



Erkhian Ritual for Apollon, Demeter, Zeus, & Athena

Apollon Lykeios § Demeter § Zeus Polieus § Athena Polias

12 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

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Apollon Lykeios: Healer, teacher, averter of evil**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 21 To Apollon**

To Apollon

Phoebus, of you the swan too sings in clear tone from its wings
 as it alights on the bank beside the eddying river Peneus; and of you
 the bard with his clear-toned lyre and sweet verse ever sings in first place and last.
 So I salute you, lord, and seek your favor with my singing.

Translation by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **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)

- ◆ **Incense: storax**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth, provides the fruits of summer, and the harvest for us so bountiful . . .**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 13 To Demeter**

To Demeter

Of Demeter the lovely-haired, the august goddess first I sing,
of her and her daughter, beautiful Persephone.

I salute you, goddess: keep this city safe, and give my song its beginning.

Translation by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **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)

- ◆ **Incense: myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus Poleius: King of all, you who rules with Hera Queen of Heaven, Savior**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **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 wakes 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! 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 Marten 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.

From Aeschylus – Suppliant Maidens – Chorus

- ◆ **Incense: myrrh**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **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.

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.

From Aeschylus – Suppliant Maidens – Chorus

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings, family, friends, etc.)**

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Athena Polias – To you who sprang from the very head of Zeus, you who bares the Aegis, you who leads us with wisdom and strength**
- ◆ **Libation of honeysweet 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!

Translation 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)

◆ **Homeric Hymn 28 To Athena**

To Athena

Of Pallas Athena, glorious Goddess, first I sing, the steely-eyed, resourceful one with implacable heart, the reverend virgin, city-savior, doughty one. Tritogeneia, to whom wise Zeus Himself gave birth out of His august head, in battle armor of shining gold: all the immortals watched in awe, as before Zeus the goat-rider she sprang quickly down from His immortal head with a brandish of Her sharp javelin. A fearsome tremor went through great Olympos from the power of the steely-eyed one, the earth resounded terribly round about, and the sea heaved in a confusion of swirling waves. But suddenly the main was held in check, and Hyperion's splendid son halted His swift-footed steeds for a long time, until the maiden, Pallas Athena, took off the godlike armor from Her immortal shoulders, and wise Zeus rejoiced.

So I salute you, child of goat-rider Zeus. And I will take the head both for you and for other singing.

Translation by Martin L. West

I will accept a home with Pallas, and I will not dishonor a city which she, with Zeus the omnipotent and Ares, holds as a fortress of the gods, the bright ornament that guards the altars of the gods of Hellas. I pray for the city, with favorable prophecy, that the bright gleam of the sun may cause blessings that give happiness to life to spring from the earth, in plenty.

From Aeschylus – Eumenides (Chorus)

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, and may Apollon, Demeter, Zeus, and Athena protect 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**