

# Sacrifice to Zeus Epoptes

**ADF August Feast High Day Rite, 2008**

Brandon in Japan and Jason

Historical Note:

This rite is based on an entry in the Athenian calendar marked simply “Sacrifice to Zeus Epoptes.” Epoptes is word meaning overseer, spectator, watcher, or witness. It is also the title given to those returning to the Eleusinian Mysteries for the second time or more. Thus, the sacrifice may nod to Zeus’s rulership aspect as “overseer,” or it may point an Eleusinian meaning. If the latter, it seems likely to refer to Zeus’s role as provider of the fertilizing rains, as in the traditional cry to sky and earth which concluded the mysteries: Hye! Kye! (Rain! Conceive!). Thus, this rite honors Zeus in his rulership and rain-giving capacity. It is acknowledged that the basis is speculative, at best.

Altar:

On the altar is a basin of water representing the rain of Zeus and serving as the Waters of Life Also, prepare hymns of praise to Zeus.

## **0. Pre-ritual Preparations: offerings to local spirits**

Spirits of this place, thank you for allowing us to have our rite here. We give you this offering in gratitude. (offer wine)

## **0. Purification: offerings to Outdwellers**

Outdwellers, you who may oppose this rite, we give you an offering.

All you who stand against this way,

Take this and make no trouble today.

So may it be.

(offer wine)

(then purify by sprinkling water and wafting incense)

## **1. Initiating the Rite: Opening Prayer**

O Gods, spirits, plants and animals, rivers, mountains, ancestors, fellow folk--all beings: this is the rite of Sacrifice to Zeus Epoptes, as in Athenian traditions of ancient times, and as in our tradition today. At this time of the August Feast, when the summer swelter bakes the barren earth of Attica and cooks us here, we honor Zeus, Son of Kronos, and call him to prepare his rains for the coming season. May the soil of the earth and the soil of our hearts receive the waters of Zeus at the appropriate time. All beings, join us in this rite, if you will.

(Perform Two Powers meditation)

## **2. Purification (already accomplished in preliminaries)**

### **3. Honoring the Earth Mother**

May the first and final honors of all rites

Be always for the Earth.

Offerings be to the Earth Mother,

Hail, Earth Mother. Hail!

(offer wine)

### **4. Statement of Purpose**

D1. Why are we here?

D2. We are here to honor the Ancestors.

D1. Why are we here?

D2. We are here to honor the Nature Spirits.

D1. Why are we here?

D2. We are here to honor the Gods and Goddesses

D1 & D2. And together we all shall honor Zeus Epoptes.

### **5. (Re)Creating the Cosmos**

Offer silver into the cauldron, saying:

In the deeps flow waters of Chaos. Waters, bring wisdom, change, and vitality. Sacred well, flow within me.

Make an offering to the Fire, saying:

I kindle the sacred Fire, the wild forge of love and power. Sacred fire, burn within me.

Sprinkle and cense the world-tree, wand or self, saying:

World-tree, bind this holy grove with your moving stillness and strength. Draw Chaos from below, Order from above.

Sacred tree, grow within me.

See the Deep Power flowing in the whole Shrine washing away ill, repeating:

By Water's might and Fire's light, this Shrine is made whole and holy.

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(Ritualist switches to censuring herself and all, continuing the charm.)

Spread your hands, and encompass the whole shrine in your awareness, saying:

The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree, flow and flame and grow in me!

In Land, Sea, and Sky, below and on high!

Thus is the Sacred Grove claimed and hallowed.

So be it!

## **6. Opening the Gate(s)**

This Fire is the holy goddess Hestia. Let us revere her, while calling out to Hermes to be our gatekeeper.

Homeric Hymn #29 to Hestia, lines 1-6 (Sargent trans., modified slightly)

Hestia, you who of all in the lofty halls

Of immortal gods and of men who walk on the earth

Obtained a home everlasting and highest honor,

Beautiful is your prize, and precious, for without you

No feasts would there be for mortals, where first and last

An offering is poured out to Hestia.

(offer wine to the Fire)

Homeric Hymn #29 to Hestia, lines 7-13 (Sargent trans.):

And you slayer of Argos, son of Zeus and of Maia,

Gold-wanded messenger of the blessed Immortals,

Giver of good things, be gracious and come to my aid,

Joining with Hestia, goddess revered and dear.

Dwell here in this noble house with love in your hearts for each other,

And both being mindful of men who live upon earth

And of their fine deeds, urge on their efforts with vigor.

O Hermes, Guide,

O Hermes, Interpreter,

O Hermes, Messenger of the Gods,

We call out to you now

And ask you to join us in this grove,

To be our Gatekeeper.

O Hermes,

With this offering,

We ask but that you remember us,

For now we need your help.

Be with us in this Grove.

(offer wine)

Now, O Hermes,

Join your might with ours,

In the work of opening the Gates.

O Hermes, Gatekeeper,

Let the Fire be opened as a Gate!

Let the Well be opened as a Gate!

Let the Tree be opened as a Gate!

And as they open,

Let our eyes and ears and hearts

Be opened evermore.

### **7. Inviting the Three Kindreds**

Fill the horn or cup with ale and raise it, saying:

Theoi, Progonoi, Daimones, Powers of Land and Sky and Sea,

By Fire and Well and sacred Tree, offerings I make to thee!

To the Dead who dwell below, to the Gods who reign from above, to the tribes of spirits in land, sea or sky.

Hear your true worshipper (your name) as I make due sacrifice.

Old ones, my ancestors, all those who came before me, I remember you! I ask that you watch over me and mine. Ancestors, accept my sacrifice!

Pour a quarter of the ale into the bowl.

Raise the horn, and say:

Spirits of this green land, I aid you! I ask that you guide me and mine. Spirits, accept my sacrifice!

Pour a quarter of the ale into the bowl.

Raise the horn, and say:

Gods and goddesses that reign above, I honor you! I ask that you bless me and mine. Zeus Olympios, Hera Boupis, Poseidon Asphelaios, Artemis Agrotera, Phoebus Apollo, Persephone Agne, Aphrodite Ourania, Pallas Athena, Demeter Anesidora, Hephaistos Ambidexter, Dioskouroi, Asklepios, Heracles Invictus, Hermes Trismegistos, Ares Aphneius, Tyche Fortuna, Haides Plouton, Kybele Rhea, Pan Megas and Dionysus Polygethes, Shining Ones accept my sacrifice! Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones, be welcome here in my Grove!

Offer the last of the ale.

## **8. Key Offerings**

We call out now to the patron of our rite, the mighty Son of Kronos, Zeus Eoptes.

O Zeus,

With this offering,

We ask but that you remember us,

For now we need your help.

Be with us in this Grove.

(offer wine)

O Zeus Eoptes, Overseer,

Zeus Overseer,

Zeus of the Lightning and Thunderbolt,

Zeus of the Rain, who mates with holy Demeter,

Receive our offerings,  
And in exchange, gather your rains for the coming season,  
To fall upon the soil of the earth and our hearts,  
And when the time is right,  
To bring forth life.

Now, O Kindreds, let us present to our patron the Great Sacrifice of the High Holy Day!

To Zeus Epopetes, Overseer

We present the Great Sacrifice

Of the High Holy Day:

Bread and wine, of a feast in honor of your glory.

(offer bread and wine)

To Zeus of the Lightning and Thunderbolts,

We present the Great Sacrifice

Of the High Holy Day:

Incense, to reach your skies.

(offer incense)

To Zeus of the Rain, who mates with Demeter,

We present the Great Sacrifice

Of the High Holy Day:

Hymns in your honor.

(read hymns)

### **9. Prayer of Sacrifice**

Now all the sacrifices have been presented. Let us send them forth with one final prayer.

D2. O Zeus Epopetes,

D1 & D2. By Land, Sky, and Sea,

By Fire, Well, and Tree,

And by the Kindreds Three,

Accept our sacrifice!

D2. And give us a sign of your acceptance...

### **10. Omen**

(take omen)

### **11. Calling (asking) for the Blessings**

Thanks and praise be Zeus!

His Blessings are upon us!

D2. O Zeus Epopetes,

We accept the Blessings you offer.

D1 & D2. Give us the Waters of Life!

D2. We accept that rain has an appropriate time and season.

D1 & D2. Give us the Waters of Life!

D2. We accept your rain into our hearts.

D1 & D2. Give us the Waters of Life!

### **12. Hallowing the Blessings**

D2. Let the Blessings come into these Waters, that we may drink them down.

Behold the Waters of Life!

(D2 offers the Waters to D1, D1 drinks and returns the favor)

(last, toss the waters offered earlier skyward to fall back down like rain on the altar, ground, and worshippers)

### **13. Affirmation of the Blessings**

Hail the Kindreds, strong in me!

Thanks be to the Kindreds Three!

Whether on Land, in Sky, or on Sea,

I'm blessed by their might!

So may it be!

Thanks and praise be to Zeus.

#### **14. Workings (if any)**

#### **15. Thanking the Beings**

Now it is time to draw this rite to a close. Let us give thanks and bid farewell to all gathered here.

First, to the patron of our rite:

O Zeus Eoptes,

May your life-giving rains fall when the time is right,

And bring forth life.

Thank you for being with us in this rite.

Stay if you will, go if you must.

Thanks be to Zeus.

#### **16. Closing the Gate(s) (and Two Powers Re-centering)**

O Fire, O Holy Goddess Hestia, thank you for being with us in this rite.

Without you no feasts would there be for mortals, where first and last an offering of honey-sweet wine is poured out to Hestia.

(offer wine)

Now, O Hermes, once more join your might with ours in the work of closing the Gates.

O Hermes, Gatekeeper,

Let the Fire be once again a fire,

Let the Well be once again a well,

Let the Tree be once again a tree,

Let all the Gates be closed,

And as they close,

Let our eyes and ears and hearts

Be opened evermore.

O Hermes, thank you for being with us in this rite.

Stay if you will, go if you must.

Thanks be to Hermes.



(Perform the Two Powers meditation re-centering)

### **17. Thanking the Earth Mother**

May the first and final honors of all rites

Be always for the Earth.

Offerings be to the Earth Mother.

Hail, Earth Mother. Hail!

(offer wine)

### **18. Closing the Rite**

The rite is ended, go in peace.

Thanks be to all!