



Ritual for the Epidauria

18 Boedromion

- ◆ **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, guide to doctors and all in the medical profession, father of Hygieia**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 67 To Asklepios**

To Asklepios

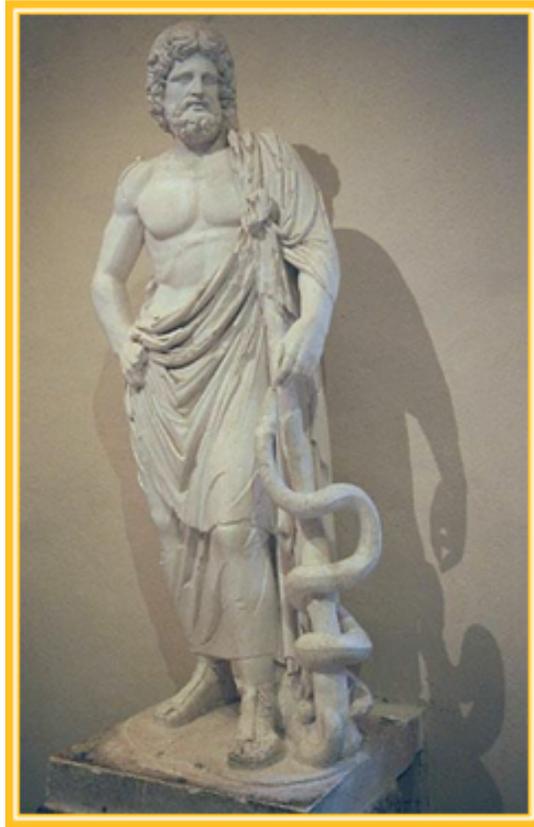
Asklepios, lord Paean, healer of all,
 you charm away the pains of men who suffer.
 Come, mighty and soothing, bring health,
 put an end to sickness, then to the harsh fate of death.
 O blessed spirit of joyful growth, O helper, you ward evil off,
 honored and mighty son of Phoibos Apollon.
 Enemy of 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)

- ◆ **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 Asclepius

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
Asclepios 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 most revered of the blessed ones among mortals, 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**
- ◆ **Paean To Hygieia by Ariphron of Sicyon**

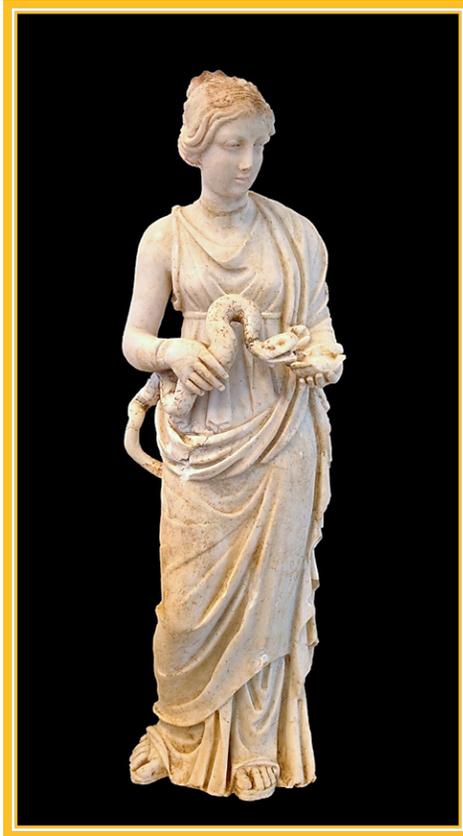
Paean to Hygieia

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).



- ◆ Libation of honey sweet wine
- ◆ Offering
- ◆ Orphic Hymn 68 To Hygieia

To Hygieia

Charming queen of all, lovely and blooming,
blessed Hygeia, 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 we be free of all illness and may you accept us to dwell with Thee for the rest of our lives. May you keep company with us that we 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 and to think of those who are ill. Let go of them, especially if they have been holding you back, it is 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**