

**Panathenaia Festival to Heroic Athena:
A celebration honoring Her birthday.**
Hyporborean Proto-Demos of Hellenion
Sunday, August 19, 2007

The Panathenaia is a festival in honor of Athena's birthday. The ancient Athenians who held the lesser and greater versions of this festival looked upon Athena as matron of their city, and Her role as city protectress was emphasized. At this ritual, we thank Athena for Her many spheres of interest, including giver of wisdom, protector of urban spaces, and bringer of victory. It is an appropriate time to offer Her poetry, instrumental performance, and/or an athletic feat.

Glossary

thea: Ancient Greek word for "goddess"

temenos: ritual area

khernips: spring water and sea salt

nator: baking soda and salt

theoxenia: a feast where mortals and the Gods eat together

Supplies for this ritual

khernips

drinking goblets for each participant

nator

drink for libations

charcoal, matches, & lighter fluid for the fire

basket of barley

olive loaf

grill or fire pit

loose incense or aromatic herbs

copy of Homeric Hymn #28

celebratory feast

poem to the Olympians

eating utensils

Possible objects for the altar

image of Athena

images of roosters

European cornel

aegis

olive oil

cypress

helmet

olive leaves and

ivy

spear

branches

pottery

images of owls

aromatic herbs

weaving

images of snakes

bridle

Procession & Purification of People

Participants first process to the edge of the temenos. Here each person says, “Far off, far off, even to the profane!” while khernips (spring water and sea salt) is poured over their hands. They then may enter.

Purification of the Temenos

After calling for solemn silence, a participant walks around the temenos, sprinkling it with nator to cleanse the space. After this, the fire tender lights the fire, saying, “I conjure You sacred fire whose mother is Hestia and whose Father is Hephaestos.”

Hymnodia to Hestia

A participant will request solemn silence:

Hestia, You who obtained as Your lot in the lofty abodes
Of all the immortal Gods and of humans who walk on the earth
A seat that forever endures as the honor due to Your age,
Possessing a beautiful portion and honor – for not without You
Are banquets held by mortals, where he who begins pours out
No wine as sweet as honey for Hestia first and last.
– Homeric Hymn 29: Hymn to Hestia and Hermes

First libation

Herald: Sponde! Hestia, guardian of hearth’s fire, Yours is always the first as well as the last.

Everyone pours a libation to Hestia and then drinks.

Hymnodia to Athena

Homeric Hymn #28 to Athena is read aloud by a volunteer.

Litany to Athena

Herald: Athena, Born of the Head,
Shining thea, You arose fully armed
From Aegis-Bearing Zeus alone.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Athena, Contriver of Plans and Devices,
With Your invention of the mighty plough and bridle,
You made possible the civilizations of the West.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Athena, Keeper of the City,
You share Your divinity with urban spaces,
Bringing the sacred to crowds, concrete, and steel.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Maiden Athena,
Your teach us to follow passions
Of instruction, creation, and heroic might,

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Athena of Strength,
Your mighty arms, capable of flinging islands,
May touch us gently or throw us into action.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Counselor Athena,
Through wise guidance,
You direct our most thought-out plans and heroic acts.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Athena, Champion of the Anchorage,
You greet the ships of our allies
Who bring the trade connecting the whole world.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Protectress Athena,
Through Your sharp-eyed defense and foresight,
May we never be victims.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Athena of Good Health,
Your olive tree flows with healthful oils,
And the singing of Your flute salves injured souls.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Athena War Trumpet,
You know when the time for talk is over
And delight in war necessary and just.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Athena Of Hospitality,
You teach the value of diplomacy and good manners
When peace and fine company are most hoped for delights.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Athena of Escape to Refuge,
You assist the displaced, the refugee, and the hunted
That they bypass enemies through sanctuary and underground railroad.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Worker Athena,
From Your mighty hands and victorious blessings
Arise most wondrous works of craft.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: Victorious Athena,
You delight in triumph and championship,
Encouraging us to stick to worthy goals.

All: We praise You! We honor You!

Herald: For these we thank You,
for these we adore You,
for these we honor You.

Libation to Athena

Herald: Sponde! Pallas Athena, glorious protectress, beloved gray-eyed thea, on this Your birthday we give You honor. Athena Workwoman, Weaving Thea, we honor You in our craftsmanship. Athena of the city, of the council, of the market, of the fore temple, matron of Athens, we honor You in our love, support, and service of our communities and cities. Athena of foresight, of wisdom and reason, we honor You in our continual quest for new knowledge and in our delight in discovery of new wisdom. Champion Athena, repeller of danger, warlike thea of noble combat, defender of our homes, we honor You in our respect of the power of war and honorable aggressive action. Broad-faced Athena of the growing ivy, of the cypress grove, of horses, of health, golden protectress of youth, we honor the splendor of Your multiplicity in our awe at the variedness of this world. Many-skilled daughter of indestructible Zeus, we call upon You by whatever name pleases You and wish You a happy birthday.

Everyone pours a libation to Athena and then drinks.

Hymnodia to the Olympians

A devotional poem to the Olympians is read aloud by a volunteer, such as Hearthstone's *A Shorter Devotion*.

[<http://www.geocities.com/hellenicdevotions/general-p2.html>]

[Hearthstone. Devotion: Prayers to the Gods of the Greeks. United States of America: Lulu, 2005, p.119.]

Libation to the Olympians

Herald: Sponde! Immortal Olympians, come join our host.

Everyone pours a libation to the Olympians and then drinks.

Sacrifice

At the conclusion of the libations, barley is passed from person to person. Everyone takes a small handful and tosses it into the fire.

A participant breaks the olive loaf and places a small portion on the fire.

Participant: We begin with You, Hestia.

All: For You, Hestia.

Another small piece is placed on the fire.

Participant: And for You, Mighty Athena.”

All: For You, Athena.

A final small piece is placed on the fire.

Participant: And for You, Victorious Nike.

All: For You, Nike

Individual participants may come forward, offer a pinch of incense or aromatic herbs, and say a personal prayer to Athena.

Activities

Ancient Athenians began the Panathenaia with a torch race and over the course of the festival held competitions in sports, music, and poetry. In this vein, participants may read an original piece of poetry, perform an act of physical prowess, or play a piece on a musical instrument. Works relating to Her spheres of interest (civilization, wisdom, heroic deeds, craftwork, etc.) are especially appropriate.

The Athenians dedicated a newly woven peplos to Athena every year at this time. If you have a statue of the Thea, you may symbolically incorporate this into your activities.

Feast Menu Suggestions

Olive loaf

Beef

Marinated olives

Feta cheese

Tubers

Set up a theoxenia altar for Athena during the feast, fixing a plate of food for Her. After the festival, burn it in the fire.

Closing Libations

Herald: Sponde! Immortal Olympians, thank you for joining our host.”

Everyone pours a libation to the Olympians and then drinks.

Herald: Sponde! Pallas Athena, glorious champion of the city, we praise You. On this Your birthday, we pay honor to Your presence in our craftsmanship, our urban communities, our search for knowledge and wisdom, our strategy and forethought, and our communities' protectors and our abilities to protect. Beloved Athena of the tribes, Athena of counsel, Athena Workwoman, we honor the splendor of Your multiplicity. Gray-eyed daughter of the Aegis-Bearing Zeus, we call upon You by whatever name pleases You and wish You a happy birthday.

Everyone pours a libation to Athena and then drinks.

Herald: Sponde! Hestia, guardian of hearth's fire, Yours is always the last as well as the first."

Everyone pours a libation to Hestia and then drinks.

All toast: Be brave, for all good things have come to pass!