

Mystery (gr. mustêrion)

- Secret rite, mostly in plural, esp. those of Demeter at Eleusis, from múō, ‘close, shut’ (sc. the eyes or the mouth)



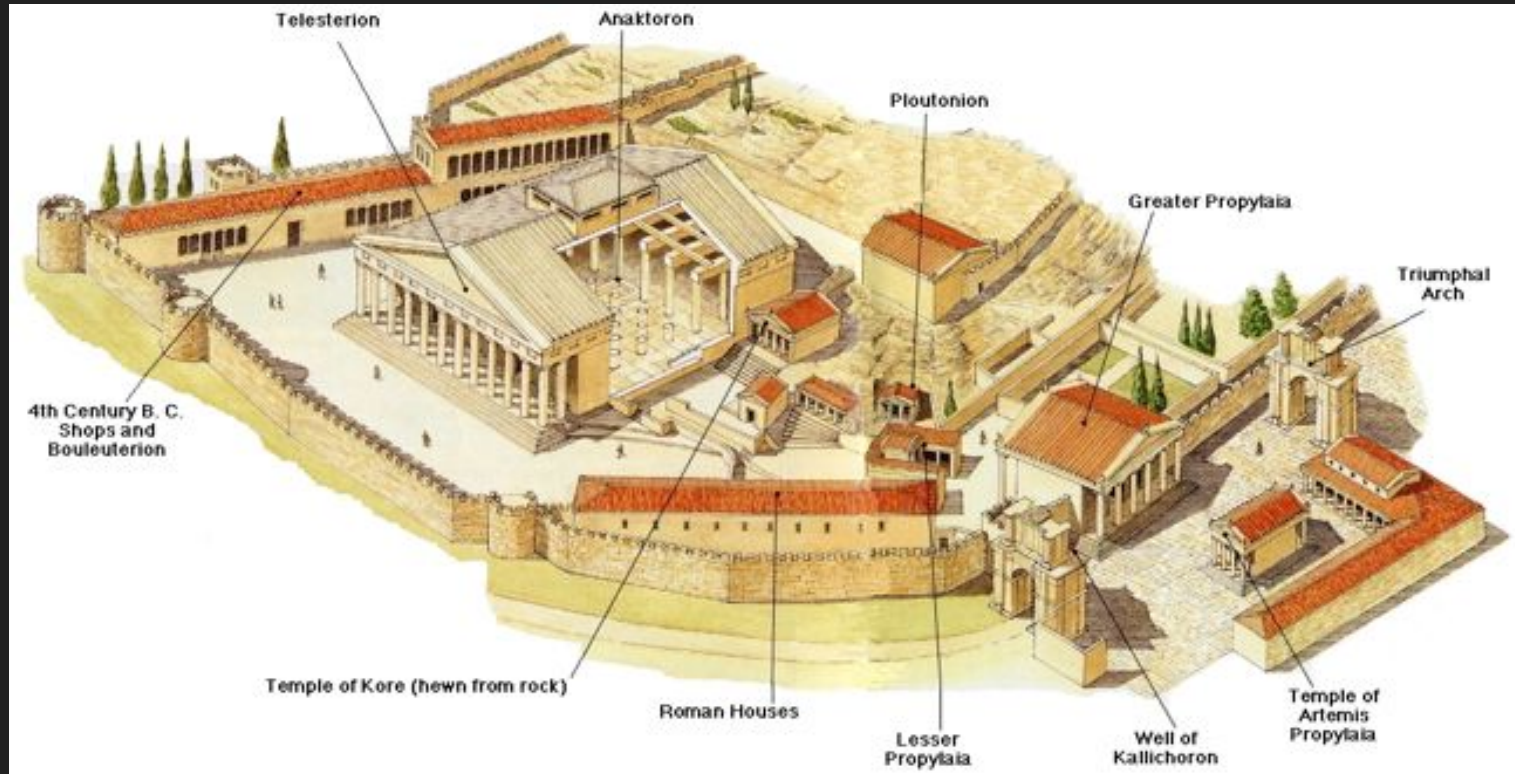
Why were these rituals secret?

- Strabo (10.3.9): the secrecy with which the sacred rites are concealed induces reverence for the divine, since it imitates the nature of the divine, which is to avoid being perceived by our human senses.
- Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, vv. 478-8: Demeter *showed the beautiful mysteries* (to the kings) ... *the solemn mysteries which one cannot depart from or enquire about or broadcast, for great awe of the gods restrains us from speaking.*

Eleusis



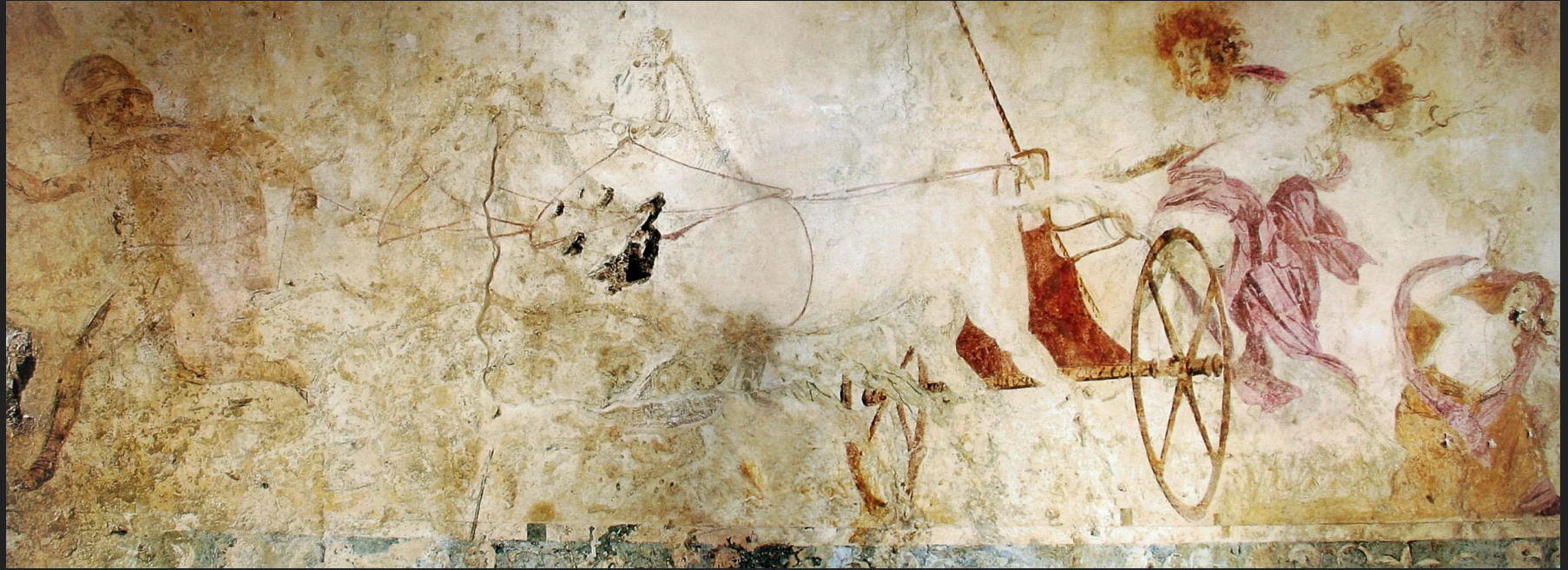
Sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis



Demeter - Ge Meter



Rape of Persephone



Persephone and Hades



Persephone Returns



Queen of the Underworld

