

Genesisia

Honoring: Ge/Gaia and the Dead

Date: 4 Boedromion (18 September per HMEPA)

Region: Athens

This is a chthonic ritual and should, if possible, be held after dusk.

Items needed

Bowl of water and stick (incense, punk, or natural) to light and douse

Candle, matches or lighter to light the stick

Bowl of barley

Offerings—do not offer wine, as this ritual honors the dead and therefore is a chthonic ritual. Milk or water or honeyed water are some libation options; pour it out directly, do not drink. Likewise, other offerings (cakes or flowers, for example) should not be consumed but rather burned or buried.

Libation bowl and plate

Cup

Procession

Assemble and prepare to process to the altar.

We go to the holy place with reverence and love, to honor the gods.

Proceed to enter the sacred space.

Purification of participants

Light a stick and extinguish in the bowl of water, creating lustral water.

May all be made pure who wash in this water.

Pour water over the hands of each person so that they may rinse their face and hands in the lustral water.

Purification of space

Pass the bowl of barley among the participants so that each may take a handful of barley.

May all that is profane be gone from here!

Each person throws barley onto the altar, gently if indoors, with force if outside.

Invocation

O Gaia, great goddess, mother of all who live and die,
kind and gracious one, you carry the dead within your heart
as you carry the living upon your back. O Ge,
we stand upon your sod, you bear our weight, you give
us food and drink, our lives are yours, to nurture
or to take. Gaia from whom all existence springs,
we call to you with gratitude and praise.

O ancestors, first fathers, first mothers, we honor you,
O you whose blood runs in our veins, whose labor lay
the stone on which our houses stand. Long gone your days,
long gone your names, long gone the stories of your lives,
and yet we know you well, we know your might,
we know the bonds of kin and clan. Ancestors,
we call to you with gratitude and praise.

If ever we have honored you, poured out good drink
in reverence and love, O great ones, kindly ones,
hear now our prayers, grant now your blessings. Praise be to you!

Statement of purpose

We gather tonight to honor those who walked this world before us, our fathers' fathers' fathers, our mothers' mothers' mothers, all the founders of our families, all our forebears; we gather to remember. We gather too to pay homage to great Gaia, whose might brought forth all life, whose goodness sustains us.

Prayer to Gaia

O Gaia who is the source of all that is,
O first of first mothers, O giver of life and lives,
we call out to you. To you we owe life and being,
to you we owe existence. We thank you,
O goddess, for your care of the living and the dead.
We pray to you, O goddess, for your favor.

Prayer to the Ancestors

O ancestors, fathers and mothers long gone
from the world, great of wisdom, great of might,
we call out to you. To you we owe our lives;
to you we owe our fortunes. We thank you,
O kind ones, for luck granted and blessings bestowed.
We pray to you, O gracious ones, for favor.

Libations

Pour water, milk, or other non-wine liquid offering into cup, hold up filled cup.

To Gaia whose might creates and sustains us,
We offer this drink; all praise to you, O Ge!

Pour out offering onto the ground (or, if indoors, into the libation bowl to be poured outdoors later). Participants do not drink. Refill cup if necessary.

To those who gave us blood and breath, lineage and life,
We offer this drink; all praise to you, O ancestors!

Pour out offering onto the ground (or, if indoors, into the libation bowl to be poured outdoors later). Participants do not drink.

Offering of food and/or flowers to the ancestors

Hold up the offering.

Ancestors, you who walked this world before us,
on whose work we build, in whose footsteps we follow,
whose faces we see when we look on our children,
whose voices we hear when they speak, we pray to you,
take this offering given with love and reverence.

Give offering in its entirety, either onto the ground if outdoors or on an offering plate if indoors, to eventually be burned or buried.

Thanks

We thank you for your presence this day
as we honor your might and your memory.
We thank you for your many blessings,
for the great gifts you grant to men and women.
With love and devotion we remember you.

Close

We leave this holy place, with reverence and gratitude for all we have been given. The rite is ended.

Step away from the altar and leave the sacred space.