006 *Original artist:* ?
 - **File:Lady_of_Auxerre_Louvre_Ma3098_n2.jpg** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/Lady_of_Auxerre_Louvre_Ma3098_n2.jpg *License:* CC-BY-2.5 *Contributors:* Jastrow (2007) *Original artist:* Unknown
 - **File:Laurel_wreath_fa13.gif** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/72/Laurel_wreath_fa13.gif *License:* ? *Contributors:* <http://fa13.com> *Original artist:* Фёдор Таран
 - **File:Locri_Pinax_Of_Persephone_And_Hades.jpg** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cd/Locri_Pinax_Of_Persephone_And_Hades.jpg *License:* CC-BY-SA-2.5 *Contributors:* ? *Original artist:* ?
 - **File:Lycosoura-2.jpg** *Source:* <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e1/Lycosoura-2.jpg> *License:* CC-BY-2.5 *Contributors:* self-made (J. Matthew Harrington) render *Original artist:* Nefasdicere (= J. Matthew Harrington)
 - **File:Lycosoura-group.jpg** *Source:* <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/51/Lycosoura-group.jpg> *License:* CC-BY-2.5 *Contributors:* J. Matthew Harrington, National Archaeological Museum of Athens, personal digital image February 1, 2007 *Original artist:* Nefasdicere (= J. Matthew Harrington)
 - **File:Lycosoura-veil.jpg** *Source:* <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/49/Lycosoura-veil.jpg> *License:* CC-BY-2.5 *Contributors:* J. Matthew Harrington, National Archaeological Museum of Athens, personal digital image, February 1, 2007 *Original artist:* Nefasdicere (= J. Matthew Harrington)
 - **File:P1010629_crop.png** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/29/P1010629_crop.png *License:* CC-BY-SA-3.0 *Contributors:* Own work *Original artist:* Aeleftherios
 - **File:Persephone_krater_Antikensammlung_Berlin_1984.40.jpg** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/39/Persephone_krater_Antikensammlung_Berlin_1984.40.jpg *License:* Public domain *Contributors:* User:Bibi Saint-Pol, own work, 2008 *Original artist:* Circle of the Darius Painter
 - **File:Proserpina_kidnapped_Kircheriano_Terme.jpg** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b4/Proserpina_kidnapped_Kircheriano_Terme.jpg *License:* Public domain *Contributors:* Jastrow (2006) *Original artist:* ?
 - **File:Sarcophagus_with_the_Abduction_of_Persephone_by_Hades_(detail).JPG** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0a/Sarcophagus_with_the_Abduction_of_Persephone_by_Hades_%28detail%29.JPG *License:* CC-BY-SA-3.0 *Contributors:* Own work by Ad Meskens. *Original artist:* Anonymous (Roman).
 - **File:Throning_goddess_(Persephone)_480-460_BC_(Sk_1761)_1.JPG** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fb/Throning_goddess_%28Persephone%29_480-460_BC_%28Sk_1761%29_1.JPG *License:* CC-BY-SA-3.0 *Contributors:* Own work *Original artist:* Nemracc
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 - **File:Triptolemos_Louvre_G187.jpg** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/72/Triptolemos_Louvre_G187.jpg *License:* Public domain *Contributors:* Jastrow (2007) *Original artist:* **English:** Triptolemos Painter (eponymous vase)

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