

Maimakteria

Honoring: Zeus Maimaktes, or Blustering Zeus

Date: Exact date unknown, presumably held during the month of Maimakterion (late November-early December)

Season: The beginning of winter

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

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 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

To Zeus Maimaktes, Zeus who comes when the north wind blows,
we offer our praise, we make you welcome!

As the air grows chill around us, as the ground grows firm
beneath our feet, as the fields and trees grow barren,
as the earth takes its rest, then does the sky grow bold,
the gales grow fierce, the storm grow deadly cold. O Zeus
whose hand is in winter's bluster and blast, who chooses
a season cruel or mild, we call to you this day!

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 for the Maimakteria, to celebrate Zeus Maimaktes, wild and blustering Zeus, who rules the winter months, to honor your power and to ask that you be merciful in the coming season.

Ritual body

To Zeus of the wild winds and the knife-sharp cold,
the snow and the sleet that cover road and field,
we call to you, O Zeus, be good, be gentle.
In your name of Maimaktes your might is great;
the storms that rise by your hand can stop the works
of men, can end the lives of those caught far

from shelter. O Zeus whose will it is that the season
be harsh or fair, be kind to us, we pray,
and spring will see us praise your name once more.
O Zeus Maimaktes, we thank you for your blessings.

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 Zeus Maimaktes, Zeus of the storms of winter,
We offer this drink; all praise to you, O Zeus!

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 humanity.
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.