

Asclepios

*Asclepios was the god of medicine, son of Apollo and Coronis, daughter of Phlegyas. Apollo seized the child before he was born as Coronis was consumed by flames for being unfaithful to Apollo. The god left the child Asclepios in the care of the centaur Cheiron who raised him. Cheiron Taught Asclepios the art of healing and the pupil soon surpassed his master for he could resurrect even the dead. But this power of resurrection of the dead enraged Hades, lord of the underworld, and he appealed to Zeus who to please Hades slew Asclepios with a thunderbolt. Asclepios had many offspring with his consort Epione variously known as Aglaia, Ippone, Lampetea, and Xanthe. **The most important of these were his two sons Machaon and Podaleirios who took part in the Trojan expedition with thirty ships and his daughters Hygeia and Panacea. (Segment of Parthenon's Pediment)** His symbols were the cypress, pine and olive trees, and in the animal kingdom the dog, the goat, cock, and mainly the serpent. Asclepios was worshipped throughout Greece where over three hundred sacred precincts have been found. The main temples were at Epidauros, Athens, Cos, and Pergamos. Festivals were held in his honour known as the Asclepeia. The outstanding festivals were those of Epidauros held every five years. His descendants, the Asclpiadae formed a sacred brotherhood responsible for maintaining the secrets of healing which were passed on from father to son.*