

Pyanepsia

Honoring: Apollo

Date: 6 Pyanepsion (19 October per HMEPA calendar)

Season: Fall harvest

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

*Eiresione**

Libation

Offering of *panspermia*, a dish made with beans and grains**

Libation bowl

Cup

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 a stick of 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

Apollo, wise and mighty son of thundering Zeus
and great and gracious Leto, we honor you,
we praise your power. Apollo, friend of the poet
and the hero, long ago your favor fell
on Theseus, son of sea-dwelling Poseidon,
who slew the monstrous Minotaur of distant Crete.
Great perils followed Theseus upon his journey home;
once safe ashore, he made to you an offering,
a small and simple meal, yet richer than a feast
of kings, for with it were the ship's stores bare.
Apollo who keeps at bay all ill and evil,
who wards each gate and door, I praise and honor you.

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

Today we celebrate the Pyanepsia, remembering the many gifts given us by Apollo and offering him our thanks and our praise. Today we call to him to bless our homes, placing the *eiresione* over the front door as a sign of prosperity and plenty, and a reminder of our faith in the goodness of the gods.

The Eiresione

Hold up eiresione.

“The *eiresione* brings figs and cakes,
honey golden-sweet, oil to anoint us,
and good strong wine to make us sleep.” *(Traditional chant)*

May all within these walls be blessed;
may all within these walls be favored;
may only that which is good enter through this door:
health, wealth, and joy, good friends and good fortune!

Bring eiresione to front entrance, hang securely over door. Return to altar.

Alternatively the eiresione may be hung over a shrine or altar where Apollo is honored in your home.

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 drink into the libation bowl; hold up cup, refilling if necessary.

To Apollo, whose might protects and sustains the children of men,
We offer this drink; all praise to you, O Apollo!

Pour out some drink into the libation bowl. Place plate of panspermia or other bean/grain dish on the altar.

Apollo, we offer you this simple dish, in thanks for your many gifts and blessings, and in memory of the great service you performed so long ago for Theseus and his crew, for which they offered you the last of their meager provisions in thanks for your protection during their long and perilous journey. May it please you, O great god.

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 drink 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.

* The *eiresione* is an olive branch decorated with wool and hung with other items, possibly including fruit, bread, honey, oil and wine, which was offered during the Pyanepsia at Apollo's temple as well as being hung at private homes after being carried through the streets by troupes of boys.

** The *panspermia* is a dish made from beans, grains and seeds. You can attempt to recreate the original dish, or you can use a modern equivalent (such as red beans and rice), as long as the ingredients are those that would be left when the larder was nearly empty—at the end of a sea voyage, for example, or before the new harvest has been reaped—so that the feast represents a gift that is both humble and significant.