



Ritual for the Herakleia

Herakles

2 Metageitnion

- ◆ **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 Herakleia honored Herakles as a Hero and as a God with burnt sacrifice followed by feasting and with athletic competitions and feats of strength. Herakles was also honored within banqueting groups where the members were chosen as 'parasites'.

Herakles was a guide to youth. Athenian youths who were about to become ephebes, would bring a measure of wine known as an 'oinisteria' as an offering to Herakles before cutting off a lock of their hair prior to admission into the phratry. After pouring out a libation to Herakles, they would offer it to their companions to drink. Herakles remained with them when they became ephebes and presided over the gymnasia where they exercised and was a divine witness to their oaths.

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Herakles: You who accomplished the twelve labors, many deeds of valor, and great feats of strength, a guide to youth**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 12 To Herakles**

To Herakles

Herakles, stout-hearted and mighty, powerful Titan,

strong-handed, indomitable, doer of valiant deeds,
shape-shifter, O gentle and endless father of time,
ineffable, lord of all, many pray to you,
all-conquering and mighty archer and seer,
omnivorous begetter of all, peak of all, helper too all,
for the sake of men you subdued and tamed savage races.
Peace was your desire; she brings dazzling honors and nurtures youths.
Self-grown, weariless, bravest child of earth,
O illustrious Paian, your primordial scales gleam.
Round your head dawn and dark night cling,
and your twelve deeds of valor stretch from east to west.
Immortal, world-wise, boundless and irrepressible,
come, O blessed one, bringing all charms against disease,
with club in hand, drive evil bane away,
with your poisonous darts do ward off cruel death.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Prayers: May we be valiant in our deeds, accomplish the tasks before us, and conquer all adversities**

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, and may Herakles inspire us and guide us to accomplish good deeds 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**