



# Erkhan Ritual for the Heroineis

14 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.

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**
- ◆ **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**
- ◆ **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**

Muse, sing of Artemis, sister of the Far-shooter, the virgin who delights in arrows, who was fostered with Apollo. She waters her horses from Meles deep in reeds, and swiftly drives her all-golden chariot through Smyrna to vine-clad Claros where Apollo, god of the silver bow, sits waiting for the far-shooting goddess who delights in arrows.  
 And so hail to you, Artemis, in my song and to all goddesses as well. Of you first I sing and with you I begin; now that I have begun with you, I will turn to another song.

Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **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**
- ◆ **Paian to Hygieia by Ariphron of Sicyon**

#### **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.

The paean is preserved on an Athenian stone dated c. 200 C.E.  
(now in Kassel) and on a very fragmentary stone from the  
Asclepieum at Epidaurus. Lucian calls it ‘very well known,  
On everyone’s lips’, and Maximus of Tyre shows that it was  
Still sung in their day; see also Licymnius 769.

From Greek Lyric, Volume V, edited and translated by David A. Campbell (Harvard University Press 1993).

“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.*

RAC

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

May we be mindful of the many heroines and give due honor! May the blessings they have  
imparted be with us, and may the Theoi watch benevolently over us and our children and  
guard 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**