



# **Erkhian Ritual for Apollon and Nymphs**

## **Apollon Apotropaïos § Apollon Nymphegetes § Nymphais**

### **8 Gamelion**

- ◆ **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 – khnerips (holy water) sprinkled from a bay branch – “Be gone all corruption and evil” khernips (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**
- ◆ **Invocation to Apollon Apotropaïos: Khaire Apollon, healer, teacher, averter of evil . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Apollon**
- ◆ **From Callimachus Hymn II To Apollon**

### To Apollon

How the laurel branch of Apollo trembles! How trembles all the shrine! Away, away, he that is sinful! Now surely Phoebus knocketh at the door with his beautiful foot. See'st thou not? the Delian palm nods pleasantly of a sudden and the swan in the air sings sweetly. Of yourselves now ye bolts be pushed back, pushed back of yourselves, ye bars! The god is no longer far away. And ye, young men, prepare ye for song and for the dance.

Not unto everyone doth Apollo appear, but unto him that is good. Whoso hath seen Apollo, he is great; whoso hath not seen him, he is of low estate. We shall see thee, O Archer, and we shall never be lowly. Let not the youths keep silent lyre or noiseless step, when Apollo visits his shrine, if they think to accomplish marriage and to cut the locks of age, and if the wall is to stand upon its old foundations. Well done the youths, for that the shell is no longer idle.

Be hushed, ye that hear, at the song to Apollo; yea, hushed is even the sea when the minstrels celebrate the lyre or the bow, the weapons of Lycoreian Phoebus. Neither doth Thetis his mother wail her dirge for Achilles, when she hears Hië Paeëon, Hië Paeëon.

Hië, Hië, Paeëon, we hear—since this refrain did the Delphian folk first invent, what time thou didst display the archery of thy golden bow. As thou wert going down to Pytho, there met thee a beast unearthly, a dread snake. And him thou didst slay, shooting swift arrows one upon the other; and the folk cried “Hië, Hië, Paeëon, shoot an arrow!” A helper from the first thy mother bare thee, and ever since that is thy praise.

Translated by A. W. Mair

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymns 21 To Apollon**

#### **To Apollon**

Phoebus, of you even the swan sings with clear voice to the beating of his wings, as he alights upon the bank by the eddying river Peneus; and of you the sweet-tongued minstrel, holding his high-pitched lyre, always sings both first and last.

And so hail to you, lord! I seek your favor with my song.

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Prayers: for protection and averting illness and evil for family, community, Elaion, and all who seek His blessings . . .**
  
- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Apollon Nymphegetes: Lord Apollon, leader of the Nymphs, may the beautiful tones from your lyre guide the Nymphs in dance and protect them and their sacred places from wanton destruction and greed. . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 34 To Apollon**

#### **To Apollon**

Come, O blessed Paian, O slayer of Tityos, O Phoibos, O Lykoreus,  
giver of riches, illustrious dweller of Memphis, O god to whom we cry “Ie”,  
O Titan and Pythian god, yours are  
the golden lyre, the seeds, and the plows. Grynean, Sminthian, slayer of Python,  
Delphic diviner, wild, light-bringing, lovable god you are, O glorious youth.  
You shoot your arrows from afar, you lead the Muses into dance,  
O holy one, you are Bacchos, Didymeus, Loxias, too,  
lord of Delos, you are the eye that sees all, you bring light to mortals,  
your hair is golden, your oracular utterance is clear.  
Hear me with kindly heart as I pray for people.  
You gaze upon all the ethereal vastness,  
upon the rich earth you look through the twilight.  
In the quiet darkness of a night lit with stars  
you see earth’s roots below, you hold the bounds  
of the whole world; the beginning and the end to come are yours.

You make everything bloom with your versatile lyre,  
 you harmonize the poles, now reaching the highest pitch,  
 now the lowest, now again with a Doric mode,  
 harmoniously balancing the poles, you keep the living races distinct.  
 You have infused harmony into the lot of all men,  
 giving them an equal measure of winter and summer:  
 the lowest notes you strike in the winter, the highest notes you make distinct in the  
 summer,  
 your mode is Doric for spring's lovely and blooming season.  
 This is why mortals call you lord and Pan,  
 the two-horned god who sends the whistling winds;  
 it is for this you have the master seal of the entire cosmos.  
 O blessed one, hear the suppliant voice of the initiates and save them.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Prayers (for protection of sacred places, for mindfulness and caring for the land, and for awareness and piety for the blessed Nymphs, etc.)**
  
- ◆ **Libation of milk and honey**
- ◆ **Invocation to the Nymphs: Blessed Nymphs, true spirits of place, of flowing springs, fragrant meadows, lovely groves, in piety toward your sacred places and shaded forests and caves, teach us what we need to know, guide us in piety toward your sacred places, and lighten our hearts with your sacred dances. . .**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 51 To the Nymphs**

#### **To the Nymphs**

O Nymphs, daughters of great-hearted Okeanos,  
 you dwell inside the earth's damp caves;  
 you are as secret as your paths, O joyous, O chthonic nurses of Bacchos.  
 You nurture fruits, you haunt meadows, O sprightly and pure  
 travelers of the winding roads, who delight in caves and grottoes.  
 Swift, light-footed, and clothed in dew, you frequent springs,  
 visible and invisible, in ravines and among flowers  
 you shout and frisk with Pan upon mountainsides,  
 gliding down on rocks, you hum with clear voice,  
 O mountain-haunting maidens of the fields, of gushing springs and of woodlands,  
 sweet-smelling virgins, clothed in white, fresh as the breeze,  
 herds of goats, pastures, splendid fruit, you protect; wild animals love you.  
 Though you are tender, cold delights you; you feed many, you help them grow,  
 Hamadryad maidens, playful, water-loving.  
 Spring is your joy, O Nysian and frenzied, O healing ones,  
 in the company of Bacchos and Deo, you bring grace to mortals.  
 Come to this blessed sacrifice with joyful heart,  
 pour streams of pure rain during the grain-giving seasons.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

Let us pour libation to the Muses,  
The daughters of Memory,  
And to the leader of the Muses,  
Leto's son.

Greek Lyric II, Edited and translated by David A. Campbell, Loeb Classical Library 1988, p. 316

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Prayers:**

“Blessed Nymphs, may you teach us your sacred ways and guide us in piety toward your sacred places that we shall be in harmony with you and be good stewards of the land we share.”

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May *Apollon Apotropaïos* and *Nymphegetes* watch benevolently over us and our children and may you and the blessed Nymphs 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**