

**S. SPENCE : The Mythography of Proserpina: Geography and Power**

Through its focus on journey and geography, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* offers a matrix that is both historic and mythic for later adaptations of the myth. The Greek source emphasizes the importance of geography to the story of Persephone that recurs in the Roman and medieval adaptations, even after the setting of the myth has changed to Sicily and the purpose of the myth has turned to explaining the origins of empire. The interest in traveling the earth is eventually supplemented, if not supplanted, by a parallel interest in traveling in time. Whether a journey of time or space, later versions of the Proserpina myth from Cicero to Dante can be seen to explore the geographic crux between history and myth introduced in the *Homeric Hymn*.

**Key-words :**

Persephone – Proserpina – Hades – geography – journey – Sicily – purgatory – Dante – Venus – Demeter – Ceres – empire – redemption