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*Claviceps*

*Clavicipitaceae*

The Eleusinian Mysteries practised in classical Greece to honour the goddess of agriculture, Demeter, were held for roughly 2000 years and were considered by the initiated to be the ultimate physical and mental experience open to man. Some authorities have suggested that grain infected with ergot (but a different species to that shown below) played a significant role. Details of the actual ritual have never come to light but scenes depicting parts of the initiation suggest that liquor poured in offering may have been contaminated with the fungus, as well as the grain itself.