



# Erkhian Ritual for the sacrifice to the Herakleidai

## 4 Mounukhion

- ◆ **Ritual washing**
- ◆ **Ritual washing with invocation: Orphic Hymn 83 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.

Translation by Thomas Taylor

- ◆ **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 Herakles: Khaire Herakles, slayer of enemies, completer of many tasks, father of many strong sons and daughters...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Herakles**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 15 To Heracles the Lion-Hearted**

**To Heracles the Lion-Hearted**

I will sing of Heracles, the son of Zeus and much the mightiest of men on earth. Alcmena bare him in Thebes, the city of lovely dances, when the dark-clouded Son of Cronos had lain with her. Once he used to wander over unmeasured tracts of land and sea at the bidding of King Eurystheus, and himself did many deeds of violence and endured many; but now he lives happily in the glorious home of snowy Olympus, and has neat-ankled Hebe for his wife.

Hail, lord, son of Zeus! Give me success and prosperity.

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White

“We honor you Iolaus, Heracles nephew and companion during his Twelve Labors, for bringing the fatherless children of Heracles as suppliants to the altar of the temple of Zeus in seeking protection from the vengeful King Eurystheus.

“And we honor you Demophon for insisting that Athens has always been a friend to the friendless and for being confident that the Heracleidai will always be grateful.

“And we honor your noble death Macaria, eldest daughter of Heracles, who willingly offered yourself as sacrifice to save your siblings.

“Be proud Athenians for defending Heracles’ children against their father’s old persecutor Eurystheus!”

- ◆ **Invocation to the Heracleidai: Khairete, Sons and Daughters of mighty Herakles, Kings and Queens, Heroes and Heroines who ruled Hellas with strength and wisdom...**
- ◆ **Burnt Offering to the Heracleidai**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to the Heracleidai**

What honor is greater for children than to have a father who is brave and noble? You walked upon the soil you inherited after you claimed it in bloody battle. You sacrificed to the Gods of your ancestors, something you couldn’t do before since you lived the life of wandering exiles. O, children! You are truly of the seed of divine Herakles! You are truly no one else’s sons and daughters but those of that brave hero!

Adapted from Euripides – Heracleidai

- ◆ **Prayers to the Heracleidai for success, courage and strength.**
  
- ◆ **Incense – myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus: Khaire Zeus, Councilor, fulfiller, Savior, to you King of all who rules with Hera Queen of heaven, father of Herakles the Brave . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine to Zeus**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymn 23 To Zeus**

#### **To Zeus**

Of Zeus, best and greatest of the gods, I will sing, the wide-sounding ruler,  
the one that brings to fulfillment, who consults closely with Themis as she sits  
leaning against him.

Be favorable, wide-sounding son of Kronos, greatest and most glorious.

Translated by Martin L. West

He does not sit upon his throne by mandate of another and hold his dominion beneath a  
mightier. No one sits above him whose power he holds in awe. He speaks, and it is done  
– he hastens to execute whatever his counseling mind conceives.

Aeschylus – Suppliant Maidens, Chorus

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“Herakles, Father of the Heracleidai, may we be mindful of thy strength and powers. May you give us the strength and skills we need and 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**