



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

15 Boedromion

(Opening of the Greater Mysteries – day)

- ◆ **Ritual washing – Pour out sacred salted water over your head to emulate the dip into the sea the ancient initiates would have taken to purify themselves.**
- ◆ **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: storax**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth, who sprouts the seeds, and provides for us so bountifully...**
- ◆ **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.

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **(Part of) Homeric Hymn 2 To Demeter**

To Demeter

He [Keleos] summoned his far-flung people to assembly, and told them to build a rich temple for lovely-haired Demeter, and an altar where the hill juts out. They promptly obeyed and hearkened to his words, and made it as he instructed, and it grew by divine

dispensation. When they had finished it and paused from their toil, they went to their various homes; but flaxen Demeter took her seat in it and remained there, apart from all the blessed gods, pining for her deep-girt daughter.

The most dreadful and abominable year she made it for mankind across the nurturing earth. The land allowed nothing sown to come up, for fair-garlanded Demeter kept it hidden. Many were the bent ploughs that the oxen dragged in vain over the fields, and much the white barley seed that fell into the soil without result. Indeed, she would have destroyed humankind altogether by grievous famine, and deprived the Olympians of their honorific privileges and their sacrifices, had Zeus not taken notice, and counselled with his heart.

Translated by Martin L. West

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

- ◆ **Invocation to Persephone: Khaire Persephone, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 29 Hymn To Persephone**

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)

- ◆ **Visualize walking those first steps from Athens to Eleusis down the sandy road. The sun is bearing down, already hot. You are surrounded by thousands of people who are participating in the Mysteries with you. Feel the connection to ancient Hellas, the excitement, the sliver of apprehension of the unknown. These are the Mysteries and they are connected to the end of life and to living.**

“Blessed Demeter and golden haired Persephone. Today we walk the path of the ancients. As they walked the road to Eleusis, towards Your sanctuary. These days are devoted to You and You alone, and we vow to pay homage to You along the way, as did the ancients as they walked. Be with us, and when we come to You again, give us a glimpse of the Mysteries You have taught others oh so many years. This we pray of You, Goddesses of abundance who watch kindly over the human race.”

- ◆ **Present both Demeter and Persephone, and any Gods and Goddesses you feel close to who you want to invite to support you on this journey, with a personal offering that will be left on your altar for the duration of the Mysteries. You may offer anything you want, perishable or not. The road to Eleusis was littered with small shrines to various deities and people would leave small offerings at these with a word of prayer. That is what we are emulating here. Take a moment to commit to this journey that the Mysteries are. Remember that it's going to mean daily sacrifices to Demeter and Persephone, a day of fasting if you can, and daily rituals. Once you are ready, tie the króki around your left wrist, a yellow—traditionally woollen—string to indicate you are fully committed to fulfilling the Mysteries. Then you may finish the rite.**

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us and may the Goddesses 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**



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

16 Boedromion

(Purification – day)

- ◆ **Ritual washing – Pour out sacred salted water over your head to emulate the dip into the sea the ancient initiates would have taken to purify themselves.**
- ◆ **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: storax or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth and provides for us so bountifully...**

Demeter first turned the earth with the curved plough; She first gave corn and crops to
 bless the land; She first gave laws; all things are Demeter's gift. Of Demeter I must sing.
 Oh that my song may hymn the Goddess' praise as She deserves, a Goddess who
 deserved high hymns of praise.

From Ovid, Metamorphoses 5

- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 41 To Mother Antaia**

To Mother Antaia

Queen Antaia, Goddess and many-named mother
 of immortal Gods and mortal men,
 weary from searching, weary from wandering far and wide,
 you ended your fast in the valley of Eleusis,
 you came to Hades for noble Persephone.

Your guide was the innocent child of Dysaules,
who brought the news of pure Chthonic Zeus' holy union;
you bore divine Euboulos by yielding to human need.
O Goddess, O Queen to whom many pray, I beseech you
to come graciously to your pious initiate.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Invocation to the Horai: Khaire Horai, spirits of spring and the blossoming meadow, you whose time it is for blessed Persephone to rejoin her mother ...**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water to the Horai**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 43 To the Hoai**

To the Horai

Horai, daughters of Themis and Lord Zeus –
Eumonie and Dike and thrice-blessed Eirene –
pure spirits of spring and of the blossoming meadow,
you are found in every color and in all the scents wafted by the breezes.
Ever-blooming, revolving and sweet-faced, O Horai,
you cloak yourselves with the dew of luxuriant flowers.
You are holy Persephone's companions at play, when the Fates
and the Graces, in circling dances come forth to light,
pleasing Zeus and their fruit-giving mother.
Come to the new initiates and their reverent and holy rites
and bring seasons perfect for growth of goodly fruit.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis

- ◆ **Prayers to Demeter and Persephone**

“Blessed Mother and Daughter divine, who watch over mankind and Earth’s bounty. Around You the seasons revolve, both of the harvest and life. It is you who allow us to reap the rewards of our labour, who help us fill up our bellies and allow our children to grow strong. It is You who guide us now, as we walk the path of the ancients. Guard over us and purify us as we prepare to take part in Your rites.”

- ◆ **Pour out sacred salted water over your head to emulate the dip into the sea the ancient initiates would have taken to purify themselves.**

“Make us clean!”

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us and may the Goddesses 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



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

17 Boedromion

(General rite to Demeter and Persephone – day)

- ◆ **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**
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Ges

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 you nourish all, you give all, you bring all to fruition, and you destroy all.
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 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.

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- ◆ **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: storax or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter:**

“Of Demeter, ruler of corn-rich Sicily, and of the violet-garlanded [Kore] sing . . .”

From Bacchylides, 3 Translated by David A. Campbell, Greek Lyric Vol. IV, p. 127, Loeb Classical Library

- ◆ **Libation Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **Kallimachos, Hymn 6 To Demeter**

To Demeter

As the Basket comes, greet it, ye women, saying ‘Demeter, greatly hail! Lady of much bounty, of many measures of corn.’ As the Basket comes, from the ground shall ye behold it, ye uninitiated, and gaze not from the roof or from aloft--child nor wife nor maid hath shed her hair--neither then nor when we spit from parched mouths fasting. Hesperos from the clouds marks the time of its coming: Hesperos, who alone persuaded Demeter to drink, what time she pursued the unknown tracks of her stolen daughter.

Hail, Goddess, and save this people in harmony and in prosperity, and in the fields bring us all pleasant things! Feed our kine, bring us flocks, bring us the corn-ear, bring us

harvest! And nurse peace, that he who sows may also reap. Be gracious, O thrice-prayed for, great Queen of Goddesses!"

- ◆ **Invocation to Persephone: Khaire Persephone, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water to Kore**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 29 To Persephone**

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 netherworld, secretly sired by Zeus in clandestine union. Mother of loud-roaring, many shaped Eubouleus, 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 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

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- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

"May blessings go with us and may the Goddesses 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:**
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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**



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

18 Boedromion

(Mysteries of Asklepios, Hygieia, Hypnos and Morpheus – night)

- ◆ **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.**
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- ◆ **Lighting of the sacrificial fire**
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- ◆ **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 Asklepios: Khaire Asklepios, master healer, guide to all in the medical profession, father of Hygieia...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Asklepios**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymns 16 To Asklepios**

To Asklepios

I begin to sing of Asklepios, son of Apollon and healer of sicknesses.
 In the Dotian plain fair Koronis, daughter of King Phlegyas, bare him,
 a great joy to men, a soother of cruel pangs.

And so hail to you, lord: in my song I make my prayer to thee!

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 67 To Asklepios**

To Asklepios

Asklepios, lord Paean, healer of all,
 you charm away the pains of men who suffer.

Come, mighty and soothing, bring health,
put an end to sickness, then to the harsh fate of death.
O blessed spirit of joyful growth, O helper, you ward evil off,
honored and mighty son of Phoibos Apollon.
Enemy of disease, consort is Hygieia the blameless,
come as savior, O blessed one, bring life to a good end.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Paean of Erythrae (380-360 B.C.E. - P.M.G. 934)**

Paean of Erythrae

Sing youths, of Paean, skill-famed, Leto's son,
Far-shooter –
ië Paean! –
who fathered a great joy for mortals
when he mingled in love with Koronis
in the land of the Phlegyae –
ië Paean! –
Asclepios, the most famous god –
ië Paean!

By him were fathered Machaon and Podalirios
and Iaso –
ië Paean! –
and fair-eyed Aegle and Panacea, children of
Epione, along with Hygieia, all-glorious,
undefiled;
ië Paean! –
Asclepios, the most famous god –
ië Paean!

Greetings I give you: graciously visit our
wide-spaced city –
ië Paean! –
and grant that we look on the sun's light in joy,
approved with the help of Hygieia, all-glorious,
undefiled;
ië Paean! –
Asclepios, the most famous god –
ië Paean!

"If anyone after sleeping in the temple or making a vow is offering due sacrifice to
Asclepius and Apollo, when he puts on the altar the sacred portion he must first sing this
paean three times around Apollo's altar."

Translated by David A. Campbell (Loeb - Greek Lyric, Vol. V)

◆ **We honour all doctors who have sworn the Oath of Hippocrates**

“Those who swear by Apollo Physician and by Asklepios and Hygieia and Panacea and all the
Gods and Goddesses, making them their witnesses that they will fulfil according to their ability
and judgement this oath and this covenant.

For all who fulfill this oath and do not violate it, may it be granted to them to enjoy life and art, being honored with fame among all men for all time to come; if they transgress it and swear falsely, may the opposite of all of this be their lot.”

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Invocation to Hygieia: Khaire Hygieia, daughter of Asklepios, most revered of the blessed ones among mortals, may you graciously accept us to dwell with Thee . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Hygieia**
- ◆ **Paean to Hygieia (by Ariphron of Sicyon)**

To Hygieia

Hygieia, most revered of the blessed ones among mortals,
may I dwell with you for what is left of my life,
and may you graciously keep company with me:
for any joy in wealth or in children or in a king’s
godlike rule over men or in the desires which we
hunt with the hidden nets of Aphrodite, any other
delight or respite from toils that has been revealed
by the Gods to men, with you, blessed Hygieia, it
flourishes and shines in the converse of the Graces;
and without you no man is happy.

The paean is preserved on an Athenian stone dated c. 200 C.E. (now in Kassel) and on a very fragmentary stone from the Asclepieum at Epidaurus. Lucian calls it ‘very well known, On everyone’s lips’, and Maximus of Tyre shows that it was Still sung in their day; see also Licymnius 769.

From Greek Lyric, Volume V, edited and translated by David A. Campbell (Harvard University Press 1993).

- ◆ **Invocation to Hypnos: Khaire soft-eyed Hypnos, come, embracing all as a mother on seeing her dear son after a long absence folds him with her wings to her loving breast...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Hypnos**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 85 to Sleep**

To Hypnos

Sleep, you are lord of all, lord of blessed gods and of mortal men,
of every living thing the broad earth nurtures,
for you alone are master of all, you do visit all,
binding their bodies with fetters unforged.
You free us of cares, you offer sweet respite from toil,
you grant holy solace to our every sorrow,
you save souls by easing them into the thought of death,
since to Death and Oblivion you are a true brother.
But, O blessed one, I beseech you to come, sweet-tempered,
to be a kindly savior of the initiates, that they may serve the gods.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Invocation to Morpheus: Khaire Morpheus, bringer of dreams who travels on noiseless wings...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Morpheus**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 86 To Dream**

To Morpheus

I call upon you, blessed, long-winged and baneful dream,
 messenger of things to come, greatest prophet to mortals.
 In the quiet of sweet sleep you come silent,
 you speak to the soul, you rouse men's minds,
 in their sleep you whisper the will of the gods;
 silent you come to show the future to silent souls
 that walk the noble path of devotion to the gods.
 Good always wins the race in people's minds,
 good leads their lives to pleasures anticipated,
 to a respite from suffering, that god himself may reveal
 the firmament of the divine lords . . . through vows and sacrifices.
 The end to which the pious come is always so sweeter,
 but to the impious never does a dreamy phantom,
 a prophet of evil deeds, reveal future need
 so that they may find the cure from pain to come.
 But, blessed one, I beg you, show me the behests of the gods,
 in all things bring me close to the path that is straight,
 do not through weird apparitions show me evil signs.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Offering (amongst the recorded sacrifices are black goats or sheep, gold, silver, or marble sculptures of the body part that required healing, and coins)**
- ◆ **Prayers**

“Blessed Asklepios and all Your fair daughters. Blessed Hypnos and Morpheus. Gather around me in haste. Listen to my plea for clarity of mind. As I lay me to rest, bring me kind sleep and knowledge divine. You who brings prophetic dreams for my future alone, let me wake rested and with clear mind.”

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us and may the Theoi 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



Ritual for the Epidauria

18 Boedromion

(Following daylight hours)

- ◆ **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 Asklepios: Khaire Asklepios, healer, You who guides all in the medical profession, who guides all doctors, father of Hygieia**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 67 To Asklepios**

To Asklepios

Asklepios, lord Paeon, healer of all,
you charm away the pains of men who suffer.
Come, mighty and soothing, bring health,
put an end to sickness, then to the harsh fate of death.
O blessed spirit of joyful growth, O helper, you ward evil off,
honored and mighty son of Phoibos Apollon.
Enemy of disease, consort is Hygieia the blameless,
come as savior, O blessed one, bring life to a good end.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Prayers**

“Blessed Asklepios, you who tends to the sick and heals all ailments. You who alleviates the suffering of all. Take away my pains and troubles and heal my weary mind and soul. May all worries fall from me under the gentle touch of Your strong hand. May all my wounds be healed and my journey light.”

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymns 16**

To Asklepios

Of Asclepius the healer of sicknesses first I sing, son of Apollo,
born in the Dotian Plain to the lady Coronis, daughter of king Phlegyas,
a great joy to mankind, the soother of horrid pains.

So I salute you, lord; I supplicate you with my song.

Translated by M. L. West

- ◆ **Paean of Erythrae (380-360 B.C.E. - P.M.G. 934)**

Paean of Erythrae

Sing youths, of Paean, skill-famed, Leto's son,
Far-shooter –
ië Paean! –
who fathered a great joy for mortals
when he mingled in love with Koronis
in the land of the Phlegyae –
ië Paean! –
Asclepios, the most famous god –
ië Paean!

By him were fathered Machaon and Podalirios
and Iaso –
ië Paean! –
and fair-eyed Aegle and Panacea, children of
Epione, along with Hygieia, all-glorious,
undefiled;
ië Paean! –
Asclepios, the most famous god –
ië Paean!

Greetings I give you: graciously visit our
wide-spaced city –
ië Paean! –
and grant that we look on the sun's light in joy,
approved with the help of Hygieia, all-glorious,
undefiled;
ië Paean! –
Asclepios, the most famous god –
ië Paean!

"If anyone after sleeping in the temple or making a vow is offering due sacrifice to Asclepius and Apollo, when he puts on the altar the sacred portion he must first sing this paean three times around Apollo's altar."

Translated by David A. Campbell (Loeb - Greek Lyric, Vol. V)

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Hygieia: To you who makes life the most pleasant, who allows us to accomplish the most in life and, who allows us to do the most good in like**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Ariphron of Sicyon Paean To Hygieia**

Paean to Hygieia

Hygieia, most revered of the blessed ones among mortals,
may I dwell with you for what is left of my life,
and may you graciously keep company with me:
for any joy in wealth or in children or in a king's
godlike rule over men or in the desires which we
hunt with the hidden nets of Aphrodite, any other
delight or respite from toils that has been revealed
by the gods to men, with you, blessed Hygieia, it
flourishes and shines in the converse of the Graces;
and without you no man is happy.

The paean is preserved on an Athenian stone dated c. 200 C.E. (now in Kassel) and on a very fragmentary stone from the Asclepieum at Epidaurus. Lucian calls it 'very well known, on everyone's lips', and Maximus of Tyre shows that it was still sung in their day; see also Licymnius 769.

From Greek Lyric, Volume V, edited and translated by David A. Campbell (Harvard University Press 1993).

- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 68 To Hygieia**

To Hygieia

Charming queen of all, lovely and blooming,
blessed Hygieia, mother of all, bringer of bliss, hear me.
Through you vanish the illnesses that afflict man,
through you every house blossoms to the fullness of joy.
The arts thrive when the world desires you, O queen,
loathed by Hades, the destroyer of souls.
Apart from you all is without profit for men:
wealth, the sweet giver of abundance for those who feast, fails,
and man never reaches the many pains of old age.
Goddess, come, ever-helpful to the initiates,
keep away the evil distress of unbearable disease.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Prayers of purification and cleansing**

“Blessed Hygieia, may I be free of all illness and may you accept me to dwell with Thee and may you keep company with me that I may serve Thee and all the Gods well and do acts of kindness.”

- ◆ **Take a moment to contemplate old pains and aches you have been holding onto, be they physical, emotional or spiritual. This is the time to let go of them. Especially if they have been holding you back, it is now time to let the burden of them fall away.**

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, may Asklepios heal our illnesses, and may Hygieia graciously accept us to dwell with Her. May the Theoi 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**



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

19 Boedromion

(Opening – night)

- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Of Demeter, ruler of corn-rich Sikelia sing...**
- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **(Part of) Homeric Hymn 2 To Demeter**

To Demeter

He [Keleos] summoned his far-flung people to assembly, and told them to build a rich temple for lovely-haired Demeter, and an altar where the hill juts out. They promptly obeyed and hearkened to his words, and made it as he instructed, and it grew by divine dispensation. When they had finished it and paused from their toil, they went to their various homes; but flaxen Demeter took her seat in it and remained there, apart from all the blessed gods, pining for her deep-girt daughter.

The most dreadful and abominable year she made it for mankind across the nurturing earth. The land allowed nothing sown to come up, for fair-garlanded Demeter kept it hidden. Many were the bent ploughs that the oxen dragged in vain over the fields, and much the white barley seed that fell into the soil without result. Indeed, she would have destroyed humankind altogether by grievous famine, and deprived the Olympians of their honorific privileges and their sacrifices, had Zeus not taken notice, and counselled with his heart.

Translated by Martin L. West

◆ **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)

◆ **Orphic Hymn 41 To Mother Antaia**

To Mother Antaia

Queen Antaia, Goddess and many-named mother
of immortal Gods and mortal men,
weary from searching, weary from wandering far and wide,
you ended your fast in the valley of Eleusis,
you came to Hades for noble Persephone.
Your guide was the innocent child of Dysaules,
who brought the news of pure Chthonic Zeus' holy union;
you bore divine Euboulos by yielding to human need.
O Goddess, O Queen to whom many pray, I beseech you
to come graciously to your pious initiate.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

“Blessed Demeter, whose road we travel in these days. Accept this offer illuminated by torchlight and guide us safely through Your rites.”

◆ **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**



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

20 Boedromion

(Initiatory rite – night)

This is a night time ritual, so carry a torch (or candle) on your way to your altar. Preferably, the rest of the space is completely dark, or lit with small lights/candles. Make the journey as long as you can. With every step, remember how you started on this journey six days ago, with all of us, and with the spirits of the ancient Hellenes walking with you. Now you are alone, just you and the Theoi. The Mysteries can only be experienced alone, after all, and never shared afterwards. Asklepios and His daughters have cleaned, healed, and blessed you. Your body is pure. Your mind is pure. It's time to enter the rite and meet the Gods.

- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, Lady of much bounty, of many measures of corn...**
- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **(Parts of) Homeric Hymn 2 To Demeter**

To Demeter

He [Keleos] summoned his far-flung people to assembly, and told them to build a rich temple for lovely-haired Demeter, and an altar where the hill juts out. They promptly obeyed and hearkened to his words, and made it as he instructed, and it grew by divine dispensation. When they had finished it and paused from their toil, they went to their

various homes; but flaxen Demeter took her seat in it and remained there, apart from all the blessed gods, pining for her deep-girt daughter.

The most dreadful and abominable year she made it for mankind across the nurturing earth. The land allowed nothing sown to come up, for fair-garlanded Demeter kept it hidden. Many were the bent ploughs that the oxen dragged in vain over the fields, and much the white barley seed that fell into the soil without result. Indeed, she would have destroyed humankind altogether by grievous famine, and deprived the Olympians of their honorific privileges and their sacrifices, had Zeus not taken notice, and counselled with his heart. . . .

Soon they came to the house of Keleos, nursling of Zeus, and passed through the portico to where their lady mother sat by a pillar of the strong-built roof with her young sprig of a child in her bosom, and they ran to join her. Then Demeter stepped onto the threshold: her head reached to the rafter, and she filled the doorway with divine radiance. The queen was seized by awe and reverence and sallow fear; she gave up her couch for her, and invited her to sit down. But Demeter, bringer of resplendent gifts in season, did not want to be seated on the gleaming couch, but stood in silence, her lovely eyes downcast, until dutiful Iambe set a jointed stool for her and laid a shining white fleece over it. There she sat, holding her veil before her face, and for a long time she remained there on the seat in silent sorrow. She greeted no one with word or movement, but sat there unsmiling, tasting neither food nor drink, pining for her deep-girt daughter, until at last dutiful Iambe with ribaldry and many a jest diverted the holy lady so that she smiled and laughed and became benevolent—Iambe who ever since has found favor with her moods.

Metaneira filled a cup with honey-sweet wine and offered it to her. But she declined, saying that it was not proper for her to drink red wine; she told her to mix barley and water with the graceful pennyroyal and give it to her to drink. So she made the kykeon and gave it to the goddess, as she requested, and the lady Deo took it for custom's sake and . . .

Then fair-girt Metaneira opened the conversation: "Greetings, lady, for I do not expect you come from low parents, but ones of standing; your eyes have a striking modesty and charm, as might come from lawgiver princes. But what the gods give, we humans endure, painful as it is, for our necks are under the yoke. However, now that you have come here, you shall have as much as I have myself. Just rear this boy for me, whom the immortals have granted me, late and beyond expectation, but in answer to many a prayer. If you were to raise him and see him to young manhood's measure, then any woman who saw you might well envy you, so richly would I repay you for his nurturing."

Fair-garlanded Demeter addressed her in turn: "Greetings to you too, lady, and may the gods give you blessings. As for your boy, I will gladly take him over, as you request. I will rear him, and I do not anticipate that any supernatural visitation or cutter of roots will harm him through any negligence by his nurse. For I know a powerful counter-cut to beat the herb-cutter, and I know a good inhibitor of baneful visitation."

With these words she took him into her fragrant bosom and immortal arms, and his mother was delighted. So she proceeded to rear in the mansion wise Keleos' resplendent son Demophon, whom fair-girt Metaneira had borne, and he grew like a divine being, though he ate no food and sucked no mother's milk. For by day fair-garlanded Demeter would anoint him with ambrosia, as if he were the son of a god, breathing her sweet breath over him as she held him in her bosom, while each night she would hide him away

in the burning fire, like a brand, without his dear parents' knowledge. To them it was a great wonder how precociously he flourished; he was like the gods to behold. Indeed she would have made him ageless and deathless, if in her folly fair-girt Metaneira had not waited for the nighttime and spied from her fragrant chamber: she shrieked and clapped her two thighs in alarm for her son, for she was greatly misled, and she addressed him with winged words of lament: "Demophon my child, the visitor is hiding you away in the blazing fire, causing me groaning and grief."

So she lamented; and the goddess heard her. Angry with her, fair-garlanded Demeter took her dear son, whom she had borne beyond expectation in the mansion, in her immortal arms and laid him down away from her on the ground, removing him out of the fire in her heart's great wrath, and at the same time she spoke to fair-girt Metaneira:

"Ignorant humans and witless to recognize a dispensation of coming good or ill! You are another one irremediably misled by your folly. For may the implacable Water of Shuddering on which the gods swear their oaths be my witness, I would have made your dear son deathless and ageless forever, and granted him unfading privilege; but now there is no way he can avoid death and mortality. Yet a privilege unfading shall always be his, because he came onto my lap and slept in my arms: in his honor, at the due season of the revolving years, the sons of the Eleusinians shall evermore make battle and affray among themselves. For I am Demeter the honored one, who is the greatest boon and joy to immortals and mortals. Now, let the whole people build me a great temple with an altar below it, under the citadel's sheer wall, above Kallichoron, where the hill juts out. As to the rites, I myself will instruct you on how in future you can propitiate me with holy performance."

With these words the goddess changed her form and stature, thrusting old age away; beauty wafted all about her, a lovely fragrance spread from her scented dress, and a radiance shone afar from her immortal body; flaxen locks bestrewed her shoulders, and the sturdy house was filled with a brilliance as of lightning as she went out through the hall. . . .

Translated by Martin L. West

◆ Prayers

"Thus is the tale of the Mysteries and with this knowledge I walk to Your altar, Blessed Demeter of the corn. Watch over me as I submit to Your will and Your knowledge. Entrust me with Your secrets and your blessings."

- ◆ **Invocation to Persephone: Khaire Persephone, spouse of Hades, host of many...**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water to Persephone**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 29 To Persephone**

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**

“Blessed Persephone, much-honored spouse of Plouton, life-giving, who journeys to and from the underworld where we shall all depart to once it is our time. As you depart, so we suffer and as you rise, so we thrive. You who rules over our lives and whose Mother provides us with all means for our survival. When I come to You, and I am judged, whisper kindly in their ears. Lay your hand on me once my time comes and accept me unto you.”

- ◆ **Invocation to Plouton: Khaire Plouton who are the wealth of earth and accepts all to rest...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Plouton**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 18 To Plouton**

To Plouton

You dwell below the earth, O strong-spirited one,
a meadow in Tartaros, thick-shaded and dark.
Sceptered Chthonic Zeus, please accept this sacrifice,
O Plouton, holder of the keys to the whole earth.
To mankind you give the wealth of the year's fruits,
yours is the third portion, earth, queen of all,
seat of the gods, mighty lap of mortals.
Your throne rests on a dark realm,
the realm of distant, of untiring, of windless, and of impassive Hades;
it does not rest on gloomy Acheron, the river who girds the roots of the earth.
All-receiver, master of death, master of mortals, host of many,
Euboulos, you once took as your bride pure Demeter's daughter:
you took her away from the meadow, and through the sea
you carried her to an Attic cave upon your steeds –
it was the district of Eleusis, where the gates to Hades are.
You alone were born to judge deeds obscure and conspicuous.
Holiest and illustrious ruler of all, frenzied god,
You delight in the respect and in the reverence of your worshipers.
I summon you, come with favor, come with joy to the initiates.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Prayers**

“They say that the entire bulk and substance of the earth is dedicated to father Dis, because all things fall back into the earth and also arise from the earth. So as I fall and arise, may You look upon me kindly. May you bestow upon me fruition and blessings both in life and after. When I come to you, accept me with open arms.”

◆ **Incense: storax**

◆ **Invocation to Hermes: Khaire Hermes, who swiftly carries the dead to the river...**

◆ **Offerings of honey sweet wine to Hermes Khthonios**

◆ **Orphic Hymn 57 To Chthonic Hermes**

To Chthonic Hermes

You dwell on the road all must take, the road of no return, by the Kokytos,
you guide the souls of mortals to the nether gloom.
Hermes, off-spring of Dionysos who revels in dance,
and of Aphrodite, the Paphian maiden of the fluttering eyelids,
you haunt the sacred house of Persephone, as guide throughout the earth of ill-fated souls,
the souls you bring to their destined harbor when their time has come;
you charm them with your sacred wand, you give them sleep
from which you rouse them again. It is to you indeed
that Persephone gave the high office throughout broad Tartaros
to lead the way for the everlasting souls of men.
O blessed one, grant a good end for the labors of the initiates.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Prayers**

“Blessed Hermes, who guides the souls of the dead into the afterlife. You who is our final companion. Once I come to You, stripped of all, take mercy upon me. Do not strand me on the banks of the river but carry me swift and true to the realm of Hades.”

“Blessed is he who hath seen these things before he goes beneath the hollow earth; for he understands the end of mortal life, and the beginning of a new life given of God.”

Pindar, Dirges Fragment 137

- ◆ **Sit and meditate for long moments and let your mind wander towards the cycle of life, as governed by Plouton, Persephone, and Demeter. Count the many blessings in your life and focus on goals you hope to achieve with the aid of the Gods. If there is one thing you could ask for right now, what would it be? And how would you best be helped by the Theoi. Then set out your path towards it and ask for the Theoi to walk with you on that path. Let the Mysteries be a guide to your life.**

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us and may the Theoi 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**



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

20 Boedromion

(Rite of gratitude – day)

- ◆ **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: storax or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth and provides for us so bountifully...**
- ◆ **Libations of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **From Ovid, Metamorphoses 5.341**

To Demeter

Demeter first turned the earth with the curved plough; She first gave corn and crops to bless the land; She first gave laws; all things are Demeter's gift. Of Demeter I must sing. Oh that my song may hymn the Goddess' praise as She deserves, a Goddess who deserved high hymns of praise.

- ◆ **Invocation to Persephone: Khaire Persephone, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Kore**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 29 to Persephone**

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)

- ◆ **Invocation to the Horai**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water to the Horai**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 43 to the Horai**

To the Horai

Horai, daughters of Themis and Lord Zeus, Eumonie and Dike and thrice-blessed Eirene,
Pure spirits of spring and of the blossoming meadow,
You are found in every color and in all the scents wafted by the breezes.
Ever-blooming, revolving and sweet-faced, O Horia,
You cloak yourselves with the dew of luxuriant flowers.
You are holy Persephone's companions at play, when the Fates and the Graces,
In circling dances come forth to light, pleasing Zeus and their fruit-giving mother.
Come to the new initiates and their reverent and holy rites,
And bring seasons perfect for growth of goodly fruit.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis

- ◆ **Tipping out of two jugs of water**
- ◆ **Prayers**

“To you, golden-haired Demeter, and to you, bright-eyed Persephone, libations of thanks. That after all darkness may come the light and that You may always guide me to it.”

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us and may the Goddesses 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**



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

21 Boedromion

(General rite to Demeter and Persephone and personal – day)

- ◆ **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: storax or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Of Demeter, ruler of corn-rich Sikelia, and of the violet-garlanded Persephone sing...**
- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **From Kallimachos, Hymn 6 To Demeter**

To Demeter

As the Basket comes, greet it, ye women, saying ‘Demeter, greatly hail! Lady of much bounty, of many measures of corn.’ As the Basket comes, from the ground shall ye behold it, ye uninitiated, and gaze not from the roof or from aloft--child nor wife nor maid hath shed her hair--neither then nor when we spit from parched mouths fasting. Hesperos from the clouds marks the time of its coming: Hesperos, who alone persuaded Demeter to drink, what time she pursued the unknown tracks of her stolen daughter.

Hail, Goddess, and save this people in harmony and in prosperity, and in the fields bring us all pleasant things! Feed our kine, bring us flocks, bring us the corn-ear, bring us harvest! And nurse peace, that he who sows may also reap. Be gracious, O thrice-prayed for, great Queen of Goddesses!"

- ◆ **Invocation to Persephone: Khaire Persephone, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water to Kore**
- ◆ **(Part of) Orphic Hymn 29 To Persephone**

To Persephone

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 . . .

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us and may the Goddesses 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**



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

22 Boedromion

(General rite to Demeter and Persephone and personal offerings to all the Theoi honoured in the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries – day)

- ◆ **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: storax or aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Of Demeter, ruler of corn-rich Sikelia, and of the violet-garlanded Persephone sing...**
- ◆ **Libation of kykeon (barley meal, water, mint or barley meal, water, mint, and goat cheese) to Demeter**
- ◆ **From Kallimachos, Hymn 6 To Demeter**

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Hail, Goddess, and save this people in harmony and in prosperity, and in the fields bring us all pleasant things! Feed our kine, bring us flocks, bring us the corn-ear, bring us harvest! And nurse peace, that he who sows may also reap. Be gracious, O thrice-prayed for, great Queen of Goddesses!"

- ◆ **Invocation to Persephone: Khaire Persephone, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water to Kore**
- ◆ **(Part of) Orphic Hymn 29 To Persephone**

To Persephone

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 . . .

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Add libations, hymns, and prayers to all Theoi you want to reconnect with after going through the Eleusinian Mysteries.**

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us and may the Goddesses 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**



Ritual for the Eleusinian Greater Mysteries

23 Boedromion

(Closing rite – day)

- ◆ **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

- ◆ **Invocation to Demeter: Khaire Demeter, you who taught us to work the earth and provides for us so bountifully...**

“I begin to sing of rich-haired Demeter, awful Goddess, of her and of her daughter lovely Persephone. Hail, Goddess! Watch over us as we walk your most sacred road.”

From Homeric Hymn 13 To Demeter

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Demeter**
- ◆ **(Part of) Homeric Hymn 2 To Demeter**

To Demeter

He [Keleos] summoned his far-flung people to assembly, and told them to build a rich temple for lovely-haired Demeter, and an altar where the hill juts out. They promptly obeyed and hearkened to his words, and made it as he instructed, and it grew by divine dispensation. When they had finished it and paused from their toil, they went to their various homes; but flaxen Demeter took her seat in it and remained there, apart from all the blessed gods, pining for her deep-girt daughter.

The most dreadful and abominable year she made it for mankind across the nurturing earth. The land allowed nothing sown to come up, for fair-garlanded Demeter kept it hidden. Many were the bent ploughs that the oxen dragged in vain over the fields, and

much the white barley seed that fell into the soil without result. Indeed, she would have destroyed humankind altogether by grievous famine, and deprived the Olympians of their honorific privileges and their sacrifices, had Zeus not taken notice, and counselled with his heart.

Translated by Martin L. West

◆ **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)

- ◆ **Invocation to Persephone: Khaire Persephone, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Kore**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 29 To Persephone**

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)

- ◆ **You have come to the end of our celebration of the Mysteries. The ancient Hellenes would have packed up, cleaned up, and prepared themselves for the return to their daily lives outside of the seclusion Eleusis offered. You, too, must now move forward, but not before thinking over your experiences. Take time to meditate on what you have gone through, of how you felt, of how you feel now. Thank the Theoi for bestowing this gift upon you.**

“Blessed Demeter and golden haired Persephone. I have walked the path of the ancients. As they walked the road to Eleusis, towards Your sanctuary, so have I. I came to You and You have given me a glimpse of the Mysteries You have taught others oh so many years. As the Mysteries come to an end, I pray that I may always carry Your blessings, Goddesses of abundance who watch kindly over the human race.”

- ◆ **Take a moment to mentally end this journey. Once you are ready, untie the króki from your left wrist. Then you may finish the rite.**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us and may the Goddesses and all the Theoi 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**

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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**