

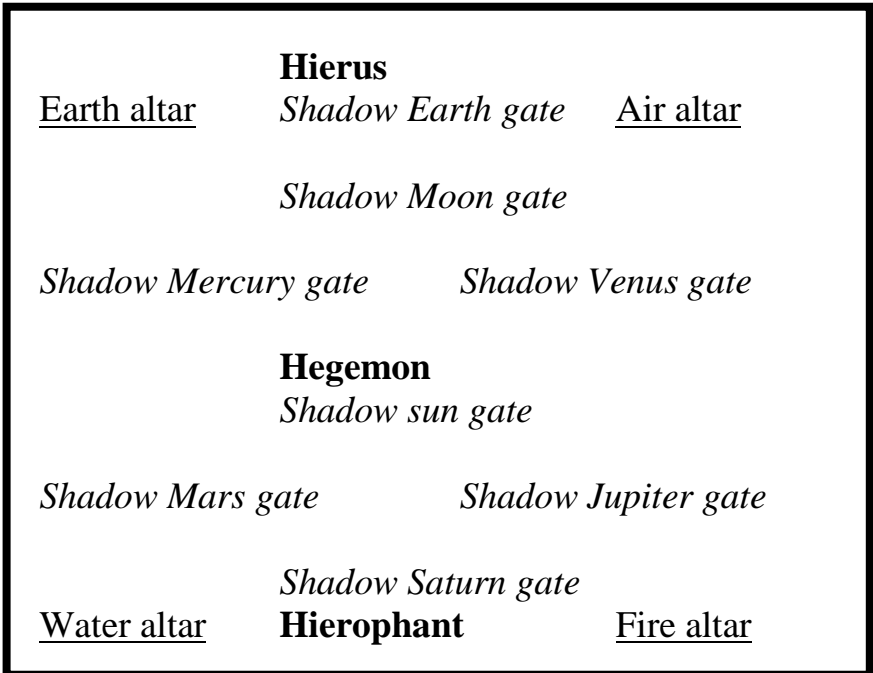
EARTH INITIATION

UNDERWORLD

JOURNEY

Temple Diagram: The Shadow Tree

East



Initiatory Tools

- **Seven ribbons:** black, blue, red, gold, green, orange, and silver. Basket to put them in.
- **Hoodwinks** of opaque black cloth.
- **Planetary symbols:** the shadow tree can be marked on the temple floor with colored ribbons, paper symbols of the planets, or other device that the sisters invent.
- **Initiatory tokens:** disk black on one side and white on the other.

Initiatory tools and tokens can be staged beneath the Hierophant's throne or anywhere convenient until needed.

Entering the Shadow Tree

Hierophant places planetary markers on floor of temple.

Hierus extinguishes the quarter candles.

Hierophant: Sorors, do we have business today?

Hegemon: Soror Hierophant, these candidates seek admittance to the temple.

Hierophant: my fellow officers, will you assist me to guide them to the temple?

Hierus and Hegemon: (answer).

Hierophant: Mehet-Weret the vast darkness of the universe filled with Weret-Hekau the power of limitless light. These twin forces flashed into existence in the same instant, so that one could not exist without the other, and when one is gone

both are gone and the universe will cease to be.

The vast darkness of the universe spread like water in all directions without limit. This dark water called Nun formed the substance of the universe.

Sorors, we undertake to bring these candidates from the chaotic realms where the universe is constantly recreated, through the twisting paths of the shadow tree, to stand with us in the temple of the Earth. In order to bring her and ourselves safely through this journey, let us establish the shape of the universe, and let us invoke the powers to guide and protect us.

Vibrates: Mehet-Weret! Weret-Hekau! *speaking voice:* you hold the matrix of existence, from the

depths of chaos to the temple. All is equally sacred to you, who are the overflowing power of magic itself.

All: Mehet-Weret, Weret-Hekau, you are the matrix of the universe.

All stand.

Hierophant: *vibrates:* Isis! *speaking voice:* you are the power of the white pillar, the power of light and expansion.

All: Isis, you are the power of life.

Hierus: *vibrates:* Nephthys! *speaking voice:* you are the power of the black pillar, the power of darkness and contraction.

All: Nephthys, you are the power of death.

Hierophant: Between them they hold the Tree of Life, the ever-regenerating creation.

Hegemon: *vibrates:* Seshat! *speaking voice:*

Seshat writes the years of every life on the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life stands on the great mound of the world, rooted in the watery depths and stretching to the heights of the stars.

All remain standing.

Hierophant: Sorors, let us gather around the trunk of the Tree of Life.

All sisters join Hierophant at the center of the temple, facing each other in a circle.

Hegemon: The Tree casts a shadow in the dark waters, the imperfect reflection of the manifest universe.

Hierus: Each of us faces the chaos within ourselves and the world. We each make the journey through the watery realms to reach the doorway to the temple of the earth.

Hierophant: Let Seshat be strong within us and guide us through the watery realms. Let us hold fast to the power which will bring us back to the temple of the earth. I hold fast to the power of life. *Hierophant moves to the Hierus's throne between the water and fire altars.* I stand at the boundary of limitless darkness.

Hierus: I hold fast to the power of darkness.

Hierus moves to the Hierophant's throne between the earth and air altars. I stand at the boundary

between the shadow tree and the temple of the Earth.

Hegemon: *turning to face the Hierus Throne*

(west): I hold fast to the power of balance. I stand at the center of the temple, the axis around which the temple revolves. I hold fast to the taproot of the tree, I hold fast to the power of Seshat, the one who writes on the leaves of the Tree of Life.

All sit.

Hierus *now sits on the Hierophant's throne*

between the earth and air altar.

Hierophant *sits on the Hierus' throne between*

the water and fire altars.

Hegemon *still sits in the center of the temple but*

is now facing west.

Hierophant: Sorors, we are now in the shadow
Tree.

Admitting the Candidates

Soror Hegemon, please assemble the candidates.

Hegemon: (*assembles candidates.*)

Hierophant: *stands.* Soror Hegemon, what
strangers do you bring to our temple?

Hegemon: Those who seek to be a Sister of
Seshat.

Hierophant: What do they know of the Tree of
Life?

Hegemon: They stand in its shadow.

Hierophant: Candidates, in order to enter the
temple, you must first walk the path of

purification. Are you willing to face the chaos in the world and in yourself?

Candidates: (unprompted) (yes).

Hierophant: Soror Hegemon, please provide them with the necessary provisions to successfully complete their journey and advise them how to conduct their way.

Hegemon gives candidates seven ribbons to hold.

Hegemon: These tokens will enable you to pass safely through the realm of darkness. The path you must walk is twisted. There are many shadows along the way, many dangers and difficulties. Yet if you persevere with a courageous heart you will come presently to the

gateway which leads you to the temple of the earth.

The Seven Veils

***Hegemon** leads candidates to stand before*

Hierus, facing Hierus on Hierophant's throne

*(east). **Hierus** stands.*

Hierophant: *speaking from Hierus' throne*

behind candidates. Ishtar came to the gates of the underworld seeking an audience with the dread Queen Ereshkigal. Seven gates did she encounter, each guarded by a stern and implacable warder. Seven veils did she surrender, one to each of the gatekeepers.

Hegemon: Then Ishtar said, "Gatekeeper, open the way for me! If you do not open the way I will

break the lock, I will smash the door, I will bring down the door posts.”

Hierus: Then Ereshkigal said, “Who is it whose heart brings her to the gates of the underworld? Does she wish to eat clay, does she wish to breathe dust? Gatekeeper, open the gate for her, and deal with her according the ancient covenant.”

Hegemon leads candidates counterclockwise to stand before Hierophant at shadow Saturn gate, facing Hierophant on the Hierus’s throne (west).

Hierophant: *stands.* Halt! You stand at the gateway in the shadow of Saturn, the realm of limitation, in which all is concealed and nothing

is certain. Are you willing to give up your need to understand?

Candidates: (unprompted) I am.

Hierophant: *takes black ribbons from candidates. Pass then through the gate and continue on your way in the realm of the shadows. Hierophant sits.*

Hegemon *leads candidates circumambulating the temple counterclockwise.*

Hierus *stands and moves to the fire altar at shadow Jupiter gate. When candidates reach the fire altar at the station of the shadow Jupiter.*

Hierus *bars the way.*

Hierus: Halt! You stand at the gateway in the shadow of Jupiter, the realm of deception, in

which authority becomes oppressive and that which should govern instead exploits. Are you willing to give up your need to control?

Candidates: (unprompted) I am.

Hierus: *takes blue ribbons from candidates. Pass then through the gate and continue on your way in the realm of the shadows.*

Hegemon *leads candidates circumambulating the temple counterclockwise. Hierus returns to her station and sits. Hierophant moves to the water altar. When candidates reach the water altar at the station of the shadow Mars. Hierophant bars the way.*

Hierophant: Halt! You stand at the gateway in the shadow of Mars, the realm of violence, in

which cowardice permits brutality to rule. Are you willing to give up your fury?

Candidates: (unprompted) I am.

Hierophant: *takes red ribbons from candidates.*

Pass then through the gate and continue on your way in the realm of the shadows.

***Hierophant** leads candidates circumambulating counterclockwise around the temple. **Hegemon** returns to her station and sits. When candidates reach the station of the shadow sun **Hegemon** bars the way.*

Hegemon: Halt! You stand at the gateway in the shadow of the sun, in which everything withers in the light of condemnation. Are you willing to give up your righteousness?

Candidates: (unprompted) I am.

Hegemon: *takes gold ribbons from candidates.*

Pass then through the gate and continue on your way in the realm of the shadows.

***Hegemon** leads candidates circumambulating the temple counter clockwise. **Hierophant** returns to her station and sits. **Hierus** moves to the air altar. **Hegemon** continues to lead candidates circumambulating the temple again. When candidates reach the air altar at the station of the shadow Venus **Hierus** bars the way.*

Hierus: Halt! You stand at the gateway in the shadow of Venus, the realm of faithlessness, where the abandoned are led into degradation. Are you willing to give up your compliance?

Candidates: (unprompted) I am.

Hierus: *takes green ribbons from candidates.*

Pass then through the gate and continue on your way in the realm of the shadows.

Hegemon leads candidates circumambulating the temple counterclockwise once. **Hierus** returns to her station and sits. **Hierophant** moves to the earth altar. When candidates reach the station of the shadow Mercury at the earth altar

Hierophant bars the way.

Hierophant: Halt! You stand at the gateway in the shadow of Mercury, the realm of temptation, in which the wavering succumb to grasping desire and are lost. Are you willing to give up your avarice?

Candidates: (unprompted) I am.

Hierophant: *takes orange ribbons from candidates. Pass then through the gate and continue on your way in the realm of the shadows. She returns to her station and sits.*

Hegemon *leads candidates circumambulating counterclockwise around the temple. When candidates reach the station of the shadow moon (between throne of Hegemon and Hierophant's throne in the east) Hierus bars the way.*

Hierus: Halt! You stand at the gateway in the shadow of the Moon, the realm of nightmares, in which fear overwhelms the mind. Are you willing to give up your despair?

Candidates: (unprompted) I am.

Hierus: *takes silver ribbons from candidates.*

Pass then through the gate and continue on your way in the realm of the shadows.

Hierus returns to Hierophant's throne.

Hierophant returns to the Hierus's throne. All remain standing.

In The Underworld

Hegemon leads candidates circumambulating the temple counterclockwise, ending in the east facing the Hierus who stands before the Hierophant's throne. Hegemon lines up candidates facing Hierus.

Hierophant: *speaking from Hierus' throne behind candidates. Then Ishtar, having passed*

through the seven gates, came to stand before the dread queen Ereshkigal.

Hierus: *Sternly.* Who is this who stands before my throne? Why has she come here? Does she wish to eat clay, does she wish to breathe dust?

Hegemon: *Picks up basket and places orange ribbons in the basket. Collects ribbons from Hierus and Hegemon and places them in the basket. Hegemon presents basket to Hierus.*

She has passed through the seven gates, she has made the seven renunciations.

Hierus: Then let her be set down in this place, and let her lose her sight that she may not know, and let her lose her breath that she may not speak, and let her be made as nothing.

***Hegemon** places a chair behind each candidate and sits each candidate in her chair. (Other sisters may assist in placing the chairs).*

***Hegemon** places an individual hoodwink on each candidate.*

***Hegemon** picks up planetary symbols from the floor of the temple.*

***Hegemon** stands next to candidates, facing Hierus (east).*

Hierus

Hegemon

Hierophant

***Hierophant** and **Hierus** revolve one half-circumambulation around candidates and*

Hegemon so that they return to their own thrones.

***Hegemon** turns her throne to face the Hierophant (east). All remain standing.*

Hierophant

Hegemon

Hierus

Heirus: Is there none who will speak for her?

Must she remain as nothing?

Hegemon: Is there none who will show her the way? Must she remain in this place forever?

Hierus: For as long as she remains in the realms of chaos there is no love, nothing can grow, order will not stand.

Hierophant: Let her emerge from the

underworld as the Kore emerged from the earth.

Hegemon: As Ishtar you have wandered through

the underworld and come to face the dread queen

Ereshkigal. As Demeter called her daughter Kore

to return to the earth, so you are called to stand up

into the temple of the Earth. You stand in the

gateway of eternity.

*(As **Hierus** and **Hierophant** speak each take a
step toward candidates.)*

Hierus: I am darkness.

Hierophant: I am light.

Hierus. I am death.

Hierophant. I am life.

Hierus: I am Nephtys.

Hierophant: I am Isis.

Hierus: I am the daughter.

Hierophant: I am the mother.

Hierus: I am the sister.

Hierophant: I am the sister.

Hierophant and Hierus: We are the double
power of the world.

Hierophant and Hierus put hands on candidates' heads so that each candidate has a hand on their head.

Hierophant: I call my daughter to light. Come forth from the earth!

Hegemon and Hierus lift hoodwinks from each of the candidates. They set hoodwinks aside beneath the throne of the Hegemon.

***Hierophant** and **Hierus** return to their stations and sit. **Hegemon** remains standing beside candidates facing **Hierophant** (east). Candidates remain sitting in their chairs.*

Purification

Hierophant: Soror Hierus, purify the candidates.

***Hierus** takes the bowl and aspergillum from the water altar, asperges candidates, and replaces the bowl and aspergillum on the water altar.*

Soror Hierophant, the candidates are purified.

***Hierus** returns to her station and sits.*

Hierophant: Soror Hegemon, consecrate the candidates.

Hegemon: *takes the censer from the fire altar, censens candidates, and replaces the censer on the*

fire altar. Soror Hierophant, the candidates are consecrated. **Hegemon** returns to her station and sits.

The Temple of the Earth

Hierophant: We have wandered among the shadows along a twisting path. This path wound between the roots of the great Tree of Life which is anchored in chaos and reaches into the stars. Now we have entered into the temple of the Earth at the base of the great trunk of the Tree. This temple has four great pillars.

(Pause)

Soror Hegemon, please establish the pillar of air.

Hegemon: *retrieves the lighter from the fire altar, moves to the air altar and lights yellow*

*candle. Soror Hierophant, the pillar of air is established. **Hegemon** returns to her station and remains standing.*

Hierophant: Soror Hegemon, please establish the pillar of fire.

Hegemon: *moves to the fire altar and lights red candle. Soror Hierophant, the pillar of fire is established. **Hegemon** gives lighter to Hierus, returns to her station and sits.*

Hierophant: Soror Hierus, please establish the pillar of water.

Hierus: *moves to the water altar and lights blue candle. Soror Hierophant, the pillar of water is established. **Hierus** returns to her station and remains standing.*

Hierophant: Soror Hierus, please establish the pillar of earth.

Hierus: *moves to the earth altar and lights green candle.* Soror Hierophant, the pillar of earth is established. *Hierus replaces lighter on fire altar, and returns to her station and sits.*

Hierophant: Let us all be established in the temple.

Hierophant: *stands, lifts her hands in the sign of Seshat and vibrates:* Seshat! *She declaims:*
Establish the temple, Mistress of Builders!

All: *place hand on heart.*

Hierophant: Seshat is the builder of the temple. She is the soul of magic that ensouls every magician. Let us visualize Seshat's crown in our

hearts. *Pause.* Seshat is the ba in the heart of every magician.

Hierophant: *hands out the initiatory tokens to initiates.* This token is black on one side and white on the other. It has three meanings. First, it is a tile of the floor of the temple of the Earth, so that with this token you can always return directly to the temple of the Earth from any other place you might journey. Second, it is a symbol of the double goddess - Isis and Nephthys, Demeter and Kore, mother and daughter, sister and sister, who guided you today. Third and lastly, this token is a reminder that ours is the magic of light and darkness.

Hierophant: *returns to her station and sits.* We have passed through the depths where the shadow of the Tree of Life shimmers in the dark waters to emerge in the temple of the Earth where the Tree roots and reaches to the heights. Each of us confronts the chaos within ourselves and finds our own way along the Tree to the stars.

Welcome to the temple of the Earth, fellow

Sisters of Seshat!

Applause.

