



# Ritual for the Thesmophoria

11 Pyanepsion (Day 1)

- ◆ **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

- ◆ **In cense: storax**
- ◆ **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.

From Homeric Hymn 13 To Demeter

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

Translated by A. W. Mair

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings and protection, for abundance in food and growth, and fertility)**
  
- ◆ **Incense: aromatic herbs**
- ◆ **Invocation to Persephone: Khaire Persephone, maiden Goddess of spring's bounty...**
- ◆ **Libation of pure water to Kore**
- ◆ **Excerpt from Orphic Hymn 29 Hymn to Persephone**

#### **Hymn to Persephone**

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

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings and protection, for abundance in food and growth)**
  
- ◆ **Burning of the pig shaped cakes or pork meat laid out at the Stenia**  
"Blessed Demeter, golden-haired Goddess of the harvest and Kore, blessed Goddess of bountiful spring fruit. Accept these offerings that echo the piglets risen from the deep--like you, Kore, when you rise from Hades' realm. Bring fertility and joy to our lives."
  
- ◆ **After burning, add seeds and earth to the remains of the sacrifice and sow them in your garden after the ritual.**

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

"May we be mindful of the blessings of Demeter and Persephone 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 Thesmophoria

12 Pyanepsion (Day 2)

- ◆ **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)

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- ◆ **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...**
- ◆ **Libation of a 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)

- ◆ **Offering**
- ◆ **Excerpt from Homeric Hymn 2 To Demeter**

### **To Demeter**

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. The queen at once gave way at the knees, and remained speechless for a long time, not thinking to pick her darling child up from the floor. His sisters heard his piteous crying, and jumped down from their well-bedecked beds: one of them picked the child up in her arms and took him to her bosom, another stoked up the fire, while another dashed on tender young feet to help her mother up from the scented chamber. Then, gathering round him, they cuddled him and washed him as he squirmed, but he was not to be comforted: these were inferior rearers and nurses that held him now.

They then throughout the night tried to propitiate the glorious goddess, trembling with fear. As soon as dawn appeared, they told wide-ruling Keleos everything exactly, as the goddess, fair-garlanded Demeter, had instructed. He 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. As a first step he sent gold-winged Iris to summon Demeter the lovely-haired, whose form is beautiful. So he instructed her, and she in obedience to Zeus, the dark-cloud son of Kronos, swiftly darted across the intervening space and arrived at the fragrant town of Eleusis. She found dark-robed Demeter in her temple, and addressed her with winged words:

“Demeter, father Zeus whose counsels do not fade summons you to join the families of gods who are forever. So come, and let the word I have from Zeus not go unfulfilled.

Translated by Martin L. West

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

“Oh Demeter, without whose gifts we could not live. Today we go hungry as we remember the value of all of Your many gifts. Never forsake us; spread your life giving touch over our fields and bellies. We rejoice when you rejoice, so rejoice year upon year upon year, again.”

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

*May blessings go with us, may we be mindful of blessings and bounty of Demeter and honor Her and the Theoi. 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 Thesmophoria

13 Pyanepsion (Day 3)

- ◆ **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**

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 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.  
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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

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

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

#### **Hymn to Persephone**

Persephone, blessed daughter of great Zeus, sole offspring of Demeter,  
Come and accept this gracious sacrifice.  
Much-honored spouse of Plouton, discreet and life-giving,  
You command the gates of Hades in the bowels of the earth,  
Lovely-tressed, Praxidike, pure bloom of Deo, mother of the Furies,  
Queen of the netherworld whom Zeus sired in clandestine union.  
Mother of loud-roaring and many shaped Eubouleus,  
Radiant and luminous playmate of the Seasons, august, almighty,  
Maiden rich in fruits, you alone are beloved of mortals.  
In spring you rejoice in the meadow breezes,  
And you show your holy figure in shoots and green fruits.  
You were made a kidnapper's bride in the fall,  
And you alone are life and death to toiling mortals,  
O Persephone, for you always nourish all and kill them too.  
Hearken, O blessed goddess, and send forth the earth's fruits.  
You who blossom in peace, in soft-handed health,  
And in a life of plenty that ferries old age in comfort to your realm,  
O queen, and to that of mighty Plouton.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis

- ◆ **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

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

“Beautiful seasons, dance about the Goddesses of life. Bring forth fresh growth once the season changes. Bring forth heirs and watch over those already alive. Make strong the bonds of family and bring many blessings. May your seasons be happy ones.”

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, may we be mindful of the sacrifices for freedom, 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**