



Erkhian Ritual for the Zeus Epakrios

(Zeus on the Height)

16 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

The sacrifice to Zeus Epakrios (on the Height) was made on the bare summit of Mt. Hymettos as, even as today, it gave the Athenians a reliable indication of weather by the presence, or absence, of threatening clouds. The sacrifice was nephaliōs (wineless) and au phora (not carried – totally consumed). There was an altar to Zeus Ombrios (of rain) less than a kilometer north of the highest point but the sacrifice to Zeus Epakrios was at the summit.

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense or myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus: To you Almighty Zeus, King of all who rules with Hera Queen of Heaven, Councilor, Fulfiller, and Savior, to you on the hight who rules the weather**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water**
- ◆ **Aratus' Hymn to Zeus**

To Zeus

From Zeus let us begin; him do we mortals never leave unnamed; full of Zeus are all the streets and all the market-places of men; full is the sea and the havens thereof; always we all have need of Zeus. For we are also his offspring; and he in his kindness unto men giveth favorable signs and wakeneth the people to work, reminding them of livelihood. He tells what time the soil is best for the labor of the ox and for the mattock, and what time the seasons are favorable both for the planting of trees and for casting all manner of seeds. For himself it was who set the signs in heaven, and marked out the constellations,

and for the year devised what stars chiefly should give to men right signs of the seasons, to the end that all things might grow unfailingly. Wherefore Him do men ever worship first and last. Hail, O Father, mighty marvel, mighty blessing unto men. Hail to thee and to the Elder Race^d! Hail, ye Muses, right kindly, every one! But for me, too, in answer to my prayer direct all my lay, even, as is meet, to tell the stars.

From the Phaenomena, translated by G. R. Mair

◆ **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

He does not sit upon his throne by mandate of another and hold his dominion beneath a mightier. No one sits above him whose power he holds in awe. He speaks, and it is done – he hastens to execute whatever his counseling mind conceives.

Aeschylus – Suppliant Maidens – Chorus

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense or myrrh**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water**
- ◆ **Prayers (to Zeus the Provider for blessings and for ample rain for the crops, for abundance . . .)**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus**

Cleanthes' 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 Order 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 Order of all came to be one.
This Order, 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 Order of Reason.

Translated by M. A. C. Ellery, 1976 (modified – Logos translated as ‘Word’ was replaced by ‘Order’)

Cleanthes (331-232 B.C.) was a disciple of Zeno the Stoic. He considered the universe a living being and said that god was the soul of the universe and the sun its heart.

◆ **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)

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense or myrrh**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water**
- ◆ **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

◆ **Prayers to Zeus for rains for the crops and fulfillment of all that brings abundance . . .**

“But may Zeus grant that it go well with us. For Zeus' desire is hard to trace: it shines everywhere, even in gloom, together with fortune obscure to mortal men.”

Aeschylus – Suppliant Maidens, Chorus

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, and may Zeus 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**