



# Ritual for Elaphebolia

6 Elaphebolion

- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Lighting of the incense burner with frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Artemis: Khaire Artemis, far-shooter, protectress of women and children, of women in childbirth, and young animals . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymns 27 To Artemis**

### To Artemis

I sing of Artemis, whose shafts are of gold, who cheers on the hounds, the pure maiden, shooter of stags, who delights in archery, own sister to Apollo with the golden sword. Over the shadowy hills and windy peaks she draws her golden bow, rejoicing in the chase, and sends out grievous shafts. The tops of the high mountains tremble and the tangled wood echoes awesomely with the outcry of beasts: earthquakes and the sea also where fishes shoal. But the goddess with a bold heart turns every way destroying the race of wild beasts: and when she is satisfied and has cheered her heart, this huntress who delights in arrows slackens her supple bow and goes to the great house of her dear brother Phoebus Apollo, to the rich land of Delphi, there to order the lovely dance of the Muses and Graces. There she hangs up her curved bow and her arrows, and heads and leads the dances, gracefully arrayed, while all they utter their heavenly voice, singing how neat-ankled Leto bare children supreme among the immortals both in thought and in deed.

Hail to you, children of Zeus and rich-haired Leto! And now I will remember you and another song also.

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering of a honey cake in the shape of a stag**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymns 36 To Artemis**

#### **To Artemis**

Hear me, O queen, Zeus' daughter of many names,  
Titanic and Bacchic, reverend, renowned archer,  
torch-bearing goddess bringing light to all, Diktynna, helper at childbirth.  
you help women in labor, though you know not what labor is.  
O frenzy-loving huntress, you loosen girdles and drive distress away;  
swift arrow-pouring goddess of the outdoors, you roam in the night.  
Fame bringing and affable, redeeming and masculine in appearance,  
Orthia, goddess of swift birth, you are a nurturer of mortal youths,  
immortal and yet of this earth, you slay wild beasts, O blessed one,  
your realm is in the mountain forests, you hunt deer.  
O revered and mighty queen of all, fair blossomed, eternal,  
sylvan, dog-loving, many-shaped lady of Kydonia,  
come, dear goddess, as savior to all the initiates,  
accessible to all, bringing forth the beautiful fruit of the earth,  
lovely peace and fair-tressed health.  
May you dispatch disease and pain to the peaks of the mountains.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Lighting of the incense burner with myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus: Khaire Zeu, father of the Goddess profuse with arrows, fulfiller, savior . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 23 To Zeus**

#### **To Zeus**

Of Zeus, best and greatest of the gods, I will sing, the wide-sounding ruler,  
the one that brings to fulfillment, who consults closely with Themis as she sits leaning  
against him.

Be favorable, wide-sounding son of Kronos, greatest and most glorious.

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings, protection, family, and those in need, etc.)**
  
- ◆ **Lighting of the incense burner with myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Leto: Khaire Leto, Mother of the Far-Shooters . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 35 To Leto**

### To Leto

Dark-veiled Leto, revered goddess, mother of twins,  
great-souled daughter of Koios, queen to whom many pray,  
to your lot fell the birth pains for Zeus' fair children.  
you bore Phoibos and arrow-pouring Artemis,  
her on Ortygia, him on rocky Delos.  
Hear, lady goddess, come with favor in your heart  
to bring a sweet end to this all-holy rite.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

“May Artemis watch benevolently over us, watch over our women and children, and 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**