



Ritual for the Plynteria

25 Thargelion

- ◆ **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

*Summary primarily from **Athenian Myths and Festivals** by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, Oxford 2011.*

The 25th of Thargelion was a very inauspicious day and no enterprises should be begun. At sundown, the beginning of the ancient day, the priestess of Athena Polias gave the temple key to the archon, the representative of the Polis, thus relinquishing her authority over the temple of Athena Polias and placing it with the Polis. The women of the genos Praxiergidai offered the preliminary sacrifice (not burnt) to the Moirai, Zeus Moiragetes, and Ge and then removed the jewelry from the ancient wooden statue of Athena, removed the chiton, covered the statue with cloth, and performed secret rights of great solemnity. One mythos was that this olive wood statue had fallen from the sky and another that Erichthonuios set up the statue on the Acropolis

On the morning of the 26th of Thargelion (the latter half of the ancient day), the covered statue was taken in a chariot, escorted by the Epoheboi, in a procession to the sanctuary of Athena Skiras at Phaleron near the sea which was the strong ritual modality for purification. Women carried baskets with hegeteria, cakes made of dried figs. There the statue was carried to the shore and bathed by the Plyntrides, two girls of the Praxiergidai (the same women who were to clean her temple on the Kallynteria) and covered for the return procession by torchlight at

night, the beginning of 27 Thargelion, the first day of the Kallynteria. It was likely that the peplos and chiton were washed in fresh water on this day by the Plyntrides.

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense or storax for purification**
- ◆ **Invocation to Athena: Queen Athena, Savior of the city, beloved Goddess . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Athena Polias**
- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Incense: aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to the Moirai (in this instance two of the Moirai, likely Lachesis, Klotho):
Blessed Fates who brings things to happen, may you be kindly, and bring an end to this
inauspicious time, bring Athena safely to Her Temple**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water (khernips – no salt)**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 59 To the Morai**

Moirai

Boundless Fates, dear children of dark Night,
hear my prayer, O many-named
dwellers on the lake of heaven, where the frozen water is broken
by night's warmth in the shady hollow of a sleek cave;
from there you fly to the vast earth, home of mortals, from there,
clothed in purple, you march toward men,
whose noble aims match their vain hopes
in the realm of the dead, are vain, where glory drives her chariot on
all over the earth beyond the ends of Justice,
of anxious hope, of primeval law, of the measureless principle of order.
In life Fate alone watches; the other immortals
who dwell on the peaks of snowy Olympos do not,
except for Zeus' perfect eye. Fate and Zeus' mind
know all things for all time.
I pray to you to come, gently and kindly,
Atropos, Lachesis, Klotho, offspring of noble stock.
Airy, invisible, inexorable, ever indestructible,
you give all and take all, being to men the same as necessity.
Fates, hear my prayers, receive my libations,
come gently to the initiates, free them from pain.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Incense: myrrh**

- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus Moiragetes: To you leader of the Fates, Zeus the omnipotent who guards the city with Athena and Ares, a fortress of the gods, the bright ornament that guards the altars of the gods of Hellas . . .**
- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 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)

- ◆ **Invocation to Ge: To you, who nurtures us into being, through life, and accepts us one again unto Thee, bring a return to auspicious times, times of goodness, plenty, and happiness . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water (khernips – no salt)**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 30 To Earth the Mother of All**

To Earth the Mother of All

I will sing of well-founded Earth, mother of all, eldest of all beings.
She feeds all creatures that are in the world, all that go upon the goodly land,
and all that are in the paths of the seas, and all that fly: all these are fed of her store.
Through you, O queen, men are blessed in their children and blessed in their harvests,
and to you it belongs to give means of life to mortal men and to take it away.
Happy is the man whom you delight to honour! He has all things abundantly:
his fruitful land is laden with corn, his pastures are covered with cattle, and his house
is filled with good things. Such men rule orderly in their cities of fair women:
great riches and wealth follow them: their sons exult with ever-fresh delight, and their
daughters with flower-laden bands play and skip merrily over the soft flowers of the
field. Thus it is with those whom you honour O holy goddess, bountiful spirit.

Hail, Mother of the gods, wife of starry Heaven; freely bestow upon me for this my song substance that cheers the heart! And now I will remember you and another song also.

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn White

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, and may Athena always watch benevolently over us and guide us with wisdom, strength, and 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**