



The Demeter temple as reconstructed © Dr Jesper Blid, Opuscula 14, 2021, p. 125.

LISTS OF MYSTAI OR MYSTERIOUS LISTS?

IN SEARCH OF THE WORSHIPPERS OF DEMETER CHTHONIA IN HERMIONE

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When the traveller Pausanias visited the city and territory of Hermione, he found much to write about (2.34.4-2.35.11) and was very impressed by its main sanctuary, that of Demeter Chthonia (2.35.4-2.35.10). This goddess was celebrated with a magnificent procession and strange sacrifice each summer and most likely with mystery rituals. In my paper, I will address what is usually included among the evidence for Hermionian mysteries, several documents that have been interpreted as lists of mystai. Do they corroborate the existence of mystic rites, and can they help us identify the worshippers of the intriguing goddess Demeter Chthonia?

