



Ritual for the Maimakteria

16 Maimakterion

- ◆ **Ritual washing**
- ◆ **Ritual washing with invocation to Okeanos**

Okeanos whose nature ever flows, from whom at first both Gods and men arose; sire incorruptible, whose waves surround, and earth's all-terminating circle bound: hence every river, hence the spreading sea, and earth's pure bubbling fountains spring from thee. Hear, mighty sire, for boundless bliss is thine, greatest cathartic of the powers divine: earth's friendly limit, fountain of the pole, whose waves wide spreading and circumfluent roll. Approach benevolent, with placid mind, and be forever to thy mystics kind.

- ◆ **Purification – khernips (holy water) sprinkled from a bay branch – “Be gone all corruption and evil” (three times).**

“Blessed Okeanos, may your bright waters purify this space, and prepare both me, and it, for the rites that are about to unfold.”

- ◆ **Euphemia sto, euphemia sto, eukhomai tois Theois pasi kai pasais.**
(Let there be words of good omen, Let there be words of good omen, pray to the Gods and Goddesses.)
- ◆ **Who is present? Those attending answer: All good people!**
- ◆ **Lighting of the lamp for Hestia with invocation: Daughter of Kronos, You whose eternal flame illumines all our worship, come to this oikos with blessings . . .**
- ◆ **Lighting of the sacrificial fire**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 24 to Hestia**

To Hestia

Hestia, you that tend the far-shooting lord Apollo's sacred house at holy Pytho, from your locks the oozing oil ever drips down. Come to this house in kindly (?) heart, together with Zeus the resourceful, and bestow beauty on my singing.

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Strewing of barley groats around the altar (circling clockwise three times)**
- ◆ **To Gaia**

First of all, in my prayers, before all other Gods, I call upon the foremost prophetess Gaia.

Aeschylus – Eumenides (opening lines)

- ◆ **Invocation to Gaia: Gaia, to you who nurtures us into being, who nurtures us through life, and who accepts us once again unto Thee, blessed Kourotrophos, I honor you with khernips**
- ◆ **Offering of khernips poured out**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 26 To Earth**

Ges

[Gaia Thea/], mother of men and of the blessed Gods,
 you nourish all, you give all, you bring all to fruition, and you destroy all.
 When the season is fair you are heavy with fruit and growing blossoms;
 and, O multiform maiden, you are the seat of the immortal cosmos,
 and in the pains of labor you bring forth fruit of all kinds.
 Eternal, reverend, deep-bosomed, and blessed,
 you delight in the sweet breath of grass, O Goddess bedecked with flowers.
 Yours is the joy of the rain, and round you the intricate realm of the stars
 revolves in endless and awesome flow.
 But, O blessed Goddess, may you multiply the gladsome fruits
 and, together with the beautiful seasons, grant me favor.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis

- ◆ **Invocations and prayers to Themis: To you who sits leaning against Zeus, who consults closely with Zeus, and who are the just order of all things**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

Leap for goodly Themis

From the Hymn of the Kouretes

The Maimakteria is in honor of Zeus Maimaktes (Zeus the Blusterous, Stormy) was likely held at mid-Maimakterion. As the month of Maimakterion was stormy and blustery, Zeus the Stormy and Blusterous and bringer of storms was propitiated with sacrifice.

Sources primarily from H. W. Parke *Festivals of the Athenians*, Cornell 1979

- ◆ **Incense: storax or myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus Maimaktes: Blessed Zeus bringer of storms and blustery winds, be kindly and bring an end to blustery storms and fair weather**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 19 To Zeus the Thunderbolt**

To Zeus the Thunderbolt

Father Zeus, sublime is the course of the blazing cosmos you drive on,
 ethereal and lofty the flash of your lightning
 as you shake the seat of the gods with a god's thunderbolts.
 The fire of your lightening emblazons the rain clouds,
 you bring storms and hurricanes, you bring mighty gales,
 you hurl roaring thunder, a shower of arrows.
 Horrific might and strength sets all aflame,
 dreadful missile makes hearts pound and hair bristle.

Holy and invisible, it comes with a sudden crash,
an endless spiral of noise, omnivorous in its drive,
unbreakable and threatening, ineluctable, too, the gale's
sharp and smoke-filled shafts swoop down
with a flash dreaded by land and sea.
Wild beasts cringe when they hear the noise,
faces reflect the brilliance of thunder roaring
in the celestial hollows. You tear the robe
that cloaks heaven, you hurl the fiery thunderbolt.
O blessed one . . . the anger of sea waves,
the anger of the mountain peaks – we all know your power.
Enjoy this libation and give all things pleasing to the heart:
a life of prosperity, queenly health,
divine peace that nurtures youth, crowned with honors,
a life ever blooming with cheerful thoughts.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offerings**
- ◆ **Prayers: for blessings, family, friends, etc.)**

- ◆ **Ending of Kallimachos' Hymn to Zeus**

Hail, greatly hail, most high Son of Kronos, giver of good things, giver of safety.
Thy works who could sing? There hath not been, there shall not be, who shall sing
the works of Zeus. Hail! Father, hail again! And grant us goodness and prosperity.
Without goodness wealth cannot bless men, nor goodness without prosperity.
Give us goodness and wealth.

Translated by A. W. Mair, G. R. Mair

- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 20 To Astrapaios Zeus (modified)**
To Astrapaios Zeus

I call upon great and pure, upon resounding and illustrious,
upon ethereal and blazing Zeus, whose racing fire shines through the air.
Your light flashes through the clouds with an ear-splitting clap.
O horrid, O wrathful and pure, O invincible god,
O begetter of all, O great king,
to be kind and to bring a sweet end to my life.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May we be mindful of the power of Zeus and may His blessings go with us and may He watch
benevolently over us and guide us with favorable fortunes through stormy times!”

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**