



Ritual for the Synoikia

15 & 16 Hekatombaion

First day

- ◆ **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.

Aeschylus – Eumenides (opening lines)

- ◆ **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

The Synoika was thought to commemorate the union (συνοικισις) of Attica into one City State brought about by Theseus and honors Athena Phratria and Zeus Phratrios (phratries – groups with hereditary membership and normally associated with specific localities) and later included Eirênê (Peace). Athena Phratria was honored on the first day and Zeus Phratrios on the second day. Although not specifically mentioned, it seems logical and appropriate to honor Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho.

FIRST DAY

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Athena Phratria: Khaire Athena, who sprang from the head of Zeus, who bears the aegis, who leads us in wisdom and strength, you who guides the phratries and unites them in common bond . . .**
- ◆ **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**
- ◆ **Prayers for understanding, for guidance, and for unity . . .**

- ◆ **Lighting of the incense burner with frankincense or myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Eirene: Blessed Eirene who brings peace that nurtures mankind and harmony that establishes wellbeing . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

And as for the Hours, as they are called, to each of them, according as her name indicates, was given the ordering and adornment of life, so as to serve to the greatest advantage of mankind; for there is nothing which is better able to build a life of felicity than obedience to law (Eunomia) and justice (Dikê) and peace (Eirenê).

From Diodorus Siculus: The Library of History

- ◆ **Lighting of the incense burner with frankincense or myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Aphrodite Pandemos: To you who engenders love, nurtures love, and brings love to fruition, you who unites all the Demes in love**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 10 to Aphrodite**

To Aphrodite

Of Cytherea, born in Cyprus, I will sing. She gives kindly gifts to men:
smiles are ever on her lovely face, and lovely is the brightness that plays over it.

Hail, goddess, queen of well-built Salamis and sea-girt Cyprus;
grant me a cheerful song. And now I will remember you and another song also.

Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White

- ◆ **Invocation to Peitho: Oh sovereign Peitho, herald of Aphrodite . . .**
- ◆ **Libations of honey sweet wine to Peitho**

“Give holy reverence to the sweetness and charm of my tongue, then you might remain. I will be grateful to You if Your glance keeps watch over my tongue and mouth, when I encounter fierce refusal.”

Adapted from Aeschylus, Eumenides

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, and may Athena Phratria and Zeus Phratrios unite us in a common bond of unity that brings fruitfulness between us all. Guide us in all our relationships with favorable fortunes!”

Adapted from Aeschylus – Libation Bearers – Chorus

- ◆ **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**



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Second day

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

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- ◆ **Incense: myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus Phratrios: King of all, you who rules with Hera Queen of Heaven, fulfiller, who establishes the common Order of Reason, who unites the phratries in common bond . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus**

Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus

Most glorious of the immortals, invoked by many names, ever all-powerful,
Zeus, the First Cause of Nature, who rules all things with Law,
Hail! It is right for mortals to call upon you,
since from you we have our being, we whose lot it is to be God's image,
we alone of all mortal creatures that live and move upon the earth.
Accordingly, I will praise you with my hymn and ever sing of your might.
The whole universe, spinning around the earth,
goes wherever you lead it and is willingly guided by you.
So great is the servant which you hold in your invincible hands,
your eternal, two-edged, lightning-forked thunderbolt.
By its strokes all the works of nature came to be established,
and with it you guide the universal Order of Reason which moves through all creation,
mingling with the great sun and the small stars.
O God, without you nothing comes to be on earth,
neither in the region of the heavenly poles, nor in the sea,
except what evil men do in their folly.
But you know how to make extraordinary things suitable,
and how to bring order forth from chaos; and even that which is unlovely is lovely to you.
For thus you have joined all things, the good with the bad, into one,
so that the eternal Order of all came to be one.
This Order, however, evil mortals flee, poor wretches;
though they are desirous of good things for their possession,
they neither see nor listen to God's universal Law;
and yet, if they obey it intelligently, they would have the good life.
But they are senselessly driven to one evil after another:
some are eager for fame, no matter how godlessly it is acquired;
others are set on making money without any orderly principles in their lives;
and others are bent on ease and on the pleasures and delights of the body.
They do these foolish things, time and again,
and are swept along, eagerly defeating all they really wish for.
O Zeus, giver of all, shrouded in dark clouds and holding the vivid bright lightning,
rescue men from painful ignorance.
Scatter that ignorance far from their hearts,
and deign to rule all things in justice,
so that, honored in this way, we may render honor to you in return,
and sing your deeds unceasingly, as befits mortals;
for there is no greater glory for men
or for gods than to justly praise the universal Order of Reason.

Translated by M. A. C. Ellery, 1976 (modified – Logos translated as ‘Word’ was replaced by ‘Order’)

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering of barley cake**
- ◆ **Prayers for the rule of reason, for right action, and for love and gentle persuasion that establishes unity . . .**

- ◆ **Lighting of the incense burner with frankincense or myrrh**

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◆ Extinguishing of the lamp