



Ritual for the Bendideia

19 Thargelion

Bendis § Artemis § Hekate

- ◆ **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 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

The Bendidia celebrated on 19th of Thargelion was in honor of the Thracian goddess Bendis and featured two great processions (pompe), one of Thracians and one of Athenians. There was an evening torch-lit horserace from the Prytaneion hearth in the center of Athens and ending at the shrine of Bendis in the Piraeus next to Artemis Mounukhia.. After the torch-lit horserace, there was all-night feasting and celebration (pannuchis) followed with burnt sacrifice in the daylight hours.

- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Bendis: We honor you, Bendis, with double spear (*dilonkhos*), fox skin cap (*alopekis*), and boots for sanctifying the alliance between Athens and the Thracian king Sitalkes and thank Nymphodoros who helped to arrange the alliance. You great huntress and protector of women, children, and nature, like Artemis Mounuchia, Kourotrophos (*child nurturer*) and Phosphoros (*light-bringer - torch-bearer*) as is Hekate, your festival the Bendideia honors you . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Offering to Bendis**
- ◆ **Incense: frankincense**
- ◆ **Invocation to Artemis Mounukhia: Protector of women and children, protector of childbirth, and protector of nature, huntress, kourotrophos, and phosphoros . . .**

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **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)

- ◆ **Invocation to Hekate: Blessed Kourotrophos, protector of women, children, and the oikos, protector of travelers, nurse of the young . . .**
- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **From Hesiod's Theogony**

[Phoebe] bore Asteria of happy name, whom Perses once led to his great house to be called his dear wife. And she conceived and bore Hecate whom Zeus the son of Cronos honored above all. He gave her splendid gifts, to have a share of the earth and the unfruitful sea. She received honor also in starry heaven, and is honored exceedingly by the deathless gods. For to this day, whenever anyone of men on earth offers rich sacrifices and prays for favor according to custom, he calls upon Hecate. Great honor comes full easily to him whose prayers the goddess receives favorably, and she bestows wealth upon him; for the power surely is with her. For as many as were born of Earth and Ocean amongst all these she has her due portion. The son of Cronos did her no wrong nor took anything away of all that was her portion among the former Titan gods: but she holds, as the division was at the first from the beginning, privilege both in earth, and in heaven, and in sea. . . . Whom she will she greatly aids and advances: And the son of Cronos made her a nurse of the young who after that day saw with their eyes the light of all-seeing Dawn. So from the beginning she is a nurse of the young, and these are her honors.

Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn White

- ◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**
- ◆ **Orphic Hymn 1 To Hekate**

To Hekate

Lovely Hecate of the roads and crossroads I invoke.

In heaven, on earth, then in the sea, saffron-cloaked,
tomb spirit reveling in the souls of the dead,
daughter of Perses, haunting deserted places, delighting in deer,
nocturnal, dog-loving, monstrous queen,
devouring wild beasts, ungirt and repulsive.
Herder of bulls, queen and mistress of the whole world,
leader, nymph, mountain-roaming nurturer of youths,
maiden, I beseech you to come to these holy rites,
ever with joyous heart, ever favoring the oxherd.

Translation by Apostolos N. Athanassakis (revised edition)

◆ **Libation of honey sweet wine**

“May blessings go with us, and may Bendis, Artemis, and Hekate watch benevolently over all women and children 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**