



# Ritual for the Apatouria

16 Pyanepsion

- ◆ **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

*The Apatouria was a three day festival held in the month of Pyanepsion, the first day was the Dorpia, the banquet, the second day was the Anarrhysis, sacrifices to Zeus Phratrios and Athena Phratria, and the third day was the Koureotis, the day fathers would introduce their young sons to the phratries, the hereditary brotherhoods, and again when their sons reached puberty and were presented again for membership in the phratria with locks of their hair consecrated to the Gods. At each occasion, the father was expected to provide a sacrificial victim. The Apatouria did not have fixed calendar days but was determined by each phratria.*

- ◆ **Incense: storax or myrrh**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus Phratrios: Mighty Zeus, father of all, councilor, and savior . . .**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymns 15 To Zeus**

### To Zeus

Much-honored Zeus, great god, indestructible Zeus,

we lay before you in prayer redeeming testimony.  
O king, you have brought to light divine works –  
earth, goddess and mother, the hills swept by the shrill winds,  
the sea, and the host of the stars, marshaled by the sky.  
Kronian Zeus, strong-spirited god, the thunderbolt is your scepter,  
father of all, beginning and end of all,  
earth-shaker, increaser and purifier, all-shaker,  
god of thunder and lightning, Zeus the sower.  
Hear me, god of many faces, grant me unblemished health,  
please grant me divine peace and riches, please grant me glory without blame.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Incense: storax or myrrh**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Aratus' Hymn to Zeus from the Phaenomena**

### **Hymn to Zeus**

From Zeus let us begin; him do we mortals never leave unnamed; full of Zeus are all the streets and all the market-places of men; full is the sea and the havens thereof; always we all have need of Zeus. For we are also his offspring; and he in his kindness unto men giveth favorable signs and wakeneth the people to work, reminding them of livelihood. He tells what time the soil is best for the labor of the ox and for the mattock, and what time the seasons are favorable both for the planting of trees and for casting all manner of seeds. For himself it was who set the signs in heaven, and marked out the constellations, and for the year devised what stars chiefly should give to men right signs of the seasons, to the end that all things might grow unfailingly. Wherefore Him do men ever worship first and last. Hail, O Father, mighty marvel, mighty blessing unto men. Hail to thee and to the Elder Race! Hail, ye Muses, right kindly, every one! But for me, too, in answer to my prayer direct all my lay, even as is meet, to tell the stars.

From the translated by G. R. Mair

- ◆ **From Aeschylus' Suppliant Maidens – Chorus**

But may Zeus grant that it go well with us. For Zeus' desire is hard to trace: it shines everywhere, even in gloom, together with fortune obscure to mortal men.

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Athena Phratria – Blessed Athena, City Savior who bears the Aegis and guides us with wisdom and strength . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 32 To Athena**

### **To Athena**

Revered Pallas, great Zeus bore by himself,  
noble and blessed goddess, brave in the din of war.  
Renowned and cave-haunting, spoken of and then ineffable,

your domain is on wind-swept hilltops,  
shaded mountains, dells that charm your heart.  
Arms please you, and you strike men's souls with frenzy,  
O vigorous maiden, O horrid-tempered one,  
slayer of Gorgo, O blessed mother of the arts, you shun the bed of love,  
you bring madness to the wicked, you bring prudence to the virtuous, O impetuous one.  
Male and female, shrewd begetter of war,  
she-dragon of many shapes, frenzy-loving, illustrious,  
destroyer of the Phlegraian Giants, driver of horses,  
victorious Tritogeneia, O goddess, you free us of suffering,  
day and night, ever into the small hours.  
Hear my prayer and give me a full measure of peace,  
of riches, and of health, accompanied by happy seasons,  
O gray-eyed and inventive queen, to whom many offer their prayers.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **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

- ◆ **From Aeschylus' Eumenides – Chorus**

I will accept a home with Pallas, and I will not dishonor a city which she, with Zeus the  
omnipotent and Ares, holds as a fortress of the gods, the bright ornament that guards the  
altars of the gods of Hellas. I pray for the city, with favorable prophecy, that the bright  
gleam of the sun may cause blessings that give happiness to life to spring from the earth,  
in plenty.

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymns 50 To Lysisos – Lenaios**

#### **To Lysisos – Lenaios**

Hear, O blessed son of Zeus and of two mothers, Bacchos 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 healer 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 abundance of food, wine, and celebrating the joys of life . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May we reflect on the brotherhood we share with all who honor the Theoi of Hellas. To our kin in Elaion! May the Theoi watch benevolently over us guide us 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**