

Η ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ

He Epistole



Issue #24 – Summer 2011

ABOUT Us...



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 four times 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 (K.S. Roy)

Web Manager/Technical Support: Miguel Oliveira

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REDISCOVERING PAN

By Lykeia

Pan is, without a doubt, perhaps one of the most widely worshiped gods of Hellas, outside of the twelve Olympians. He is the merry, and lusty, Syrinx player, the goat-footed god, and a rather puckish figure that still charms many people as much as he was said to have delighted the gods after his birth. “Then all the immortals were glad in heart and Bacchic Dionysos in especial; and they called the boy Pan because he delighted all their hearts.” Here in this quote we can see perhaps why so many are attracted to him, he is, as the poet says, “a merry laughing god” who delights us all with his free spirit and impish humors. It is no wonder then that the soul would experience a natural attraction toward him, for all his seemingly odd appearance he is operating with the genitive powers on the soul (tending the fields of the souls so to speak) and inspiring us to move towards freedom.

This much we can understand from that which brought about the birth of Pan. Hesiod introduces the birth of the god by describing Hermes tending the sheep in Arcadia because he desired to marry Dryops. It was from the marriage of the shepherd Hermes and the maiden that Pan sprung. That this has significant bearing on his birth seems evident in the fact that Pan was born with the hind-quarters and horns of a goat, and even fully bearded as a babe. Therefore, even in form, he appears to be connected to the area of his generation. And this would seem particularly to concern him too if we take into account the opening lines of the Homeric Hymn as the god travels up and down the crags and mountains, into the glens and near the rivers like so much of a shepherds path wandering through the mountain sides with his flocks. And ever is he followed by nymphs in his wake, the nurses of gods and lover of shepherds, the beautiful soul who has become separated from his companions, lying among mortals in the spring meadows. Thus we can see Pan as a spring-time leader of the first romance of the soul and the initial fertilization processes.

*“With Pan exulting on the mountain’s height,
Inspir’d, and stridulous, whom woods delight:
Nymphs od’rous, rob’d in white, whose streams exhale
The breeze refreshing, and the balmy gale;
With goats and pastures pleas’d, and beasts of prey,
Nurses of fruits, unconscious of decay.”*

A slightly differing correlation to the nymphs and their shepherds would be the satyrs and their maenads. Thereby we can see Pan as leader of these two divine classes engaging with the mortal soul, which may reveal why Pan is so beloved to Dionysos. For Pan is a part of the divine train



which is encouraging the mystic marriage, and as such he is that figure which is represented with Apollon and Dionysos in a vase painting depicting the rising of Semele from the underworld as part of the genitive powers associated with the spring time.

But, as a shepherd god, Pan is perhaps bearing the closest direct relationship to Apollon, Artemis and Hermes. As the child of Hermes this is a logical association for he is engaging in the domain of his father, protecting and leading the mortal flocks as much as he is encouraging the healthy generation of the flocks. However, it could be said that as a shepherd god Pan bears the closest relationship to Apollon who shares with him the epithet Nomios in Arcadia. There Apollon was at times called the son of Silenus, and in Corinth were Apollon was well known by the epithet of Karneios as he was in

Sparta, worshiped as a horned god not entirely unlike Pan in appearance. In fact the main sanctuary of Apollon Karneios in Corinth was set with statues of Pan and Artemis outside of the cella. Argos particularly lauded Apollon as the god of shepherds akin to the role enjoyed by Pan, especially in connection with the myth of Apollon's servitude to Admetus where the god caused the herds to greatly multiply under his care. Therein we can see a strong relationship between Apollon and Pan specifically in association with the genitive powers of spring, the season of rebirth, which is likewise aligned to the festivities of Dionysos in so much that Pan and Apollon are cooperatively bringing forth Dionysos which is echoed in the harvest festivals of the autumn. The Orphic hymns to Apollon and Pan certainly bear some striking commonalities which allude to this...

*"Hence by mankind Pan, royal, two-horn'd nam'd,
Shrill winds emitting thro' the syrinx fam'd;
Since to thy care the figur'd seal's consign'd
Which stamps the world with forms of ev'ry kind."*

Now compare this to the Orphic Hymn to Pan:
*"All-fertile Paeon, heavenly splendour pure,
In fruits rejoicing, and in caves obscure."*

Thus far we understand Pan as a god who appears to be somewhat contemporary of Apollon, and certainly the myths of the syrinx and daphne do contain a strong similarity with very slight differences, and as the son of Hermes. Yet above all he is considered to be a manifestation of Zeus and is called just after the above lines from the Orphic hymn, the true serpent-horned Jove by Thomas Taylor in his translation. This is likewise alluded to in early parts of the hymn where he is the ruler of the all the world, all of which are parts of him. Taylor suggests in his footnotes that Pan is likely synonymous with the demiurge Phanes who became a part of Zeus. If this is the case then how can he reasonably be the son of Hermes and bear such close similarity to Apollon and a close relationship with Dionysos as he does? Foremost we must acknowledge that the hymn to Pan which calls the god the son of Hermes is somewhat misleading if read in a literal chronological sense. For Apollon and Artemis are certainly the elder of Hermes, and yet each of them are associated with Pan in their youths as we know from the writings of Apollodorus and the poet Kallimachus: one he taught divination to, and the other he gave choice dogs to which is a reasonable thing that such a hunter of predators, as he is declared to be in the Homeric Hymn, that he would have a great pack of such dogs. This is all certainly in line with an elder deity bestowing, with an almost paternal favor, gifts to the divine children of Zeus. What is interesting is that Pan is here called by Apollodorus the son of Zeus and Hybris, rather than the son of Hermes. Furthermore, Pan's inherent knowledge of the future and unseen is not comparable with the domain of

Hermes. Hermes was not favored with the gift of true divination because it is something that, according to the Homeric Hymn of Hermes, was specifically entrusted to Apollon and could not be divulged to another god. Therein the instruction of Apollon by Pan has some significance. So might the fact that Aeschylus in his Agamemnon likens together Apollon, Pan and Zeus as those who may send the Erinyes. This leaves us with a close relationship between Zeus, Pan and Apollon that does not necessarily include Hermes. This particularly seems true in Arcadia where the temple of Zeus Lykaios was nestled between two hills crowned with the temples of Apollon and Pan.

The similarities between Apollon and Pan go further as they are both lauded as gods that deliver men from mortal fears, as the word panic is derived from the name of Pan, and as divine musicians: Apollon as leader of the Muses, and Pan as the god from whom issues the divine melody and endless dance that once again connects Pan to the demiurge, a masculine principle, never ceasing in motion, that is father to all things of which Zeus is heir and absorbed as king. That Pan is "sent by Zeus" to Arcadia to enquire after Demeter who has submerged herself in a cave, seems to make a pretty obvious suggestion to Pan's concern with the genitive powers of the earth, and the general wellbeing of the world. This is also evident wherein Orpheus says that Pan is the master of the Ocean, the earth, the sea, and of the sun. Apollon as an oracular god that can directly tap into the will of his father, it is natural that he can also tap into the cosmic melody and create from it. Thus even the music of Apollon is issuing the essence of Zeus by the melody of Pan. This can be inferred from the text of Euripides in his Akestis where Apollon is said to be playing on the pipes of Pan during his servitude to Admetus. This melody of Pan is as the word of Zeus, ambiguous and hidden which is implied as Pan is depicted as a cavern loving god. Certainly at Delphi Pan's cave was nestled near the summit of Parnassus that alludes to some close association between the power of Pan and the Delphic oracles. As a messenger, Hermes is not quite so tuned in on the same frequency as Apollon, but he does have the skill of developing those tools by which that principle can be made accessible to mortals. Therefore, just as Pan created the syrinx from the reeds that remained of his beloved, so too did Hermes create the flute and the lyre that he gifted to Apollon. It is this ingenuity that is perhaps one of the first real signs of the relationship between Pan and Hermes that is also inclusive of Apollon.

However, it is possible that the reemergence of Pan as the son of Hermes has more to do with Pan's representation of divine generation. He is part goat and part man, which certainly suggests a boundary divine being, and as Hermes carries forth the souls to their destinations and carries off the divine children of the gods it is easy to see how he became

the new father of Pan. He is the father of Pan because of necessity he is receiving the new divine generations. Thereby, as Dionysos is the divine child of Zeus, Pan is a deity which is bringing forth Dionysos and would for that be much favored by the latter deity in accordance to the Homeric Hymn. The role of Hermes presented as the father of Pan may also have something to do with how close Hermes is connected to the mortal world, particularly as the only one from among the Olympians who was born of a mortal mother. Likely because of this close relationship, it was with Hermes that Zeus was said to have traveled when he decided to wander among the mortals. Therein as the son of Hermes, Pan has a further expressed connection to the mortal world that is necessary for his role in the mysteries of Dionysos, wherein Pan is called by Orpheus "Bacchanalian."

That being said, the affection so many have towards Pan is not unusual in the slightest, and the practice honoring Pan as a creative, though sometimes fearsome and unpredictable, deity of the natural world is not all that out of sync with the way Pan fits into the order of the gods and his role within our world and in relation to mankind. That he is often called upon as a god who induces fear is nothing more than understanding that the worshiper is forced to confront fear and to dispel fear of the thing itself. And usually this fear, this panic we may feel, is nothing more than the fear of the unknown

or unseen. As children there is usually some strange fear that we may possess, whether it is of the closet, or perhaps underneath the bed. Yet, at some point we all eventually look under the bed and see that there is nothing there to be afraid of, thus we no longer harbor that fear again as we grow. We can celebrate this in his nature even as we celebrate that which is the genitive vitality of Pan that we may yield a great harvest of the spirit as much as we do of the mortal world around us.

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*: v 50-60

Apollodorus, *The Library*: 1.4.1

Apollodorus, *The Library*: 1.9.12-5

Euripedes, *Aclestis*: v 540-584.

Goblet d'Aviella, Eugene. *Symbols: Their Migrations and Universality*, Dover Publications Inc: NY, 1894: 64.

Homeric Hymn to Pan: 2.27-47

Kallimachus, *To Artemis*

Orphic Hymn to Apollon

Orphic Hymn to Pan

Orphic Hymn to the Nymphs

Pausanias: 2.10.2

Pausanias: 8.36

HIDDEN ACROSTIC

By Jason Ross Inczauskis

Hermes, Great Clever-Minded God,
Sweet Messenger, bearing tidings fair.

Whenever you are near,
Everything is much more clear,
And the words we need to speak, they will be there!
That's just a gift that we receive within your care!

Hermes, Swift Message-Bearing God,
Ever moving, never holding still.
Reveal to us your arts,
Mischief-Maker, lift our hearts,
Every trick you play provides another thrill,
So we can learn the lessons that you would instill!

Hermes, Kind Spirit-Guiding God,
You walk with us, when we live or die.
From birth until our end,
We couldn't ask a better friend,
For you're always there to cheer us when we cry!
And when you come to take us home, with you we'll fly!
For you give a gift of love we can't deny!



By C.L. Tice

Hekate stood at the crossroads. Two young women walked down the asphalt road toward her. The stoplight blinked red slowly, given a respite from changing after ten PM. No sidewalks or curbs interfered with the large yards surrounding the dark houses, giving the girls a reason to walk the street.

Neither was old enough to drive. One was dressed for a party, short skirt and bubble gum popping with each step. Her hair was as high as her heels and necklaces chimed together as she moved. Her lip gloss glistened in the street lights.

The other held on to the straps of her backpack like it was the only thing safe in her world. Jeans covered her legs and a t-shirt peeked out from beneath her sweater. Her dark hair hung over her shoulder in a braid and glasses perched on her freckled nose.

The pair came to the middle of the crossroads and split apart. One went left while the other went right. They stopped and turned around, meeting each other in the center of the crossroads.

The bubble gum girl wriggles a hand beneath the straps of the backpack. Her nails were painted silver and flashed with each movement. She tipped her head towards the road she had chosen. "C'mon, Lizzie. We're going this way."

Lizzie pushed her glasses up further on her nose and looked at her friend in confusion, leaning back against the pull. She glanced down the street she had chosen and then the one her friend was aiming for. "What do you mean, Jan? I thought we were going to your house to study. The test is on Monday."

"Please, Lizzie," Jan rolled her eyes, voice full of disgust. "When have I ever studied on a Saturday night? We're going to Trey's party." The gum popped and she leaned in close. "His parents are out of town and he's been wanting to ask you out." She waggled her eyebrows at her friend and tugged Lizzie again. Lizzie took a step but stopped again, the stop light casting her eyes in red shadows.

"Trey? I thought you said he didn't date, just slept around." Lizzie frowned at her friend and stared down the street to the teenage boys house.

"Lizzie, please! You are so not cool." Snap. "He likes you. The hottest guy in school wants you. Why are we still standing here?" Jan pulled away from her friend and crossed her

arms beneath her breasts. The gum stopped popping for a moment while she studied Lizzie. "If you let your hair out of that horrible braid and got contacts, you'd be fantastic." She reached out to put action to her words but Lizzie stepped back and shook her head.

"I don't think I want to go to the party, Jan. I'm not ready for that."

"Lizzie!"

"No, Jan. I don't want to be on a list of conquered girls."

"Fine. I'll go by myself." Jan wrinkled her nose at Lizzie and turned down the street, gum popping angrily.

"Jan! C'mon. We can go back to my house." Lizzie ran a few steps and caught her friends arm, pulling her to a stop.



She pushed her glasses up with a finger and tucked a stray hair behind an ear. “You don’t have to go either. You don’t have to act like that group of brats to be popular. We’ve been best friends forever and I know you better than they do.”

The two girls studied each other beneath the red light. Lizzie hitched her bag up higher, tucking her thumbs beneath it. Jan popped her gum and chewed on her lower lip. Jan lifted her shoulders and looked down the road. “I’ve got to go, Lizzie. If I don’t...”

“If you go, I’m afraid you won’t be yourself anymore.”

“I don’t want to be myself anymore,” Jan exploded, voice filled with anguish. “I want to be cool. I want to be wanted, Lizzie. I’m tired of being the goodie two shoes. I want to do what I want, not what I’m told.”

Jan lifted her shoulders again and wrapped her arms around her waist. “Are you coming with me?”

Lizzie shook her head and watched Jan walk away down the road. A car came up and Lizzie moved out of the center of the road, waving to her neighbor on the way to work. She let go a heavy sigh and looked around the quiet town as the headlights faded away. The backpack got shifted a bit and Lizzie turned back towards her house.

Hekate stood at the crossroads.

THARGELIA

By Lykeia



By Lykeia

Karneios, two-horned, royal Apollon,
Labyrinth-guarding, Zeus' fairest son.
How dearly you hold the spiral way
Nestled in your palm. Heart of Amyclae,
Argive shepherd of the cone and rod,
Ever-wandering, far-roaming ineffable god.
In a golden boat you sail the ethereal sea
Tending to all the little isles that there be,
With bright-plumed swans yoked afore
To the prow sailing from shore to shore,
Regal birds that ever-sweetly sing--
Swimming across the sky on ivory wing
So to alight upon every pasture of worth
Kept nobly, honorably, by children of the earth.
Before him all the lambs and calves surely drop
As he plows, dragon-yoked, cultivated crops:
So, a lamb to Karneios, keeper of the flocks
A ram to Karneios, for the god of golden locks.
A calf to Karneios draped in purple silk
A bull to Karneios, nurtured on honeyed milk,
And sweet pale clusters offered from the vine
Immature fruit, too young for making wine
That the children bring with unblemished hand
Offering youth's harvest in prayer for their land.
Hail to you Karneios, dweller of the hearts
Bless us Karneios with your tending arts.



NEOKOROI NEWS

By K.S. Roy

Info pulled from recent group messages

• Congratulations go to **Allyson Szabo** for her recent ordination as an interfaith minister through The New Seminary!

*"To everyone who wished me well, thank you!
I got countless emails congratulating me and it's
much appreciated."*

- Allyson

• **Lykeia** has just released her book **Crowned with Nine Rays**, in honor of Apollon, through Createspace! For more information or to order, go to <https://www.createpace.com/3602908>.

"I am rather happy with how it turned out... Within the book there are philosophical discussions regarding the

domain of Apollon and the meaning his influence has upon our lives, a number of rituals throughout the year, and an exploration of several epithets."

- Lykeia

• **Jason Inczauskis** has successfully defended his Master's Thesis! defense was successful!

"Soon, there shall be one more Hellenic with a Master's Degree in Plant Biology!"

- Jason

• Neokoroi News is a regular feature. If there is anything you feel should be posted here, please email me at Kadynastar78@yahoo.com

THARGELIA

By K.S. Roy



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

By K.S. Roy

News gathered from the wider Polytheist community

- **Calls for Submissions from Bibliotheca Alexandrina:** We are currently seeking poetry, short fiction, scholarly essays, rituals, recipes, meditations, artwork and other submissions for several other devotional projects.

<http://neosalexandria.org/bibliotheca-alexandrina/>

- **The Scribing Ibis: An Anthology of Pagan Fiction in Honor of Thoth** [edited by **Rebecca Buchanan**]. Submissions open **1 January 2011** and close **30 June 2011**. Projected release date of **August 2011**.

- **Queen of the Sacred Way: A Devotional Anthology in Honor of Persephone** [edited by **Melitta Benu**]. Submissions open **7 February 2011** and close **31 August 2011**. Projected release date **September 2011**.

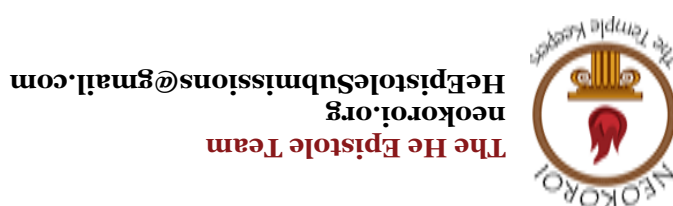
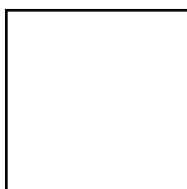
- **Harnessing Fire: A Devotional Anthology in**

- **Honor of Hephaestus** [edited by **Star Foster**]. Submissions open **25 April 2011** and close **31 October 2011**. Projected release date of **January 2012**.

- **A Devotional Anthology in Honor of Hermes** [edited by **K.S. Roy**]. Submissions will open in **August 2011** and close in **January 2012**. Projected release date of **March 2012**.

- **Shield of Wisdom: A Devotional Anthology in Honor of Athena** [edited by **Jason Ross Inczauskis**]. Submissions will open in **September 2011** and close in **February 2012**. Projected release date of **April 2012**.

- Community Bulletin Board is a regular feature. If there is something you would like to be posted here, please email me at Kadynastar78@yahoo.com



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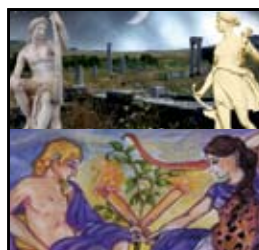
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**Rediscovering
Pan**



**At the
Crossroads**



**Thargelia
Art**



**Hidden
Acrostic**

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: He_Epistole@yahoo.com

