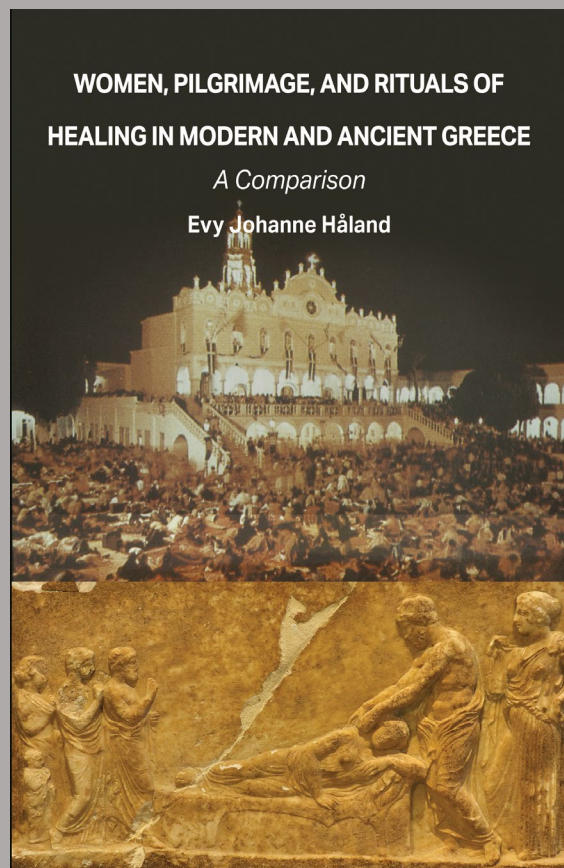




Healing Rituals in Modern and Ancient Greece: A Comparison

Lecture by Dr. **Evy Johanne Håland** (Government Grant Holder (Norwegian, statsstipendiat), Emerita/National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Archaeology and History of Art, Marie Curie Intra-European Fellow, Emerita. Senior lecturer at SeniorUni Norge AS)



Book Cover: Healing Rituals in Modern and Ancient Greece: A Comparison (Cambridge Scholars Publishing)

The lecture will take place on **Monday, 20 October 2025, at 7:00** p.m. (EEST) at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, Tsami Karatasou 5, 11742 (the lecture will also be streamed online via Zoom)

Registration is required for both in-person and virtual attendance.

To attend **in-person**, please register at norwinst@uib.no

To attend **via Zoom**, please register via the following link:

https://uib.zoom.us/meeting/register/fytf1BZ_TCS3KfNybv7JLw



Abstract

How can we try to understand such cores of ancient Greek culture as its healing rituals, generally carried out during festivals and rites connected with life-cycle passages, when the male authors of our sources did not and could not know much of what occurred, since the rituals were carried out by women? One way of facing this problem is to attend similar healing rituals in modern Greece, carried out by women, and compare that information with ancient sources, thus providing new ways of interpreting the ancient material we possess. This methodological approach to ancient sources is presented and discussed in the author's recent book, [Women, Pilgrimage, and Rituals of Healing in Modern and Ancient Greece: A Comparison](#) (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023), on which the talk is based, and in which parallels between modern and ancient healing rituals are central. These might also be seen as transmissions of ancient medical heritage into the modern Greek and Mediterranean region. This concerns material culture, such as amulets and votive gifts, both from resilient material such as stones and organic substances, or compounds such as apotropaic herbs and flowers, which have been important during religious rituals and everyday life, especially within the female sphere. The topics have also been central in pilgrimages to religious centers in which dream healing miracles have been an important part within societies all around the Mediterranean in the ancient Greek and the modern Christian and Islamic worlds.

The lecture therefore combines ethnography—especially firsthand fieldwork carried out since 1983—with historical sources to examine the relationship between modern Greek healing rituals and ancient written and visual sources on the subject of healing, aiming to present some of my findings, thus using modern sources in conjunction with ancient ones to shed fresh light on both the ancient and modern worlds from a female perspective.

Biographical Information

Dr. [Evy Johanne Håland](#), is a Norwegian Researcher, Dr/PhD, History, appointed a Government scholar (Norwegian, statsstipendiat) by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture. Emerita from May 2024. Since 1983, she has had several periods of fieldwork in the Mediterranean, mainly in Greece and Italy. Her publications combine fieldwork results with ancient sources, and the most important include, *Women, Pilgrimage, and Rituals of Healing in Modern and Ancient Greece: A Comparison* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing/CSP) from 2023, *Competing Ideologies in Greek Culture, Ancient and Modern* (CSP) from 2019, *Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient: A Comparison of Female and Male Values* (CSP) 2 vols from 2017, *Rituals of Death and Dying in Modern and Ancient Greece: Writing History from a Female Perspective* (CSP) from 2014, and the edited book *Women, Pain and Death: Rituals and Everyday-Life on the Margins of Europe and Beyond* (CSP) from 2008. She has published many articles and book chapters on festivals and rituals in modern and ancient Greece. She presently works on the project, Greek travellers and travellers to Greece through the ages. In the period 1990-2008 Håland was affiliated with, inter alia, the University of Bergen, Norway, where she worked as Lecturer/Research Fellow in history. Since 2009 she has lectured at several European Universities, and in the period 2011-213 she worked as a Marie Curie Intra-European Fellow in the Department of Archaeology and History of Art, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece [\[CV\]](#).