

Chalkeia

Honoring: Hephaistos and Athena as patrons of artisans and craftworkers

Date: 30 Pyanepsia (~ 11 November per HMEPA)

Region: Athens

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 (wine or some other drink)

Libation bowl

Cup

Crafting implements to be blessed; these can include things like knitting needles, crochet hooks, paintbrushes, woodcarving tools and so forth.

Optional: Materials for making a peplos to be presented at Panathenaia

In the ritual script, italicized text refers to directions and actions and isn't meant to be spoken.

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 the stick or incense 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

We call to Athena of the steel-grey eyes,
whose will it was that built the walls of Athens,
whose wisdom brought into being an age of greatness.
We call to Hephaistos of the fire and the forge,
whose keen eye and strong arm made from stone unrefined
the strongest of shields, the sharpest of blades.
O gods whose favor falls on the diligent
and the deft, the artist and the artisan,
the seamstress and the smith, the wright and the weaver,
all who work with craft and skill, whose hands grow calloused,
whose eyes grow dim, we ask your blessing on our art.

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

Statement of purpose

We gather today to celebrate the Chalkeia, the day of Athena and Hephaistos, patrons of craft and art. On this day we praise and honor the gods for their many gifts to humankind, we thank them for the skill and inspiration they provide us, and we ask their blessing on the tools we use in doing their work.

Blessing of crafting implements

Place crafting implements on the altar.

To Athena, who shapes the maker and the mind,
to Hephaistos, who crafts things of beauty and strength,
to you gods who guide the hands and hearts of men
and women as we bring into the world
that which has never been before: we thank you
for your gift of art and inspiration, we thank you
for your counsel and the vision you provide.
O gods of the workbasket, gods of the hammer
and tongs, we ask your blessing on these tools
that we may be strong and skillful in our work.

Remove crafting implements from the altar.

Creating the peplos to be presented at the Panathenaia

If you plan to craft a peplos for Athena to use in celebrating the next Panathenaia, now present the materials you'll be using to make it—for example, yarn if you'll be knitting, crocheting or weaving it, or fabric if you'll be sewing it.

Great Athena, mistress of foresight, good advisor,
whose art and skill are unsurpassed, whose goodness
and bounty are far-famed, peerless goddess whose gifts
to mankind are well known, to you we promise
the gift of a new peplos, to be made by hand
with care and reverence from these materials.

Hold up materials.

O goddess, may you bless our work, may you be pleased
with our efforts and our devotion.

Remove materials from the altar.

Libations and offerings

Pour wine, milk, or other liquid offering into cup; hold up filled cup.

To noble Hestia, who ever comes first and last,
We offer this drink; all praise to you, O Hestia!

Pour out some wine into the libation bowl; hold up cup, refilling if necessary.

To great and gracious Athena, child of mighty Zeus,
We offer this drink; all praise to you, O Athena!

Pour out some wine into the libation bowl; hold up cup, refilling if necessary.

To clever Hephaistos, great of strength, great of art,
We offer this drink; all praise to you, O Hephaistos!

Pour out some wine into the libation bowl; hold up cup , refilling if necessary.

To noble Hestia, who ever comes last and first,
We offer this drink; all praise to you, O Hestia!

Pour out some wine into the libation bowl; hold up cup, refilling if necessary.

We share this drink among ourselves with love for the gods
and gratitude for all we have been given.

Pass the cup among the participants.

Thanks

We thank you, O gods, for your presence this day
as we celebrate your festival with reverence and joy.
We thank you, O gods, for your many blessings,
for the great gifts you grant to men and women.
With love and devotion we praise and honor 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.