



Ritual for the Skiraphoria

(female version)

12 Skirophorion

- ◆ **Ritual washing**
- ◆ **Ritual washing with invocation to Okeanos**

Okeanos whose nature ever flows, from whom at first both Gods and men arose; sire incorruptible, whose waves surround, and earth's all-terminating circle bound: hence every river, hence the spreading sea, and earth's pure bubbling fountains spring from thee. Hear, mighty sire, for boundless bliss is thine, greatest cathartic of the powers divine: earth's friendly limit, fountain of the pole, whose waves wide spreading and circumfluent roll. Approach benevolent, with placid mind, and be forever to thy mystics kind.

- ◆ **Purification – khernips (holy water) sprinkled from a bay branch – Be gone all corruption and evil” (three times).**

“Blessed Okeanos, may your bright waters purify this space, and prepare both me, and it, for the rites that are about to unfold.”

- ◆ **Euphemia sto, euphemia sto, eukhomai tois Theois pasi kai pasais.**
(Let there be words of good omen, Let there be words of good omen, pray to the Gods and Goddesses.)
- ◆ **Who is present? Those attending answer: All good people!**
- ◆ **Lighting of the lamp for Hestia with invocation: Daughter of Kronos, You whose eternal flame illumines all our worship, come to this oikos with blessings . . .**
- ◆ **Lighting of the sacrificial fire**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 24 to Hestia**

To Hestia

Hestia, you that tend the far-shooting lord Apollo's sacred house at holy Pytho, from your locks the oozing oil ever drips down. Come to this house in kindly (?) heart, together with Zeus the resourceful, and bestow beauty on my singing.

- ◆ **Strewing of barley groats around the altar (circling clockwise three times)**
- ◆ **To Gaia**

First of all, in my prayers, before all other Gods, I call upon the foremost prophetess Gaia.

- ◆ **Invocation to Gaia: Gaia, to you who nurtures us into being, who nurtures us through life, and who accepts us once again unto Thee, blessed Kourotrophos, I honor you with khernips**
- ◆ **Offering of khernips poured out**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 26 To Earth**

Ges

[Gaia Thea/], mother of men and of the blessed Gods,
 you nourish all, you give all, you bring all to fruition, and you destroy all.
 When the season is fair you are heavy with fruit and growing blossoms;
 and, O multiform maiden, you are the seat of the immortal cosmos,
 and in the pains of labor you bring forth fruit of all kinds.
 Eternal, reverend, deep-bosomed, and blessed,
 you delight in the sweet breath of grass, O Goddess bedecked with flowers.
 Yours is the joy of the rain, and round you the intricate realm of the stars
 revolves in endless and awesome flow.
 But, O blessed Goddess, may you multiply the gladsome fruits
 and, together with the beautiful seasons, grant me favor.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis

- ◆ **Invocations and prayers to Themis: To you who sits leaning against Zeus, who consults closely with Zeus, and who are the just order of all things**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

Leap for goodly Themis

From the Hymn of the Kouretes

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Athena: Khaire Athena, who sprang from the head of Zeus, who bears the aegis, who leads us in wisdom and strength . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 11 To Athena**

To Athena

Of Pallas Athena the city-savior first I sing, dread goddess, who with Ares attends to the works of war, the sacking of towns, shouting and fighting, and keeps the army safe as it goes out and returns.

I salute you, goddess: grant us success and prosperity!

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 28 To Athena**

To Athena

Of Pallas Athena, glorious Goddess, first I sing, the steely-eyed, resourceful one with implacable heart, the reverend virgin, city-savior, doughty one. Tritogeneia, to whom wise Zeus Himself gave birth out of His august head, in battle armor of shining gold: all the immortals watched in awe, as before Zeus the goat-rider she sprang quickly down from His immortal head with a brandish of Her sharp javelin. A fearsome tremor went through great Olympos from the power of the steely-eyed one, the earth resounded terribly round about, and the sea heaved in a confusion of swirling waves. But suddenly the main was held in check, and Hyperion's splendid son halted His swift-footed steeds for a long time, until the maiden, Pallas Athena, took off the godlike armor from Her immortal shoulders, and wise Zeus rejoiced.

So I salute you, child of goat-rider Zeus. And I will take the head both for you and for other singing.

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings, protection, peace and stability in life)**

- ◆ **Incense: myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Poseidon: Khaire Poseidon, tamer of horses and the sea, guardian, earth-shaker...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Poseidon**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 17 To Poseidon**

To Poseidon

Hearken, dark-maned Poseidon, holder of the earth,
equestrian, carved in bronze is the trident in your hand,
and you dwell in the foundations of the full-bosomed sea.
Deep roaring ruler of the sea and shaker of the earth,
your blossoms are waves, O gracious one, as you urge horses and chariot on,
rushing on the sea and splashing through the rippling brine.
To your lot fell the third portion, the unfathomable sea,
and you delight in waves and in their wild dwellers, O spirit of the deep.
Save the foundations of the earth and ships moving at full tilt,
And bring peace, health and blameless prosperity.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis

“Gray-maned Poseidon, Lord of the lapping waters and the great unfathomable sea, progenitor of all life, O Poseidon Pater, may you be favorable to us this coming season.”

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings, calm weather, and fruitful endeavours)**

- ◆ **Incense: storax**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth and you provide for us so bountifully...**
- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, ground goat cheese, mint) to Demeter**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 13 To Demeter**

To Demeter

I begin to sing of rich-haired Demeter, awful goddess, of her and of her daughter lovely Persephone.

Hail, goddess! Keep this city safe, and govern my song.

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **From Homeric Hymn 2 to Demeter**

To Demeter

. . . . But golden-haired Demeter sat there (at Eleusis) apart from all the blessed gods and stayed, wasting with yearning for her deep-bosomed daughter. Then she caused a most dreadful and cruel year for mankind over the all-nourishing earth: the ground would not make the seed sprout, for rich-crowned Demeter kept it hid. In the fields the oxen drew many a curved plough in vain, and much white barley was cast upon the land without avail. So she would have destroyed the whole race of man with cruel famine and have robbed them who dwell on Olympus of their glorious right of gifts and sacrifices, had not Zeus perceived and marked this in his heart.

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Incense: storax**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 40 To Demeter**

To Eleusinian Demeter

Deo, divine mother of all, goddess of many names,
 revered Demeter, nurturer of youths, giver of prosperity and wealth,
 you nourish the ears of corn, O giver of all,
 you delight in peace and in toilsome labor.
 Present at sowing, heaping, and threshing, O spirit of the unripe fruit,
 you dwell in the sacred valley of Eleusis.
 Charming and lovely, you give sustenance to all mortals;
 you were the first to yoke the plowing ox,
 the first to send up from below a rich, a lovely harvest for mortals.
 You are growth and blossoming, O illustrious companion of Bromios,
 torch-bearing and pure, you delight in the summer's yield.
 From beneath the earth you appear, gentle to all,
 O holy and youth-nurturing lover of children and of fair offspring.
 You yolk your chariot to bridled dragons,
 round your throne you whirl and howl in ecstasy.
 You are an only daughter, but you have many children and many powers over mortals;

the variety of flowers reflect your myriad faces and your sacred blossoms.
Come, O blessed and pure one, come with the fruits of summer,
bearing peace, bring the welcome rule of law;
bring riches, too, and prosperity, and bring health that governs all.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings and protection, for abundance in food and growth, and fertility)**

- ◆ **Invocation to Kore: Khaire Kore, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Kore**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **From Homeric Hymn 2 To Demeter**

(Kore)

. . . . And Aidoneus, ruler over the dead, smiled grimly and obeyed the behest of Zeus the king. For he straightway urged wise Persephone, saying:

“Go now, Persephone, to your dark-robed mother, go, and feel kindly in your heart towards me: be not so exceedingly cast down; for I shall be no unfitting husband for you among the deathless gods, that am own brother to father Zeus. And while you are here, you shall rule all that lives and moves and shall have the greatest rights among the deathless gods: those who defraud you and do not appease your power with offerings, reverently performing rites and paying fit gifts, shall be punished for evermore.”

And when Demeter saw them, she rushed forth as does a Maenad down some thick-wooded mountain, while Persephone on the other side, when she saw her mother's sweet eyes, left the chariot and horses, and leaped down to run to her, and falling upon her neck, embraced her. . . .

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings and protection, for abundance in food and growth)**

- ◆ **Burying of the Thesmoi either in a bowl of soil or outdoors in a shallow pit.**

“Blessed Demeter, golden-haired Goddess of the harvest and Kore, blessed Goddess of bountiful spring fruit, accept these offerings placed into the dark of the earth--like you, Kore, when you descend down to Hades' realm. We mourn the loss of your fertile influence when You journey down, but celebrate Your rising.”

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Athena, Demeter Kore, and Poseidon**

“Here where the Great Gods meet, look favourably upon us. Bring us wealth and fortune and keep safe the crops of our harvest. Of this we pray to Athena Skiras, Demeter, Kore, and Poseidon Pater alike.”

- ◆ **Invocation to Hestia: Daughter of Kronos, You whose eternal flame illumines all our worship, we have honored You in first place with a libation of honey sweet wine and will honor you in last place with a libation of honey sweet wine:**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 29 to Hestia**

To Hestia

Hestia, you that in the high dwellings of all, both immortal gods and men who walk on earth, have been assigned an everlasting seat as the privilege of seniority, and enjoy a fine honor and privilege, for mortals have no feasts without you where the libation-pourer does not begin by offering honey-sweet wine to Hestia in first place and last: and you, Argus-slayer, son of Zeus and Maia, messenger of the blessed ones, gold-wand, giver of blessings, be favorable and assist together with Hestia whom you love and revere. For both of you dwell in the fine houses of men on earth, in friendship towards each other, fine supports (of the house), and you attend intelligence and youth.

I salute you, daughter of Kronos, and you too, gold-wand Hermes. And I will take heed both for you and for other singing.

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Hestia**

“Blessed Hestia, Goddess of home and hearth, to you we offer last of all a libation of honey sweet wine, as pious mortals should. Tend to those whom we love and guard the houses of the pious. As the Gods will it, so shall it be!”

- ◆ **Extinguishing of the lamp**