

Elaphebolia **A Festival in Honor of Artemis**

Our Ritual Today

Elaphebolia is a festival for which most of the information has been lost. It honors Artemis Elaphebolos, the Deer Shooter; and offerings of stag-shaped cakes called elaphoi were made to the Goddess. Since we have little historical information about this festival, we will celebrate it as a devotional rite for Artemis in her role as hunter and protector of wildlife and as the leader of the Nymphs who also protect the wild places of the world.

The proper offerings for this festival are the elaphoi, which should be placed on the altar with an image of Artemis and a stag. If doing this outside it should be in a secluded area.

Purification of People

As the Lustral Water (spring water mixed with sea salt) is poured over your hands, say: Far off, Far Off, Even to the Profane! Then enter the area.

Purification of the Temenos

After calling for “solemn silence” Priest/Priestess will walk around the area sprinkling it with Nator, (baking soda and salt).

After this, the fire tender will light the fire saying: “I conjure you sacred fire whose mother is Hestia and whose father is Hephaestos”. After which the barley is passed around with each person taking a small handful and tossing it into the fire.

First Libation

“Sponde! Hestia, guardian of hearth’s fire, yours is always the first and the last.”

First Hymnodia

Priest/Priestess will ask for solemn silence again.

Printouts of libation prayers and the Homeric and Orphic Hymns will be available

At this time someone can read the Orphic Hymn #36 to Artemis

Libation to Artemis

“Sponde! Megale_ Artemis, Daughter of Zeus and Leto. Swift-running and far shooting huntress, yours are the creatures of the wild and all their young. You aid those who tread your mountains with respect and honor you with dances. Keladeine, Hegemone, Agroteria_, You are the mistress of animals, Potnia Theron_. We call upon You by what ever name that pleases you; Help us to preserve your virgin forests, your solitary peaks, and your wild rivers. Let fly your arrows at those who cut down your sacred groves out of greed, leaving your children without homes. As we honor You today, may our children still find joy in Your mountain haunts and bring You offerings of old.”

Everyone will pour a libation to Artemis and drink.

Second Hymnodia

Priest/Priestess will ask for solemn silence again

Someone will read something written for the Nymphai companions to Artemis

Libation to the Nymphai

“Sponde! Blessed Daughters of Potamoi, the Hekaterides. Beautiful maidens, pure companions to Leto’s daughter. Oreades of the mountain pines, Meliai of the ash trees, Hamadryades who dwell in oaks and Daphniai of the Laurel tree, Naiades who guard fresh waters and forest streams. All of you and more beside by which ever name you desire to be called. Lend your strength and light to the wild places, keep them forever safe.

After this everyone pours a libation to the Nymphai and then drinks

Libation to the Olympians as a group

“Sponde! Immortal Olympians, Come join our host.”

Pour libation to the Olympians and drink

Activities and Sacrifice:

The Elaphoi are now placed on the altar or on the ground near the altar. As well as any other gifts you wish to leave for Her or the Nymphai.

Feast

Closing Libations

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“Sponde! Hestia, guardian of hearth’s fire, yours is always the first and the last.”

Closing:

Participants will clean the area so that it is the same as when they arrived. After the clean up, Herald will lead us saying: “Be brave for all good things have come to pass.”

_ Great
_ Sounding[of the chase], She Who Leads, of the Wilderness
_ Mistress of the Animals