

Η ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ

(THE EPISTOLE)

a newsletter for Hellenic polytheists

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THE NEOKOROI* are a group of Hellenic polytheists who feel called to a path of service and devotion to the gods. We support mysticism, hard polytheism, and tend to favor reconstructionism as an approach to developing Hellenismos, while also recognizing the importance of personal experience and local cultus. We are especially dedicated to fostering communities, festivals, and public shrines, and providing guidance and information on religious matters – all to ensure the strength and longevity of the worship of the Greek gods.

HE EPISTOLE (a “message” or “letter”) is published twice a year. We offer articles, hymns, prayers, poetry, reviews, information, rituals, community notices, fiction, recipes, and anything else of interest to the Hellenic polytheist community. We welcome feedback, and submissions from guest writers. He Epistole is a free publication and can be found in many locations nationwide. Please contact us if you would like to distribute copies in your area – in return you receive the issues in electronic format for free. Back issues can also be downloaded in PDF form from the website for free.

To contact the editor, email: **heepistolesubmissions@gmail.com** - or visit the Neokoroi website: **neokoroi.org**. (We have even more articles online, as well as information on the gods, photos, links and more!)

*The word *neokoros* is derived from the Greek words *naos* (temple) and *koreo* (to sweep) and originally meant “the one who sweeps the temple” or “the temple keeper.” It was a humble position, but an important one, for it was the neokoros’ responsibility to make sure that the temple was kept clean and free of any pollution, and also to tend to the daily service of the god in whose temple he or she served.

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THE HE EPISTOLE TEAM

Editor: Kharis Theocritos

Art Director/Graphic Designer: Khryseis Astra

Web Manager/Technical Support: Allyson

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Khryseis Astra

SPRING

By Allyson Szabo

I lie in bed,
sunshine streaming through my room.
Through the streaked window
I can just barely see the snow
melting and falling from the roof,
making soft thuds on the ground below.

I am impatient to be up,
out there in the disappearing slush,
plowing or shovelling
or collecting hens' eggs that are still warm.
Indoors no longer interests me;
I've plumbed these depths
too much this winter.

Tulips of pink and red grace the living room window,
and I sigh.
When will those little buds appear outside?
It was not a cold winter, but
I'm done with it,
done with being sick,
done with wheezing and coughing.

I want my window to be open,
letting in the spring air,
the cleansing air,
the healing air
of a new agricultural season.
I want to feel whole
and well.

My soul melts along with the snow,
becoming less rigid,
more soft and warm and real.
Spring is welcome here.



DEMETER ERINYS

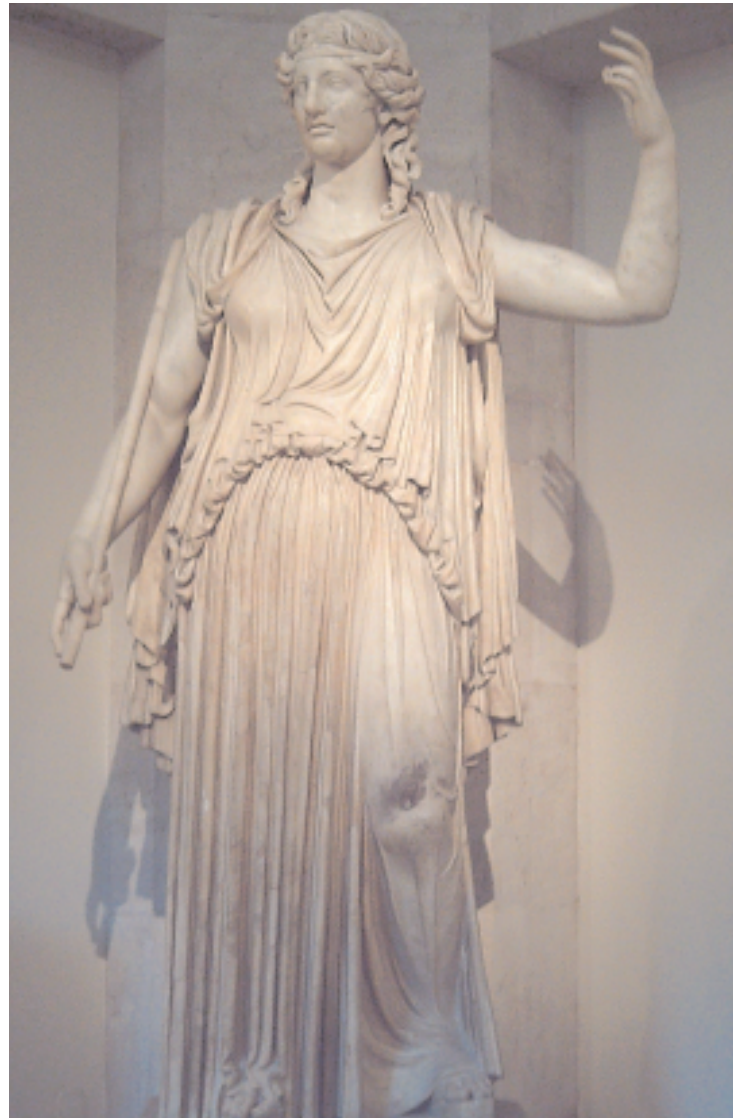
By Suzanne Thackston

Most people have at least a passing familiarity with Demeter's traditional roles as grain goddess and divine mother. Some Hellenistoi are aware of Her further involvement in issues of death and rebirth, and grief and redemption. The spheres of influence which tend to go unexamined save for Her worshippers are the areas of terror and fury, Demeter Melaina and Demeter Erinys. The Goddess's love and beneficence are undeniable, the Great Mother of all who gives us not only bread and life but the promise that we can 'live well and die with better hope' (Cicero, *De Legibus*). With her Holy Daughter, She gives us the agricultural cycles and the seasons. But within the familiar story of the Two Goddesses are whispers of the Arkadian and Orphic myths, which carry dark undertones, revealing deeper levels and a more complete understanding of the breadth of influence borne in the totality of the Megala Meter.

The mourning of Demeter is a well-known theme in the great myth, and one of the aspects of the Goddess most associated with Her. Echoes of loss permeate the story, not only of Demeter's terrible loss of Kore, but Metaneira's grief at her perceived loss of her son (and according to some sources a real loss when Demophoon sickens and dies at Demeter's abandonment of him). Kore herself cries out with sorrow at her last glimpse of the lovely upper world of her Mother as the earth closes over her. Demeter's long wanderings and Her demeanor as She enters Eleusis are recognizable and sympathetic to us as a mother who has lost her beloved child. It is a situation to which we can relate, and which makes us feel closer to Her.

Anger is a natural phase of the grieving process. Even in the most well-known variant of the myth, Demeter's anger is demonstrated in Her fury at Metaneira's interference in the line 'The shafts of terrible anger shot through Demeter' (Athanasakis, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 251). Her anger is directed at both mortals and gods; Her refusal to allow grain to grow threatens the very existence of men, and She is equally adamant in Her refusal to allow Her fellow gods to persuade Her. She is not appeased until Her daughter is restored to Her and the annual cycle of visitation is established. All of this makes sense from a human perspective, and the Goddess' anger, while terrible and with dire consequences for mortals, is also comprehensible.

The Arkadian variant gives another face of the Goddess, one more wild and terrifying, and much more in keeping with Her epithet Erinys which is widely attested but less applicable to the more common story. It is in this tale that Demeter is paired with Poseidon, a god with whom Her name is associated in Minoan archaeology but with whom we do not see Her linked in the familiar tale. His name may mean 'husband of Da', an archaic



version of Demeter. In this story the sea-god glimpses beautiful Demeter as She wanders sorrowing through the region of Arkadia and desires Her. In Her terrible grief She spurns his advances but he persists, until She turns Herself into a mare and conceals Herself in a great herd of horses, but Poseidon is not deceived. The God of horses becomes himself a stallion and covers Her in that form. This ravishment, mirroring that of Persephone by Aidoneus, brings forth a black fury that is not generally associated with the tender, grieving Mother Goddess. The event changes Her face, in both a metaphorical sense as She becomes Demeter Erinys, and literally as She takes on the head of a great mare. This nightmare Demeter stalks the region of Arkadia terrorizing the inhabitants until they appeal to Pan, who goes to the cave on Mount Elaeus where She lurks and placates Her. A temple was built to Her on the River Ladon near Thelpousa, where She was worshipped as the mare-headed Demeter Erinys along with the mysterious daughter born from the union with Poseidon, known only as Despoina which means 'mistress' and is more of an epithet than a name. A mystery cult emerged in this region about which we know little. It would seem as if Despoina is a counterpart of Persephone and seems to have evoked the same mingling of awe and fear. Another being is

produced from the rape, a wonderful horse called Areion, who is described as being either black or green-maned, and has the power of speech. The colors evoke Demeter's epithets of Melaina, black, and Khloe, green.

Pan's mediating influence has the desired effect, and the dark wrath of the Goddess is cooled. She bathes in the River Ladon, symbolically washing away Her fury, and transforms from Demeter Melaina to Demeter Louisa, the Mild. Speculating on the influence of Pan is interesting. It could be that his very nature as wild, uncivilized Nature god is what the Goddess of civilization needs at this time. She brings cultivation and the potential for humans to transform from migrant hunter/gatherers to modern agricultural communities, Pan mediates this by maintaining the wild uncultivated areas, allowing the natural healing force of Nature to counter the deleterious effects of agriculture upon the land.

As is always the case in Demetrian myth, there is an etiological component to unpacking this story as well. Fertile earth and salty sea do not mingle well to create a welcoming atmosphere for living things. It is possible that this myth reflects a racial memory of a tidal wave or other sea-borne disaster that overwhelmed the arable coastal land, driving the inhabitants over the mountains to centrally located Arkadia, bringing with them memories of the travails if not the details. Sea water would render farmland inhospitable for many generations and make a compelling etiological explanation for Poseidon's assault and Demeter's subsequent wrath. There is a fragment in which Demeter makes Her way to a fountain after the rape, and upon seeing the water, which recalls Her tormentor, causes it to turn black (Ptolemy Hephaistion, *New History* Book 3), trying to understand who is recalling the tormenting. The water or Demeter? Is the water causing her to have recollections or is the "memory" playing out on the surface of the water?

In the lesser-known Orphic myth the ancient earth goddess Rhea, daughter of Gaia, is conflated with Demeter. After Rhea gives birth to the Olympian six, She essentially 'becomes' Demeter. Zeus is consumed with lust for Her, but She is repulsed by the notion of having relations with Her son and tries to flee, turning Herself into a snake. Zeus then becomes a snake and ravishes Her, in a story that has obvious parallels with the later tale involving Poseidon. It is from this union that Kore/Persephone is born. Later Zeus chooses Persephone to bear the son he wishes to rule after him. He lies with her in the form of a snake as he did when begetting her, and they produce Dionysos Zagreus. We see in this mystic variant the same themes of conflict, anguish and resolution that are more explicitly drawn in the mainstream myth.

Demeter's wrath, while less demonic than in Arkadia, is evident in lesser myths as well. When Erysikhton commits the impiety of cutting down Her sacred grove at Pelasgia, She gives

him an opportunity to desist. But when he not only persists but threatens Her with an axe, She inflicts him with a particularly poignant torture for a Goddess of grain and abundance, an unassuageable hunger that rages through him despite how much he gorges himself, until he literally eats his way through his family's wealth and starves to death in the streets. Lynkos of Skythia makes the mistake of abusing xenia when Triptolemos comes to bring him Demeter's gift of cultivation. He tries to murder the young man, and Demeter turns him into a lynx. The Sirens are said to have been formerly companions of Kore, transformed by Demeter into birdlike monsters with sweet seductive voices for refusing to help Her search for Her daughter. And then there is the story of Minthe, the prideful nymph who had been the mistress of Aidoneus before he brought Persephone to be his queen. Minthe was jealous, and proclaimed herself more beautiful than Demeter's daughter, and that soon she herself would usurp Persephone's place and sit beside the All-Receiver. Demeter crushed her underfoot, turning her into a fragrant herb whose scent is released when stepped upon.

Demeter is first and foremost a Mother Goddess, tender, fiercely protective, and loving. Her grief is the grief of all parents who lose a child in untimely fashion. Her role as Plutodotera, the bounteous provider, cannot be disregarded, as She is the Mistress of Grain who provides sustenance for mortals. But it is unwise to overlook Her attributes as Demeter Erinys, the dark Fury who can also bring terror and destruction.

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SEASONS OF ARTEMIS

By Thista Minai

Quiet footsteps on autumn's fallen leaves
Green eyes peer between the trees
Searching, seeking, the wind upon her skin
Thus does the hunter's dance begin

Something flees; the chill air fills with laughter
She pursues, running faster
The smell of fear mixes with cypress, birch, and pine
Bow bends and arrow paints a line

All is falling
floating down
gold and orange
red and brown
leaves find rest on
blood soaked earth
The Huntress stands fulfilled

Seasons spinning like a dance
of whirling violence and terror
Can you hear her? Can you follow?
She is changing, always moving
Can you follow? Do you dare?

Winter coats the world in white
Everything glitters in moonlight
She passes through the forest all aglow
But leaves no tracks in virgin snow

Sleeping creatures sigh in pleasant dreams
As she draws near, the woodland queen;
Her lonely song floats with frozen breath
As she protects the forest's little death

Bring light to the darkest sky
Bring light to my life

Seasons spinning like a dance
in soft and silent solitude
Can you hear her? Can you follow?
She is changing, always moving
Can you follow? Do you dare?

Nature seethes with leaves and blossoms.
Flushing girls swarm the meadows like a springtime flood
Tearing off layers of stifling winter clothes
They rejoice in an ecstasy only a wild one knows

She is there in the frenzied dance
Dizzy turn, wild stomp, and delicate prance
With body, mind, and spirit all ablaze
We are all made children in her vernal craze

Like the softest baby's breath
that grows into a roar,
Swelling, bursting, liberating,



Know your nature
Wild awareness

Seasons spinning like a dance
of frantic liberation
Can you hear her? Can you follow?
She is changing, always moving
Can you follow? Do you dare?

Heat comes in waves
emanates and permeates
Laughing, we move
with stately grace

All is alight
The world is our playground
We roam the wild
in endless days

Follow the sound of the blood in your veins
Seek what your heart craves
Hunt your prey with the extent of your strength
and in reaching you'll know who you are

Seasons spinning like a dance
of bold and joyful confidence
Can you hear her? Can you follow?
She is changing, always moving
Can you follow? Do you dare?

SPRING RITES 2010

By Allyson Szabo

This ritual is based upon two sources: last year's Spring Rites, and the one used by Neokoroi, and its original can be found at <http://neokoroi.org/noumenia.htm>.

Ritual Notes

Assemble all the items for the ritual: water, candle/flare, matches, basket with barley and other items, wine, offerings, ritual copy, and hymns, music (drums, bells, shakers, etc.)

Pomp (Procession)

In a large public festival or rite during Hellenic times, the crowd would be led by the sacred officials in procession to the temple or sacred precinct. We made our way up our hill and to the area we call the landing, where a ritual area was set up and a bonfire laid out (but not lit). The movement and procession in a Pomp is important as it marks the change from profane to sacred space.

Purification of the Sacred Space

Khernips:

A special vessel, the perieranteria, containing pure water from a sacred spring or other designated source, was used to purify the worshippers, and to delimit the sacred precinct. At temples this container would be outside the sacred precinct so that worshippers could purify themselves before entering the ritual space. Sometimes a priest would use pure water to outline the area for worship and would sprinkle the worshippers. For our ritual, we used water from our capped spring, in a large glass jug.

We paused before entering the temenos, and first the officials washed their hands with pure water and dried their hands on clean linens. Then the priestess walked around the sacred precinct sprinkling the water and the barley. Once that was done, the officials returned to the "entrance" area and allowed the other participants to wash their hands in the water and dry with the linens.

Ritual Lighting of Sacred Fire

In Hellenic Greece, this flame was taken from the Public Hearth of the Polis, sacred to Hestia. We brought flame from the hearth of our home, using a candle in a lantern. Our sacred fire was a small bonfire lit inside a small portable fire pit.

Tossing of Barley

Part of the ritual equipment brought to the sacred precinct or altar is a special ritual basket, called kanoun, which is filled with barley groats, and with which the official(s) scatters barley



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around the ritual space, including the altar in order to further purify or mark it as sacred space dedicated to the gods. For blood sacrifice, this basket also conceals the knife, or makhaira, used to slit the throats of animal victims. Our basket contained roasted eggs, white and purple barley, herbs, and a meat offering. No knife was in the basket, as small children were present.

Preliminary Invocation

*Helios, golden Titan, whose eternal eye illumines
all the bright blue sky.*

*Self-born, unwearied in diffusing light, and to all
eyes the mirror of delight:*

*With your right hand the source of morning light,
and with your left the father of the night,
Come, great Sun, and shine with all your might.*

*Selene, Queen of moon and stars, hail!
Deck'd with a graceful robe and shining veil;
Come, blessed Goddess, prudent, starry, bright,
come moony-lamp with chaste and splendid light,
Shine on these sacred rites with prosperous rays,
and pleas'd accept our suppliant praise.*

*Hekate Triformus, lovely dame,
of earthly, watery, and celestial frame,
Sepulchral, in a saffron veil arrayed,
attended by dark ghosts in shade;
Gate-keeper, guide, solitary goddess, hail!
The world's key-bearer, never doomed to fail;
Guide our faltering steps toward Persephone
and Haides, her Dark Lord.*

*O Demeter, much-producing queen,
all flowers are thine and fruits of lovely green.
Bright Goddess, come, with Summer's rich increase,
swelling and pregnant, leading smiling Peace;
Come, with fair Concord and imperial Health,
and join with these a needful store of wealth.*

*Persephone, Daughter of Zeus almighty and divine,
come, blessed queen, and to these rites incline:
Only-begotten, Haides' honor'd wife,
O venerable Goddess, source of life:
Join us as we celebrate your rebirth, your return
to your mother and our blessed Earth.*

*Haides, magnanimous, whose realms profound are fixed
beneath the firm and solid ground,
In the Tartarean plains remote from sight,
and wrapt for ever in the depths of night.
Lord of the Underworld, thy sacred ear incline,
and pleased accept these sacred rites divine.*

*To all other gods and daimons we now call,
Great Persephone's return we do recall.
But each of you, of many realms and none
Are welcome at the rite we've now begun.*

Libations

A libation of wine is poured for each of the gods called upon, plus one for the other gods who may be watching.

The Story

The meat of our ritual was the telling of the myth of Haides and Persephone, and the reciting of the Hymn to Demeter. We discussed the comparison between the terrified, screaming virgin view of Persephone, versus the Dark Queen of the Underworld that other sources portray her as. We spent a few minutes talking about the loss of a child, and how that grief can be so overwhelming. Demeter's loss of her Kore, her little girl, was put into a human perspective.



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Homeric Hymn to Demeter

Choice portions of this hymn were spoken. The whole poem is much too long for a small ritual as we had, but it is traditional to read at least some of the Hymn.

Offerings (Thusia)

Each person took a bit of barley, a sprig of herbs, and a sprinkle of wine and offered them into the flames. Most of the offerings were made in silence. The officials offered meat to Persephone, Haides, Hekate and Demeter on behalf of the group.

Blessing of the Eggs

It is traditional within our family to bury blessed, raw eggs at the corners of our gardens. This year 8 eggs were blessed. This was done with the participation of everyone, touching the basket holding the eggs, and sending spring feelings, emotions, and energy into the waiting eggs. Hard boiled and roasted eggs were also mixed in with them, for sharing and eating!

Prayer

*Haides, your kidnapping shook the world.
You changed a girl into a woman, and made her a Queen.
You saw her power, embraced it, and did not fear it.
You had no need, because your power matched hers.
We thank you for your actions,
your ability to see what needed doing, and to do it.*

*Persephone, your Queenly state is due to your
husband's intervention, but your power is yours.
You provide us with a deep and abiding example
of shining womanhood and strength of person.
We thank you for your strength and courage.*

*Demeter, your grief and anger were frightening to behold,
but your loss of your daughter created our seasons.
Though the sacrifice of your Kore was unwilling,
your gift of seasonal fruits, grains, and meats is welcome.
We thank you for providing for us,
and for the fructation of the earth.*

Final Prayers

*We have offered pure water and sweet wine,
Fruits of the earth and fragrant incense, cakes of grain and honey,
Bright flowers, and a hymn of praise,
As sustenance for your hearts.
And with our prayers
We entreat you:
Watch over us and sustain us.
Look kindly on our efforts,
For it is through you we receive all blessings.*

Final Libations

*Oi Theoi,
We offer thanks to you
For attending in a spirit of joyous mercy
to this holy rite and libation of reverence.
May your blessings follow us throughout the year,
And bring fruitfulness of womb, mind, body and gardens,
As is appropriate to each of us.
Let us each go in peace, in our own way.*

FILM REVIEW: THE LIGHTNING THIEF

By Adam

I went to the theater to see the film version of Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief expecting some deviation from the book. I was not prepared for the immense disappointment I found in the adaptation.

Let me begin by saying, however, that the movie has some redeeming qualities. It was exactly what one generally expects to see in an action movie aimed at young teens and children. It has the flashy special effects that one would expect to see in a movie made by a former Harry Potter director. It is engaging and moderately entertaining. What it is not, is a good representation of what I feel the author of the book was trying to get across.

If you read the book you should remember that Ares played quite a large role in the adventures of Perseus and his pals. Unfortunately, and for reasons that are completely lost upon me, the movie seems to treat Ares as if he does not exist at all. Not to mention the fact that Kronos, the truly evil character in the book, is also similarly ignored and is replaced by Hades.

The plot involving the Gods and their subtle conflicts seems to get lost in the film makers' zeal for a showcase of special effects and monsters. There is a hydra, a creature that does not appear in the book but there is no Chimera, a beast that does appear in the book. I am at a complete loss as to why the director and producers decided to leave some exciting plot elements out while adding others that were irrelevant or completely fabricated. Unfortunately, this is not at all unusual in film adaptations of perfectly good books.

Furthermore, the movie makers completely distorted the relationship between Poseidon and Percy. They changed the rule banning the "Big Three" (Zeus and his brothers) from having demigod children to a ridiculous rule about not communicating with their children. This twisted the relationships that were supposed to have been in the book in two ways. First: It made Zeus look like an outright jerk amongst his brothers. Second: It made Poseidon seem like much less of a jerk from the way he was portrayed in the book. It created an emotional connection between Percy Jackson and his father that should not have been there. Poseidon, upon meeting his son, tells a perfectly dripping sob story about how he caused Zeus to make the law by spending too much time with the infant Percy. It utterly destroyed the awkward family dynamics played out in the book and thereby hurt a relatively accurate portrayal of the mythical relationships amongst the Olympians.

Regardless, I found myself willing to look past all that and enjoy the movie for its entertainment value until the Underworld scenes. To my knowledge it was the single most egregiously

erroneous and sinful portrayal of the Greek Underworld ever compiled. Complete with rivers of fire, screaming souls, and no hint of Kerberos whatsoever it was a near exact copy of the Christian concept of "Hell." This scene bore absolutely no resemblance to the scene in the book and certainly not to the Greek Hades. Hades the God was similarly misrepresented as a brutish tyrant who wanted to take down Olympus and could take the form of a flaming demon. This, coupled with the other transgressions, thoroughly ruined the movie for me.

In the end, it was somewhat fun to watch. Grover the satyr was amusing along with a few minor characters. Just go into it expecting Hollywood to once again rape and plunder a fine book and simultaneously Hellenic religion at large. Or, to avoid such unpleasantry, simply avoid reading the book until after you've seen the movie, it might soften the blow.



SPRING RECIPES

By Allyson Szabo

It's Spring! It's the time of bunnies and chicks, wild turkeys mating, and coyotes howling late into the night. Everything around us (here in New England at least) is sere and brown, and yet if you look closely, there are tiny patches of green surfacing. Seedlings sit in a tray by the window, poking their delicate little heads up from their earthen home, becoming strong and vital. Days are noticeably lengthening, and the weather trend leads us into warmer times. Fruit trees have been sprayed to discourage destructive bugs, and I'm looking longingly at the lawn mower, contemplating when it will burst into rowdy and noisy life.

At this time of year, the hen house is bustling with activity. Egg production goes up exponentially, and many of the eggs we gather are fertilized. Some say that fertilized eggs taste better, and there's a group of scientists who say they're better for us by a small margin. Regardless, they're tasty and rich and wonderful food for us to enjoy. They're also a good source of protein, and if they're fresh they are full of natural cholesterol fighters!

Spring Frittata

Ingredients:

- 6 to 8 eggs (depending on size) or about 2 cups of egg beaters
- 3 to 4 green onions, chopped fine (greens included)
- 1 cup fresh spinach, shredded
- 5 pieces of bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 1 cup total of cheese (any type you like, mix it up!)
- butter for coating the pan, or buttery spray
- milk to mix with eggs

Method:

In a large bowl, scramble your eggs with a dollop of milk. They should be about the consistency you'd use for an omlette or



solid scrambled eggs. Meanwhile, heat a large pan on a medium low temperature, and melt your butter or spray into it. The pan needs to have sides at least an inch high - a well-seasoned cast iron skillet is what we use, and it works very well. It also needs to go into the oven, so don't use anything with plastic on it! When the pan is hot, add your green onions and sautee them until they're soft. Add in the shredded spinach and bacon.

While that's cooking, preheat your oven to 350° F. Add the egg mixture into the pan and give it a bit of a stir to mix things evenly. Pour in your cheese, and mix again. You may want to reserve a sprinkle of cheese for the top, though it isn't strictly necessary. Let it set slightly on top of the stove, then slide the whole pan into the oven. Cook for 15 to 30 minutes, and then check every five minutes for readiness. You'll know it's ready when a piece of pasta or a knife goes into the middle and comes out clean.

Frittata can be served right out of the pan, or you can put it onto a large plate and decorate with a few slices of red and green pepper if you wish to be fancy. Cut into wedges as you would with a quiche. Serve with toasted muffins, fresh texas toast, or home-made corn bread.

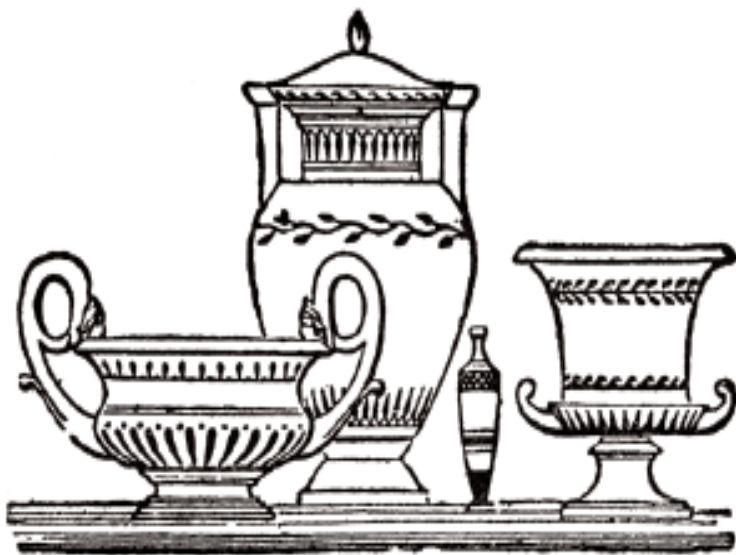
Eggs Benedict

Ingredients, Hollandaise Sauce:

- 3 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup of water
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup (one stick) cold, firm butter cut into 8 pieces
- salt and pepper to taste
- sweet paprika for garnish

Ingredients, Eggs Benedict:

- 8 eggs, cold
- 4 english muffins, split and toasted
- either 8 slices of cooked bacon
- OR one round of Canadian bacon per muffin half
- tomato (optional)





Method:

First, prepare your Hollandaise Sauce. Whisk your egg yolks, water and lemon juice in a small saucepan until blended. Though it can be done in a regular saucepan, I suggest using a double boiler on medium heat, making sure no water touches the top pan. Cook over a VERY low heat, stirring/whisking constantly, until the mixture is bubbling at the edges. At this point, stir in your butter, one piece at a time. Stir gently until the butter is melted. The sauce will thicken as you do this. If it gets too

thick before all the butter is melted in, add a teaspoon of hot water as necessary to thin it out a little. Once the sauce is thick, remove it from the heat right away. Stir in the salt and pepper, and cover with a lid until your eggs are ready.

Heat 2 to 3 inches of water in a large saucepan or deep skillet to boiling. I have had excellent luck doing this in an electric skillet, and I also have an egg poacher which sits in a pan to help when I need to cheat. You want the water to be simmering gently but not at full boil. Keep adjusting until you get it right. When the water is ready, break your eggs into a saucer or small bowl with no lip, then slide the egg into the simmering water very carefully. The fresher your eggs are, the easier this will be. Cook the eggs in the water until the whites are completely set, and the yolks are beginning to thicken but are not hard (usually 3 to 5 minutes). Do not stir the water or otherwise disturb it! When the eggs are ready, use a slotted spoon to lift them out, and drain them well,

Butter each muffin half and then top with two slices of bacon or one round of Canadian bacon, one poached egg, and 2 tablespoons of Hollandaise Sauce. For those who want a Montreal Flair, add a generous slice of tomato between the bacon and the egg. Sprinkle with a bit of sweet paprika and serve, two to a customer.

Eggs Benedict are difficult to make, but well worth the effort. If you don't feel up to trying the sauce, there are packages that make it very easy to do. The biggest thing is to remember to do everything under a moderate to low heat. High heat on the sauce will cause it to curdle, and high heat on the eggs will cause the

delicate whites to come apart in the water.

Creamy Pasta and Egg Skillet

Ingredients:

- 1 package (7 oz) small shell pasta, cooked and drained
- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 1 tsp dried marjoram or parsley
- 2 cups broccoli, cauliflower and carrot
(you may use a defrosted frozen package for a quick meal!)
- 4 eggs

Method:

Coat a large skillet with cooking spray. Combine the pasta, cottage cheese and herbs in the skillet, and toss to coat evenly. Add your veggies and toss to mix. Cook over a medium heat, stirring occasionally, until it's heated through and sizzling gently, about 5 to 10 minutes. Press four indentations (about 2 inches diameter) into the mixture with the back of a large spoon.

Crack and slip an egg into each of the indentations. Cook, covered, over a medium heat until the whites are completely set and the yolks are as thick as you want them to be. I like them slightly runny, but others prefer them more firm. Use your imagination!



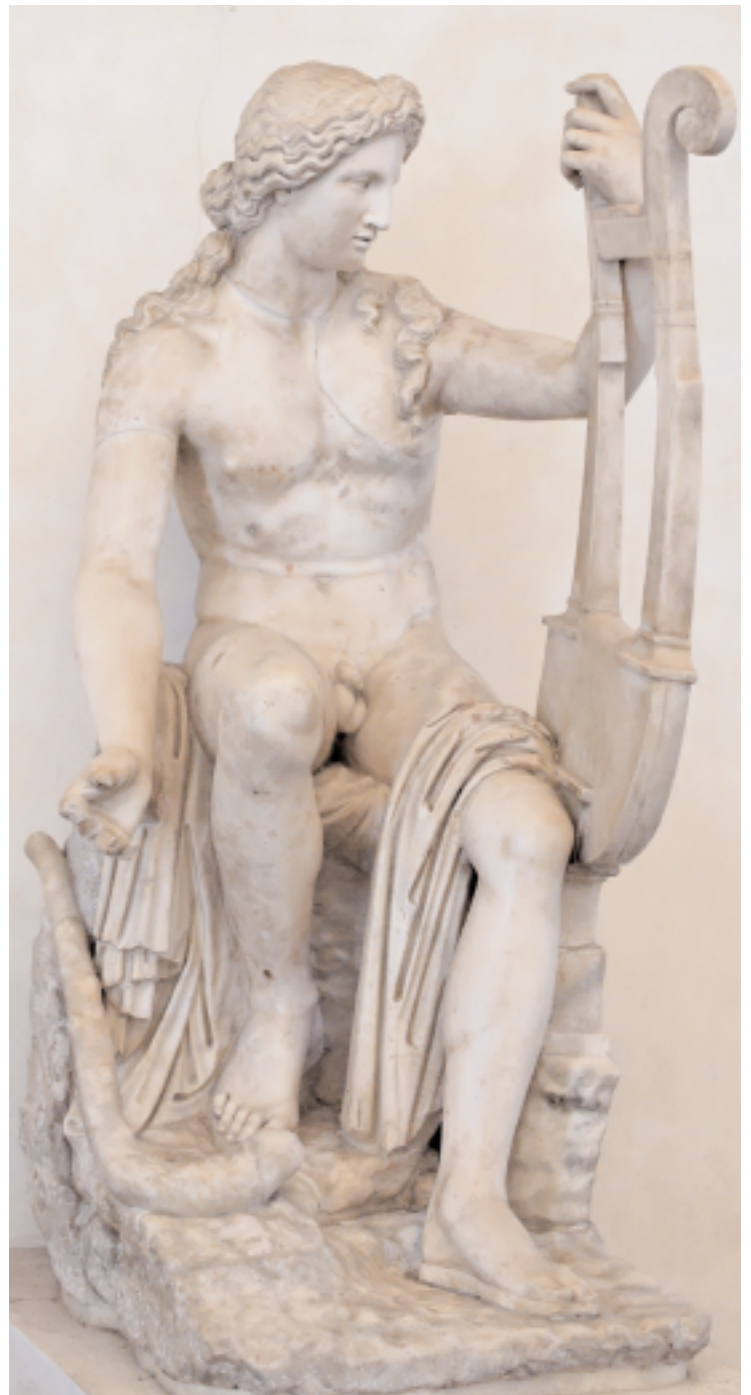
APOLLON: THE FATHER OF MUSIC

By Lykeia

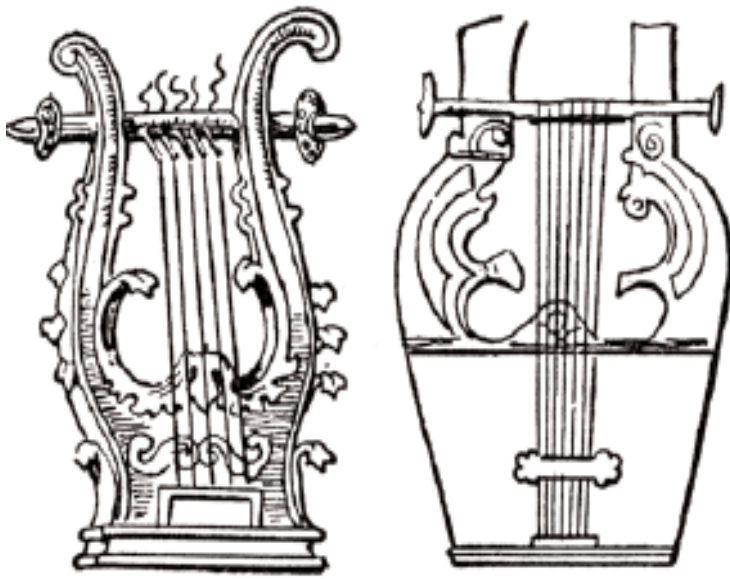
Aside from his oracular functions, Apollon's role as the musician is probably one of the most well known faces of Apollon. Not only as a musician himself and creator the tones that make up the universe, but also the granter of the art to men and animals, and the leader of the muses. Apollon in this form wears a long khiton, his hair draping across his shoulders from a bun, and holds a kithara. The Orphic Hymn to Apollon tells us that it is on his kithara that the highest notes are played at the spring and the lowest notes during the winter. This imagery brings connotations of life and order associated with his music. Not to forget that music also taps into the deepest, instinctual recesses of our humanity and touch our hearts. It can sway emotions, inspire our minds, and is known to be an aid for developing one's memory for academic studies and the brain of infants. Expecting parents are frequently barraged by the numerous selections of classical music for infants, such as Baby Mozart.

It is Apollon's kithara that was put in contest with the double flutes of Marsyas, though according to Plutarch this was but the first part of the contest. Marsyas pipes won over the kithara, but Apollon's ability to sing in accompaniment to his instrument won for him the second part. It is clear that Marsyas cannot fairly compete in this second part, not only for the flutes, but also perhaps because Marsyas, and his cultic association with donkeys, was incapable of creating vocal music. It does make a more subtle example of the power of the voice and perhaps its supremacy over manmade instruments. Certainly the core parts of Apollon's major festivals involved competitions of singing choirs, and the performance of singing troupes of children during Thargelia and Pyanepsia. The most notable singers are referenced in the Homeric Hymn, the Delian Maidens, who were considered the most essential part of the Delia (aka Thargelia) festival.

Such supremacy is given to the gift of song that Apollon bestowed this quality on Kyknos, the king of the Ligurians at Eridanos. There are two version of the fate of Kyknos. One states that he was turned into a swan because of his grief over the death of his friend Phaeton. Another says that the gods turned him into a swan because they found something amiss with his singing. The song came before the swan, but the swan form allows Kyknos to rise from his human existence at his death and achieve immortality. This singing swan is connected to the singing swans of the Hyperboreans, and those who possessed certain qualities loved, or where beloved by Apollon were fated to become swans themselves.



There is no mistaking a certain prediction in the Oresteia, when Cassandra is scorned for her swan song, the song before death. It is at death that she would become a singing swan. Or so I have derived from this information. For the swan only singing at its death conflicts a bit with the mythic singing swans of Hyperborean and Helioxoia, unless we consider that it is the death that brings the transformation of the individual into swan on a spiritual level, which sings as it departs. In Helioxoia it is at spring they celebrate the return of the swans, which relates a certain spiritual rebirth scene of the arrival of the swan souls coming to join their songs and celebration, and the physical swans in their annual migration. Myth says that the swans are traveling to Helioxoia from the north which certainly draws on a Hyperborean connotation. Certainly there are singing swans in



the physical world which could have been the originators of the mystical end of things. The whooping swan of the northern regions of Europe, not be confused with the mute swan that inhabitants more southerly ports, is said to make a bell-like song. On the other side of the world, in the Americas, we have the trumpeter swans that are reminiscent of French horns in their song.

We may assume that music and song deals only with this subject as we are directly familiar with it in this day and age, in the numerous genres available. The definition of what makes music is always expanding. Often times previous generations defame the music of the newer generations as "noise." We cannot place a direct definition of what exactly can make music as we have seen music evolve and change over the centuries. Sometimes music can come from the most unexpected corners. One cannot discount the cadences, the rhythm, intonations, and tone of the poetic voice in recitation. Anyone who may doubt this should just turn their mind toward chanting for a moment which is often categorized into the meditative music genre, and in ancient times was a part of Apollon's festival at Delos as it was performed in honor of him, Leto, and Artemis. Even rap is accepted as such in the modern era, though there are those who will still debate the musical merit of this type. This connection of the poetic voice with music broadly encompasses both poets and musicians as the children of Apollon. Foremost in our minds is Orpheus, to whom is attributed the Orphic Hymns and whose music in mythically recounted as swaying all those around him, even the heart of Persephone to permit the return of Eurydice.

All that is musical belongs to him. The Ionians wore gold grasshoppers in their hair as a sweetly voiced creature of the god. He cherishes all musical forms of life, particular our own human voices so unique to us, and our ability to create music externally as another component of our musical nature, giving humanity a myriad of "voices." Then there are the aforementioned singing swans, the transformed dead beloved of Apollon and the physical birds of the north. Music is a basic element of our world, a

part of communication and the crossing of elements such as when the wind whips across the reeds. He draws the breath of music, inspires it, and forges it, settling it within each of us. So let us give all honors to this king of bards, of troubadours, of musicians world-wide, and poets of clear voice; particularly in these days of spring as Thargelia swings nearer and the migrating birds are returning to their northern abodes. Let us keep in mind the gift of music and song he brings to spring. Hail to Apollon.

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TEACHING OUR CHILDREN

By Allyson Szabo

Around our world, there are pagan adults who grew up pagan. A second (and in some cases, a third!) generation of children have been brought up with pagan values, beliefs, and rituals. Hellenic Polytheists aren't quite there yet, though. Many of us now have children and we need to give thought to how we plan to teach them.

Spring is in the air here which makes a great time for teaching. Our family has two wonderful 4 year old twins, both of whom are intelligent, inquisitive and curious. They are being brought up in a very interfaith household, and their beliefs shine through their eyes brightly. There are many little things we do with the children, to let them be a part of What It Is That We Do.

On our land we currently have a small temple to Artemis, a shrine for Dionysos replete with new grapevines, and a little riverside natural altar for the Nymphs and local land spirits. Of these, the last is the one that draws the children and their vivid imaginations most. That is where we have started.

When we go up the hill, we take with us juice and food, and on the way we collect things to leave for the Nymphs as an offering. The children will bounce around picking up tiny pine cones, early flowers, bouquets of ferns and clover, and whatever other interesting stones and such that they find. These items become their offering to our Nymphs.

Items are placed reverently on the stump we use as a natural altar. We have also planted daffodil bulbs all around the area, which are now just starting to peep through the ground. There is a magic about the place, and our kids seem to be aware of it to a great degree.

Nothing heartens me more than to see them "playing" with the Nymphae, jumping over the stream and floating leaf-boats down its fast moving water. There is no need for them to work at seeing and referring to the Nymphs; they simply know, in their hearts and minds, that they're there.

The other thing we do, which I feel is so important, is we involve the children in almost everything we do; they come to rituals, they sit before my altars in the house, they make food and flower offerings when we do, and they truly love it. Children enjoy copying adults, especially when they sense the importance of something like ritual. Being allowed to help out, to read from a script or toss barley, includes them and lets them know that their worship is equally valid to our own. It lets them build self-esteem and joy in worship.

Invite a kid to celebrate Noumenia with you this month! Take a kid out into the woods, or to a local park, and let them find traces of the elemental beings that live there. Encourage them to plant seeds and watch the incredibly magical process of them sprouting. Help them to express the joy in their own hearts and minds.

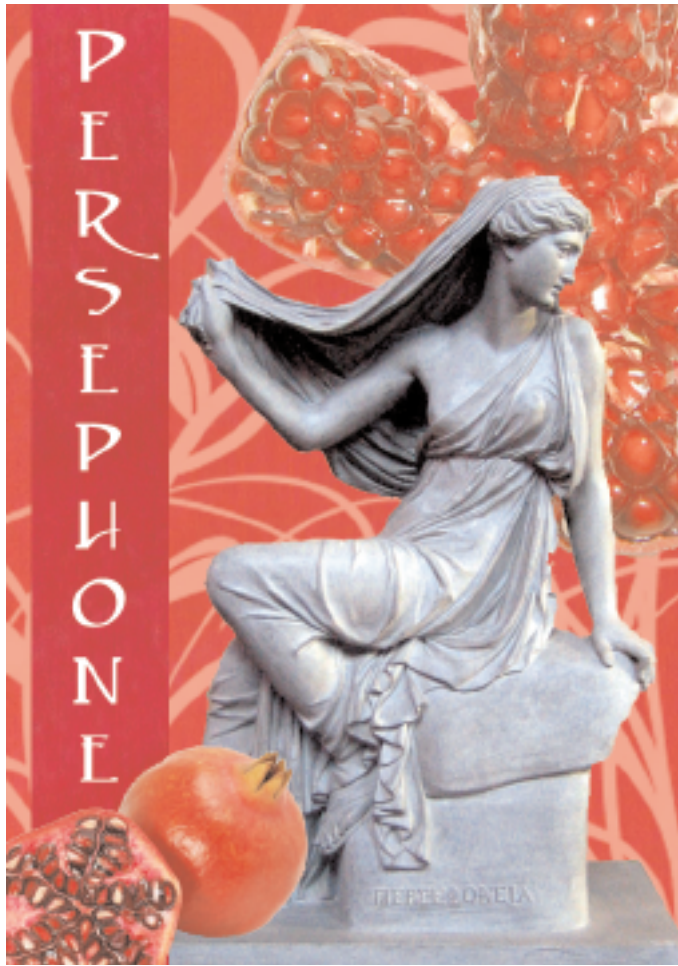
Blessed Spring!



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PERSEPHONE

By Khryseis Astra



COMMUNITY NEWS

Collected By Khryseis Astra

• **Bibliotheca Alexandrina** is seeking submissions for the following devotionals...

Megaloi Theoi, A Dioskouroi Devotional.

Please send all submissions to dioscuridevotional@gmail.com. Submissions will be accepted starting October 1, 2009, and ending July 1, 2010. The editor will acknowledge all submissions, but does not guarantee any inclusion in the devotional.

For more information:

http://www.neosalexandria.org/dioskouroi_devotional.htm

Zeus Devotional

Please send all submissions to zeusdevotional@gmail.com. With your entry please submit a 2-5 sentence author biography. Submissions will be accepted starting October 1st, 2009 and ending on April 30th, 2010.

For more information:

http://www.neosalexandria.org/zeus_devotional.htm

Pan Devotional

Please send all submissions to diotimasph@gmail.com. All submissions should be in MS Word or compatible format (.txt or .rtf). With your entry please submit a 2-5 sentence author biography. Submissions will be accepted starting February 1, 2010 and submissions will close on 1 July, 2010.

For more information:

http://www.neosalexandria.org/pan_devotional.htm

• **The Hellenistai.com Forum** (forum.hellenistai.com) and its members have started a Hellenic Wiki.

Creating a wiki for Hellenists bypasses the tendency of Wikipedia editors to flag, lock and delete any sections we might try to put on Wikipedia pages about modern worship of deities because the worship is "not significant" to Wikipedia's audience. Ruadhan, founder of the Hellenistai Project (www.hellenistai.com), has a goal of 500 pages by August so we can have a poetry contest for the Muses.

Want to help? Go to the Hellenistai Wiki (wiki.hellenistai.com) and create your own account.

If you need help with Wikipedia formatting language, go here: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Cheatsheet>.

If you have a creative block, see what pages are in demand on the Hellenistai Wiki here:

<http://wiki.hellenistai.com/index.php?title=Special:WantedPages>

If you're thinking about it and just want to see what it's all about, go here:

<http://forum.hellenistai.com/viewforum.php?f=70>

(Thanks to Kayleigh at <http://kallisti.writingkaye.com/> for this entry.)

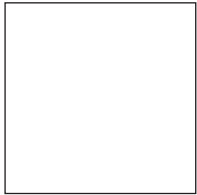


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neokoroi.org
HeEpistoleSubmissions@gmail.com



Η ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ

(HE EPISTOLE)

a newsletter for Hellenic polytheists

ISSUE #19 ~ SPRING 2010

In This Issue:

*Apollon: The Father of Music • Spring Rites 2010 • Demeter Erinys
Seasons of Artemis • Recipes, Poetry & More!*

HE EPISTOLE – CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

HE EPISTOLE (a "message" or "letter") is published twice a year. We offer articles, artwork, hymns, prayers, poetry, reviews, information, community notices, fiction, recipes, and anything else of interest to the Hellenic polytheist community.

We're currently seeking submissions from guest writers.

For more information, please visit our website at: Neokoroi.org
Submissions may be sent to: HeEpistoleSubmissions@gmail.com

