

ZIRIDAVA  
STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

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# Feasts in Honor of Demeter in the Megarian Colonies on the Shores of Pontus Euxinus\*

Remus Mihai Feraru

**Abstract:** The study focuses on the comparative research of the feasts dedicated to Demeter in Megara and its Pontic colonies (Byzantion, Mesambria, and Callatis). In Megara and in the Megarian Pontic colonies Demeter was worshipped with a multitude of epicleses: *Thesmophoros*, *Malophoros*, *Chthonia*, and *Ploutodoteira*. The feasts consecrated to Demeter (*Chthonia*, *Thesmophoria*, *Malophoria*) in the Megaran Pontic city states display an agrarian character. On those occasions Demeter was celebrated under the guise of a chthonian deity and a goddess of soil fertility and agriculture. The Pontic colonies of Megarian origin have adopted the cycle of feasts set through the Megarian tradition.

**Keywords:** feast; Demeter; Chthonia; Thesmophoria; Malophoria; Megara; Pontus Euxinus.

The feasts celebrated in the Greek city states were generally closely related to the practice of the various religious cults. Public feasts were occasions to celebrate the deities venerated in each city. In Greek religion, feasts fulfilled the role of celebrating or commemorating certain events or certain mythological characters. The feasts dedicated to the gods adored in the Greek city states were fundamental benchmarks in the structuring of their calendars. The names of the Greek months derive, with a few exceptions, from the names of the homonymous religious feasts. The time and place of the rituals and ceremonies associated with the different feasts were established beforehand through sacred laws and regulations<sup>1</sup>.

The feasts dedicated to Demeter are relatively well attested both in Megara and in its colonies on the shores of the Pontus Euxinus (Byzantion, Chalcedon, Heraclea Pontica, Mesambria, Callatis, and the Tauric Chersonesos) (Fig. 1). This can be explained by the central place that Demeter held in the pantheon of Megara. The goddess also enjoyed considerable popularity in the Megan Pontic colonies. The present study focuses on the comparative research of the feasts dedicated to Demeter in Megara and the Pontic colonies of Megarian origin. The initiative starts from the hypothesis that the Pontic Megaran city states have inherited the cults and the calendar of their metropolis of Megara.

## Research methodology

Ever since the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC the relation between the names of the Greek feasts and the names of the calendar months is obvious. Originally, the Greeks labeled their months according to the main feasts and the name of each month was derived from the name of the homonymous feast or from the epiclesis of the god honored on that occasion<sup>2</sup>. Festive rituals and ceremonies were organized in the days of the months consecrated to each of the important gods, days set through sacred laws and regulations. The month of *Artemisios* for example signified the “month of the *Artemisia* feast”<sup>3</sup> celebrated in honor of goddess Artemis. Thus the existence of different Greek feasts can be inferred – when they are not directly attested by the epigraphic sources – starting from the name of the homonymous months, in case the latter are mentioned in inscriptions. In their turn, the epicleses of the deities – formed from the name of the homonymous feasts – are also clues for the existence

\* English translation: Ana M. Gruia.

<sup>1</sup> Ferrari 2003, 742 (s.v. *sărbătoare*).

<sup>2</sup> Casevitz 1991, 110–112.

<sup>3</sup> The month of *Artemisios* is attested by the calendars of the city states in almost all of the regions of ancient Greece, including Macedonia. *Artemisios* is included in the calendars of the Dorian city states, see Trümper 1997, 122, 125; Miroux 1976, 234–235; 236–237.

of the feasts dedicated to the gods in question. For example, the epiclesis Μαλόφορος designated Demeter who was celebrated during the feast of Μαλοφόρια.

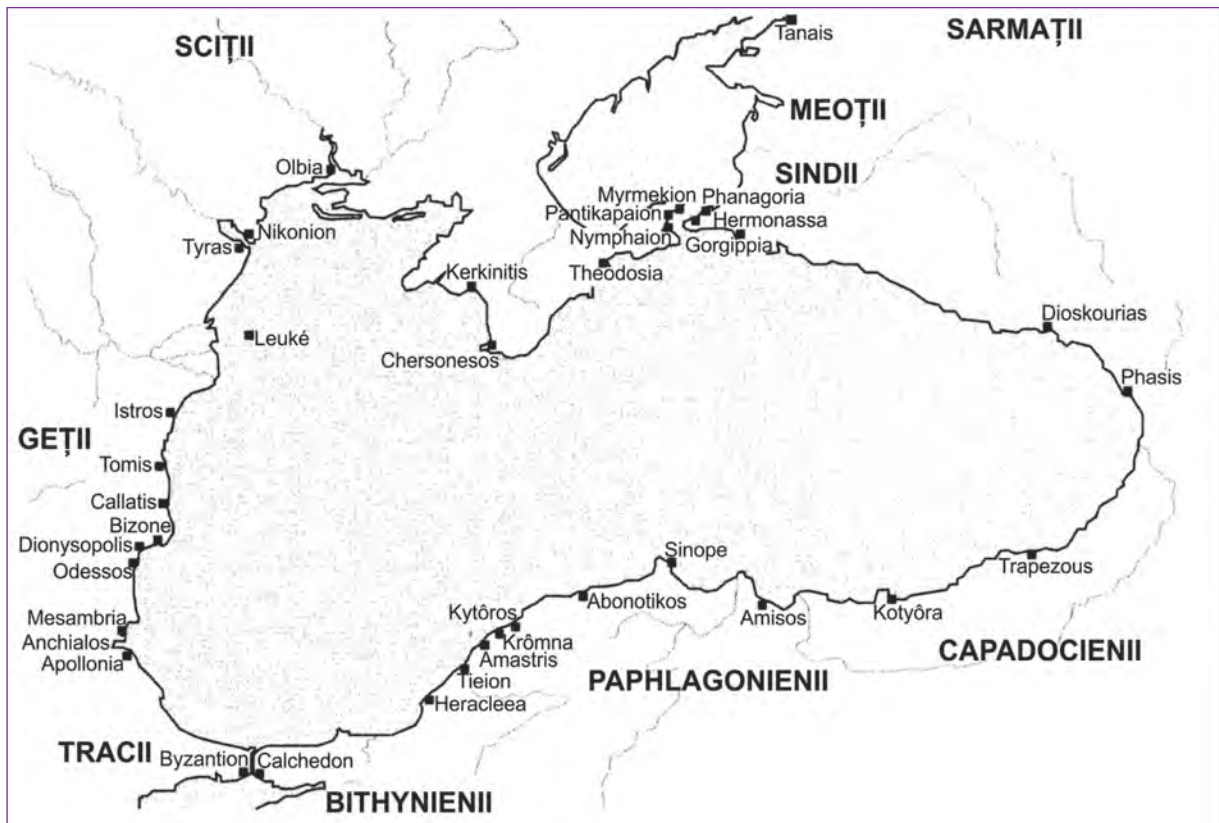


Fig. 1. The Greek cities on the shores of Pontus Euxinus (apud Dana 2011 – with our edits).

### The cult of Demeter in Megara and in the Megarian Pontic colonies

In Megara, Demeter was an ancestral goddess, part of the city state's original pantheon. The cult of Demeter had been practiced since the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Pausanias tells how Kar, the first king of Megara, introduced the cult of Demeter in the city by erecting a place of worship (μέγαρον) in her honor.<sup>4</sup> Demeter is the only Megarian goddess adored on both acropolises, the eastern one (Caria)<sup>5</sup> and the western one (Alcathoos)<sup>6</sup>. Besides, the oldest religious nucleus of Megara, located on the spot of the coast archaeological site in Nisaia, seems dominated by Demeter in association with Poseidon *Enyalios* and Zeus *Meilichios*<sup>7</sup>. Pausanias signals the existence of a sanctuary (ιερόν) dedicated to Demeter *Malophoros*<sup>8</sup> in Nisaia where her cult dates back to at least the first decades of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC<sup>9</sup>. Thus, Megaran Demeter was a chthonian deity that manifested itself under two distinct aspects: on the one hand as a goddess of the Thesmophoria Demeter enjoyed a cult located *intra-muros*, right in the center of Megara while on the other hand she was is venerated as *Malophoros* in a sanctuary outside the city.

In Megara, Demeter was adored with the epicleses of Θεσιμόφορος and Μαλόφορος. The epithet

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 39, 5, (p. 115): "It is said that the city [Megara] received its name when the ruler was Kar, son of Phoroneus; it is said that they [the Magarans] built for the first time holy buildings dedicated to Demeter and the inhabitants called their city Megara"; Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 40, 6, (p. 117): "this is also the place of the *megaron* of Demeter. It is said that Kar had it built during his reign." Pausanias' text might be interpreted in the sense that the name of the city of Megara derives from the *megaron*, the religious place consecrated to Demeter, located on the acropolis of *Karia*, Antonetti 1998, 36.

<sup>5</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 40, 6 (p. 117).

<sup>6</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 42, 6–7, (p. 121–122): "A temple of goddess Demeter *Thesmophoros* is also located (on the acropolis)"; Antonetti 1999, 17. Antonetti, 1998, 35–36.

<sup>7</sup> Tucidide IV, 67, 2; 118, 4 *apud* Antonetti 1998, 36.

<sup>8</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 44, 3–4, (p. 125): "Descending towards the port that is still called Nisaia one encounters a temple of Demeter *Malophoros*"; see also Antonetti 1998, 36; Lévêque-Antonetti 1990 198–199.

<sup>9</sup> Bremmer 2012, 32.



Θεσμόφορος was usually associated with the name of Demeter. Its meaning is ambiguous; it can be interpreted either as “bringer of laws”<sup>10</sup> (a well-attested sense), or as “the one who receives θεσμοί”, i.e. “sacred objects” or “sacred depositions” with an obvious magical and symbolic value<sup>11</sup>. This latter meaning alludes to the ritual held during the first day of the feast of Θεσμοφόρια when the offerings to Demeter were collected from the sacrifice pits (μέγαρα)<sup>12</sup>. Besides, the epiclesis *Thesmophoros* derives from the name of the homonymous feast, the *Thesmophoria*.

According to Pausanias, Demeter was venerated through the epiclesis Μαλόφορος. The author provides an imaginary etymological explanation of this epiclesis: “the first sheep farmers of Megara had called Demeter *Malophoros*”<sup>13</sup>. Naturally, Pausanias associated the epithet Μαλόφορος and the word μῆλον meaning “sheep”<sup>14</sup>; *Malophoros* thus meant “the one who brings the sheep”. For this reason Demeter was seen as a protector of the flocks. It has been proven that Pausanias’ explanation is incorrect from a linguistic perspective<sup>15</sup>. The epithet *Malophoros* was rather formed from the Dorian word μάλον, “apple”<sup>16</sup>. *Malophoros* very likely derived from the name of a presumed feast of *Malophoria* held in honor of Demeter as protector of fruit-bearing trees<sup>17</sup>. The cult of Demeter *Malophoros* was adopted by the Megaran colonies in Sicily (Selinunte) and on the shores of Pontus Euxinus (Byzantion, Anchialos, Mesambria, and Callatis). It is well attested in Selinunte, a colony of Megara Hyblaea, where archaeologists have uncovered a sanctuary of Demeter *Malophoros* that dates to 590–580 BC<sup>18</sup>.

Demeter holds a significant place in the pantheon of Chalcedon beside Apollo. The goddess’ head features on local coins<sup>19</sup>. The only available piece of information on the cult of Demeter in Heraclea Pontica originates in one of Hesychius’s notes: Πάμπανον· ἡ Δημήτηρ ἐν Ἡρακλείᾳ. The head of Demeter is depicted in coins from the Imperial Era<sup>20</sup>.

The name of the month of *Malophorios*, epigraphically attested in Byzantion, suggests a possible presence of Demeter *Malophoros* in the pantheon of that city state. To an equal degree, the existence of the cult of Demeter *Malophoros* in Byzantion can be admitted based on its attestation in the metropolis of Megara<sup>21</sup> and in the Megarian colonies from the Pontus Euxinus (Callatis, Mesambria Anchialos) and from Sicily (Selinunte)<sup>22</sup>.

In Callatis Demeter had been adored ever since the foundation of the colony; she was certainly part of the original pantheon of Callatis, belonging to the group of chthonian gods. Demeter was invoked with epicleses such as Χθονία and Πλουτοδότειρα (“bestower of riches”) and this indicates that she was adored as a god of the plowed soil and of agriculture<sup>23</sup>. The epiclesis Χθονία features in a list of gods from Callatis dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Though the epithet *Chthonia* features beside the name of Artemida<sup>24</sup>, it certainly belongs to Demeter. The ancient character and the significance of the cult of Demeter *Chthonia* in Callatis are confirmed by her position beside Dionysos *Patroos*, *Bakcheus*, and *Dasyllios*, Aphrodite *Pandamos*, Peitho, Artemis, and Kronos; these are the most important gods of the city state, part of its “Megarian inheritance”<sup>25</sup>.

An honorary decree from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC tells of the existence of a society of

<sup>10</sup> Chantraine 1970, 432 (s.v. θεσμός). The word θεσμός is usually employed with the meaning of *rule*, *order*, and *law*. The word Θεσμόφορος is a composite form of θεσμός, with the meaning of “law-bringer, civilizer.”

<sup>11</sup> Bremmer, 2012, 27; Ferrari, 2003, 821, (s.v. *Tesmofovia*).

<sup>12</sup> Ferrari, 2003, 822, (s.v. *Tesmofovia*).

<sup>13</sup> Pausanias, *Cālātorie in Grecia* (1974), I, 44, 3, (p. 125).

<sup>14</sup> In Greek one encounters a homonym of μῆλον that has the meaning of “apple”, see *LSJ*, 1127 [s.v. μῆλον (A); μῆλον (B)].

<sup>15</sup> Bremmer 2012, 32.

<sup>16</sup> Chantraine 1974, 694 (s.v. 1 μῆλον); *LSJ*, 1127 [s.v. μῆλον (B)]; Dubois, 1989, 76.

<sup>17</sup> To this end, see Callimachos invoking Demeter (*Hymne VII*, 136): “Φέρε μάλα, φέρε στάχυς”, (“Grant us fruit, grant us wheat!”), Hanell 1934, 175–176. For an explanation of the epiclesis *Malophoros*, see also Mantzoulinou-Richards 1986, 15–22.

<sup>18</sup> Dewailly 1992, 3–9.

<sup>19</sup> Hanell 1934, 180.

<sup>20</sup> Hanell 1934, 180.

<sup>21</sup> Pausanias, *Cālātorie in Grecia* (1974), I, 44, 3, (p. 125).

<sup>22</sup> Dubois 1989, 61, no. 54 (dating: 475–450 BC); Dubois 1989, 75, no. 78, r. 5 (dating: 450 BC).

<sup>23</sup> Ferrari 2003, 276, (s.v. *Demetra*).

<sup>24</sup> *ISM III*, 48 A: “[Διόν]υσος Πα[τρῶος] / [Διόν]υσος Βακ[χεύς] / Ἀφροδίτα Πά[νδημος] / Πειθῶ, Δασύ[λλιος] / Ἄρτεμις, Χθ[ονία(?)] / Κρόνο[ς] -----.”

<sup>25</sup> Many of the gods mentioned by the oracular inscription from Callatis, except for Artemida and Kronos, are also encountered in Pausanias’ description [*Cālātorie in Grecia* (1974), I, 43, 5–6, p. 123–124] of the Megaran pantheon.

worshippers (θουινᾶται) of Demeter *Chthonia* in Callatis<sup>26</sup>. The name of the members of this association – θουινᾶται – derives from the word θουινή, *sacred banquet*, proving that the association of the *thoinatai* was charged with organizing the sacred banquets held during the feasts consecrated to Demeter *Chthonia*<sup>27</sup>.

During the Imperial Era a religious association consecrated a dedication to Demeter Πλουτοδότειρα (“bestower of riches”); this epithet corresponds to Demeter’s function of agriculture goddess<sup>28</sup>.

Though Demeter *Malophoros* is not attested in Callatis, one can presume she existed due to the attested month of Μαλοφόριος<sup>29</sup> the name of which derives from the epiclesis in question. Still, the existence of the month of *Malophorios* in the calendar of Callatis is not a sufficient argument as it was colonists from Heraclea Pontica who brought the calendar to Callatis, and had adopted it, in their turn, from Megara<sup>30</sup>. The fact that the cult of Demeter *Malophoros* is attested in Mesambria is an argument that supports its existence in Callatis<sup>31</sup>.

The numismatic sources confirm the existence of the cult of Demeter in Callatis. The head of Demeter and her symbol, the ear of wheat, are depicted on bronze coins dated to the Hellenistic and Imperial eras<sup>32</sup>.

The cult of Demeter *Malophoros* is attested in Anchialos<sup>33</sup>, a settlement founded by Apollonia Pontica in the area of influence of Mesambria. Considering the fact that Demeter was venerated with the epiclesis *Malophoros* in Megara and its colonies exclusively, it is certain that the cult of Demeter *Malophoros* originated in Mesambria or had been even imposed in Anchialos by the Mesambrians<sup>34</sup>. Demeter *Malophoros* was venerated in Selinunte, a colony of Megara Hyblaea, where the goddess had her own sanctuary<sup>35</sup>.

A funerary stela discovered in Mesambria had been erected for a priestess of goddesses Demeter and Kore Persephone, whose names are associated with the epithet Θεσμοφόροι (or τῶ Θεσμοφόρῳ)<sup>36</sup>. The cult of Demeter *Thesmophoros* (“The Lawmaker”) is attested in Megara where she had her own sanctuary according to Pausanias<sup>37</sup>. Another decree issued in Mesambria in the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC honors a priestess of Demeter and Kore Persephone “who has tended to the sacrifices honorably and piously”<sup>38</sup>.

The effigy of Demeter and the wreath of wheat ears, her symbol, are depicted on a series of bronze coins discovered in Mesambria<sup>39</sup>.

### The feast of *Chthonia*

The cult of Demeter Χθονία is attested in Callatis. Demeter *Chthonia* was probably celebrated by the inhabitants during the feast of *Chthonia*. An argument supporting the celebration of this feast resides in the attestation of a religious association of Demeter *Chthonia* in Callatis, the members of which (θουινᾶται) were charged with organizing the sacred banquets part of the *Chthonia*. Besides, one knows that the sacred banquet held a central place in the cult of Demeter as attested by several

<sup>26</sup> ISM III, 40, r. 1–2: “ἔδοξε τοῖς θουινάταις τᾶς Δά/ματρος τᾶς Χθονίας / Νουμήνιος Νουμηνίου εἶπε· κτλ.” It seems that the decree in honor of Ariston, the son of Ariston of Callatis, was issued by the same association of worshippers of Demeter *Chthonia*, ISM III, 41, r. 8 (end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC).

<sup>27</sup> Avram, in ISM III, 105–106.

<sup>28</sup> ISM III, 259: “[ἀγα]θῆ τύχη / [---Δ]ήμητρι Πλου/[τοδοτείρα]” (the Antonine Era); see also Chiekova 2008, 121 and footnote 35.

<sup>29</sup> ISM, III, 38, r. 1–2: “Ἐπὶ βασιλέος Ἀγαθοῦ Δαίμο/νος μηνὸς Μαλοφορίου κτλ.”

<sup>30</sup> Chiekova 2008, 121; Avram in ISM III, 93–94.

<sup>31</sup> IGB I<sup>2</sup> 370 bis; the inscription was found in Anchialos, a settlement located in the area of influence of Mesambria.

<sup>32</sup> Chiekova 2008, 121–122.

<sup>33</sup> IGB I<sup>2</sup> 370 bis: “Ἀγαθῆι τύχη[ι] / Φιλῆτη θεᾷ / Μαλοφόρῳ / εὐχαριστήριον” („Goodspeed! Philete (consecrated this) to *Malophorios* in sign of gratitude”).

<sup>34</sup> See, Velkov 1980, 117–124.

<sup>35</sup> Riotta 1985, 25–51.

<sup>36</sup> IGB I<sup>2</sup>, 342: “Χαῖρε ἱερέα / Θεσμοφόρων / Ἀγησίλα / [Πλο]υτίωνος” („Greetings, priestess of the *Thesmophore* goddesses, Agesila, daughter of Ploution”).

<sup>37</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 42, 6, (p. 121–122).

<sup>38</sup> IGB V, 5095: “(...) γενομένα τε τᾶς Δάμα/τρος καὶ Κόρρας ἱερέα τῶν τε ἱερῶν κα/[λῶς καὶ] ὀσίως προέστα καὶ τῶμ πολ[ι]τᾶν θετος(?) ἐπιμελου[-----]”.

<sup>39</sup> Chiekova 2008, 124.

sacred regulations that mention persons charged with organizing the banquets (θoinαρμόστρια and ὑποθoinαρμόστρια)<sup>40</sup>.

According to Pausanias, the feast of *Chthonia* was held annually in Hermiona during the summer in honor of Demeter *Chthonia*: "... Demeter brought *Chthonia* to Hermiona and erected the sanctuary for the Hermionians. This deity is called *Chthonia* and they celebrate the feast of *Chthonia* once a year, in the summer ..." <sup>41</sup>.

### The feast of *Thesmophoria*

The feast of Θεσμοφόρια was consecrated to Demeter Θεσμόφορος and was celebrated throughout the Greek world, both in the Ionian and in the Dorian city states. The existence of the feast of *Thesmophoria* can be inferred based on the epigraphic mentions of the month of Θεσμοφόριος<sup>42</sup> or of the epiclesis Θεσμόφορος. In Megara, Demeter *Thesmophoros* was celebrated in her temples on the acropolis of Caria (the *megaron* of Demeter)<sup>43</sup> and on the acropolis of Alcatheos (the temple of Demeter *Thesmophoros*)<sup>44</sup>.

The cult of Demeter *Thesmophoros* was one of the main cults of Megara. Besides, according to Pausanias, the Megarans themselves believed that the name of their city derived from that of Demeter's *megaron* that was directly connected to the *Thesmophoria*. Starting with the Classical Period, the *megaron* was mainly used for the sacrifices during the cults of the chthonian gods; the term *megaron* designates the subterranean buildings and is semantically the equivalent of *bothros*, sacrifice pit<sup>45</sup>. During the Athenian *Thesmophoria* women sacrificed piglets to Demeter by throwing them alive in pits called *megara*<sup>46</sup>; this was a ritual specific to the *Thesmophoria* and is also attested in Delos<sup>47</sup>. The numerous subterranean rooms discovered in Megara were presumably used during the feast of *Thesmophoria*; the features also had a practical function, i.e. for the storage of cereals<sup>48</sup>.

Though the *Thesmophoria* is not directly attested in the Pontic city states, the feast of Demeter was very likely celebrated at the Pontus Euxinus based on several clues provided by the inscriptions regarding the cult of Demeter *Thesmophoros*. Stephan of Byzantium suggested an imaginary etymological explanation of the name of the city state of Callatis that presumably derived from the word κάλαθος, the basket used during the rituals held during the *Thesmophoria*<sup>49</sup>. At any rate, Stephan's explanation reflects a religious reality and supports the hypothesis that the *Thesmophoria* were celebrated in Callatis. The cult of Demeter *Thesmophoros* is attested in Mesambria, as indicated by the funerary inscription of Agesila, daughter of Ploution, who was a priestess of goddesses Demeter and Kore Persephone, the patron goddesses of the *Thesmophoria*<sup>50</sup>.

As for the date of the *Thesmophoria*, the literary and epigraphic sources provide contradicting data. In Athens, the feast was held between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month of *Pyanepsion*

<sup>40</sup> LSCG 65, r. 30–31, p. 131 (regulation regarding the mysteries of Demeter in Andania, 92 BC); LSCG 66, r. 6–8 (regulation from Messenia, the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC); LSCG 64, r. 12 (ritual regulation in Messenia, 191 BC); see also Chiekova 2008, 120–121 and footnote 129, with numerous examples.

<sup>41</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), II, 35, 5, (p. 205–206); see also IG IV, 679, r. 13–17 (the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) that mentions the sacrifices performed in Hermiona during the celebration of the feast of *Chthonia* dedicated to Demeter *Chthonia*.

<sup>42</sup> The month of *Thesmophorios* is attested in Rhodes, Crete, Sicily, and Magna Grecia (IG XIV, 2393, 11, 22, 41, 50, 75, 96, etc.); in Rhodes and Crete, the month of *Thesmophorios* is the equivalent of the Attic month of *Pyanepsion* (October–November), during which the Athenian *Thesmophoria* were held.

<sup>43</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 39, 5, (p. 115); 40, 6, (p. 117).

<sup>44</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 42, 6–7, (p. 121–122).

<sup>45</sup> Chiekova 2008, 117–118.

<sup>46</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1982), IX, 8, 1 (p. 197): "Further on, beyond Asopos, at a distance of almost 10 stadia from the city, one encounters the ruins of Potniai and between them the holy clearing of Demeter and Kore (...). At a set date, besides the other religious practices, the inhabitants use to throw [sacrificial animals] in the so-called *megara*, namely suckling piglets"; Nilsson 1906, 321.

<sup>47</sup> IG XI, 459, r. 61.

<sup>48</sup> *Apud Robu* 2014, 104, n. 397.

<sup>49</sup> Stephanus Byzantinus, s.v. Κάλλατις. ὡς κάλαθος εὐρέθη ἔοικώς τοῖς θεσμοφοριακοῖς [Callatis; (it is said) that a basket similar to those used during the *Thesmophoria* was found there, see Stephanus Byzantinus, s.v. "Κάλλατις" in *FHDR* II, 338–339.

<sup>50</sup> IGB I<sup>2</sup>, 342.

(October-November), at the time of the autumn sowing<sup>51</sup>. On the other hand, based on the correspondence between the month of *Thesmophorios* in the calendar of Rhodes and the month of *Boedromion* in Attica (September-October), one can presume that the Thesmophoria were held in September-October. In Delos the feast was held slightly earlier, during the local month of *Metageitnion*<sup>52</sup> that corresponds to the Attic month of *Metageitnion* (August-September)<sup>53</sup>. In Eretria, the Thesmophoria were held in the end of summer<sup>54</sup>. Thus, the Thesmophoria were celebrated at various dates between the end of summer and the end of autumn.

From an etymological perspective, the name of the feast of Θεσμοφόρια seems connected to the verb τίθημι, “to put”, suggesting that it should be interpreted as “the feast of the deposition of θεσμοί”, i.e. “sacred objects” or “sacred depositions” with an obvious magic and symbolic value<sup>55</sup>. This latter meaning alludes to the ritual performed during the first day of the Thesmophoria when the offerings consecrated to Demeter were gathered from the sacrificial pits (μέγαρα)<sup>56</sup>.

In Athens the Thesmophoria were held between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Pyanepsion (October-November). The feast included purification, fertility, and fecundity rituals. Diodorus of Sicily informs us that the Thesmophoria lasted for 10 days in Selinunte and in all of Sicily; they were celebrated at the time of the winter sowing<sup>57</sup>.

The Thesmophoria were reserved for women and for them alone, namely for the wives of the citizens. In Athens, young unmarried women, the concubines, and the men were excluded. The three days of the Attic Thesmophoria were preceded by a sort of “retreat” of the women to Cape Kolia located in front of the harbor of Piraeus, 35 stadia away from Athens. In a sanctuary of Demeter Thesmophoros and Kore Persephone the women performed a sacrifice<sup>58</sup>.

On Pyanepsion 11 – the first day of the Thesmophoria – the women “returned” to the Athenian sanctuary of Demeter Thesmophoros, located on the Pnyx Hill; for this reason, the day was called ἄνοδος (“the re-climb”). The ritual performed during the first day of the Thesmophoria was connected to the episode of Hades kidnapping Persephone. The women who took part in the ritual (ἀντλήτριαι, “those who took out [offerings] from the well”) collected from the sacrifice pits (*megara*) the remains of the piglets sacrificed during the previous year – probably during the feast of *Skira* – as well as dough figurines depicting snakes and sexual organs<sup>59</sup>. They mixed these remains with seeds and placed the mix on the altars before spreading it across the agricultural fields. The aim of this ritual was to ensure the fertility of the earth and of the future crops, as well as the fecundity of the women. The agrarian function of the ritual seems obvious<sup>60</sup>.

The second day of the Thesmophoria (Νηστεία, “The Lent”) commemorates Demeter’s mourning over the loss of her daughter. The women climbed in procession the Pnyx Hill and spent the day without eating or drinking, seated on litters made of vitex branches, an “anti-aphrodisiac” plant. This temporary retreat to chastity was paradoxically meant to introduce its opposite, the procreative fecundity of women<sup>61</sup>.

During the third day of the feast (Καλλιγένεια, “the beautiful generation”) the participants invoked *Kalligeneia* (“the goddess who gives birth to beautiful children”), identified with Demeter herself; subsequently, as goddess of human fecundity, Demeter was given an offering (*panspermia*) followed by banquets meant to celebrate the return of Persephone<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Deubner 1966, 52.

<sup>52</sup> IG XI, 290, r. 5: “Μεταγεινιώνος ἐκ φιάλης ... παρὰ ταμίου εἰς / Θεσμοφό[ρια---]” (“During the month of *Metageitnion*; from the treasury for the *Thesmophoria*”) (the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC).

<sup>53</sup> Trümpy 1997, 63–64.

<sup>54</sup> Plutarh, *Quaestiones graecae* (*Moralia* 298B).

<sup>55</sup> Bremmer, 2012, 27; Ferrari, 2003, 821, (s.v. *Tesmofovia*).

<sup>56</sup> Ferrari, 2003, 822, (s.v. *Tesmofovia*).

<sup>57</sup> Diodor din Sicilia, V, 4, 7, *apud* Dewailly 1992, 9, footnote 20; Burkert 1987, 242.

<sup>58</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1974), I, 31, 1, (p. 99).

<sup>59</sup> Jost 1992, 166; Burkert 1987, 242–243.

<sup>60</sup> Jost 1992, 166, Ferrari 2003, 822 (s.v. *Tesmofovia*); Bremmer 2012, 28; Burkert 1987, 242–243.

<sup>61</sup> Jost 1992, 166, Ferrari 2003, 822 (s.v. *Tesmofovia*); Bremmer 2012, 29; Burkert 1987, 243–244.

<sup>62</sup> Jost 1992, 166–167; Ferrari 2003, 822; Bremmer 2012, 29–30; Burkert 1987, 244–245.



### The feast of Malophoria

The feast of Μαλοφόρια was consecrated to Demeter *Malophoros* who was adored as protector of fruit-bearing trees. More specifically, the epiclesis *Malophoros* makes reference to “the feast of apples” that celebrated “the original epiphany of the apple” offered by Demeter *Malophoros*, “the goddess who bears the fruit of the earth.” Those who took part in the feast brought fruit offerings<sup>63</sup>.

*Malophoria* was celebrated in Megara, Selinunte (in Sicily) and in the Pontic colonies of Megarian origin. The celebration of the Malophoria can also be inferred in Byzantion, Mesambria, and Callatis based on the attestation of the month of *Malophorios* (September) in the calendars of these city states<sup>64</sup> and on the epiclesis *Malophoros* that is specific to Demeter<sup>65</sup>. *Malophoria* was very likely a feast of the fruit harvest, celebrated during the month of September<sup>66</sup>. The epiclesis *Malophoros* is well fitting to a goddess celebrated in the beginning of autumn, as Demeter *Malophoros* was the goddess who offered ripe fruit<sup>67</sup>.

### Conclusions

The Pontic colonies of Megarian origin have adopted the cycle of feasts set by the tradition in Megara. The cult of Demeter played a significant role in setting the calendars of Megara and its Pontic colonies. The feast of *Malophoria* attested in Byzantion, Mesambria, and Callatis has provided the name of the month of *Malophorios* (September). Besides, the existence of the month of Malophorios and of the feast of *Malophoria* in the calendars of the Megarian Pontic colonies indicates the popularity and ancient character of Demeter’s cult. During the feasts of *Chthonia*, *Thesmophoria*, and *Malophoria* that have an agrarian character, Demeter was celebrated as a chthonian deity and a goddess of soil fertility and agriculture. Besides, the cycle of agrarian Greek feasts transposes into ritual the elements that tradition had settled through myth, namely the disappearance and reappearance of Persephone and her successive residence in the world of the dead and that of the living.

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### LIST OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS

FHDR II	<i>Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae – Izvoarele Istoriei României</i> , II, (ed. H. Mihăescu, G. Ștefan, V. Iliescu). București 1970.
IG XI, 3	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae XI. Inscriptiones Deli</i> , Fasc. 3, (ed. F. Hiller de Gaertringen). Berlin 1977.
IG XIV	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae, XIV. Inscriptiones Siciliae et Italiae, additis Galliae, Hispaniae, Britanniae, Germaniae inscriptionibus</i> , ed. G. Kaibel. Berlin 1890.
IGB I <sup>2</sup>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae</i> , vol. I <sup>2</sup> : <i>Inscriptiones orae Ponti Euxini</i> , (ed. G. Mihailov). Sofia 1970.
IGB V	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae</i> , (ed. G. Mihailov), vol. V: <i>Supplementum, addenda et corrigenda</i> . Sofia 1997.
ISM I, II, III	<i>Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris – Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor</i> , vol. I: <i>Histria și împrejurimile</i> (ed. D. M. Pippidi), București 1983; vol. II: <i>Tomis și teritoriul său</i> , (ed. Iorgu Stoian), București 1987; vol. III: <i>Callatis et son territoire</i> (ed. Alexandru Avram), București-Paris 1999.
LSCG	<i>Lois sacrées des cités grecques</i> , (ed. F. Sokolowski). Paris 1969.

<sup>63</sup> Bremmer 2012, 32; Hannell 1934, 176.

<sup>64</sup> Trümpy 1997, 150; Samuel 1972, 88; Avram 1999, 29; ISM III, 38, r. 2.

<sup>65</sup> IGB I<sup>2</sup>, 370 bis.

<sup>66</sup> Pausanias, *Călătorie în Grecia* (1982), IX, 19, 5 (p. 216–217); Theocrit 7, 144 *apud* Bremmer 2012, 32; Dewailly 1992, 9.

<sup>67</sup> See Callimachos invoking Demeter (*Hymne VII*, 136): “Φέρε μάλα, φέρε στάχυν”, (“Grant us fruit, grant us wheat!”).

LSJ Liddell H. G., Scott R., Jones H. S., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, with a revised supplement. Oxford 1996.

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# Abbreviations

ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.
AAC	Acta Archaeologica Carpathica, Cracow.
ActaMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
ActaMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău
AnArchRessoviensia	Analecta Archaeologica Ressoviensia, Rzeszów.
AAS at CEU	Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU, Budapest.
Apulum	Acta Musei Apulensis – Apulum, Alba-Iulia.
Alba Regia	Alba Regia, Székesfehérvár.
Antaeus	Antaeus, Budapest.
Arrabona	Arrabona, Győr.
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală, Cluj-Napoca, Brăila, Reșița.
ArchBaltica	Archaeologia Baltica, Vilnius.
Arch.Inf	Archäologische Informationen.
ATS	Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis, Sibiu.
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest.
Banatica	Banatica, Reșița.
BBMÉ	A Béri Balogh Ádám Múzeum Évkönyve, Szekszárd.
BUFM	Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas.
BCMI	Buletinul Comisiei Naționale a Monumentelor, ansambluri situri istorice. București.
CommArchHung	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungaricae, Budapest.
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice, Comisia Națională de Arheologie, București.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CMA	Complexul Muzeal Arad.
Dolgozatok	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum érem- és régiségtárából, Cluj.
Dolg.	Dolgozatok a Magyar Királyi Ferencz József Tudományegyetem Archaeologiai Intézetéből, Szeged.
Dolg. ÚS	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából, Új Sorozat. Cluj-Napoca / Kolozsvár.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
HOMÉ	A Hermann Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve. Miskolc.
JAHA	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Cluj-Napoca.
JAM	Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza.
JPMÉ	Janus Pannonius Múzeum Évkönyve.
JRGZM	Jahrbuch des Romisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz.
KRRMK	Kaposvári Rippl Rónai Múzeum Közleményei, Kaposvár.
LMI	Lista monumentelor istorice, updated in 2015.
MittArchInst	Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
MOL	Magyar Olaj- és Gázipari Részvénytársaság / Hungarian Oil and Gas Public Limited Company
Marisia	Marisia, Târgu Mureș.
NyJAMÉ	A nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyíregyháza.
PBF	Praehistorische Bronzefunde. Berlin.
Przegląd Archeologiczny	Przegląd Archeologiczny, Wrocław.
Rad	Jósa András Museum, Archaeological Archive
RégFüz	Régészeti Füzetek, Budapest.

RKM	Régészeti Kutatások Magyarországon/Archaeological Investigations in Hungary, Budapest.
RAJ Arad	Repertoriul Arheologic al Mureşului Inferior. Judeţul Arad. Timişoara 1999.
RAN	Repertoriul Arheologic Naţional.
Sargetia	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva.
SCIV(A)	Studii şi Cercetări de Istorie Veche şi Arheologie, Bucureşti.
SGB	Studii de Geografie a Banatului, Timişoara.
SIB	Studii de Istorie a Banatului, Timişoara.
Slavia Antiqua	Slavia Antiqua, Poznań.
SlovArch	Slovenská Archeológia, Nitra.
SMK	Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei, Kaposvár.
SovArh	Sovetskaja Arheologija, Moskva.
SRTM	Shuttle Radar Topography Mission.
StudiaUBB Historia	Studia UBB Historia, Cluj-Napoca.
SzKMÉ	A Szántó Kovács Múzeum Évkönyve, Pécs.
Századok	Századok, Budapest.
Terra Sebus	Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis, Sebeş.
Tibiscum S. N.	Tibiscum S. N., Caransebeş.
TransRev	Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca.
ZalaiMúz	Zalai Múzeum, Zalaegerszeg.
ZSA	Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica. Arad.
Živa Antika	Živa Antika, Skopje.