

# **A Hittite Rite of Offering:**

## ***The Core Order of Ritual in Action***

-Michael J Dangler

The most difficult thing about writing Hittite ritual is that we have so much of it. ADF ritual is built and designed for Neo-Pagans, and involves its own cosmology that is necessarily separate from ancient ritual: as modern folk, we know and realize that our needs are different from those of the pagans of the ancient world. Our realities are different, our concept of cosmos is different, and the place we make for ourselves within that cosmos is most certainly different. Yet we still start from the same Kindred and the same deep desire to worship them.

Thus, we are most comfortable calling our rituals not reconstruction, but new construction from the same basic building blocks.

It is possible, though, to write a Neo-Pagan ritual that honours the Kindred as seen through the eyes of the ancients, even if our basic Core Order of Ritual is vastly different than theirs was. Because of the (occasionally radical) differences between ADF ritual and the well-documented Hittite rituals, I wanted to provide a Hittite ritual using the new ADF Core Order of Ritual, as agreed upon by the ADF Clergy Council.

It should be noted that this ritual was impossible to write under the old Standard Liturgical Outline. The Core Order of Ritual provides much more flexibility for cultural focus and offers a deeper level of creativity than the Standard Outline did. This is why we're able to see what may be the first Hittite rite in ADF's history only now, over 20 years into our history.

This ritual is a simple rite of offering, one that can be used by anyone seeking to honour the Hittite deities. I have chosen to make the Sun-goddess of Arinna the patron of the rite.

### **0. Pre-ritual purification**

All participants should be asked to wash, shave, clip their fingernails, and dress nicely before entering the space. Because the Hittite relationship with his deity was one of an idealized "loving" relationship between master and servant, the manner in which the worshipper approaches his or her deity needs to be in what we would call his or her "Sunday best."<sup>i</sup>

### **1. Initiating the Rite**

"We are going to the sacred space! Nobody should bow down, and nobody should speak until we enter!"<sup>ii</sup>

The procession into the space begins. Upon entering the space, the priest should go directly to the altar.

The priest pours three libations in front of the altar. [these libations wash the hands of the deity].  
The priest then washes his/her hands.<sup>iii</sup>

## 2. Purification

"Within each of us, there are times when we have anger, times of fear, times of sullenness. At this time we find these things within ourselves, but we must not linger in the sacred space with these things in our heart."

"Take a moment to search within yourselves for these evils. Find them, draw them out. Now before you see a road, one which leads away from us in this sacred space. Put these things on this road, push them down it. See them off as they go down this road, away from our sacred space, away from our fields and our creative places. These things are on the road into the Dark Earth. Down in the Dark Earth stand iron vats. The road leads to these vats. The lids of the vats are made of lead. Whatever goes into them does not come up again; it perishes within. So may our anger, our fear, and our sullenness go into these vats, be covered with their iron lid, and not come up again, but perish."<sup>iv</sup>

"As we stand on the road that our troubles have gone down, look up. On an *eyan*-tree find a bag hanging down, just within reach. Reach up and take it down. Hold it in your hands. Open it. Within this bag lie symbols of joy, courage, and an even temperament. Take these out, and replace the things you have sent down the road to the Dark Earth. These are gifts the earth has given back, cleansing gifts for you to take forward."<sup>v</sup>

Offer, at this time, a drink or food to the gods. Libate upon the ground or lay food before them.

[each person offers food and/or drink to the deities]

With their acceptance, you are now prepared to treat with them.<sup>vi</sup>

## 3. Honouring the Earth Mother

The Gods searched for her far and wide.  
In green meadows and underbrush  
In mud that stuck to their leg hair  
In mountains and flowing rivers  
In holy precincts the gods searched.  
The Mother Goddess was found in  
the forests that stretched about them  
though she smiled and said she was  
in all places they were searching.<sup>vii</sup>

Mother of us all, be with us:

This offering of pure honey  
reminds us that the bees found you.

[an offering of honey is given]

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

As our ancestors did before us, so we do today, and so may our decedents do in the future. Today, we come before the deities to offer to them. This is a rite of offering, and we offer today especially to a principal goddess, the Sun-goddess of Arinna, she who gives growth to all things in the field, brings victory in battle, and protects us, illuminating our way.<sup>viii</sup> This rite offers to all the one thousand deities of the Hitties. Now, let us begin this rite.

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

The mists in the world withdraw from us, the smoke from the fire releases the supports of this house. The fire burns brightly and is well-fueled. The altar is in harmony with the gods.<sup>ix</sup>

It is in the fire that we will find out Gate to the otherworld, the world of the Kindred. Let us call upon our gatekeeper now.

#### **6. Opening the Gates**

Seri, my lord, bull of the Storm-god, champion of Hatti. With this prayer hear our plea, introduce us before the gods. Aid us in opening the gates between the worlds!<sup>x</sup>

Seri, I call upon you to help us open the fire, to bring it to life as our connection with the otherworld. And as we approach the Kindred, introduce us, make us known to them.

Seri, let the fire open as a gate.<sup>xi</sup>

Let the gate be open!

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

##### **a. Ancestors**

Grandmothers, Grandfathers!  
At our tables each night, we drink you in!  
We break bread for you, we pray to you!  
But most of all, we remember you!

We drink you in that we may never forget you!  
Share with us this drink!<sup>xii</sup>

[libate a cup of wine; smash the cup on the ground]<sup>xiii</sup>

## **b. Nature Spirits**

When the deities could not find the Sun-god, the Mother Goddess sent out two who the deities thought unlikely to succeed: eagle and bee. Eagle searched through long roads and streams, through springs and *ippiyas*-trees, throughout the good forest. Eagle returned unlucky and told bee that he had searched from high in the sky.

But bee searched these places more closely and found the Sun-god sleeping. He stung him awake, soothed the sting with wax and honey, and led him back home.<sup>xiv</sup>

Greenkin, those on two or four or six or eight legs, we call to you. Your skill and necessity is never forgotten and we are thankful for your attendance here. Be welcome at our rite!

[an offering of honey is made in remembrance of the bee who found the sun]

## **c. Deities**

Sun-god of Heaven, Storm-god of Arinna, Mezzulla , Hulla, Zinduhiya, male gods, female gods, mountains and rivers of Arinna, Storm-god of Salvation, Storm-god of Life. Storm-gods of our home, male and female gods, gods of my grandfathers and grandmothers. Divine lords--Sun Goddess of Arinna, my lady, and all the gods of the Land of Hatti, my lords--whose priest I am, who have conferred upon me the right to speak to them, be welcome at this rite!<sup>xv</sup>

[break bread, dipping both halves in oil]

# **8. Key Offerings**

## **a. invitation**

Sun-goddess of Arinna,  
you who provide growth of grain  
growth of vines and all our fields  
growth down all generations,  
We now offer you welcome.

Battle-ready Sun-goddess,  
holding valiant spear on high,  
guarding our lands and people,  
protecting our goods and trades,  
We now offer you welcome.

Mercy, heavenly Sun-God,  
whose mind is brilliant and bright,  
whose sunbeams are luminous,  
who is the source of all light,  
we now offer you welcome.<sup>xvi</sup>

There is no other god more honoured, nor greater in heaven and earth. Your name is honoured among names, and your worshipper is honoured by its mention.<sup>xvii</sup>

Come now, and hear our prayers and praises!

### **b. appropriate customs**

[the above prayer might be said to the rising sun, or offerings might be poured out at certain intervals: libations of wine, beer, or oil might be appropriate, as might the breaking of bread.]

### **c. Praise Offerings**

[as appropriate]

## **9. Prayer of Sacrifice**

To you, O Sun-goddess of Arinna:  
We have shown you reverence,  
We have come before you pure,  
We have offered you praises.

The people have given much,  
and wish to honour your name.  
Here is our last offering:

May all these loaves be soft and plenty, and may all this wine be sweet to thee!

[break bread, dip it in honey and fine oil, libate a pitcher of wine]<sup>xviii</sup>

## **10. Omen**

Omen taken as usual<sup>xix</sup>

## **11. Calling for the Blessings**

Sun-goddess of Arinna,

Your children have brought you gifts.  
Now we call to you, goddess,  
and asking to know your love  
seek to receive your blessings.

## **12. Hallowing the Blessing**

Before us we see the cup.  
It is a cup of magic  
filled with the lumination  
of the Sun-goddess' light.

As you drink from this deep cup,  
remember that these blessings  
are not for just you alone.  
She grants these blessings to all.

Drink deeply and remember.  
Behold, the waters of life!

[all drink]

## **13. Affirmation of the Blessing**

Indeed today we have been blessed. Let us take that blessing forth into the world, and remember that the Sun-goddess shines brightly upon us at all times.

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

[as needed]

## **15. Thanking the Beings**

Now, we end as we began.

To the Sun-goddess of Arinna,  
We thank you!

To the deities,  
We thank you

To the nature spirits,

We thank you

To the ancestors,  
We thank you.

To all those powers which have aided us,  
We thank you!

Finally, Seri, you who spoke kindly of us to the gods and introduced us, help us make our farewell.  
We thank you!

## **16. Closing the Gates**

Seri, as we say farewell to the Kindred, our hosts, let us close the Gates between the world.

Seri, let the fires of sacrifice close as a Gate, and become only flame.

Let the gate be closed!

Let the mists roll in, let the smoke gather at the supports. Let the fire dwindle as the fuel runs out. The altar may now be moved and destroyed. All is as it was before.<sup>xx</sup>

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

You who brought us forth,  
Mother Goddess,  
Shall receive all that we do not use.  
For supporting and upholding us,  
We thank you!

## **18. Closing the Rite**

Grant to the community health, vigor, longevity, and brightness of spirit forever! Grant forever growth of grain, vines, fruit-trees, livestock, and humankind! May they grow! May the rains fall! May the winds of prosperity come, and in our land may everything grow and prosper!

So be it!<sup>xxi</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> KUB 13.4 obv. i, lines 14-16, quoted in Karasu, p. 222

<sup>ii</sup> CTH 385.10, §2 (i 9-10), quoted in Singer, p. 29

<sup>iii</sup> CTH 385.10, §4 (i 17-21), quoted in Singer, p. 29

<sup>iv</sup> When the god Telipinu becomes angry, ritual functions cease. In mythology, his anger is sent into the Dark Earth. This passage is nearly a direct quote from the tablets describing this myth. Cf. Hoffner, the myths surrounding the disappearance of Telipinu (p. 19).

<sup>v</sup> Hoffner again, the same myth (p. 18). Here, Telipinu takes the good things out of the bag. I have extrapolated that he places them within himself.

<sup>vi</sup> KUB 13.4 obv. i, lines 22-26, quoted in Karasu, p. 222

<sup>vii</sup> Hoffner again: p. 37, Fragments of Myths about Lost and Found Deities. Text is fractural, but enough remains to pull this bit out.

<sup>viii</sup> CTH 385.10, §5-10 (i 1-41), quoted in Singer, p. 26. I will revisit this for the invocation of the Key deities later.

<sup>ix</sup> This relates what happens when Telipinu is found When he disappears, "Mist seized the windows. Smoke seized the house. In the fireplace the logs were stifled. At the altars the gods were stifled. In the sheep pen the sheep were stifled. In the cattle barn the cattle were stifled. The mother sheep rejected her lamb. The cow rejected her calf." Cf. Hoffner, p. 15. When he is found, things come back to their normal sacrality, and the opposite is described, which I have related here, again almost word-for-word from the myth.

<sup>x</sup> CTH 381, §5 (i 33-36), quoted in Singer, p. 87. Almost word-for-word, chosen as gatekeeper for his introductory role in the "law court" of the gods.

<sup>xi</sup> Only a single fire is opened, because I can find no evidence thus far of other "gates" in Hittite culture.

<sup>xii</sup> This was an odd one: taken from *šallieš waštaiš*, the Hittite Funerary Rite (see Kassian, et. al), Vs. II (KUB 30.24 and KBo 39.292), line 23 in particular, I had to stretch some. The rite is so fragmented that we can't get a good idea of real ancestor honoring (only that they were important to the Hittites) but this aspect of "drinking" the dead appears over and over again. I have worked it in here as a method of remembrance.

<sup>xiii</sup> A very common ritual action in *šallieš waštaiš*.

<sup>xiv</sup> One of the few mentions of nature spirits I found in Hittite ritual or myth, this story is a reconstructed retelling by Hoffner. See Hoffner, p. 14.

<sup>xv</sup> This is part of a very, very, very long section of "Invocation of the Gods of All the Lands" (the title doesn't underestimate the number of deities called)

<sup>xvi</sup> derived almost entirely from CTH 385.10, §5-10 (i 1-41), quoted in Singer, p. 26

<sup>xvii</sup> derived from CTH 376.A, §4 (A i 19'-ii 2'), quoted in Singer, p. 51

<sup>xviii</sup> This sacrifice is derived from CTH 381, §77 (iv 4-7), quoted in Singer, p. 92

<sup>xix</sup> Some ideas might be found in my article, "Hittite Divination" in *Oak Leaves* issue #35

<sup>xx</sup> Cf. note ix

<sup>xxi</sup> This is word-for-word (with minor omissions) from CTH 377, §14 (iv 9-18), quoted in Singer, p. 56