



# Ritual for the Heroineis

## The Heroines

19 Metageitnion

- ◆ **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.

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **We call upon the mighty and august Goddesses who lead, inspire, and guide all humankind . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Incense: frankincense or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Hera Teleia: Goddess of beginnings, Goddess of marriages, Goddess of light, most holy and puissant Goddess Queen of Heaven who rules with Almighty Zeus, who had pity and accepted Zeus . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 12 to Hera**

### To Hera

Of Hera I sing, the golden-throned, whom Rhea bore to be  
 queen of the immortals, of supreme beauty, sister and wife  
 of Zeus the loud-booming; glorious one, whom all of the  
 blessed ones on long Olympus revere and honor no less  
 than Zeus whose sport is the thunderbolt.

Translation by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Athena: You sprang from the head of Zeus, who bares the Aegis, who leads us with wisdom and strength . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 11 to Athena**

### **To Athena**

Of Pallas Athena, guardian of the city, I begin to sing. Dread is she,  
and with Ares she loves deeds of war, the sack of cities and the shouting and the battle.  
It is she who saves the people as they go out to war and come back.

Hail, goddess, and give us good fortune with happiness!

Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Artemis: Blessed Kourotrophos and protectress of women and children, of women in childbirth, and of the young in nature; Apollon's sister profuse of arrows, you inspire greatness in women and awe in men . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 9 to Artemis**

### **To Artemis**

Sing, Muse, of Artemis, sister of the Far-shooter, the virgin profuse of arrows, fellow  
nursling of Apollo; who after watering her horses at the reedy Meles drives her chariot all  
of gold swiftly through Smyrna to vine-terraced Claros, where silver bow Apollo sits  
waiting the far-shooting one, the profuse of arrows.

So I salute you, and all goddesses, in my song; of you and from you first I sing.

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Invocation to Hygieia: Blessed Hygieia, most revered of the blessed ones, You who makes life the most pleasant, who allows us to accomplish the most in life, and who allows us to do the most good in life . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Who cannot sing a Paian to Hygieia!**

Hygieia,  
most revered of the blessed ones among mortals,  
may I dwell with you for what is left of my life,  
and may you graciously keep company with me:  
for any joy in wealth or in children or in a king's  
godlike rule over men or in the desires which we  
hunt with the hidden nets of Aphrodite, any other  
delight or respite from toils that has been revealed  
by the gods to men, with you, blessed Hygieia, it

flourishes and shines in the converse of the Graces;  
and without you no man is happy.

By Ariphron of Sicyon

“We sing many praises for the heroines who have led humankind to greatness and of those steeped in the myths of ancient times but we also sing praises to those in our time who have shown courage, strength of purpose, and compassion. You know them by many names for they have brought us the essence of humanity we all should aspire to. From deep in mythos we honor:

Atalanta § Andromeda § Kallisto § Kyrene § Hyppolyte § Otrera § Plieone and her daughters § The Leukippides who married the Dioskouri § Hypsipyle § Helen § Mykene § Alkmene § Tyro § Astydameia § Antigone § Aglauros, Savior of the City and first Priestess of Athena § Pandrosos § Herse § Many wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters of heroes and heroines in their own right.”

*Joan Breton Connelly writes in **Portrait of a Priestess**, Princeton University Press 2007, page 30: “The Greeks developed a religious system based on the human experience and so it both reflected and sustained the human condition in its fullest realization of sexuality, gender, and the life cycle.*

*Page 14: “As practitioners of household worship and the host of rituals occasioned by domestic life, Greek women assumed the role of “Priestess” within their own families. They trained their daughters to perform these rites along with other household duties expected of a good wife and mother.”*

- ◆ **Libations of honey sweet wine for the Heroines**
- ◆ **Offering to the Heroines**

“Greatness is not measured by wealth, power, and control but by understanding, compassion, and acts of kindness.”

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, and may the Heroines inspire us and guide us to accomplish good deeds 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**