



Ritual for the Skira

(female version)

12 Skirophorion

- ◆ **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: frankincense or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Athena Skiras: Khaire Athena, who sprang from the head of Zeus, who bears the aegis, who leads us in wisdom and strength, who protects our frontier . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 32 To Athena**

To Athena

Revered Pallas, great Zeus bore by himself,

noble and blessed goddess, brave in the din of war.
Renowned and cave-haunting, spoken of and then ineffable,
your domain is on wind-swept hilltops,
shaded mountains, dells that charm your heart.
Arms please you, and you strike men's souls with frenzy,
O vigorous maiden, O horrid-tempered one,
slayer of Gorgo, O blessed mother of the arts, you shun the bed of love,
you bring madness to the wicked, you bring prudence to the virtuous, O impetuous one.
Male and female, shrewd begetter of war,
she-dragon of many shapes, frenzy-loving, illustrious,
destroyer of the Phlegraian Giants, driver of horses,
victorious Tritogeneia, O goddess, you free us of suffering,
day and night, ever into the small hours.
Hear my prayer and give me a full measure of peace,
of riches, and of health, accompanied by happy seasons,
O gray-eyed and inventive queen, to whom many offer their prayers.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Prayers (for blessings, protection, peace and stability in life)**

◆ **Incense: myrrh**

◆ **Invocation to Poseidon: Khaire Poseidon, tamer of horses and the sea, guardian, earth-shaker...**

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Poseidon**

◆ **Offering**

◆ **Orphic Hymn 17 To Poseidon**

To Poseidon

Hearken, dark-maned Poseidon, holder of the earth,
equestrian, carved in bronze is the trident in your hand,
and you dwell in the foundations of the full-bosomed sea.
Deep roaring ruler of the sea and shaker of the earth,
your blossoms are waves, O gracious one, as you urge horses and chariot on,
rushing on the sea and splashing through the rippling brine.
To your lot fell the third portion, the unfathomable sea,
and you delight in waves and in their wild dwellers, O spirit of the deep.
Save the foundations of the earth and ships moving at full tilt,
And bring peace, health and blameless prosperity.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis

“Poseidon, dark-haired Lord of the lapping waters and the great unfathomable sea, progenitor of all life, O Poseidon Pater, may you be favorable to us this coming season.”

◆ **Prayers (for blessings, calm weather, and fruitful endeavours)**

◆ **Incense: storax**

- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth and you provide for us so bountifully...**
- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, ground goat cheese, mint) to Demeter**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 13 To Demeter**

To Demeter

I begin to sing of rich-haired Demeter, awful goddess, of her and of her daughter lovely Persephone.

Hail, goddess! Keep this city safe, and govern my song.

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **From Homeric Hymn 2 to Demeter**

To Demeter

. . . . But golden-haired Demeter sat there (at Eleusis) apart from all the blessed gods and stayed, wasting with yearning for her deep-bosomed daughter. Then she caused a most dreadful and cruel year for mankind over the all-nourishing earth: the ground would not make the seed sprout, for rich-crowned Demeter kept it hid. In the fields the oxen drew many a curved plough in vain, and much white barley was cast upon the land without avail. So she would have destroyed the whole race of man with cruel famine and have robbed them who dwell on Olympus of their glorious right of gifts and sacrifices, had not Zeus perceived and marked this in his heart.

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **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)

◆ **Prayers (for blessings and protection, for abundance in food and growth, and fertility)**

◆ **Invocation to Kore: Khaire Kore, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**

◆ **Libation of pure water**

◆ **Offering**

◆ **Orphic Hymn 29 Hymn To Persephone**

Hymn to Persephone

Persephone, blessed daughter of great Zeus, sole offspring
of Demeter, come and accept this gracious sacrifice.
Much honored spouse of Plouton, discreet and life-giving,
you command the gates of Hades in the bowels of the earth,
lovely-tressed Praxidike, pure bloom of Deo,
mother of the Erinyes, queen of the nether world,
secretly sired by Zeus in clandestine union.
Mother of loud-roaring, many-shaped Eobouleus,
radiant and luminous playmate of the Seasons,
revered and almighty, maiden rich in fruits,
brilliant and horned, only-beloved of mortals,
in spring you take your joy in the meadow of breezes,
you show your holy figure in branches teeming with grass-green fruits,
in autumn you were made a kidnapper's bride.
You alone are life and death to toiling mortals,
O Persephone, you nourish all, always, and kill them, too.
Hearken, O blessed Goddess, send forth the fruits of the earth
as you blossom in peace, and in gentle-handed health
bring a blessed life and a splendid old age to him who is sailing
to your realm, O queen, and to mighty Plouton's kingdom.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Prayers (for blessings and protection, for abundance in food and growth)**

◆ **Burying of the Thesmoi (compost mixed with barley goats) either in a bowl of soil or outdoors in a shallow pit.**

“Blessed Demeter, golden-haired Goddess of the harvest and Kore, blessed Goddess of bountiful spring fruit, accept these offerings placed into the dark of the earth--like you, Kore, when you descend down to Hades' realm. We mourn the loss of your fertile influence when You journey down, but celebrate Your rising.”

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“Here where the Great Gods meet, look favourably upon us. Bring us wealth and fortune and

keep safe the crops of our harvest. Of this we pray to Athena Skiras, Demeter, Kore, and Poseidon Pater alike.”

- ◆ **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**