



Ritual for the Skiraphoria

(male 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**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 22 To Poseidon**

To Poseidon

I begin to sing about Poseidon, the great god, mover of the earth and fruitless sea, god of the deep who is also lord of Helicon and wide Aegae. A two-fold office the gods allotted you, O Shaker of the Earth, to be a tamer of horses and a saviour of ships!

Hail, Poseidon, Holder of the Earth, dark-haired lord! O blessed one, be kindly in heart and help those who voyage in ships!

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Incense: myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Poseidon: Khaire Poseidon, lord of the depth of the sea, holder of the earth, tamer of horses and savior of ships . . .**
- ◆ **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: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Dionysos: Khaire Dionysos, dark-haired God of the vine, who mellows all and lifts the spirits of all who celebrate you . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 50 To Lysisos – Lenaios**

To Lysisos – Lenaios

Hear, O blessed son of Zeus and of two mothers, Bakkhos of the vintage,
unforgettable seed, many-named and redeeming daimon,
holy offspring of the gods, reveling Bacchos, born of secrecy,
plump giver of the many joys, of fruits which grow well.
Mighty and many-shaped god, you burst forth from the earth to reach the wine press,
To become a realer for men’s pain, O sacred blossom!
A sorrow-hating joy to mortals, O lovely-haired . . . ,
a redeemer and a reveler you are, your thyrsus drives to frenzy,
you are kind-hearted to all, gods and mortals who see your light.
I call upon you now, come O sweet bringer of fruit.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Prayers (for a light heart and joy upon the household)**

- ◆ **Incense: storax**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth and provides 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

- ◆ **Incense: storax**
- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, ground goat cheese, mint) to Demeter**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **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)**

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

“Where the Great Gods meet, look favourably upon us. Bring us wisdom and fortune and keep safe the crops of our harvest. Of this we pray to Athena Skiras, Demeter, 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**