



# Ritual for the Olympieia

19 Mounukhion

- ◆ **Ritual washing**
- ◆ **Ritual washing with invocation: Orphic Hymn 83 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.

Translation by Thomas Taylor

- ◆ **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: myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus: Khaire 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

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 – from Suppliant Maidens, Chorus

- ◆ Prayers (for blessings, protection, family, and those in need, etc.)
- ◆ Incense: storax or myrrh
- ◆ Invocation to Zeus: **Khairē Zeus, much-honored King of all who has brought to light divine works, increaser, and purifier . . .**
- ◆ Libation of honey sweet wine
- ◆ 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 – myrrh
- ◆ Invocation to Zeus Teleios: **Khairē Zeu, mighty King forever more, giver of good things, giver of safety, granter of goodness and wellbeing . . . .**
- ◆ Libation of honey sweet wine
- ◆ Offering to Zeus (burnt offering if you can)
- ◆ Kallimachos, Hymn I to Zeus

#### To Zeus

At libations to Zeus what else should rather be sung than the god himself, mighty forever,  
 king for evermore, router of the Pelagonians, dealer of justice to the sons of Heaven?

How shall we sing of him—as lord of Dicte or of Lycaeum? My soul is all in doubt, since  
 debated is his birth. O Zeus, some say that thou wert born on the hills of Ida; others, O  
 Zeus, say in Arcadia; did these or those, O Father, lie? “Cretans are ever liars.” Yea, a  
 tomb, O Lord, for thee the Cretans builded; but thou didst not die, for thou art forever.

In Parrhasia it was that Rhea bare thee, where was a hill sheltered with thickest brush.  
 Thence is the place holy, and no four-footed thing that hath need of Eileithyia<sup>c</sup> nor any  
 woman approacheth thereto, but the Apidanians call it the primeval childbed of Rhea.  
 There when thy mother had laid thee down from her mighty lap, straightway she sought a  
 stream of water, wherewith she might purge her of the soilure of birth and wash thy body  
 therein.

But mighty Ladon flowed not yet, nor Erymanthus, clearest of rivers; waterless was all  
 Arcadia; yet was it anon to be called well-watered. For at that time when Rhea loosed her  
 girdle, full many a hollow oak did watery Iacon bear aloft, and many a wain did Melas  
 carry and many a serpent above Carnion, wet though it now be, cast its lair; and a man  
 would fare on foot over Crathis and many-pebbled Metope, athirst: while that abundant  
 water lay beneath his feet.

And holden in distress the lady Rheia said, “Dear Earth, give birth thou also! thy birth pangs are light.” So spake the goddess, and lifting her great arm aloft she smote the mountain with her staff; and it was greatly rent in twain for her and poured forth a mighty flood. Therein, O Lord, she cleansed thy body; and swaddled thee, and gave thee to Neda to carry within the Cretan covert, that thou mightst be reared secretly: Neda, eldest of the nymphs who then were about her bed, earliest birth after Styx and Philyra. And no idle favor did the goddess repay her, but named that stream Neda; which, I ween, in great flood by the very city of the Cauconians, which is called Lepreion, mingles its stream with Nereus, and its primeval water do the son’s sons of the Bear, Lycaon’s daughter, drink.

When the nymph, carrying thee, O Father Zeus, toward Cnosus,<sup>i</sup> was leaving Thenae<sup>i</sup>—for Thenae was nigh to Cnosus—even then, O God, thy navel fell away: hence that plain the Cydonians<sup>i</sup> call the Plain of the Navel. But thee, O Zeus, the companions of the Cyrbantēs took to their arms, even the Dictæan Meliæ, and Adrasteia laid thee to rest in a cradle of gold, and thou didst suck the rich teat of the she-goat Amaltheia, and there to eat the sweet honey-comb. For suddenly on the hills of Ida, which men call Panacra, appeared the works of the Panacrian bee. And lustily round thee danced the Curetes a war-dance, beating their armor, that Cronus might hear with his ears the din of the shield, but not thine infant noise.

Fairly didst thou wax, O heavenly Zeus, and fairly wert thou nurtured, and swiftly thou didst grow to manhood, and speedily came the down upon thy cheek. But, while yet a child, thou didst devise all the deeds of perfect stature. Wherefore thy kindred, though an earlier generation, grudged not that thou shouldst have heaven for thine appointed habitation. The ancient poets spake not altogether truly. For they said that the lot assigned to the sons of Cronus their three several abodes. But who would draw lots for Olympus and for Hades—save a very fool?—for equal chances should one cast lots; but these are the wide world apart. When I speak fiction, be it such fiction as persuades the listener’s ear! Thou wert made sovereign of the gods not by casting of lots but by the deeds of thy hands, thy might and that strength which thou hast set beside thy throne. And the most excellent of birds didst thou make the messenger of thy signs; favorable to my friends be the signs thou showest! And thou didst choose that which is most excellent among men—not thou the skilled in ships, nor the wielder of the shield, nor the minstrel: these didst thou straightway renounce to lesser gods, other cares to others. But thou didst choose the rulers of cities themselves, beneath whose hand is the lord of the soil, the skilled in spearmanship, the oarsman, yea, all things that are: what is there that is not under the ruler’s sway? Thus, smiths, we say, belong to Hephaestus; to Ares, warriors; to Artemis of the Tunic, huntsmen; to Phoebus they that know well the strains of the lyre. But from Zeus come kings; for nothing is diviner than the kings of Zeus. Wherefore thou didst choose them for thine own lot, and gavest them cities to guard. And thou didst seat thyself in the high places of the cities, watching who rule their people with crooked judgements, and who rule otherwise. And thou hast bestowed upon them wealth and prosperity abundantly; unto all, but not in equal measure. One may well judge by our Ruler, for he hath clean outstripped all others. At evening he accomplisheth that whereon he thinketh in the morning; yea, at evening the greatest things, but the lesser soon as he thinketh on them. But the others accomplish some things in a year, and some things not in one; of others, again, thou thyself dost utterly frustrate the accomplishing and thwartest their desire.

Hail! Greatly hail! Most high Son of Cronus, 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 weal.

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

◆ **Prayers (for blessings for all who honor Zeus)**

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“Then may blessings go with us, and may Almighty Zeus watch benevolently over us and guard them 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**