



NEOKOROI

THE TEMPLE KEEPERS

Eranoi and Thiasoi Guidelines

1. Organizational Structure

Neokoroi Eranoi and Thiasoi must support the basic foundations of the Neokoroi organization: emphasis on hard polytheism, support of mysticism, use of reconstructionism in addition to innovation, and focus on "real life" worship. This does not mean that every member of each group must fully engage in all of these aspects, but rather that the group as a whole must not actively go against them in any significant way. This will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

Each Eranos or Thiasos is welcome to choose for themselves the specifics of their worship – for instance, which festivals they celebrate, appropriate attire, if they use Greek or English or both in ritual, which god(s) to worship, etc. Obviously the Thiasoi will be primarily focused on one deity (or pair or group of deities, as in the cases of the Two Goddesses, or the Muses) and should structure their worship accordingly.

Groups may also choose how to govern themselves, provided there is no hierarchy that leaves some members without a voice. Issues like when and where to meet, and how to handle any common possessions such as ritual items, are left up to the members themselves. It is recommended, however, that these key elements be stated in writing, in case of later dispute.

It is suggested that Eranoi and Thiasoi open at least some of their rituals to the public, and advertise them appropriately, in order to find new members, introduce others to Hellenismos, and encourage "real life" worship in general. Another option would be to hold meetings or social events that do not involve ritual, to teach 101 classes, have a table at Pagan Pride Days, etc. However, they are not required to do so, especially if members feel uncomfortable with this. They are, however, required to be a public group, with basic information displayed on the Neokoroi website.

Members of the Eranos or Thiasos are allowed to be living in the same household, related or not, or may live apart, so long as they don't live so far apart as to prevent them from meeting in person on a semi-regular basis.

2. Neokoroi and the Eranoi/Thiasoi

Eranoi and Thiasoi must provide some basic details to Neokoroi, to be published on the main website. These include the name of the group, number of members, general location, contact email, upcoming open festivals, and any other relevant information. If the group has its own website with these details, a link may be used instead for some of the information.

Groups must also submit an annual report to Neokoroi, discussing their activities for the past year, such as festivals celebrated, interfaith work done, members joined, etc. It may also include copies of any flyers, public ritual scripts, etc. This can be an informal report, but must be completed. It is due on the anniversary date of the foundation of the group as a Neokoroi Eranos or Thiasos. In between reports, groups may contact the organization at any time to update information, announce upcoming activities, or seek help – either through the list or by contacting elder members (such as Oinokhoe or Sannion) directly.

At least two members of each group (if only begun with two, these must be the founding members) must also be members of Neokoroi, although it is recommended that all members join. Non-members should be invited to join Neokoroi, although not pressured to do so.

3. Becoming a Neokoroi Eranos or Thiasos

Groups of at least two people that meet the basic requirements outlined above may apply to become officially associated with Neokoroi. They must fill out and submit the application form to Oinokhoe, available on the website. If all appears to be in order, they will be announced to the group and have a space on the Neokoroi webpage. If there are questions or issues, the members will be contacted, and Oinokhoe may confer with other longstanding members of Neokoroi. Rejection of an application does not mean that the Eranos or Thiasos cannot exist, of course – only that it cannot at this time be officially part of the Neokoroi organization.

Approved Eranoi or Thiasoi may at any time be revoked due to inactivity, or significant changes that put it outside of the tenets of Neokoroi.

4. Questions & Answers

Q: How do we choose a name for our Eranos/Thiasos?

A: If your group is a Thiasos, consider using an epithet of the god you've chosen – for instance, for Hermes you might pick "Thiasos Enodios" or "Thiasos Eriounios". For an Eranos, think of names that would express something important about the group – your location, your patron deities, your members, etc. Names can be in ancient Greek, English, or both. They are generally formatted as "Eranos _____, Neokoroi" or "Neokoroi Eranos _____". Groups may also choose a logo if desired – which may include the Neokoroi logo, provided it is approved by the organization.

Q: How do we find other members for our group?

A: This depends to a degree on your area, but here are some suggestions:

- Email the Hellenic lists and forums asking about Hellenes who might live near you
- Check the Thiasoi Directory and Hellenic Polytheist Directory for members in your area

- Put up a notice on your website, and on any local networking sites such as Craigslist
- Put up flyers at bookstores, cafes, New Age/occult stores, libraries, colleges, etc.
- If there are any general pagan groups, publications, meetups, or events in your area, contact them
- Give a talk on Hellenismos at a metaphysical shop, library, college, etc.
- Tell friends and acquaintances who might be interested or know interested people
- Advertise not only for your group in general, but for a specific event, such as an informal meetup
- (NB: These same methods can be used to publicize open events and rituals)

Q: What types of activities could our group engage in?

A: Well, most obviously rituals and festivals – either reconstructions of ancient ones, or newly-created ones, including those based on agricultural cycles, life events, personal experiences, local calendars, etc. You could also hold symposia, or have group dinners. You could form a study group to read books or learn Greek. You could have informal meetups at a coffee shop or someone's home. You could watch documentaries on ancient Greece together. You could visit powerful natural places in your area and search out the local nymphs.

Q: Should we open our events to guests?

A: That is entirely up to each group. You may want to start off by inviting any interested guests to a non-ritual event such as a symposium or group coffee talk. If you all feel comfortable with the person, you can choose to invite them to a ritual. Be sure to inform the guest of the reasons behind the ritual, the basic structure (what will be said and done), what their role (if any) will be, and general etiquette and rules (miasma considerations, attire, libations, the sacrificial feast, etc.). You can be as public or private as you want. You are welcome to open your rituals to anyone who wants to come, Hellenic or not, or limit them to potential new members, or close them entirely and involve only your group members.

Q: May we have members or guests who are under 18 years old?

A: Minors may participate with their parents' or guardians' written permission. You should remember, though, that there are more restrictions on minors (including alcohol consumption) which may affect the content of your rituals. If the member or guest is a child, this may change your focus even more. Groups are welcome to include families, or to restrict themselves to adults-only, as desired.

Q: How often must we meet?

A: There is no hard-and-fast rule about this, but use common sense. If you all live so far apart, or are so busy, that you only meet twice a year, that really isn't sufficient to be called an Eranos or Thiasos. A reasonable guideline would be at least six gatherings of some kind each year.

Q: Where should we hold rituals and other events?

A: Practically speaking, most of us don't have many options and will probably coordinate events at members' homes. If a member has a shrine room, or other space set aside for worship, this would be ideal. The space should of course be clean and able to be set up for the ritual. Outdoor spaces are certainly appropriate, provided the group has permission to be there, and any necessary permits. Sometimes, public indoor spaces may be used. For instance, a symposium could be held at a wine bar or pub, if the atmosphere was conducive to conversation. A dinner could be held at a restaurant. Also, some spaces may be rented for larger events. These include pagan-friendly shops, UU churches, library meeting rooms, community centers, hotel conference rooms, etc. The group should pool resources to pay for the space, if possible. When

renting a space, make sure that they know what you plan to do, and that you have permission to use fire, incense, and any other elements of ritual you require, if applicable.

Q: How innovative may we be with our worship?

A: This is mostly up to the members of each group, with the provision that the final product should still resemble Hellenismos. We encourage a reconstructionist approach, but not to the exclusion of all other methods. We do ask, though, that the origin and reasoning behind innovations be made clear. Ancient Greek religion varied widely by region and cultus, and so it makes sense that our modern worship does the same. We definitely support localized religion, based on unique aspects such as natural features and deities (e.g. cultus for the nymph of your local river) or significant spiritual events (e.g. a festival to commemorate a god's help or gift).

Q: Do we need to be a legal non-profit or recognized church?

A: At this point, Neokoroi is not a legal entity, and has no plans to become one. Eranoi or Thiasoi may wish to research the law if they are planning to purchase land as a group, or some other major financial undertaking. Otherwise, it is probably not necessary.

Q: Can/should we have priests?

A: Priests are not necessary to Hellenic polytheist ritual. You may of course wish to designate someone with experience or leadership skills to lead your rituals. You also may wish to have an exegete (religious advisor) or mantis (diviner) in your group, among other roles. Neokoroi provides a process for officially recognizing the exegetai and mantikoi positions, which your members are welcome to apply for. Otherwise, you are free to designate your own religious roles, as appropriate for your own group – they simply will not be an officially recognized part of the Neokoroi organization as such.