



Ritual for the Pompaia

10 Maimakterion

- ◆ **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

The Pompaia in honor of Zeus Meilichios was held during the last third of Maimakterion. A sheep was sacrificed to Zeus Meilichios and the skin, the Dion Koidion (sheepskin of Zeus) was carried in procession (Pompaia) honoring Zeus Meilichios (Zeus the Kind, Gentle) protector of those who invoked Him with propitiatory offerings along with the kerykeion, the wand of Hermes messenger of the Gods, the two intertwined serpents, Agatha Tyche (Good Fortune) and Agathos Daimon (Spirit of Goodness). Those being purified by the Dion Koidion stood on it with their left foot as part of the propitiatory rite.

Sources primarily from H. W. Parke *Festivals of the Athenians*, Cornell 1979, who cites the treatise on the Pompaia by Polemon of Iliion.

- ◆ **Incense: storax or myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus Meilichios: To you kindly Zeus whose sheep skin (Dion Koidion) is carried in procession along with the kerykeion, the blessed wand of Hermes, and with our left foot placed on the Dion Koidion, we seek atonement of our wrongs. Bring an end to blustery storms and goodness to us and those we love. . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of *melikraton* (honey and water)**
- ◆ **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

◆ **Cleanthes Hymn to Zeus**

Hymn to Zeus

Most glorious of the immortals, invoked by many names, ever all-powerful,
Zeus, the First Cause of Nature, who rules all things with Law,
Hail! It is right for mortals to call upon you,
since from you we have our being, we whose lot it is to be God's image,
we alone of all mortal creatures that live and move upon the earth.
Accordingly, I will praise you with my hymn and ever sing of your might.
The whole universe, spinning around the earth,
goes wherever you lead it and is willingly guided by you.
So great is the servant which you hold in your invincible hands,
your eternal, two-edged, lightning-forked thunderbolt.
By its strokes all the works of nature came to be established,
and with it you guide the universal Word of Reason which moves through all creation,
mingling with the great sun and the small stars.
O God, without you nothing comes to be on earth,
neither in the region of the heavenly poles, nor in the sea,
except what evil men do in their folly.
But you know how to make extraordinary things suitable,
and how to bring order forth from chaos; and even that which is unlovely is lovely to you.
For thus you have joined all things, the good with the bad, into one,
so that the eternal Word of all came to be one.
This Word, however, evil mortals flee, poor wretches;
though they are desirous of good things for their possession,
they neither see nor listen to God's universal Law;
and yet, if they obey it intelligently, they would have the good life.
But they are senselessly driven to one evil after another:
some are eager for fame, no matter how godlessly it is acquired;
others are set on making money without any orderly principles in their lives;
and others are bent on ease and on the pleasures and delights of the body.
They do these foolish things, time and again,
and are swept along, eagerly defeating all they really wish for.
O Zeus, giver of all, shrouded in dark clouds and holding the vivid bright lightning,
rescue men from painful ignorance.
Scatter that ignorance far from their hearts.
and deign to rule all things in justice.
so that, honored in this way, we may render honor to you in return,
and sing your deeds unceasingly, as befits mortals;
for there is no greater glory for men
or for gods than to justly praise the universal Word of Reason.

Translated by M. A. C. Ellery

- ◆ Libation of *melikraton* (honey and water)
- ◆ Offerings of vegetables and/or fruit, or cakes shaped as a sheep *holokauto* with honey poured over (sacrifice all, do not eat any of it yourself!)
- ◆ Prayers: for blessings, family, friends, etc.)

- ◆ **Ending of Kallimachos' Hymn to Zeus**

Hail, greatly hail, most high Son of Kronos, giver of good things, giver of safety.
 Thy works who could sing? There hath not been, there shall not be, who shall sing
 the works of Zeus. Hail! Father, hail again! And grant us goodness and prosperity.
 Without goodness wealth cannot bless men, nor goodness without prosperity.
 Give us goodness and wealth.

Translated by A. W. Mair, G. R. Mair

- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 15 To Zeus (modified)**

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)

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May we be mindful of the power of Zeus and may His blessings go with us and may He watch benevolently over us and guide us with favorable fortunes through difficult and stormy times!”

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**