

Eleusis, the Hub Town

Story, the town as built, and a redesign plan grounded in Greek history and myth

> ***THE PERIOD (set by the owner): the 5th century BCE, between 447 BC and 406 BC*** *(Periclean Athens and Eleusis, about 2,400 to 2,500 years ago). Every building, boat, prop, garment, weapon, plant and name in the redesign must fit that window: nothing modern, and nothing from a later or earlier age.*

1. At a glance

Item	Detail
Area	Eleusis, the hub town (scene SCN_Eleusis). Safe, no combat. The only place you can rest, stash, craft, trade, take quests and fast-travel from.
Role in the game	The pivot of Act 1: every chapter starts and ends here. You return by Town Portal (a Shrine of Hermes road) to restock between and during the two zones.
Level of the player	1 at the first visit; 8 for the hub interlude (Chapter 3); 15 at the denouement.
Mood	Dusk, a stormy sea, the hearth lit for gods who no longer answer. Kept, not wrecked: "nothing is ruined, only unattended."
Doc date	28 October 2026 (the redesign plan below is a proposal; nothing in it has been built yet).



Eleusis today (in-engine overview): the walled town, the hearth plaza, the temple by the gate and the terraced acropolis on the right.

2. The story of the town

The premise. Divinity in the world of Embers of Olympus is a finite fire that worship replenishes. The Mysteries of Eleusis, among the oldest rites there are, are thinning, so the boundary they kept, the Ploutonion (the gate to the dead), no longer fully closes and the dead rise. The player is never told this outright; the act makes you feel a world going quietly wrong.

Myrra returns to the Rarian Plain, her home ground, but the town does not know her as kin. She never speaks. The mentor **Chiron**, a centaur who can smell a parent on every hero and none on her, says nothing about it. His standing line: *"The question was never what you were made. It's what you do on a day nobody is watching you."*

The town's two story figures. Theano, the aging priestess who performs the Mysteries flawlessly and watches them fail anyway, sends Myrra to the Ploutonion and dies four days after she leaves. **Pheidon** ("sparing"), the Steward, hoarded the tithe grain and sold the grove's sacred yield. The town makes him its villain; he is not why the dead rise. *There is no villain in Act 1. The town will insist there is. That gap is the act.*

The five chapters as seen from the hub. Ch.1 The Last Harvest (clear the Rarian Plain); Ch.2 Bread and Timber (the Steward orders the sacred grove cut); Ch.3 The Rite That Failed (Theano's rite is refused; the hub interlude); Ch.4 Who to Blame (Pheidon at the Ploutonion approach); Ch.5 The Intake (the boss). The denouement returns here: the dead settle, Theano sends Myrra to Delphi, and dies.

The eight service posts (same jobs in every town)

Post (patron)	In-game name	Does	Standing line
Keeper of the Hearth (Hestia)	Hestiaia	Stash, rest, safe haven	"It hasn't gone out. Not on my watch and not on my mother's."
Forgemaster (Hephaestus)	Chalkon	Craft, sockets, repair, salvage	"Bring me the words and the base and I'll tell you if the sentence holds."
Wayfinder (Hermes)	Euodos	Waypoints, fast travel	"Everywhere you've been, whenever you like."
Gambler (Hermes)	Tychon	Blind-buy unidentified goods	"I don't know what it is. That's what you're paying for."
Merchant	Kerdon	Buy and sell for drachmae	"Nine drachmae. It's worth eleven..."
Occultist (Hecate)	Melaina	Reroll affixes, transmog	"It could have been otherwise. That's all I do: otherwise."
Oracle (Apollo / the Fates)	Phoibe	Quests and the bounty board	"There are two hundred and six things on this board. I have one of you."

Other people in town: the farmer, Melitta and Lykon (bounty-board givers at their doors), country folk sheltering by the hearth, hens, a goat and a dog. **Writing rule:** service NPCs talk about their job, never the cosmology.

3. The town as built now

Layout. A walled sanctuary-town on the Rarian Plain, about 77 m east to west and 84 m north to south. The gate is in the north wall (the road to the plain). The sea lies west (a curved bastion with pale shallows at its foot) and south (a second harbour with quay and piers). The east side climbs a grand stair, through a carved gateway in the wall, to the terraced acropolis.

- **Hearth plaza**: a carved stone floor ringed with a kerb, ten robed, swaying figures round the fire, log seats; the Telesterion-style temple stands by the gate, its porch toward the fire.
- **Walls**: dry-stone fieldstone, moss and ivy, pilasters, four statue niches (Demeter with the sheaf, Kore with torch and poppy, Triptolemos with sceptre and grain, Hekate with two torches).
- **Houses**: eleven timber-framed houses in five variants (lean-to, cottage, tall, balcony and sign), lanterns at every door, chimney smoke, moss on the roofs.
- **Market**: stalls with striped awnings against the east and south walls, canvas canopies, piles of barrels, crates, firewood, hay, sacks and cloth; two round granaries.
- **Harbours**: four longships and two skiffs with lanterns, carved bows, a ram and painted eyes; torch glitter on dark teal water; shallows and foam at the walls; low mist.
- **The acropolis**: lower terrace, temple terrace, tholos (round temple), two colonnaded temples and a hilltop temple, walled in the town's own stone, reached by the stair.
- **Ground**: worn earth, moss, wet patches, bones, planks, rubble; amber lantern pools; a storm sky and sea painted and generated for the project.



The grand stair and its gateway rise from the market street through the east wall to the acropolis terrace.

4. Enemies and minibosses

None. Eleusis is a safe hub with no combat. The only creatures are plain animals (hens, a goat, a dog) and the dead who appear on the Rarian Plain and in the Sacred Grove, not here. In the redesign the hub should *show* the threat without fighting it: a funeral pyre that cannot be finished, votive offerings stacking at the temple door, and the sound of the dead from beyond the wall at night.

5. The reference concept

The look the town is being built toward is the concept render below: a walled peninsula in a stormy sea, a curved mossy bastion, a harbour with piers and ships, a fire-lit plaza, a market street climbing the east wall, and a terraced acropolis with temples on the right. The latest comparison found these closest matches: the curved bastion, the fire plaza, the acropolis and stair, the teal storm mood, the walls' stone. The biggest remaining gaps: density and stacked levels, the open sea to a dark horizon, a warmer, more contrasty light, and richer terraces and groves on the acropolis.



The reference concept render for Eleusis.

6. The real Eleusis: what history and myth say

> *Facts below come from well-known sources (the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Pausanias book 1, G. Mylonas, Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries, 1961; K. Clinton on the sanctuary; J. Camp, The Archaeology of Athens; J. S. Morrison and J. F. Coates on the Athenian trireme). Dates and measurements are approximate and should be checked against those sources or a museum guide before final art is committed.*

- **The myth.** Hades carries off Persephone (Kore). Demeter, disguised as an old woman, rests by the Maiden Well (Kallichoron) at Eleusis, is taken in by the family of Celeus and Metaneira, and nurses their son Demophon. Grieving, she withholds the grain and the earth starves until the gods return Persephone; she teaches Triptolemos, and the Rarian plain is the first field sown. The rites are her gift. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter (about the 7th century BC) tells it, and calls Hades *Polydegmon*, "host of many".
- **The rites.** The Greater Mysteries ran each autumn (month Boedromion). A torch-lit procession carried the god Iacchus along the 21 km Sacred Way from Athens, jeering at the bridge over the Kephisos. The initiates (mystai) had purified themselves in the sea with a piglet. The families of the Eumolpidai and Kerykes supplied the hierophant and the herald; a torch-bearer (dadouchos) led the procession. The sacred drink was the *kykeon*, barley, water and mint. What happened inside the Telesterion was secret.
- **The place.** A sanctuary on a low rock beside the sea, in the Thriasian plain, enclosed by a fortification wall with towers (built and rebuilt from about the 6th to the 4th century BC). At its heart stands the Telesterion, the great initiation hall, rebuilt several times: in its Periclean form (5th century BC) a roughly 52 m square hall with tiers of steps on all four sides and a forest of interior columns, with a twelve-column Doric porch added around 310 BC by Philon (this porch is **later than the game's window of 447 to 406 BC**: leave it out; the game's Telesterion is the Periclean hall under construction or just finished). There is also the Kallichoron Well, a Greater and a Lesser Propylon (both Roman, **out of period**: use a simple Doric gate court of the 5th century instead), a rock-cut cave sanctuary of Plouton (the Ploutonion) and a Mycenaean megaron beneath.
- **The families and objects.** The sacred things (hiera) travelled in covered baskets; the *kernos* (a ring of small cups) and the *plemochoe* (pouring vessels) are rite objects; the great Eleusinian relief shows Demeter, Triptolemos and Kore together. Ears of grain, poppies, torches and the pomegranate are their signs.

7. Redesign plan: Eleusis as a Greek town

The aim: keep the mood and the layout the project has, but make every building, boat and object something a Greek of the 5th century BC could recognise. The reference render itself mixes in some medieval and Norse looks; these are the places the plan corrects.

Today	Problem	Greek redesign
Timber-framed houses with plaster panels and a jettied upper floor	That is a medieval northern European style. Greek houses were stone-footed and mud-brick.	Courtyard houses: a stone socle, mud-brick walls washed white or ochre, a small high window, a timber lintel and door, a low-pitched or flat roof of terracotta tiles (Corinthian or Laconian tile shapes) with antefixes, a courtyard with an altar of Zeus Herkeios and a well. Two storeys only for a few; no half-timbering.
Clinker-built longships with a curled stem	Clinker planking is Scandinavian. Greek hulls were built shell-first, plank edge to plank edge, with mortise and tenon joints.	A trireme about 37 m long: three banks of oars (170 oarsmen), a bronze ram (embolon), painted eyes (ophthalmoi), a curved stern post (aphlaston) and a long thin hull. Merchant ships: short, beamy, one square sail, two steering oars. Skiffs: small rowing boats (skaphe). Ship sheds with sloped tile roofs on the quay.
A tholos on the acropolis; a Telesterion with a porch and pediment	The Telesterion was a big square hall, not a temple with a pediment. No tholos is known at Eleusis.	Rebuild the Telesterion as the Periclean stepped square hall with interior columns (no later porch). Keep the round temple only as a clearly *fictional* shrine (a tholos of Hekate or of Hestia) or replace it with a Doric temple of Triptolemos and a Propylon.

Today	Problem	Greek redesign
A stair straight into the wall	Ancient sanctuaries were entered through a gate court.	A Doric gate court (not the later Roman propylaia) with two porches, a ramp and the Sacred Way arriving at it; the stair becomes the processional approach to the sanctuary rock.
Dry-stone walls with moss	Fine as weathering, but Greek walls were built in recognisable masonry styles.	Lower courses polygonal or trapezoidal stone, upper courses ashlar blocks, towers at intervals; mud-brick above a stone base for lesser walls.
A modern-looking market	Greek markets sat in a stoa.	A long colonnaded stoa with shop rooms behind, and stalls of wickerwork and cloth beneath; pottery (amphorae, pithoi), oil, wool, barley.

Buildings and spaces to add

- The **Kallichoron Well** as the plaza's second centre (a curb-stone well under a small canopy, Demeter's seat in the myth).
- A **Propylon** (gate court) at the north gate with Hekate Propylaia as the patron of the doorway, her torches lit.
- **Telesterion** as above, its door the centre of the story; **Plouton's cave** at the foot of the acropolis rock, with a small shrine and votive niches, foreshadowing the boss.
- A **Sacred House** (Hiera Oikia) and a **granary** (siros-like pits and storehouses): the near-empty granaries are a story beat.
- A **ship shed** row and a **mole** in the harbour; a small **harbour shrine** of Poseidon.
- **Altars** of Hestia (hearth), of Zeus Herkeios in every courtyard, of Triptolemos; boundary stones inscribed in Greek letters.

Plants, props and colour

- Olive, fig (the sacred fig is a Sacred Way landmark), pomegranate (Persephone's seeds), cypress, Aleppo pine, plane tree, barley and wheat, poppies, narcissus. **No maize, prickly pear or agave** (all post-1492).
- Pithoi, amphorae, hydriai, kraters, kernoi, plemochoai, lekythoi; bronze tripods; terracotta votive figures (Demeter with a piglet or torch); stone stelai with relief; herms at crossroads.
- Painted architecture: red, blue and ochre on Doric and Ionic mouldings; white-washed mud-brick; terracotta roofs; bronze and gilt accents on statues. Torch-lit night, not electric-looking windows.

Naming (display text only; ids never change)

Now	Proposed	Why
Town gate	The Propylon	the gate court of the sanctuary
Hearth plaza	The Prytaneion court / Hestia's hearth	a civic hearth in a Greek town is Hestia's
Telesterion-style temple	The Telesterion	the initiation hall, with its Doric porch
Round temple on the acropolis	Shrine of Hekate Phosphoros or the Temple of Triptolemos	no tholos is known at Eleusis
Market street	The Stoa	colonnaded market
Docks	The Mole and the Neosoikoi (ship sheds)	Greek harbour terms

8. Work plan and open decisions

- **Phase 1 (cheap, visible):** replace the house look with Greek courtyard houses; recolour roofs to terracotta; whitewash walls; remove the half-timbered frames.
- **Phase 2:** replace the longships with a trireme, a merchantman and skiffs; add ship sheds and a mole.
- **Phase 3:** rebuild the Telesterion as the stepped hall; add the Propylon and the Kallichoron Well; turn the market into a stoa.

- **Phase 4:** the acropolis: Doric temples with proper steps, a Propylon stair, olive groves; the distant temple on a headland.
- **Decision for the owner:** keep the reference render's look where it differs from history (a stylised, Diablo-like Greece), or follow history strictly? The plan assumes *historically grounded but dramatic*: Greek forms, painted, weathered and lit by fire.
- **Decision:** the round tholos: keep as a clearly invented shrine, or replace.
- **Risks:** the town's collision and walk tests depend on the current building positions; each phase must re-run them.

9. Historical dossier: Eleusis, 447 to 406 BC

About the pictures: the "period reconstruction" images in this section are **AI concept illustrations** made locally for this project. They show the right kind of thing, but they are not archaeological drawings and can contain small errors (proportions, details, odd lettering). Use them as mood and shape references, not as evidence.

> ***Check before use:*** *the dates and details below come from well-known ancient sources and standard archaeology as remembered while writing, and were not checked line by line. Items marked (verify) are the least certain. Please confirm against Mylonas 1961, Clinton, Thucydides, Plutarch, Pausanias, Camp and Morrison and Coates before art is committed.*

The period: 447 to 406 BC at a glance

Year (BC)	Event	Why it matters for the game
447	Work begins on the Parthenon in Athens; about this time the building of the Periclean Telesterion at Eleusis begins (Plutarch, Pericles 13: Koroibos, then Metagenes, then Xenokles; other sources credit Ictinus with the design) *(verify)*.	Eleusis is an active building site: scaffolding, stacked blocks, masons, sledges and cranes are all in period.
431	The Peloponnesian War begins. The Spartan king Archidamos invades Attica and ravages the Thriasian plain round Eleusis (Thucydides 2.19). Building at the Telesterion slows.	The "failing fields" of Zone A have a real cause: burned crops, cut olives, farmers sheltering inside walls.
430 to 426	The plague of Athens (Thucydides 2.47 to 54): fever, thirst, sores; the dead lie unburied; funeral customs collapse; people burn their dead on others' pyres.	A real Greek source for the rising dead and the unburied: the unburied dead of the game echo the plague years.
421 to 415	The Peace of Nikias; a lull. The Sicilian expedition sails and is destroyed in 413.	A quiet, anxious time.
413 to 404	The Spartans fortify Dekeleia in Attica and hold it year-round. The land route to Eleusis is cut, so for some years the Mysteries' procession goes by sea (Plutarch, Alcibiades 34) *(verify)*.	Eleusis cut off by land and kept alive by the harbour: the two harbours and the guarded gate fit this.
407	Alcibiades leads the procession back to Eleusis by the Sacred Way under armed escort (Plutarch, Alcibiades 34) *(verify)*.	Armed hoplites escorting torch-bearers: a ready image for the hub.
406	The sea battle of Arginusae; the generals are put on trial for not recovering the dead from the sea.	The theme of unburied dead appears again; the game's window ends here.
404 to 403	Defeat of Athens; the Thirty Tyrants; the Ionic alphabet is officially adopted at Athens in 403/2.	Before this, Athenian inscriptions use the older Attic alphabet: use it on any carved text.



AI concept: the Telesterion, a large rectangular hall with steps inside and a roof raised on interior columns, beside the sea.

The sanctuary in this window

- **Layout.** The sanctuary stood on a rocky ridge above the Bay of Eleusis, entered from the Sacred Way through a gate court on the north side. A fortification wall with towers enclosed it; it was rebuilt and extended in the 5th century by Kimon and Pericles *(verify exact stages)*.
- **The Telesterion.** The Periclean hall was a near-square building (about 50 m on a side) with eight rows of steps for seats round all four walls and six rows of seven interior columns holding up a roof with a central opening (the opaion) over the Anaktoron, the small inner shrine where the sacred things were kept. In the 440s it was being built; the war interrupted it, and it was finished in stages. Its first form seems to have been designed by Ictinus, the architect of the Parthenon *(verify)*.
- **Outside the hall.** The Kallichoron Well (the "well of the beautiful dances") where Demeter sat in the myth and where the women of Eleusis danced; the Ploutonion cave under the rock; altars, stelai with decrees, small treasuries; the Sacred House. Many votive reliefs, including the famous relief of Demeter, Triptolemos and Kore (about 440 BC), now in the National Archaeological Museum *(verify date)*.
- **Officials.** The Hierophant (revealer of the sacred things) from the Eumolpidai; the Dadouchos (torch-bearer) and the Hierokeryx (sacred herald) from the Kerykes; the Priestess of Demeter; epimeletai (overseers) who managed money and building, and accounts inscribed on stone.

The Greater Mysteries (autumn, in the month Boedromion; dates approximate)

Day	What happened
14 to 15	The sacred things (hiera) are carried from Eleusis to Athens in baskets, and the Eleusinion in Athens receives them. The mystai gather.
16	*Halade mystai*: the initiates go to the sea at Phaleron, bathe and purify themselves, carrying a piglet to sacrifice.
19	The great procession (pompe) sets out from Athens along the Sacred Way (about 21 km), carrying the statue of Iacchus and crying his name; torches; jests at the bridge over the Kephisos (*gephyrismoi*); dancing at the Kallichoron well on arrival at night.
20 to 21	Fasting; a drink of *kykeon* (barley, water and mint) to break the fast; the secret rites inside the Telesterion at night; torch-lit; the Hierophant shows an ear of grain in silence *(a late source; verify)*.
22	Libations to the dead (the *plemochoai* poured east and west) and return.

Daily life and objects

- **Money.** The Athenian silver coin with Athena and the owl (the tetradrachm, 4 drachmae); the drachma of 6 obols; the obol, a small silver coin, also the fare to the underworld.
- **Dress.** The chiton (a tunic), the himation (a cloak), the chlamys (a short cloak), the petasos (a broad hat), leather sandals, the exomis (a work tunic with one shoulder bare). Initiates wore white; mourners wore dark. Women: peplos, chiton, veils, hair tied in a sakkos or ribbons.
- **Light and fire.** Oil lamps of terracotta (with olive oil); torches of resinous pine; braziers; hearth fires. Horn lanterns existed but are rarer; there was no window glass in houses.
- **Food.** Barley (the main grain, as a porridge or flat bread), wheat, olive oil, figs, grapes and wine (usually mixed with water), honey, cheese, fish and octopus, lentils, onions, garlic, pomegranates. Meat mostly at sacrifices.
- **Containers.** Pithoi (big storage jars), amphorae (jars with two handles for wine and oil), hydriai (water jars with three handles), kraters (mixing bowls), kylikes (cups), lekythoi (oil flasks), kernoi (rings of small cups for the rite). **Barrels were not used.**
- **Tools and trades.** Potters, bronzesmiths, stonemasons, sailors, olive-pressers, shepherds; the ard plough, the sickle, the winnowing fan, the loom with clay weights, the potter's wheel.



AI concept: a courtyard house: whitewashed walls on a stone base, small high windows, tiled roof, an altar or well in the yard.

Houses in detail

- Walls of mud-brick on a stone socle (the brick melts in rain, so the base and a wide roof overhang matter); lime wash or plain clay; floors of beaten earth or cobbles; few and small windows, high up.
- The plan: rooms round an open courtyard (aule) with an altar of Zeus Herkeios (the household's protector) and often a well or cistern; a porch (pastas) on the courtyard side; the men's room (andron) with a raised floor edge for couches; a kitchen with a hearth and a smoke hole.
- Roofs: low-pitched, covered with terracotta pan and cover tiles (Corinthian or Laconian tile shapes), with ridge tiles and antefixes (small decorated ends) along the eaves; a flat clay roof was also common in the south and on poorer houses.
- The door opens inward; outside, a herm or a Hekate shrine may guard the street door; a laurel or a sacred ribbon may hang on it.



AI concept: a stoa, a long colonnade with shop rooms behind it, and stalls of cloth and wicker in front.

Harbour and ships

- The Athenian trireme (*trieres*) of the 5th century: about 37 m long and 5.5 m across, about 170 oarsmen in three banks (62 thranites on top through an outrigger, 54 zygites in the middle, 54 thalamites at the bottom), a bronze ram (*embolos*) at the bow, a high curved stern (*aphlaston* as an ornament), painted eyes, two steering oars (*pedalia*), a mast and a square sail that was normally taken down before battle. The hull was built shell-first with mortise-and-tenon joints and smoothed (carvel look), then covered in pitch.
- **What a trireme is not:** it is not a Viking ship: it has no dragon head, no clinker planks and no hung shields. It was a fast, light, low ship.
- Merchant ships (*holkades*): broad, round, deep, with one big square sail, two steering oars and a high stern. Small boats: *skaphe* (rowing skiffs). Quays and moles of stone blocks; ship sheds (*neosoikoi*) with tiled roofs for hauling out triremes.
- Harbour life: stacked amphorae, rope, sails, sailors, tolls, a small shrine of Poseidon or Aphrodite Euploia (of the good voyage).



In-engine: the harbour's triremes: low carvel hull, outrigger with the top oar bank, gangway, aphlaston, furled square sail. (AI image tools could not draw a Greek trireme: every attempt came out as a Viking ship.)



AI concept: a Doric temple with a painted pediment and entablature. Reference for the acropolis temples.



Eleusis in the game today: after the roof, plaza, house and trireme passes.

What is already in period in the game, and what is not

In period	Out of period or doubtful (to change)
Curved mossy fortification wall; fieldstone masonry; gate court; torches and oil lamps; pithoi and amphorae; whitewashed courtyard houses with terracotta roofs and antefixes; the Kallichoron-style plaza ring with robed figures; the Telesterion as the stepped hall (in progress); triremes; olive, pine and cypress; the acropolis temples in the Doric order; the statue niches (Demeter, Kore, Triptolemos, Hekate).	The tholos on the acropolis (no tholos is known at Eleusis; keep only as an invented shrine). The small pedimented hall used as the Telesterion (the real one is a big square hall). The striped awnings (muted, still striped). The timber gateway posts in the south street. The stair into the wall and the carved gateway (a 5th-century gate court would be Doric and plain). Doric columns on houses (porch columns should be plain wood or stone).