



# Erkhian Ritual for the Kourotrophoi

## Kourotrophos § Apollon Delphinios

7 Gamelion

- ◆ **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 or myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Kourotrophos: Blessed Kourotrophos who nurtures our children, guards and protects them, and brings wellbeing . . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering to Kourotrophos**
- ◆ **Prayers for our children and children everywhere**

- ◆ **Lighting of the incense burner with frankincense or myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Apollon Delphinios: Blessed Apollon of holy Pytho, Lord of Delphi, you who presides over youths as they grow to manhood . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Parts of Homeric Hymn 3 to Apollon**

### To Apollon

How shall I hymn you, fit subject as you are in every respect? For in every direction, Phoibos, you have laid down a field for song, both on the heifer-rearing mainland and across the islands. All the peaks find favor with you, and the upper ridges of the high mountains, and the rivers flowing on to the sea, and the headlands that lean toward the main, and the sea harbors. Shall it be how in the beginning Leto bore you for mortals'

delight, leaning against Cynthus' mountain on a rocky island, seagirt Delos, while on both sides the dark waves came up on the shores under the keening winds? From where you went forth and are become lord over all humankind.

The far-shooter Apollo answered them: "Sirs, who dwelt in wooded Cnossos before, now you will return no more to your lovely city and your fine individual homes and your dear wives: you will occupy my rich temple here, which is widely honored by men. For I am Zeus' son, I declare myself Apollo; and I brought you here over the mighty main not with any ill intent, but you are to occupy my rich temple here, which is greatly honored by all men, and you shall know the gods' intentions. By their will you shall be held in honor for all time. But come, do as I tell you without delay. First slacken the sheets and lower the sails, and then haul the dark ship up on land, take out your belongings and the ship's tackle, and build an altar on the seashore. Light a fire on it, offer white barley groats on it, and then stand round the altar and pray. Even as I originally leapt onto your ship in the misty sea in the form of a dolphin, so you are to pray to me as 'the Dolphin god,' and the altar itself will be 'Delphian,' and a permanent landmark.

. . . you arrived at Crisa, under snowy Parnassus, a west-facing spur with the cliff hanging over it and a hollow, rugged glen extending below. There the lord Phoibos Apollo decided to make his lovely temple, and he said:

"Here I am minded to make my beautiful temple as an oracle for humankind, who will ever come in crowds bringing me perfect hecatombs, both those who live in the fertile Peloponnese and those who live in the Mainland and the seagirt islands, wishing to consult me; and I would dispense unerring counsel to them all, issuing oracles in my rich temple."

Translated by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering of barley groats**
- ◆ **Prayers:**

"Blessed Apollon whose shafts are of gold, strong-voiced, divine, delighter in arrows, own brother to Artemis of the golden bow. Kourotrophos, protector of children, to whom young boys pray when their adulthood is upon them: watch over my children, the children of those I love, and watch over the children of all who sacrifice to you. May your arrows forever guard them from harm, and may Your strength of purpose ever flow unto our sons and daughters alike."

- ◆ **Prayers:**

"Great teacher, may you bring knowledge to our children, for knowledge brings understanding; Great healer, may you bring healing and health; Far Shooter, protect us from disease and from those with ill will. . . ."

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

*"May we be mindful of thy powers of healing, knowledge, and averting evil and may you 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**