



# Ritual for the Mounukhia

## 16 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 prophetic 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 Artemis: Khaire Artemis, protectress of women and children, women in childbirth, and the young of animals, Goddess of the hunt, profuse with arrows . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“ Artimes, my heart (bids me weave?) a delightful hymn for you; and someone (takes in your) hands the (beautiful?) gold-shining bronze-cheeked castanets.”

From *Greek Lyric*, Anonymous Fragments 955

- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 36 To Artemis**

### To Artemis

Hear me, O queen, Zeus' daughter of many names,  
 Titanic and Bacchic, reverend, renowned archer,  
 torch-bearing goddess bringing light to all, Diktyнна, helper at childbirth.  
 you help women in labor, though you know not what labor is.  
 O frenzy-loving huntress, you loosen girdles and drive distress away;  
 swift arrow-pouring goddess of the outdoors, you roam in the night.  
 Fame bringing and affable, redeeming and masculine in appearance,  
 Orthia, goddess of swift birth, you are a nurturer of mortal youths,

immortal and yet of this earth, you slay wild beasts, O blessed one,  
your realm is in the mountain forests, you hunt deer.  
O revered and mighty queen of all, fair blossomed, eternal,  
sylvan, dog-loving, many-shaped lady of Kydonia,  
come, dear goddess, as savior to all the initiates,  
accessible to all, bringing forth the beautiful fruit of the earth,  
lovely peace and fair-tressed health.  
May you dispatch disease and pain to the peaks of the mountains.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

- ◆ **Offering of *Amphiphontes* (a round honey cake with candles all around) to Artemis**  
**‘Artemis, dear mistress, to you I carry, Lady, this cake shining all around and what is to**  
**serve as a drink-offering.’ (from Philemon: *The Girl from Rhodes*)**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Homeric Hymns 27 To Artemis**

### To Artemis

I sing of Artemis, whose shafts are of gold, who cheers on the hounds, the pure maiden,  
shooter of stags, who delights in archery, own sister to Apollo with the golden sword.  
Over the shadowy hills and windy peaks she draws her golden bow, rejoicing in the  
chase, and sends out grievous shafts. The tops of the high mountains tremble and the  
tangled wood echoes awesomely with the outcry of beasts: earthquakes and the sea also  
where fishes shoal. But the goddess with a bold heart turns every way destroying the race  
of wild beasts: and when she is satisfied and has cheered her heart, this huntress who  
delights in arrows slackens her supple bow and goes to the great house of her dear brother  
Phoebus Apollo, to the rich land of Delphi, there to order the lovely dance of the Muses  
and Graces. There she hangs up her curved bow and her arrows, and heads and leads the  
dances, gracefully arrayed, while all they utter their heavenly voice, singing how neat-  
ankled Leto bare children supreme among the immortals both in thought and in deed.

Hail to you, children of Zeus and rich-haired Leto! And now I will remember you and  
another song also.

Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White

- ◆ **From Kallimakhos Hymn 3 and ending of Homeric Hymn 9 to Artemis**

Artemis we hymn – no light thing is it for singers to forget her – whose study is the bow  
and the shooting of hares and the spacious dance and sport upon the mountains;  
beginning with the time when sitting on her father’s knees – still a little maid – she spake  
these words to her sire: “Give me to keep my maidenhood, Father, forever: and give me  
to be of many names, that Phoebus may not vie with me... And give me sixty daughters  
of Oceanus for my choir – all nine years old, all maidens yet ungirdled; and give me for  
handmaidens twenty nymphs of Amnisus who shall tend well my buskins, and, when I  
shoot no more at lynx or stag, shall tend my swift hounds.... On the mountains will I  
dwell and the cities of men I will visit only when women vexed by the sharp pang of  
childbirth call me to their aid even in the hour when I was born the Fates ordained that I  
should be their helper, forasmuch as my mother suffered no pain either when she gave me  
birth or when she carried me in her womb, but without travail put me from her body.”  
So spake the child and would have touched her father’s beard, but many a hand did she  
reach forth in vain, that she might touch it.

And the maiden fared unto the white mountain of Crete leafy with woods; thence unto Oceanus; and she chose many nymphs all nine years old, all maidens yet ungirdled. And the river Caraetus was glad exceedingly, and glad was Tethys that they were sending their daughters to be handmaidens to the daughter of Leto.

Translated by A. W. Mair

“And so hail to you, Artemis, in my song and to all goddesses as well.”

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings and protection, for abundance, the aversion of evil, and for purification)**
  
- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Apollon: Khaire Apollon, healer, teacher, averter of evil...**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **From Homeric Hymn 3 To Apollon**

#### To Apollo

Let me call to mind and not neglect Apollo the far-shooter, at whose coming the gods tremble in Zeus' house. They all spring up from their seats as he approaches, when he draws his shining bow. Leto alone remains beside Zeus whose sport is the thunderbolt; she unstrings his bow and closes his quiver, and taking the bow from his strong shoulders she hangs it up on a pillar of his father's house from a peg of gold, leads him to a chair, and seats him on it. His father gives him nectar in a golden cup, toasting his dear son, and then the other deities do likewise from where they sit, while the mistress Leto rejoices at having borne a powerful archer son.

I salute you, O blessed Leto, for you bore splendid children, the lord Apollo and Artemis profuse of arrows: her you bore in Ortygia, him in rocky Delos, leaning against the long eminence of Cynthus, hard by the palm-tree, below the streams of Inopos.

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.

Translation by Martin L. West

- ◆ **Prayers (for blessings and protection, for abundance, the aversion of evil, and for purification)**
  
- ◆ **Incense: myrrh**
- ◆ **Invocation to Zeus: Khaire Zeus, Councilor, fulfiller, Savior, to you King of all who rules with Hera Queen of heaven . . .**
- ◆ **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

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“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 – from *Suppliant Maidens*, Chorus

◆ **Prayers (for blessings, protection, family, and those in need, etc.)**

◆ **Incense: Myrrh**

◆ **Invocation to Leto: Khaire Leto, Mother of the Far-Shooter and the Virgin Profuse with Arrows...**

“In Delos Leto bore children once, gold-haired Phoebos, lord Apollon, and the deer-shooting huntress Artemis, who holds great power over women.”

From the *Scolia* 886

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

◆ **Orphic Hymn 35 to Leto**

**To Leto**

Dark-veiled Leto, revered goddess, mother of twins,  
great-souled daughter of Koios, queen to whom many pray,  
to your lot fell the birth pains for Zeus' fair children.  
you bore Phoibos and arrow-pouring Artemis,  
her on Ortygia, him on rocky Delos.  
Hear, lady goddess, come with favor in your heart  
to bring a sweet end to this all-holy rite.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“Then may blessings go with us, and may the Artemis watch benevolently over all women and girls and guard them 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**