



# Ritual for the Proerosia

## 6 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: storax or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth and provides for us so bountifully...**

Demeter first turned the earth with the curved plough; She first gave corn and crops to  
 bless the land; She first gave laws; all things are Demeter's gift. Of Demeter I must sing.  
 Oh that my song may hymn the Goddess' praise as She deserves, a Goddess who  
 deserved high hymns of praise.

From Ovid, Metamorphoses 5

- ◆ **Libation of a kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 40 To Eleusinian Demeter**

### To Eleusinian Demeter

Deo, divine mother of all, goddess of many names,  
 revered Demeter, nurturer of youths, giver of prosperity and wealth,  
 you nourish the ears of corn, O giver of all,  
 you delight in peace and in toilsome labor.

Present at sowing, heaping, and threshing, O spirit of the unripe fruit,  
 you dwell in the sacred valley of Eleusis.  
 Charming and lovely, you give sustenance to all mortals;  
 you were the first to yoke the plowing ox,  
 the first to send up from below a rich, a lovely harvest for mortals.  
 You are growth and blossoming, O illustrious companion of Bromios,  
 torch-bearing and pure, you delight in the summer's yield.  
 From beneath the earth you appear, gentle to all,  
 O holy and youth-nurturing lover of children and of fair offspring.  
 You yolk your chariot to bridled dragons,  
 round your throne you whirl and howl in ecstasy.  
 You are an only daughter, but you have many children and many powers over mortals;  
 the variety of flowers reflect your myriad faces and your sacred blossoms.  
 Come, O blessed and pure one, come with the fruits of summer,  
 bearing peace, bring the welcome rule of law;  
 bring riches, too, and prosperity, and bring health that governs all.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Burned sacrifice of first fruits to Demeter**

“Demeter, guardian of this Eleusinian land, grant happiness to me and mine. This prayer I make now I come to offer sacrifice on behalf of the earth's crop at this shrine, where first the fruitful corn showed its bristling shocks above the soil.”

Adapted from Euripides, *The Suppliants*, opening lines

◆ **Kallimachos, Hymn 6 To Demeter**

**To Demeter**

As the Basket comes, greet it, ye women, saying ‘Demeter, greatly hail! Lady of much bounty, of many measures of corn.’ As the Basket comes, from the ground shall ye behold it, ye uninitiated, and gaze not from the roof or from aloft--child nor wife nor maid hath shed her hair--neither then nor when we spit from parched mouths fasting. Hesperos from the clouds marks the time of its coming: Hesperos, who alone persuaded Demeter to drink, what time she pursued the unknown tracks of her stolen daughter.

Hail, Goddess, and save this people in harmony and in prosperity, and in the fields bring us all pleasant things! Feed our kine, bring us flocks, bring us the corn-ear, bring us harvest! And nurse peace, that he who sows may also reap. Be gracious, O thrice-prayed for, great Queen of Goddesses!"

Translated by A. W. Mair

◆ **Incense: frankincense**

◆ **Invocation to Apollon: Radiant god who grants all that is good for mortals, far-shooter, healer, teacher, and averter of evil . . .**

**The Priestess of Pythian Apollo**

First, in this prayer of mine, I give the place of highest honor among the gods to the first prophet, Earth; and after her to Themis, for she was the second to take this oracular seat of her mother, as legend tells. And in the third allotment, with Themis' consent and not by

force, another Titan, child of Earth, Phoebé, took her seat here. She gave it as a birthday gift to Phoebus, who has his name from Phoebé. Leaving the lake and ridge of Delos, he landed on Pallas' ship-frequented shores, and came to this region and the dwelling places on Parnassus. The children of Hephaistos, road-builders taming the wildness of the untamed land, escorted him with mighty reverence. And at his arrival, the people and Delphus, helmsman and lord of this land, made a great celebration for him. Zeus inspired his heart with prophetic skill and established him as the fourth prophet on this throne; but Loxias is the spokesman of Zeus, his father.

From Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, opening lines, translated by Herbert Weir Smyth

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **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)

- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus: Khairé Zeus, Councilor, fulfiller, Savior, to you King of all who rules with Hera Queen of heaven . . .**
- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Libations of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic hymn 73 To Daimon**

**To Daimon**

I call upon Daimon, the grand and dreaded leader, gentle Zeus, who gives birth to all, who gives livelihood to mortals. Great Zeus, wide roving, avenger, king of all, giver of wealth when you enter the house in the abundance of your powers, you refresh the life of mortals worn out with toil, you possess the keys to joy and sorrow as well. So, O pure and blessed one, drive painful cares away, cares that dispatch ruin to all that live throughout the whole earth, and bring a glorious end to my life, a sweet and noble one.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Prayers to Demeter:**

**Aethra**

Demeter, guardian of this Eleusinian land, and you servants of the goddess who attend her shrine, grant happiness to me and *mine* . . . Now . . . *I* . . . come to offer sacrifice on behalf of the earth's crop at this shrine, where first the fruitful corn showed its bristling shocks above the soil. And here at the holy altars of the two goddesses, Demeter and the Maiden, I wait, holding these sprays of foliage, a bond that does not bind, in compassion for these childless mothers, gray with age, and in reverence for the sacred garlands.

Adapted from Euripides, *The Suppliants*, opening lines, translated by Gilbert Murray

“Blessed Demeter, it was Apollon who told mankind to offer sacrifice of first fruits to You to stave off the famine. And to You, Zeus, all would offer these blessed gifts. May you and all the Theoi watch kindly over mankind and bring bountiful harvest to fruition before the winter’s cold.”

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, may we be mindful of the sacrifices for freedom, and may the Theoi watch benevolently over us 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**