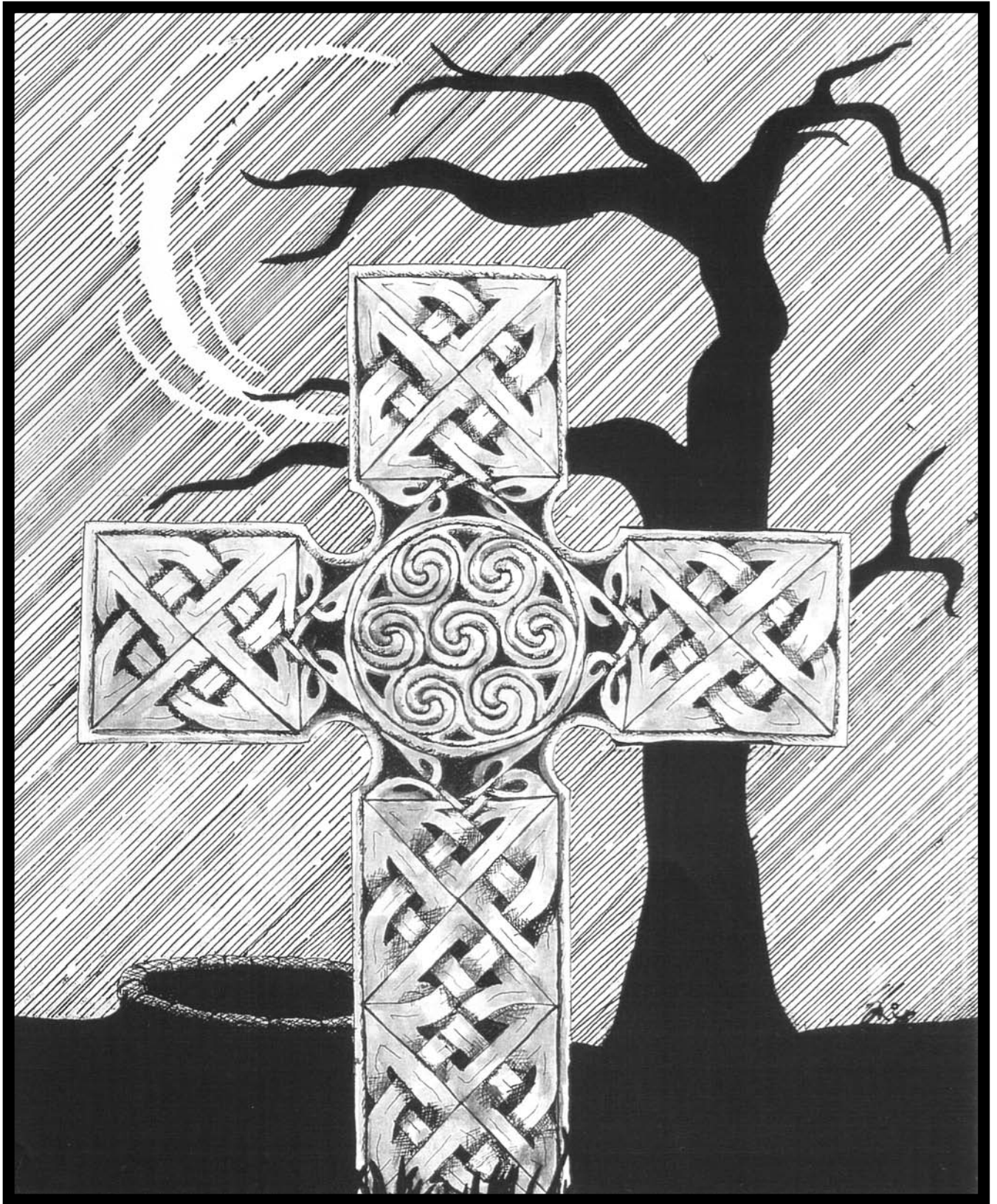


OAK LEAVES

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Oak Leaves

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Table of Contents

FOX TRACKS 2
CHRONICLER'S CORNER 3
ARTICLES/ESSAYS
Initiation and the Druid Secret Language: the Three Calls to Cormac:
A Druidic Initiation — by Cathbad 4
Religio Romana: Introduction to Private Roman Worship — by Jenni Hunt 9
Spiritual Current — by Robert Barton 12
Sacred Work, Sacred Life — by Judith Anderson Morris (ladytoad) 14
Alternate Liturgical ADF Ritual Outline — by Ceisiwr Serith 16
BOOK REVIEWS
21 Lessons of Merlyn & The Lost Books of Merlyn 24
Natural Water Garden 24
Gift of the Jews 26
Ancient Goddesses 27
STORIES
The Dancing Lady — by Laura Shoemake 28
The Tale of The Two Suns — by Bryan Morache 29
The Great Library — by Bryan Morache 29
POEMS
Samhain — by Ravenbard 32
Untitled — by Jason Garner 32
Luna — by Birdlady 33
Lament — by Jenni Hunt 33
COLUMNS
On The Solitary Path 34
Passages 35
Falling Acorns 36
6th Night Grove
Peachtree Grove
Regional Reports 37
Great Lakes
Ohio River
Pacific
Southeastern
ADF DIRECTORY 38
ADF MEMBERSHIP FORM 43
CONTRIBUTORS' PAGE 45

See the inside back cover for more information about our contributors.

Fox Tracks

The cool nights of September have begun the cascade of colors in my part of the world. With summer drawing to a close, so too approaches the end of yet another festival season. This summer was a busy one for me, filled with many appearances on behalf of the fellowship. Through these travels I have greatly enjoyed the company of old friends and have made many new ones. In particular, it has been my pleasure to see Isaac Bonewits, our Archdruid Emeritus, joining in our rites and discussions once more.

The newly elected officers are now functioning very well in their new assignments and our organization is looking better than ever due to their efforts. In particular, the stellar performance by Aimee Delach, our new Chronicler and her team has managed to get *Oak Leaves* back on track. Credit should also go to our tireless Administrator, Anthony Thompson, for keeping things organized and moving along.



Looking ahead over the next few months, one of the items that I anticipate as a positive step for our fellowship is the implementation of the Mother Grove's lay clergy policy. This long awaited program, nearly four years in the making, will recognize the considerable experience of many of our Senior Druids by granting them lay clergy credentials. These credentials will enhance their ability to serve the needs of their communities by allowing them to perform such services as marriage rites and prison ministry. Look for more details in our next issue.

For those of you whom I didn't get a chance to see this summer, it is my hope next season will find us talking, laughing, drumming, singing and honoring the gods in the light of the sacred fire.

Until then, may warmth and health be upon you,

Fox

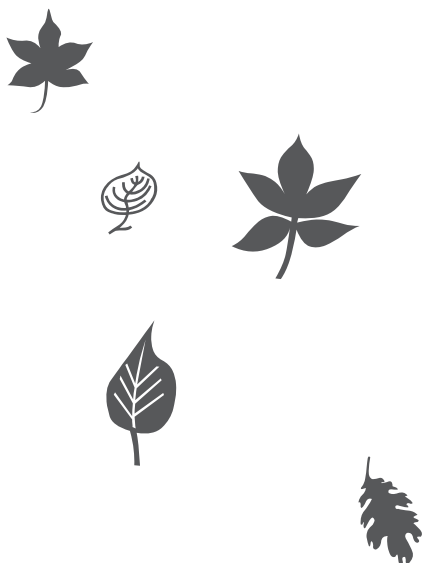


Chronicler's Corner

Fello and happy autumn to you! Samhain is a time for endings and beginnings, so I suppose it is fitting that this issue marks both the commencement of my official tenure as Chronicler, and the culmination of four months of intensive effort to ready three issues of *Oak Leaves* for publication. I am proud of the work we have done, and am particularly thrilled with the number of artists, writers, poets, editors, and layout designers who have come out of the woodwork to help put this and future issues together. Please take a moment to peruse the editors' and contributors' pages on the inside covers of this issue, and join me in expressing your thanks to everyone who has been involved.

by Sylvan

This issue, I believe, contains a good balance of scholarly, creative, and administrative material. We have detailed articles, plus short stories, poetry, and reports from a number of our administrators and Mother Grove members. Unfortunately, though, as an artifact of our frenzied publication schedule, this issue is thin on seasonal content. I hope that by the time you read this, you will already have seen and responded to the postings requesting material for *Oak Leaves*, our special Yule issue. To those of you who do not regard your modem as a second umbilicus, I apologize, and ask that you take up pen to write, draw, or do whatever you do best, and send it in throughout the year. *Oak Leaves* is of, by, and for the members of Ár nDraíocht Féin, and it is up to all of us to make it the best journal in neopagandom!





Initiation and the Druid Secret Language: The Three Calls to Cormac— A Druidic Initiation

by Cathbad

1. UNDERSTANDING THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF THE DRUIDS

A secret language is a means of communicating ideas to selected persons in such a way that no one else will be able to understand the message. Many famous authors have, over the centuries, used secret or esoteric language to hide meaning when what they had to say was politically unacceptable or dangerous. Plato, Machiavelli, and Spinoza all wrote esoterically. There is no need to search for a “key” or secret pass-code to unlock the secrets of esoteric language. Hidden messages in philosophical or literary works are not military codes. To read the hidden messages, one simply needs a good background in the culture of the time and the situation of the author — a reason why she might write esoterically, an idea of who her audience is, and who she is trying to fool.

In the case of the Druids, the secret language was used to speak to other Druids. Dr. Anne Ross speculated that the secret language of Welsh and British Druids was Q-Celtic, or the form of the Celtic language spoken in Ireland and Scotland (*Life and Death of a Druid Prince* 148). I mount no argument against her claim at this time, but I believe that from the perspective of those involving themselves in the revival of Druidism, there is more that can be said of it. We know much about the Celtic use of language, its use of poetry, “riddles and dark sayings,”¹ and word play. I believe that in poetry we will find the “key” to unlocking the secret language of the Druids. The true secret language of the Druids is the use of literary symbol to communicate religious ideas.

If Dr. Ross is to be believed, the Druids kept a secret language in order to protect a trade route that brought gold from the Wicklow Mountains of Ireland into continental Europe via Britain. This is sufficient for economic or political perspectives, but does not seem to explain why they would have used a secret language in their magical roscanna poetry. The ancient Druids might have wanted a secret language for many reasons, but the most plausible reason I can think of is that the Druids may have had an “outer” doctrine for consumption by the tribe, and an “inner” doctrine for use among themselves. This is a common feature of ancient priesthoods, such as the Pythagorean “akousmatikoi” and “mathematikoi” cults.² Celtic society was a stratified, hierarchical society that by no means bore all of the egalitarian and democratic features that neopagan Celts often ascribe to it. The Aes Dana caste, including the Druids, was an elite group that set itself in authority because of the irreplaceable service they rendered to society. Contemporary Paganism has, for the most part, rejected this feature of ancient Druidism. This rejection has the advantage of consistency with modern liberal democratic values, but the weakness of allowing unprepared people to take on leadership roles. At least the

ancient Druids, as stratified as they were, realized that not everyone has what it takes to be a Druid. Therefore, they may have wanted to keep certain facts about what they actually believed unknown to the rest of the people.

This may not have been to suppress others from becoming Druids, but to locate potential Druids. I speculate that if someone unexpected were to understand their secret language, she might be drafted into the Druid caste, for example, and inner circle doctrines revealed to her. Recall that when Cu Chullain courted Emer, he tested her with riddles, not to charm her with his wit but to see if her wit could match his. Recall also that when Nede took over Ferchertne's seat as chief of poets, Ferchertne tested the young upstart to see if he was capable of producing Druidic magical poetry.³

I'm not about to speculate in this essay as to what the inner Druidic doctrine consisted of, but there are clues showing what was omitted from it. We know that they did not use idols, and we also know that they did not lead seasonal celebratory rituals. Eugene O'Curry tells us that "there is no ground whatever for believing the Druids to have been the priests of any special positive worship,"⁴ and though the Druids do hail spirits and gods in their magic poetry, it seems as if the relationship is that of companions or business partners, and not a relationship of worshiper to deity. So whatever the inner circle teachings of ancient Druids may have been, worshipful adoration of Gods may not have been a part of it. A Druid has no need to worship any God when he can declare his own immanent divinity with, "I am a wave of the sea."⁵ The idea that we don't need the Gods would have been very politically unacceptable to devout people and, hence, had to be covered with a secret language.

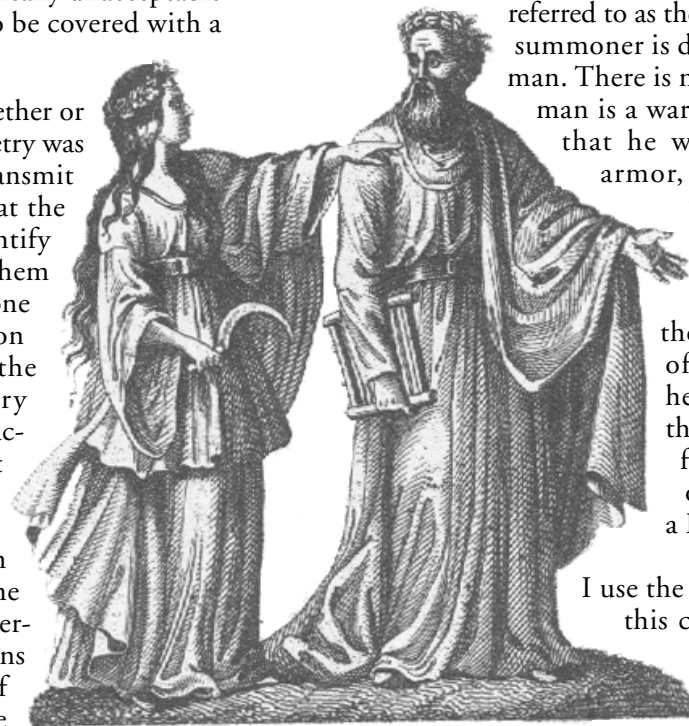
In this essay I won't speculate on whether or not this sort of secret language of poetry was employed by ancient Druids to transmit Druidic mysteries in such a way that the Christian recorders would not identify them as such (and hence not edit them out). I will point out, though, that one can penetrate Christian suppression of Druidic mysteries by reading the stories with an eye for literary euphemisms. For example, a character's motive is the sort of thing that gets Christianized, and one can read the pagan message by substituting a motive more consistent with pagan themes and teachings. Repairing the pagan content of our mythological heritage by way of meaning-substitutions involves making interpretations of poetry. I am fully aware that the

pagan community tends to frown upon interpreting poetry, as if interpretation somehow kills the spirit. It is my view that interpretation actually reveals the spirit of poetry and does not kill it. The aesthetic state brought on by the enjoyment of symbols is an interesting place to be, but in my view does not ultimately lead to substantial principles by which we can guide our lives. I neither confirm nor deny that the Gods and the Otherworld are real. I simply read the text, and report what it tells me.

With these disclaimers for the devout out of the way, I proceed with the inquiry. I made this particular insight about the Druids' secret language while reading about Manannan in Lady Augusta Gregory's wonderful book, "Gods and Fighting Men."⁶ I read the story of "His Three Calls to Cormac," with an eye for the use of esoteric language and discovered that the story reports what I believe to be Cormac's induction into the Order of Druids. In this story the Otherworld becomes the grove at which the Druids meet and conduct ceremonies; the Gods become the Druids at the ceremony who take on certain ritual roles, or perhaps even ritually impersonate the Gods; and magical wonders describe, not supernatural powers, but principles of nature, humanity, and moral teaching.

2. THE SUMMONER APPROACHES

The first paragraph of the story as retold by Lady Augusta Gregory tells of how Cormac is at home alone and is approached by an "armed man." The description of the man is given in detail, yet the only carried item that is described is not a weapon but his "shining branch having nine apples of red gold, on his shoulder," so it is for bearing the apple branch (hereafter referred to as the bell branch) that the summoner is described as an armed man. There is no indication that the man is a warrior, for the clothing that he wears is not combat armor, but a shirt ribbed with gold thread and bronze shoes. This is, I believe, consistent with reports of the multicolored dress of Irish druids, and hence establishes that the armed man is not a fighter nor even an ordinary traveler, but a Druid.



I use the term "summoner" in this context as an anthropologist might. The role of the summoner is already

established in Neopaganism; he is the member of the Wiccan coven (usually a man) who, before the ritual, sends out the call to the members of the coven that the ritual is about to begin and during the ritual acts as a kind of gatekeeper and stands outside the circle to protect against intruders. Manannan acts as a kind of gatekeeper in other myths, and so the role of summoner seems appropriate here. In our story, the figure who approaches Cormac is probably Manannan himself or a Druid impersonating the God, for although the name is not given in the text, it is implied by the title. The summoner exchanges words with Cormac and leaves him with the bell branch. The power of the bell branch is that it eliminates troublesome thoughts in the minds of those who hear its sound, for it rings with a music that comes from a land where, as Manannan describes it, "there is nothing but truth, and where there is neither age nor withering away, nor heaviness, nor sadness, nor jealousy, nor envy, nor pride." This is, as all readers of Celtic literature will recognize, Tir Na nOg, the most wonderful Otherworld that humanity has conceived. Cormac responds that our world in which he lives is not a place where there is only truth, but a place where there is heaviness, sadness, and all the other sufferings.

Cormac requests the bell branch along with the summoner's friendship. By doing so, Cormac is actually asking for the means by which all the sufferings of this world can be removed. Cormac takes up not just the bell branch, but a psychological commitment to the Druids and the Druid way of reaching Truth and happiness. We shall soon see more of the spiritual method prescribed by the ancient Druids to lead one from suffering to contentedness.

3. THE SACRIFICE

The summoner exacts a price for the branch: three unspecified gifts from

Cormac in return, which are not to be collected immediately but sent for one at a time. First, the summoner requests his daughter, then his son, and lastly his wife. Naturally his tribesfolk are upset by this, but Cormac rings the bell branch to calm them down. The essential message in this part of the story is that in order to join the ranks of Druids, one must break associations with one's own tribe. The Druids were pan-tribal, meaning that their authority extended across all Celtic tribes, so if a postulant to the Druid order was still partial to any one tribe, he could not effectively discharge his duty to all tribes. Cormac shakes the bell branch to put the sorrow from his tribesfolk, perhaps to reinforce in their minds as well as his own, the commitment he made to apprenticeship in the Druid order.

This first encounter with a Druid is actually, albeit symbolically describing a short ritual. In it, Cormac expresses his commitment to apprenticeship under the Druid by divorcing his own tribe, and the Druid accepts Cormac as his apprentice by gifting him with his first ritual tool, the bell branch; but as we have seen, Cormac's acceptance of the bell branch has further layers of meaning. This an initiation is the rite-of-passage type.

4. OPENING THE GATES TO THE OTHERWORLD

The storyteller says that Cormac left Teamhair at this point to search for his wife. I believe it safe to suppose that Cormac's motive here is something that Christian editors inserted, and if so, the real motive is something else. Cormac already agreed to cut off his connection to his tribe for a short while, so it seems inconsistent that he should try to win his kin back right away. His search for his wife is not only the search for the place where she has gone, but also for the man who took her; and the story tells us that the place she went was the Otherworld and the man who took her was Manannan.

Understanding both the God and the Otherworld to be poetic devices, we can understand the Otherworld as the symbol for the Druid's grove and Manannan as the Druid summoner who called to him there. We enter the grove by passing through a boundary that establishes the division between ordinary space and space reserved for religious purposes; it is the famous Mist that appears in so many Celtic tales.

5. TESTING THE INITIATE BY RIDDLE

Some initiation ceremonies require that the postulant be worthy of initiation. This is established by a test. In contemporary paganism, initiations that test people are generally avoided, or else the tests are superfluous and easy. In the ancient times, initiation tests were much more serious, and failure was a distinct possibility. Candidates for initiations may have risked injury, madness or death in the ceremony. There are legal and social reasons why contemporary pagans no longer perform health-threatening initiations; moreover, there are other kinds of initiations that are equally legitimate that we perform instead, such as recognition of achievements already obtained (which is what a rite of passage sometimes is). Lady Gregory describes the initiation of the Fianna of Ireland elsewhere in the same text. The postulants for entry into the Fianna had to demonstrate mastery of certain martial skills, mainly having to do with war and wilderness survival. They also had to be competent at poetry.

Cormac's initiation now becomes the testing type. The initiators will be testing his ability to recognize certain Druidic mysteries represented by symbols that he has not seen before. The possibility of failing the test is real. As Cormac approaches the rath of Manannan, which is the sacred grove where the initiation will take place, he is shown three wonders. The first is a house with feathers thatched in the roof

and Riders of the Sidhe thatching them there; once the roof is finished, a blast of wind will scatter them and the job will have to be redone. The second is a man kindling a fire with an oak tree; every time the man went for another tree to feed the fire, the first would be consumed. The third wonder he sees is a grand fort at the center of which is the Well of Wisdom. We know this well from identical descriptions of it in other tales; it has five streams flowing from it, nine hazel trees growing around it, nine hazel trees growing around it, and salmon in the streams eating the nuts that fall from the trees.

Cormac is shown these wonders and his test, for the moment, is to meditate upon them. Their meaning puzzles him, so he seeks out the meaning from two Druids who enter the story at this point. Again, their style of dress is described in detail and it bears all the color, ornament, and regalia of Druids. They are identified as “the master of the house and his wife,” but this time they are not named because Cormac must identify them as a part of his initiation tests. Cormac is now offered a bath (perhaps for ritual purification) and a place at the Druid’s meal table.

A third unidentified person enters the room, bringing the total occupants of the ritual chamber to four, or one for each cardinal direction. We know this to be an important part of ancient Druid ritual custom from the archaeology of sacred sites, as well as from other stories where certain rituals require four participants. Dian-cecht with his three children enchanting his Healing Well is one classic example. This extra man brings a pig for roasting over a spit for the meal, a log for cooking it, and an axe for cutting the log and gutting the pig, but “never and never will the pig be boiled until a truth is told for every quarter of it.” Each person must tell a story then, and the story given by the three Druids is a riddle that Cormac, as candidate for initiation,

must be able to solve. The pig here is understood to be Cormac himself, transforming in the ritual experience from an ignorant, innocent, “raw” youth into a mature, knowledgeable, “cooked” adult.

The extra man tells a story about his axe. Any pig killed by it lives again in the morning. Any log chopped by it produces enough wood to boil the pig and, like the pig, is whole again in the morning. The master of the house tells a story of a field. When he had a mind to



sow it with seed he found that it was already planted, and when he wished to harvest from it, he found the crops already cut for him. The story given by the woman of the house is of seven cattle whose milk can satisfy all people of the world, and seven sheep whose wool can clothe all people of the world. What axe, what field, and what cattle and sheep can do these things? Cormac knows; but he says to the man of the house: “If this is true, you are Manannan, and this is Manannan’s wife, for no one on the whole ridge of the world owns these treasures but himself.” Cormac has announced that he understands the secret riddle language by employing the language himself.

6. WELCOMING THE INITIATE INTO THE NEW LIFE

Now that Cormac has passed the tests successfully, he is welcomed into the community of Druids. The

story says that Manannan sings a song to him to make him sleep, and when he awakes, he is in the company of fifty armed men, as well as his wife and children who were taken from him at the beginning of the story. I believe that this means his membership in all tribes, including, yet not limited to his own, is affirmed here, as it is for all Druids.

The famous truth-detecting Cup is offered to him at this point. Its power is to shatter into three pieces if three falsehoods are told under it, and to repair itself if three truths are told. The capacity to distinguish between the true and the false is an essential skill for judges and kings like Cormac. Without any means to discover whether a crime occurred or did not occur, there can be no justice. It is interesting that the principle of Truth is the first virtue that the Summoner confirmed for Cormac, which seems to verify its importance as an ancient Druidic doctrine. Cormac is also allowed to keep the bell branch.


The three wonders which he saw at the beginning of the ceremony are now explained. “And the Riders you saw thatching the house,” Manannan explains, “Are the men of arts and the poets, and all that look for a fortune in Ireland, putting together cattle and riches.” This is a moral lesson about the pursuit of wealth: just as the feathers fly off the roof of the house, the actual acquisition of wealth does not satiate one’s desire for more. The pursuit of wealth is unattainable and hence a bringer of suffering, and so he ought not to live his life this way. “And the man you saw kindling the fire,” continues Manannan, “Is a young lord that is more liberal than he can afford, and everyone else is served while he is getting the feast ready, and everyone else profiting by it.” The moral instruction here has to do with the pursuit of an honorable reputation. Even though one would think honor is a virtue,⁷ Manannan dismisses it, on the grounds that one cannot meet one’s

own needs while always seeing to the needs of others. Last, Manannan says, "And the well that you saw is the well of knowledge, and the streams are the five streams through which all knowledge goes." The third wonder in the triad is for the druid caste, and at last Cormac is given a positive instruction: to seek knowledge and drink from the streams as his predecessor druids have done. This is the psychological path promoted by druids to alleviate suffering, to bring truth into the world, and heal all beings of their heaviness and sorrow. I find that the three wonders express virtues appropriate for the three main castes⁸ in ancient Indo-European society: wealth for the producer caste, honor for the warrior caste, and wisdom for the druid caste.

By bestowing these gifts and revealing these mysteries, the initiators invite Cormac into their community, and make him one of them. The initiation becomes a rite-of-passage again, so the ceremony has come full circle, and concludes upon Cormac's return home.

7. ADVENTURING AWAY FROM IGNORANCE

An excellent way of penetrating the secret language in Irish myths is to pose questions of the text. On encountering a magical artefact in the story, ask yourself what it is and experiment with some answers that emerge from your imbas, which is your divine inspiration. What axe can kill and yet allows for renewal? What field both fertilizes itself and harvests its own produce? What sheep and cattle both clothe and feed the world? What are the five streams from which all knowledge goes? Answer these questions and you have the hidden meaning that the speaker wishes to communicate to you. It is up to you, gentle readers, to answer them for yourselves, but I leave you with a my answer for the mystery of the well. The five streams from which all knowledge go are the five physical senses, which

bring us into contact with the manifest world around us. To drink from the streams is to engage our senses as fully and comprehensively as we can, and accept into our being all things that our senses contact, without the intervening obstacles of preconception, habit, expectation, and illusion. The Well of Wisdom is immanent within each of us, and may it never run dry! 

Notes:

1. "Riddles and Dark Sayings": A comment by Diogenes Laertius on how Druids teach their tribesfolk. Piggot, *The Druids* (Thames and Hudson, New York, 1975) pg. 117.
2. Outer Circle Pythagorean doctrine consisted of the famous theory of transmigration of souls, whereas Inner Circle Pythagorean doctrine eschewed soul-talk in favor of speculation about "inner harmony of elements." See, for example, Plato's discussion of Inner Circle doctrine in the *Phaedo*, 92a. At least four Roman historians (Hyppolytus, Diodorus, Ammaianus and Valerius Maximus) commented on the similarity between Pythagorean and Druidic thought, which lends some strength to my argument.

3. Nede and Ferchertne: see the "Colloquy of the Two Sages," in *Encyclopaedia of Celtic Wisdom*, by John & Caitlin Matthews.

4. Eugene O'Curry, "Druids and Druidism in Ancient Ireland," in *The Celtic Reader*, ed. John Matthews (The Aquarian Press, London, 1991) pg. 49.

5. "I am a wave of the sea": Song of Amergin

6. Lady Augusta Gregory, *Gods and Fighting Men* (Colin Smyth Ltd., Gerard's Cross, Buckinghamshire, 1904) pp. 106-110.










7. "Honor is a virtue" Consider the several instructions that are given to young warriors by older warriors, such as by Fionn MacCumhall and Cu Chullain. Honor would seem to be a cardinal trait for the warrior caste, and yet in this story Manannan dismisses it. This is precisely the sort of unpopular idea that Druids might try to protect with a secret language.

8. "Virtues appropriate for the three main castes." The similarity to Plato's theory of the tripartite soul is tempting, not only for its organization, but its dismissal of honor and wealth as virtues for philosophers. See *The Republic*, 434d-441c.



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ESTABLISHING A SACRED SPACE

For those wishing to begin a Roman mode of worship, probably the best place to begin is in creating a suitable worship space — the *lararium* and the hearth.

The hearth in a traditional Roman home was the center, both literally and symbolically, of the household. If not in the very center of the house, it was located either opposite the door, or in a separate kitchen. Vesta, being the living flame, was worshiped in the home as the heart of the household. The *lararium* was more or less a shrine honoring the household deities. It usually depicted, at the very least, the household gods, the Lares and Penates.

Creating a sacred space in one's home for worship depends on individual preferences. Location is important, as ideally, the *lararium* should be the first thing one sees upon entering the home. This is still possible for those who do not wish to display overt signs of their worship to visitors or neighbors. A small cupboard, such as a curio cabinet or even a box with closing doors is appropriate and can easily be passed off as part of one's decor, rather than a place of worship. Still, if this is not possible, make do as best as you can. Your *lararium* might be as simple as a drawing you can roll up and store away when you're not using it, or as elaborate as a separate room or garden with a hearth, statuary, and fountains.

My own *lararium* sits atop a bookcase immediately opposite my front door, with the kitchen behind it. I have figurines of two Lares, plaques depicting Ceres and Demeter, a statue of Venus, photos of relatives who have passed away, some Greek pottery, and what I refer to as my *testudarium*: a small cupboard which houses my collection of turtles. I can't really explain this quirk of mine, except that perhaps turtles are a sort of totem animal for me. I collect them, and it seemed appropriate to include them with the other items of my *lararium*. I also have a reproduction of an ancient Pompeiian *lararium*, which depicts two Lares on either side of a figure representing the family Genius. For an offering bowl I use an onyx turtle ashtray from my collection, and a soapstone one has holes for burning cone and stick incense.

The traditional center of the Roman household, the hearth would be either centrally located or at the far side from the door. The women of the household were responsible for keeping it burning (or banked) and tended on a daily basis. Nowadays, that just doesn't work.

Although desirable, it is hardly practical — and even unsafe — to keep a flame burning at all times. However,



Religio Romana: Introduction to Private Roman Worship

By Jenni Hunt

This article is the second of a series of articles outlining the basics of Roman focus of worship and practice. Other topics may include Early Roman Gods and Goddesses; The Roman Calendar and Public Rituals; Basic Prayers, Devotionals, and Rituals and Roman Methods of Divination. In this article, I will discuss how to set up a home worship space, and how to prepare for worship and compose suitable prayers, with some examples.

it would be appropriate to have some kind of fire going at least during the main meal of the day and during the morning devotion, preferably one you can burn things in later. Not many of us still have an old-fashioned cooking hearth, so we must make do with what we have.

Basically, a modern day hearth could be wherever and whatever you decide is appropriate. Some folks, like myself, have decided that the real “hearth” of their home is the kitchen stove. If you have a gas stove, you even have a perpetual flame in the pilot light. My stove is electric, and establishing a hearth continues to be problematic for me. The best compromise I’ve found so far is to keep a candle burning on my stovetop when I am home. I think it is a good practice to light your hearth flame from the stove, (even if it is electric) so that the two flames are connected. Fire offerings can be problematic if you have no way to burn them. If you have a fireplace, you might burn them on a weekly basis. However, if you’re like me and have no way to burn safely burn offerings, you’ll have to use your creativity and innovation.

ROMAN PRAYER

Romans were notorious for their scrupulous attention to detail in composing prayers. They liked to cover all possible contingencies. A perfect example of a thoroughly well-constructed prayer (circa 80 BCE) comes to us in the form of a prayer vow written by the Arval Brethren and is worded extremely meticulously:

I U P P I T E R O P T I M U S
M A X I M U S, I F T H E E M P E R O R
T I T U S C A E S A R V E S P A S I A N U S
A U G U S T U S, P O N T I F E X M A X -
I M U S, H O L D E R O F T H E T R I -
B U N I C I A N P O W E R, F A T H E R
O F H I S C O U N T R Y, A N D
C A E S A R D O M I T I A N, S O N O F
T H E D E I F I E D V E S P A S I A N O F
W H O M W E D E E M W E A R E
S P E A K I N G, S H O U L D L I V E A N D

T H E I R H O U S E B E S A F E O N
T H E N E X T 1 J A N U A R Y T H A T
C O M E S T O P A S S F O R T H E
R O M A N P E O P L E, T H E
Q U I R I T E S, A N D F O R T H E
S T A T E O F T H E R O M A N P E O -
P L E, T H E Q U I R I T E S, A N D Y O U
P R E S E R V E T H A T D A Y A N D
T H E M S A F E F R O M D A N G E R S
(I F T H E R E A R E O R S H A L L B E
A N Y B E F O R E T H A T D A Y),
A N D I F Y O U H A V E G R A N T E D
A F E L I C I T O U S I S S U E I N T H E
M A N N E R T H A T W E D E E M
T H A T W E A R E S P E A K I N G O F,
A N D Y O U H A V E P R E S E R V E D
T H E M I N T H A T P R E S E N T
C O N D I T I O N O R B E T T E R —
A N D M A Y Y O U S O D O T H E S E
T H I N G S — T H E N W E V O W
T H A T Y O U S H A L L H A V E, I N
T H E N A M E O F T H E C O L L E G E
O F T H E A R V A L B R E T H E R N,
T W O G I L D E D O X E N

In many ways, these prayers resemble modern day legal contracts. They were, in fact, contracts between man and the gods. Romans felt that in dealing with the gods, it was best to err on the side of caution and could be rather anal about their prayers by our standards. For instance, if any part of the prayer or ritual was omitted, interrupted, performed improperly, or attended by an improper person, it was necessary to start all over, at considerable expense and trouble. Not only that, but the second time around would probably necessitate the addition of a *piaculum*, a propitiatory sacrifice. While perfection is a lofty goal towards which neopagans can all work, I think for now we simply do the best we can and improve with practice. If you’re concerned and really want to cover all your bases, you could make a piacular sacrifice at every ritual, just in case.

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Rule number one of Roman worship is to be well prepared. It should suffice to know what you want to accomplish, what you want to say,

and what you want to do during a simple ritual. If at all possible, write out a prayer ahead of time and memorize it. Have all your incense, lighters, offering bowls, and other paraphernalia ready before you begin.

Rule number two for Roman rituals is to be clean. In ancient times, some were turned away from public rituals or sent to wash up because they didn’t pass muster. The act of cleaning or purification is known as *lustration* (from *luere*, which means “to loose,” as in freeing from sinister influences) and is a necessary factor for effective Roman worship. All participants and objects used in a ritual must be “clean” or “pure”.

Bathing or washing is only the most obvious means of cleansing. One of the simplest means of lustration is to draw a circle around whatever it is that needs purification. Such lustrations were extremely common in Roman ritual observances, including the ancient festival of *Ambarvalia*, where folks would lead a procession of a bull, sheep, and pig thrice around the boundaries of the fields, then sacrifice them to Ceres. A similar practice involving “beating the bounds” still survives in Britain at Ascension-tide in May (Ogilvie, p.88).

The best time of day, I find, for prayer and ritual is early in the morning, just after I’ve showered. By beginning early, I have less of a chance for ill omens to occur and ruin my ritual before I even begin. Romans, having been known to be rather superstitious, were quite serious about avoiding unlucky words, accidents, or coincidences prior to or during a ritual. Frequently, they would hire a flutist to play during the ritual to cover any inauspicious sounds. I like to have soft music playing and a pleasant scent lulling all my senses with a suitable ambience. Romans also performed rituals *capite velato* (with head covered) for the same reason. These are customs

easily adapted, even for solitary practitioners, by wearing a veil or head covering for solemn rituals and playing some soothing recorded music during a ritual. I always ensure the phone is off the hook before I begin. If necessary, put a “do not disturb” sign on the door if there is any chance of an ill-timed interruption — whatever might be necessary to keep unfavorable omens from interrupting your sacred moment.

Romans would hire a priest to assist the celebrant by prompting the celebrant word by word (called *praeire verba* “to anticipate the words”), much like a modern tele-prompter aids newscasters and orators to speak effectively in public. Likewise, it is perfectly acceptable, perhaps even preferable, to bring notes with you so that you don’t stumble over the words of your prayer or forget a line. Of course, it would be best to memorize your prayer in advance, but it still doesn’t hurt to have a cheat sheet just in case.

While there are several different types of prayer and sacrifices for different purposes — thanks, entreaties, vows, and fulfillment of promises, for example — for the purposes of this article, I’m going to stick with asking a blessing.

ELEMENTS OF PRAYER

The first part of a prayer is the invocation, the purpose of which, in essence, is to get the attention of the god or goddess you are addressing. First and foremost, you should know and use the correct name of the deity(ies) being addressed. Romans felt that the deity’s complete name was needed to be used or their prayers might go unheard. Therefore, you might want to list all the possible names and variations for that deity.

However, if you suspect this is not feasible for you, there are some outs. A formula to add to the names you do know would be, *sive quo alio nomine te appellari volveris* (“or by whatever name to would like to be called”). If you don’t think you know the name of a particular deity, you can address your prayer to “the responsible deity.”

Another formula common to Roman prayers used to avoid offending a god when you really mean to pray to a goddess, for example, is *sive Deus, sive Dea* (“whether thou be God or Goddess”).

Having gotten the god’s attention, you next need to convince the deity that what you request is reasonable. Horace, perhaps, did so in the humblest manner: “to enjoy what I have in good health — nothing more do I ask.” Such phrases as “by your majesty,” “just as you have done for me before,” or “by the mercy of your godhead” also serve to convince the

deity that such a request is within his or her power to grant.

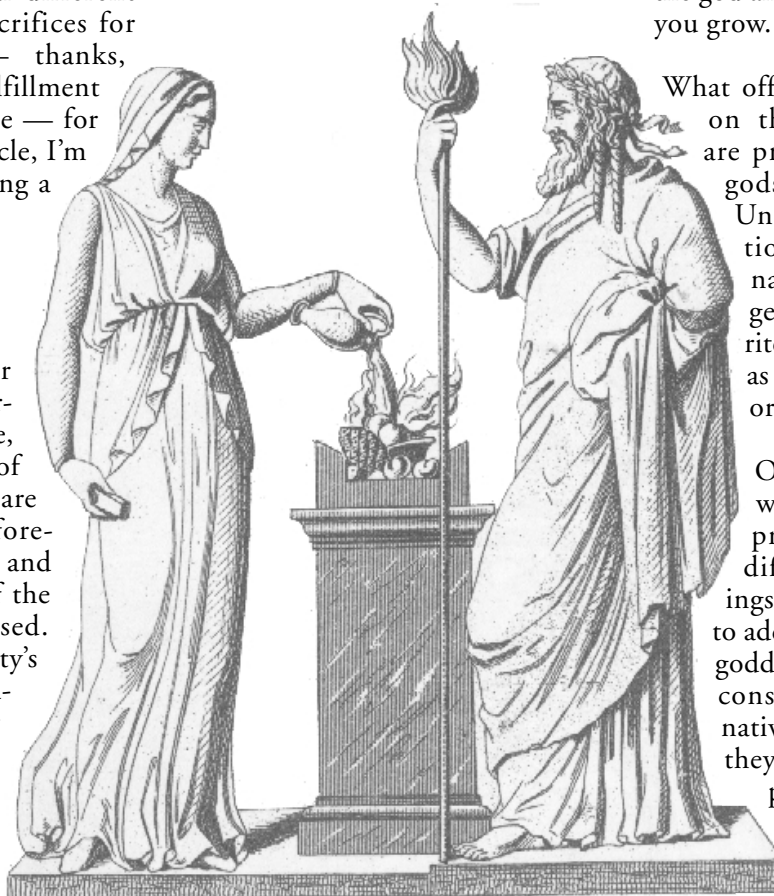
Before you explain what you would like, you need to explain what you will do in return for what it is you’re about to ask. Never demand anything from the god. It is always up to them to decide whether to assist you or not, and they just might not. Until you’ve convinced them of your piety, you might not feel a bond with the deities to which you are praying at first. Eventually, however, they will hear you, however, and appreciate your piety.

As you speak the words of your vow, make the offering and speak your request — almost as an afterthought, although not so much so that they miss the point. It’s a question of subtlety and humility. The phrase *Macte esto!* (“Be thou increased”) was quite common and is always an appropriate formula to speak while making the offering. The idea is that the offering you are making will increase the numen (i.e., power; holiness) of the god and cause the bond between you grow.

What offering you make depends on the deity to whom you are praying; for example, sky gods get burnt offerings; Underworld gods get libations or buried offerings; nature or agricultural gods get grain. For daily *lararium* rites, a bit of incense is okay, as well as a bit of wine, juice, or maybe a coin or two.

Once you seem familiar with the basic elements of prayers, experiment with different words and offerings. You needn’t speak Latin to address the Roman gods and goddesses; however, one might consider Latin to be their native language and, therefore they might be more liable to pay attention to you and be flattered by your

—Continued on page 27





Spiritual Current

by Robert Barton

What joy and peace spreads its wing o'er us when at length we find and begin to walk a spiritual path. To treasure, at last, a place and practice that is our own, and to partake of a feast of the spirit that nourishes and fills. Enfin, to understand the speech and poetry of those ancient voices that have since childhood been inviting us to return and stand on holy ground. When by prayer, celebration and sacrifice we find the well of the Gods flowing through our lives, a steady stream where we may drink and be quenched.

At times, striking like a thundering bolt of awareness and at other times enwrapping gently in a warm and comforting embrace. Like a small child at his first savoring of honey we want — we need — more. A fiery inspiration fills our eyes and a new light is cast onto our world. Suddenly, we find truth through which we may suspend our disbelief and free ourselves of the grasp of the many modern pseudo-religions which hold our spirits hostage in this hard reality. For a moment to stand once again as in childhood when imagination and magic were real and we could see the world through eyes of wonder.

And so, a spiritual current is established in our lives which satisfies the craving of our souls. Like rain falling in a thirsty desert, it brings new life and hope. This current gives to us and our worship direction and constancy. A flowing spiritual center, which picks up momentum and strength as it grows and becomes ever more present in our personal existence.


Perhaps for some it lies in dedication to a single Deity, and a single culture. For others it may be born of an exploration of many Deities and many cultures. It may be realized in the creation of something new or in the study of and adherence to ancient and traditional paths. Many faces it may wear, and many winds it may ride into each of our worlds. One thing only: for those who seek in sincerity, it does come. Each individual will eventually find a way that is right and proper for him. This sacred well will spring into life, a flow will begin, and a spiritual current will be started.

Groups or Groves may also establish a consistent and flowing spirituality that is bound within their unified identity. As the people worship and sacrifice together, it is given birth. In much the same way as the spiritual current of an individual, that of a group may take life and grow, always inspiring and guiding the members. Each meeting and prayer will add to this progression; even socializing will help to strengthen the spiritual current.

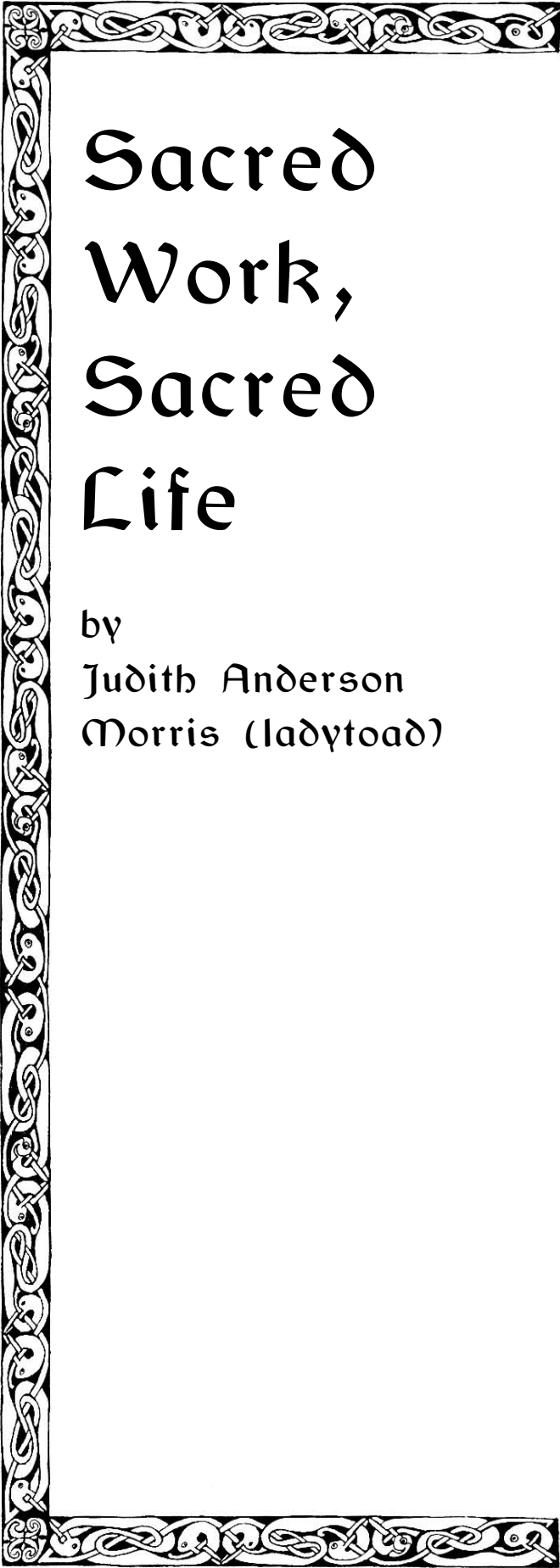
Even among large organizations these currents can be established and grow to encompass and include each

group and every member of that body. When started in a large association, they form like a web, each strand reaching from the center out through the local congregations and into the heart of each person. This spiritual identity and current must begin with and be anchored to the person who stands at the spiritual center of the larger group. When tended and nurtured properly, these streams of spirit strengthen and feed the entire organization.

In *Ár nDraíocht Féin* we need to establish a spiritual current, one that inspires and includes us all. It can be done as simply as a ceremony and sacrifice being performed for each high day, but being done in a manner that includes us all. These rituals should be generally done by the Archdruid as our spiritual leader, and in the name of *Ár nDraíocht Féin*. Each group should be named in a calling of the Groves, and among the ancestors should be named the old Groves that have gone. These rituals can be moved from place to place and hosted by different Groves and regions. Cultural foci may change from holiday to holiday, or they may be intentionally done Pan Indo-European. It is not so important how they are done or where they are done, the importance lies in that they are done and by whom they are done.

I believe that we have a wonderful opportunity to begin something which will be nourishing and strengthening to our whole organization. I hope that we may soon see a spiritual current established which flows through us and brings us together. I think this a worthy goal and it would be one of the most important legacies that we could pass to our children. 





Sacred Work, Sacred Life

by

Judith Anderson
Morris (ladytoad)

I've been thinking.

There's a spider building a web in the corner of my hearth. I've been watching her work. Occasionally, she stops to examine a section of weaving, decides that it is all wrong, and busily takes it apart to be rewoven to her satisfaction. I read somewhere that a spider's line contains the strength of a bridge cable, but it's her inner strength that interests me.

Last week I accidentally caught her web in my feather duster. By the next morning she had woven a new one. She never shows frustration; she's simply determined — and patient. She's amazing — so patient and perfecting in her creation — so patient in waiting for her food.

If only I could learn such patience; but I fear I am destined by nature to have a finger in every pot. There is always a small pile of books stacked at my bedstead, markers indicating where I stopped in my reading. Does everyone read books simultaneously like this, grabbing at words as if there will never be enough time to devour them all? I dash from task to task, from this idea to that, and in between, I am lost in some reverie of the moment.

This frenzy of thought and activity has become my work, and I take it very seriously. Soon the hot southern sun will be high in the sky, and my garden will beg to be watered and weeded, tidied and admired. Birds will call from the great oak in the yard for their daily sprinkling of seed. Squirrels will chatter for their corn. There's laundry to be done, but the computer and my novel-in-progress calls. There's a border of brambles and berries waiting to be hung in the bedroom, and the pencil cactus begging to be repotted since he's growing like a lanky teenager, all elbows and knees.

And my cat begs to be held and petted. These things — the house, the garden, my mind, are my work. Not, perhaps, the stuff of high industry, but meaningful nevertheless — and satisfying. I have been lucky in my life to have work that satisfies. When my children were very young, I had first college and then my free-lance writing, and, of course, them — a

job of negligible pay but just rewards. Later, I had a dozen gratifying years of teaching. Yes, I have been very lucky.

Work should create value in our lives. To get involved, to do something well, and to find meaning in what you do, to be satisfied— these things make work sacred, even if we are participating in mundane tasks like cutting the crusts off the bread and pressing a cookie cutter into what would otherwise be an ordinary peanut butter sandwich for a child.

Ordinary, everyday, but never humdrum. Never boring. When everything we do is art and everything we do provides satisfaction, then our world bursts with the meaningful — like the spider's. If we approach our lives with joy, even the smallest task is infused with meaning, and we are fulfilled.

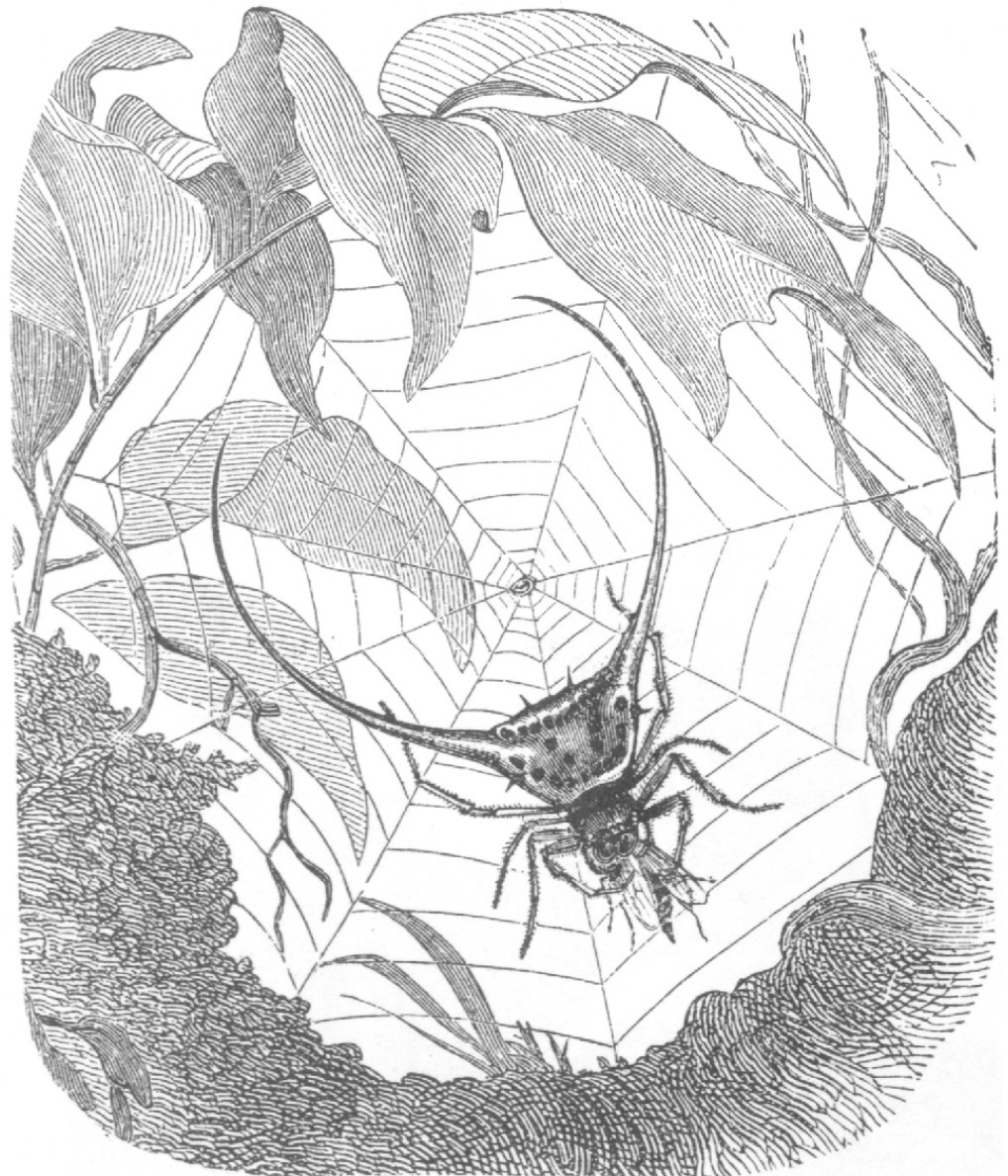
Americans, especially, have been brainwashed to think that it is only our peak experiences, our greatest accomplishments that have meaning. We tend to live our lives waiting for life to “happen” to us. If we never reach the mountain-top, we despair, say the climb was “all for nothing.”

What if we're very wrong? What if life is not lived at the top of the mountain? Once you get there, after the shouting and the initial thrill have gone, what is there really to do, after all, but climb down again? What if life— life with meaning and purpose and

satisfaction— were actually lived, not at the peak, but on the sides, in the struggle and in the climb? What if we stopped often to pick wild flowers from a sunny crevice and string them in our hair, to watch the clouds change and the weather come, to notice the shape of the most challenging rock face and wonder at its creation?

What if we live every day as if we will die tomorrow? What would happen then to crime and anger, jealousy and hatred, petty hurts, abuses? What if we approached all

of life with a steadfast calm, no matter how difficult the problem? What if we said, “This, too, shall pass,” to every hardship? Who would we then be? And how much of the sacred would each day hold? What if every day we spun our web and had it swept away by the broom, only to spin it again with infinite patience and a new design? What if we sat back satisfied at the end of every day, knowing that we had accomplished? Would you be different in your spider-self? Would I?





An Alternate ADF Liturgical Outline

by Ceisiwr Serith

This is intended to be an alternate outline for ADF ritual. It includes most of the elements found in the standard outline, some of which are rearranged. For the liturgical language I have used Proto-Indo-European, but these phrases can easily enough be replaced with the liturgical language preferred by a particular grove.

Celebrants:

Two Druids, D1 and D2

A Diviner

A Bard

A Drummer

A Fire Tender

Offerers

Except for the druids, the diviner, and the fire tender, the parts may be combined. The diviner and druids may not be the same, since part of the diviner's job is to check on the effectiveness of the druids' work, and it is not a good management technique to have someone write his own performance report. The fire tender must be separate because it is her job (and in Indo-European tradition the fire tender in public ritual is generally an unmarried girl or woman) to concentrate on the fire, which is the still point around which the ritual as a whole revolves. She must be equally still, except for her fire tending duties. The Bard leads any songs, determines before the ritual who is going to be making Praise Offerings, and then decides in which order they will be made. Except during songs, the Drummer keeps up a steady heartbeat rhythm, tying the actions and words together, and acting as a method of invoking a trance state in the participants.

Props:

Two staves, one for each druid

Divining equipment

Drum

Fire material, including tinder and kindling (a small fire is sufficient, so fuel is not necessary); a means to light the fire; something, preferably round such as a cauldron, to have the fire in; and a fire extinguisher.

Markers for the corners and gate of the ghordhos.

A shovel

Musical instrument for musical signal at the beginning of the rite.

A bowl filled with water and an asperger (which may be a short length of leafy branch) for purification.

A small pitcher of oil

A piece of silver

Three bowls of barley

Two pitchers of water

Two bottles of beer

A bowl for the Waters of Life

A bowl of corn meal

An empty bowl for the offering to the Outsiders

A small (perhaps a yard long) stake

Twine

If desired, cups and a ladle

Preliminary Ritual Activity

A. *Setting up of Ghordhos.* “Ghordhos” is the Proto-Indo-European word for “enclosed space,” (the ancestor of the English word “gird”) and is used for “nemeton,” more commonly the ADF term for the place where the ritual takes place. This step involves simply putting the ritual items in their places. Although different groves place their items in different places, for this ritual, the fire is considered to be in the center, on top of a sod which is a symbol of the world mountain (and thus a substitute for the bile), while in the west is the spot the sod was taken from. This spot is called the dhusnom (“dark place”), and functions as the well does in other ADF rituals, as a connection to the Underworld.

The sod also is a substitute for the original sod altars of the Proto-Indo-Europeans. If desired, a bile may be put to the east of the fire, the same distance as the dhusnom is to the west. The location of these items is symbolic. In a ritual sense, fire, dhusnom, and mountain or bile are all in the center, as they are in the Proto-Indo-European cosmology. Since this is impractical in a ritual, they are separated, with the optional bile in the east, where the sun comes up, and the dhusnom in the west, where it goes down. As the center of transformation of offerings, the fire is in the middle.

The ghordhos is traditionally square, with a gate in the east. It may be marked out with poles or rocks at the corners. The gate may be marked out with larger poles or rocks, about a yard apart. An interesting variation which I have used is to take two poles for each side of the gate, and put nails in them a foot or two from the top. Each pair of poles is then put on either side of the gateway about a foot apart and a grapevine wreath is hung from the nails, forming the druid sigil.

B. *Ritual Briefing.*¹

C. *Bardic Briefing, including asking about praise offerings.*

D. *Individual Meditations and Prayers (by the celebrants, and also by the participants if they so desire).*

1ST PHASE: STARTING THE RITE

(1) **Musical Signal.** This is the sign for people to come together. It may be a number of things — a drum, rattles, or a horn. A horn is most commonly used and will be assumed in this outline.

(2) **Opening Prayer.**² This is a declaration of the purpose of the rite. It includes a short description of the seasonal reason. For instance, one for Ostara could go like this:

D1: The bull bellows longingly for the missing cows.

Locked in the serpent’s bonds, they wait for release.

Locked tight in winter’s bonds, the earth awaits release.

D1: On the day when light hangs in balance we have come together to call the lightning down to earth to open the earth to the seeds we sow to call forth the dawn and release the waters.

(3) **Purification.** The Diviner brings bowl of water and asperger to D1, and purifies him, saying:

Div: May you be fit to come before the gods.

Diviner asperges D2, saying:

D2: May you be fit to come before the gods.

Diviner asperges the others, saying:

D2: May we all be fit to come before the gods.

(4) **Procession to site.**

D1: Set forth upon the shining path,
the ancestral way laid out before us.
Place your feet with measured stride,
in ancient rhythm.

The procession is formed in two lines, with D1 and D2 at the beginning, and the Diviners and Drummer at the end. The Bard begins a chant, which may be seasonal or simply be wordless sounds, and when everyone has joined in, the folk process to the site. When the procession reaches the gate, D1 and D2 bar the way with their staffs. When all are in place, D1 says:

D1: Weyom deiwons spendyeme.

D2: We are here to honor the gods!

They lift their staffs from the way and the others enter, split, and arrange themselves about the circle.

(5) **Sigil.** When all are in place, D1 and D2 take one step beyond the gates, turn towards each other, and cross the circle to the west, going one step beyond the circle

of the others present. They stop, and turn inwards to face the others, and take the step in to join them. In this way they trace out the ADF druid's sigil.

2ND PHASE: ESTABLISHING SACRED SPACE

(6) Lighting the hearth.³

D2: Dotores weswam, weyom yussme kred-dhemeni!

D1: Givers of Goods, we set our hearts toward you!

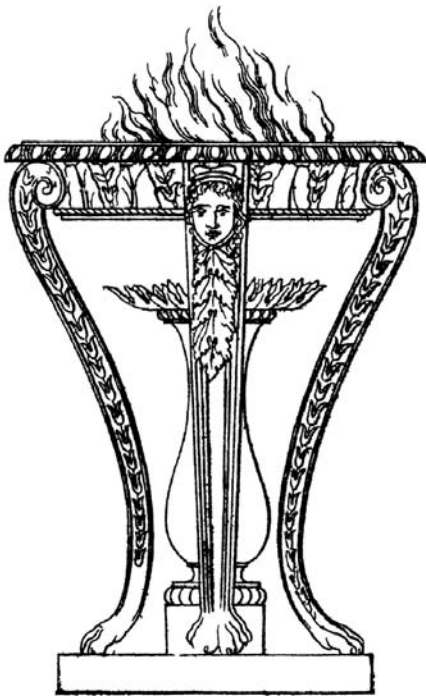
D2: Come we together on this holy day
across the distances that lay between us
to this time, to this place,
for one strong purpose:
To worship the Holy Ones in the proper manner.

D1 and D2 hold up their staffs vertically.

D1 & D2: May our worship be according to the Artus.

{The Artus is the structure behind the universe. In a Germanic rite, this word may be replaced with "wyrd" or "orlog;" in a Vedic with "rta," and in other cultural rites simply with "the proper way."}

D1: In the world's very center we light our hearth fire. At the point where the sacred and the mundane meet under the care of the shining goddess, under the watchful eye of Westya.



[Westya ("She of the Household") is a title for the Proto-Indo-European hearth goddess. In a ritual of another culture, it can simply be replaced with the appropriate name.] He spreads his arms.

D1: Let us pray with a good fire.

The fire tenders and D2 light the fire.

Bard begins singing:

Blaze in our midst, Purnoya burning,
Opening to the sacred world,
Center of the circle turning,
Flame from which the spiral's unfurled.

[Purnoya is simply another title for Westya, meaning "Fire Goddess."]

The others join in, repeating the chant until the fire is burning well. When it is, D1 says:

D1: Be our priestess, Purnoya, drawing the gods near,
and conveying our offerings to them.

All raise their hands while Offerer pours oil into the fire.

D2: Shining Westya, unite us all,
for by worshiping at a common hearth we are
made one family, one people.
Demespotya [Lady of the Home], your household is here.

All meditate a moment on the presence of the flames. Then, led by D2, all lower their hands and say:

All: Purnoya is in our midst!

(7) Opening the gate.⁴

D1: Out of the flame may the burning liquid flow,
May flaming water fill the land.
Akwam Nepot, from out of your well send
forth through the gates the Artus-filled
stream.

[Akwam Nepot ("Relative of the Waters") is the Proto-Indo-European gatekeeper. In other culture's rituals, "Artus-filled" can be replaced with "power-filled."]

All raise their hands while the Offerer pours oil into the fire.

D2: Akwam Nepot, here is an offering to you —
may the way be open between us.

All lower their hands.

D1: O Akwam Nepot, open the gate to us!

D2: O Akwam Nepot, dhwermos nos ruyes!

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D2: O Akwam Nepot, dhwermos nos ruyes!

(Each time *D1* says “open the gate to us,” he traces a widdershins triskelion in the air with his staff.)

D1: Open the gate for us, and allow our prayers and offerings to pass through.

Make the road firm from us to you.

From out of the center on spiraling waves,

Through the well of Akwam Nepot, send us the divine power, Purnoya, that we might make a world here, that we might make a place here, fit for the gods to enter.

D2: Join hands and, turning your right side to the hearth, walk in honor thrice about the center, drawing from the gate the fiery liquid out of which the world is formed.

Pray to Purnoya and Akwam Nepot that they might send it to us.

Circumambulate the fire once or three times; the number of times will mostly depend on the number of people present. With a lot of people, three times takes too long, and once is enough.

(8) Establishment of the vertical.

D2 asperges dhusnom, using the water from the bowl, and offers silver to it.

D2: By the dhusnom we are connected to the world below.

All touch the ground and say: Land to waters, the dhusnom extends.

D1 asperges the turf, and then scatters barley on it.

D1: By the holy mountain, we are connected to the world above.

All rise, raise arms, peruse the skies, and say: Land to sky, the mountain extends.

D1: Established within the three worlds along the vertical axis is our sacred place.

(9) Establishment of the horizontal.

D2: On the face of the earth we establish our sacred place.

The Diviner goes about the border, deosil, pouring water from a pitcher to mark it.

D2: Dheghemya Mater, te-bhyom gheumes:

[Earth Mother, we pour out a libation to you.]

On the expanse of your body we live,

Dheghemya Mater, te-bhyom gheumes, and on the expanse of your body we process to our ghordhos,

Dheghemya Mater, te-bhyom gheumes, and on the expanse of your body we perform our rites.

Dheghemya Mater, te-bhyom gheumes, Receive this offering.

Dheghemya Mater, te-bhyom gheumes: Be honored by our actions.

Dheghemya Mater, te-bhyom gheumes: You are honored in our hearts.

“Dheghemya Mater, te-bhyom gheumes” is repeated until the Diviner is done. When she is, she holds up the pitcher and says:

Div: The great sea encloses us.

Meg moris nos gherdmi.

She puts the pitcher down and takes her place again.

D1: Our ghordhos is sacred, set apart, within the border of the encircling river. Pure and sacred is this place of ours, fit for the gods to enter.



When this is done, D1 says:

D1: With the vertical axis well-established

D2: With the horizontal world well-placed

D1 & D2: Our sacred place is well-built about us.

(10) Honoring the Three Kindred.⁵

D1: A ghordhos is prepared for the entrance of the holy ones and we are prepared to greet them.

The Offerer pours beer into the dhusnom. D1 says:

D1: To the spirits of the ancestors we offer beer.
May there be between us the bond of hospitality.

The Offerer pours some water into a bowl and hands it to D2, who holds it up and says:

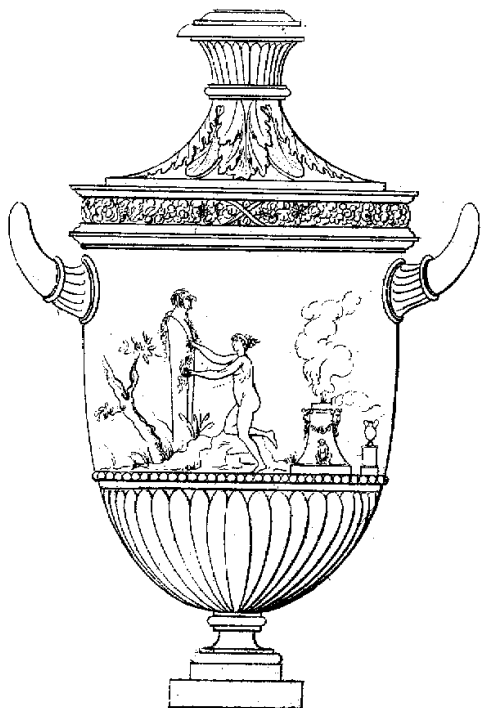
Nektar spekyo!
Behold the waters of life!

All repeat this. D2 then puts the bowl down.

The Offerer pours barley into the fire.

D1: To the gods and goddesses we offer barley
May there be between us the bond of hospitality.

The Offerer pours some water into a bowl and hands it to D2, who holds it up and says:



Nektar spekyo!

Behold the waters of life!

All repeat this. D2 then puts the bowl down.

The Offerer scatters corn about the ghordhos, while D1 says:

D1: To the spirits of this land we offer maize.
May there be between us the bond of hospitality.

The Offerer pours more water into the bowl and hands it to D2, who holds it up and says:

Nektar spekyo!
Behold the waters of life!

All repeat this. D2 then puts the bowl down next to the fire.

(11) The Outsiders.⁶

The Diviner takes beer from the center, goes to the gateway, and puts it down there.

D2: As the diviner touches you, she will turn your face toward the encircling walls of the ghordhos about us.

When all have been turned, D2 says:

D2: Step back, tighten up the tribe's warding ring to guard the ghordhos from all that threatens.
Lift up your arms in warding gesture, a sign to those who would disturb our worship.

The Diviner hoods herself, picks up the beer, steps into gateway and the bowl for the Outsiders and says:

To those beyond the borders
whether gods or goddesses
whether spirits or dead
to those who were before us
and dwell in the darkness of our world's shadow
We come to you with offering.

She goes outside the ghordhos in a downwind direction (or counter-clockwise if there is no wind) and pours the beer into the bowl. She then averts her gaze, tips over the bowl with her left foot, and says:

Serpents, take this as your payment.
Ogwhiyes, usmei serkmes.
Bhertod, ghetod.
Bhertod, ghetod.
Bhertod, ghetod.

[Serpents, we requite you your loss. Take this and go.]

(12) **Recapitulation of the Nemeton.**

D1: Close your eyes and see the sacred world we have entered.

At its very center is the hearth fire, the fire presided over by Purnoya and Akwam Nepot.

Akwam Nepot and Purnoya allow our prayers to pass through and back through will the gods send their gifts in turn. Breathe deeply, and with each breath the gate is clearer.

(Pause)

D1: Extending downward is the dhusnom,
The dhusnom connects us with the world of the Waters.

The Waters being the source of life. Breathe deeply, and with each breath the dhusnom sinks deeper.

(Pause)

D1: Extending upward is the mountain, the mountain connects us with the world above.

Where above dwell the gods, the shining ones.

Breathe deeply, and with each breath the mountain rises higher.

[In rituals where the sod is replaced with a bile, "mountain" would also be replaced with word "bile."]

(Pause)

D1: We stand in the land between, on the world of the earth,

Between is the world of the Earth.

The Earth that is girded with bordering walls.

The walls within which we stand protected.

Breathe deeply, and with each breath the border grows stronger.

(Pause)

D1: Within the enclosed land the Kindred are present,

Present are the ancestors, the deities, the land spirits.

All these beings share our ritual with us. Breathe deeply, and with each breath your awareness of them is greater.

(Pause)

D1: These are the elements of our sacred world:

The center fire opening.

The dhusnom and mountain extending.

The border limiting.

The Holy Ones watching.
Remember this inner vision
and open your eyes to see it in outward reality.

D2: May the Holy Ones bless this ghordhos:
From edge to edge, blessings upon it!
From corner to corner, blessings upon it!
From border to center, blessings upon it!
Upon all that happens within it, blessings!
Upon all who worship within it, blessings!

3RD PHASE: OFFERINGS AND OMENS

(13) **Praise Offerings.**

D1 goes to the east of the fire and plants a stake in the ground. He ties the asperging branch to it with the twine. He sprinkles the branch with barley, saying:

D1: Receive the gifts of the people and convey them to the gods.

D2: Have the folk brought praise?

Bard: They have!

The praise offerings are made, with the Bard indicating the order in which they will be made. When the last offering has been made, *D2* removes the branch from the stake, and puts it the fire, saying:



D2: The gifts of the people rise to the gods
on the smoke of the sacrifice.

All: May our prayers go clearly, without hindrance, to
those we have praised.

When the branch has burned, D2 returns to her place.

(14) The Omen.

D1: Diviner, take the omens, to see how the Holy
Ones have received our offerings.

Diviners take the omens and report what they have
said to the others. If any action is required as a result it
is taken.

4TH PHASE: RECEIVING AND USING THE RETURNED POWER

(15) The Waters of Life.

The Offerer takes the bowl of Nektar to D1 and D2. D1
and D2 hold their hands out in blessing over the bowl.

D2: With the gates opened and the offerings made,
we have established the bond of hospitality with
the gods.

D1: What the gods have given to us, we distribute
freely.

The waters are distributed, carried around the circle by
the Offerer. They may be ladled from the bowl into
cups, or the participants may dip their hands into the
water and drink from their palms. While this is going
on, a song may be sung.

5TH PHASE: UNWINDING AND ENDING THE RITUAL

(16) Thanking of Entities.

D2: With our worship ended, we prepare to return
from our sacred place,

D1: We thank first the Holy Ones who have shared this
time with us.

D2: Spirits of the Land

All: Weyom yussme gwrtns dhemes!
We thank you!

D1: Deities from the elder days

All: Weyom yussme gwrtns dhemes!
We thank you!

D2: Ancestors who gave us birth

All: Weyom yussme gwrtns dhemes!
We thank you!

D1: Akwam Nepot, may the flow of burning fire now
cease,

may the gate between our world and the world of
the shining ones close!

D1 makes a deosil triskelion with his staff, saying:

D1: Akwam Nepot, tu dhwerns opiweryoyes!

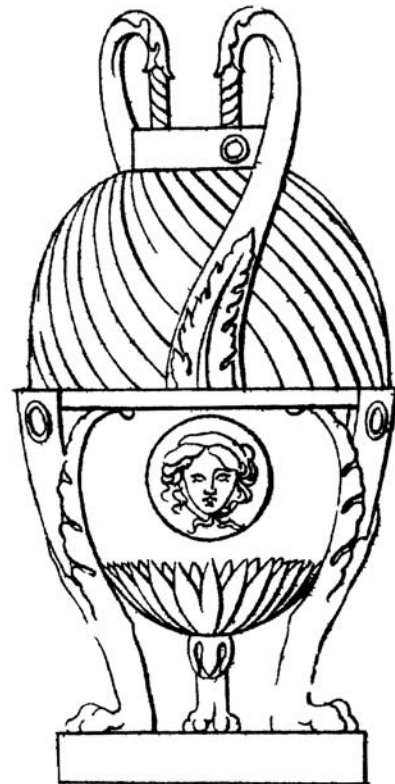
D2: We give thanks for your great help.

D1: Weyom te ghebhtibhyos megbhyos gwrtns
dhemes.

D2: May the way always be open to us when we need
it.

D1: Purnoya, guardian of our common hearth,
first called to and last to be thanked,
though your fire here be extinguished,
it burns in our hearts.

D1: Priestess to the gods,
though your fires here be extinguished,



All: Weyom te gwrtns dhemes!


We thank you!

D1: With the hearth fire extinguished,
the center of our sacred world is gone.
With the flow of fiery water ceased
the ghordhos dissolves about us.
We will carry it in our hearts, though,
nestled deep with the love of the gods.

D2: We have done as our ancestors did
and as our children will do
and the gods have answered.

D1: With our sacred space dissolved
With the gate closed
With the gods worshiped
We will walk in wisdom.
All: Sont sdhi.
[So be it.]

(17) Recessional.

Everyone leaves, again in two files, one moving widdershins and one deosil. This may be to a song, to silence, or to drumming. 



Notes:

1. The Bard takes note of what praise offerings will be made beforehand and then arranges them so that they might be done in an orderly fashion. This eliminates the hesitation and wondering who comes next that sometimes results without this. During praise offering section of the ritual, the Bard may either indicate who is next, or actually go to that person and take their place during the offering. I believe this idea was originated by Gwynne Green.

2. The seasonal celebration is to be put in at the point. For instance, a celebration of a hearth goddess (appropriate to Brigid's Day) would belong at the point of lighting the fire, while one directed at the Outsiders (such as Beltane) would be done at that point.

3. The fire in the center is both the common hearth of the group and the sacrificial fire. In Indo-European tradition, the former is circular and the latter square; by using a round fire pan over a square sod, both are combined. "Let us pray with a good fire" is from the Rig Veda, 1.26.8, in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty's translation (New York: Penguin Books, 1981). Oil is offered to the fire quite simply because it burns. Other flammable offerings may be made instead.

4. The liturgical language version and the English version of "[Gate Keeper] open the gate to us" may be done in such a way that they overlap. I believe this to be a suggestion by Gwynne Green. The triskelion is widdershins because in Indo-European tradition that is the direction of dissolving and thus of opening. A modern equivalent would be with screws, which are turned clockwise to tighten and counter-clockwise to loosen.

5. The Kindred are offered to in the same order that the cosmos is recreated: Ancestors (world below), Deities (world above), Land Spirits (world around). The Ancestors should be offered a dark beer, appropriate for the dark lower world, and something that will sink into the ground. The Deities are offered barley, since that is the traditional sacred grain of the Proto-Indo-Europeans; it may be replaced by an appropriate grain in any of the descendant traditions. The Land Spirits are given maize (in the United States and Canada) as a nod to the American Indian traditions; in other countries another grain might be more appropriate.

6. The Outsiders are envisioned in the form of serpents, one of the two most common ways for them to be seen in Indo-European tradition. (The other is as wolves.) The bowl is taken downwind to keep any of the offering from blowing back upon the offerer. The offerer averts their eyes to signify that a relationship is not being established, but quite the opposite. Since one part of the Outsiders consists of those spirits of chaos out within which we form our cosmos, they are "required" (a nice word for "bought off") for their loss of this territory.

Book Reviews

21 LESSONS OF MERLYN: A STUDY IN DRUIDIC MAGIC AND LORE

BY DOUGLAS MONROE

Llewellyn Publications, 1992

448 pages • ISBN: 0 875 42496 1

Few books have raised such a fervor in the Neopagan community as the *21 Lessons of Merlyn* by Douglas Monroe. While many wide-eyed newcomers flock to Druidry after reading and rereading this mixture of romantic fantasy and spiritual primer, many older and more jaded veterans of our religion denounce the book with such force and vigor, that those who liked it head for the hills with their tails tucked firmly between their legs. It cannot be denied that the *21 Lessons of Merlyn* has brought more people to Druidry's door than any other book, past or present. Since each of us is bound to encounter countless fans of this book — and now its sequel — we had better take the time to understand it ourselves.

I had first heard of this book from several people who thought it was the “best thing ever” and urged me to run out and buy it. This was before I was involved in the Neopagan community, and before I identified myself as a Druid. For some reason, I never got around to reading it. Almost as soon as I subscribed to the IMBAS Mailing List I started to hear about it again. I noticed that each post that began, “Wow! I just finished the best book I ever read and it made me sign onto this list! It's called *The 21...*”, was immediately followed by 39 blistering counter-posts, some of which brutally denounced the book and its publisher, Llewellyn. Others asked, “When are we going to put up a FAQ about this book?” Still others that pointed to the location of all the FAQs that were already up. Some people took delight in pointing out every sentence in the book that could be untrue and others merely repeated with passion what they thought they heard about it, with all the conviction of someone who had actually read it. Many of the detractors pointed out that Monroe quotes one source as being especially important: *The Book of Pheryllt*, which was proclaimed by 18th Century Druid revivalist Iolo Morganwg as being authentic, but denounced by others to be a fraud and a forgery. I couldn't resist, I ran right out and bought it!

Well, it's certainly not “the best book ever,” but neither is it the horrible travesty of truth and righteousness that its detractors claim. *The 21 Lessons of Merlyn* is actually two books shuffled into one: the first is an adventure story about young Arthur, who grows up in a monastery and is befriended by Merlyn, the Druid, and taken on various trips and adventures. The second is a book of lessons about how to be a Druid, covering

THE LOST BOOKS OF MERLYN: DRUID MAGIC FROM THE AGE OF ARTHUR

BY DOUGLAS MONROE

Llewellyn Publications, 1998

480 pages • ISBN: 1 567 18471 5

*Reviewed by
Bardd Dafydd*

everything from the wheel of the year to a large selection of rituals and magic workings. Each chapter in the story is followed by a short section that explains the lessons from that chapter and gives instruction for a meditation, a ritual, a recipe, a song or a sacred tool to make. Along the way, Monroe also freely expresses his opinions about what Druidry is, where it came from, where it should go.

One of Monroe's most strongly argued theories is that all Druids were men and that there was a sister organization called the Motherhood of Avalon for women. According to him, when the Christian Church's persecution made it too difficult to openly practice the Celtic religions, the Druids retreated into the Church of Culdee. The Motherhood disbanded and scattered, eventually being called “witches” for what trace of old knowledge they retained. Monroe believes that to progress spiritually, men and women should not worship together. Indeed, it seems that he doesn't want them to be near each other at all. To prove that this separation of genders is not only historically accurate, but spiritually sensible, Monroe throws in arguments from all sorts of fields, like biology, psychology and philosophy, to name a few. I got as far as chapter 12, entitled, “Deadliest of the Species” before these views irritated me too much to continue. I just don't think he likes women.

Other than that, I liked most of his philosophy and exercises. I like his use of imagined myth to explain the concepts. Most of it is a very entertaining read and gives a certain “feel” for Druidry that you can't get in very many places. We have no way of knowing if this is anything like the “feel” of the Druidry of the Ancients, but I don't think that matters very much. They were them and we are us.

The danger of this book is that Monroe doesn't make it very clear which parts come from an older tradition and which parts he made up on the spot. Nor does he use footnotes or identify his sources, merely providing a list of books he says he consulted. So for those who prefer strict adherence to scholarship over inspiration, this book is very weak. All in all, I think the very strong negative reaction to this book by some of the Neopagan community is undeserved, and could very possibly be sour grapes. The fact is, it sold very well while most Neopagan books sell very poorly.

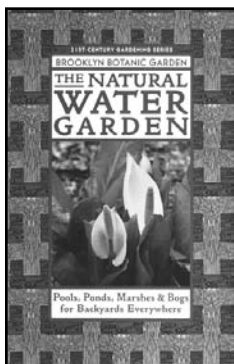
One common accusation the detractors constantly make is that Monroe claims that pumpkins were European trees. In fact, on his “Recommended Books on



Druidism and Indo-European Paleopaganism” web page, Isaac Bonewits writes: “I do not recommend Douglas Monroe (21 Lessons of Hogwash — excuse me, Merlyn), Edward Williams a.k.a. ‘Iolo Morganwg’ (*Welsh Triads Vol. 3, The Barddas*) — source of much of Monroe’s garbage —over 90% of what is available in print about the ancient Druids is nonsense, so read carefully and look for unverified (and/or unverifiable) assumptions, ‘sacred druid trees’ that are actually North American vines . . .” Although Monroe attributed the American Halloween custom of carving pumpkins to an older Celtic custom of carving squash and turnips, I could find no place where he claimed pumpkins were either European or known by the Druids. The whole thing about “Pumpkins are not IE Trees!” is so silly that anytime you hear it you can be sure the person saying it did not read the book very carefully.

In *The Lost Book of Merlyn*, Monroe addresses his critics and answers their objections— pretty well, I thought. He explains why he uses a fictitious story to make his points (“because that’s how the Celts would have done it”), explains where he got his copy of the *Book of Pheryllt*, and boldly proclaims that he doesn’t care how authentic it is, only how effective it is. He even makes a few decent arguments to support his assertion that the original Druids were all men. (I still think he just doesn’t like women!)

I really liked some of his exercises and meditations in this book. They are very inspired. I recommend these books to any student of Druidry, with the strong warning that you cannot use them for reference unless you are very careful. In other words, don’t quote him! But aside from his misogynic attitudes, they are a good source for inspiration and enjoyment.



THE NATURAL WATER GARDEN : POOLS, PONDS, MARSHES & BOGS FOR BACKYARDS EVERYWHERE

C. COLSTON BURRELL (EDITOR)

Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1997

112 pages • ISBN: 0 889 53801 9

*Reviewed by Barbara S. Knox, Ph.D.
(White Owl)*

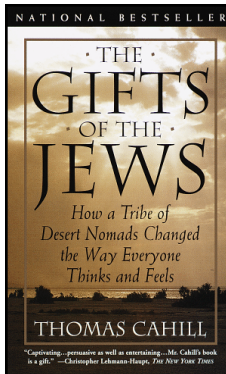
Concern over the plight of frogs and toads inspires the thought of creating a little pond, one that can be seen from a window, where amphibians would make their home and multiply. A search through stacks of books at the public library and screen after screen of on-line books turned up nothing on how to make one. One quickly bogs down in discussions of circulating pump size, fountain styles, filters, artificial waterfalls, and specifications for plumbing and wiring these elaborate creations. Once completed, they are filled with imported koi and exotic water lilies.

Then came *The Natural Water Garden*, a slender volume packed with practical information. A collection of how-to essays with an ecological perspective, it focuses

on mimicking the structure and functions of natural wetland systems. Everything that you need to know to create a water garden that is bio-diverse and easy to maintain is there: construction, planting, maintaining pools and ponds, a storm water marsh (using water runoff from your roof and driveway), a bog garden, and even how to restore a stream bank naturally.

Native wetland plants and nursery sources are listed for the various regions of the U.S. with scientific and common names and lots of excellent color photos. Pumps and fountains are not even listed in the index. What a find!

Book Reviews



THE GIFTS OF THE JEWS: HOW A TRIBE OF DESERT NOMADS CHANGED THE WAY EVERYONE THINKS AND FEELS

BY THOMAS CAHILL

Doubleday, 1998

291 pages • ISBN: 0 385 48248 5

Reviewed by Open of Triskele River Grove

The Gift of the Jews is an interesting and perhaps controversial book for both Christians and Pagans. The first chapters paint a graphic scene of ancient Sumer culture. From this, Thomas Cahill tells how the patron god of Terah (Abraham's father) differentiated himself from the pagan world in which he originated.

The purpose of Cahill's book is to describe how this differentiated god created a new and different view of time, and with that, a different mind set and world view. This is Cahill's "gift of the Jews," and he suggests it is the foundation of all western art, culture, and science.

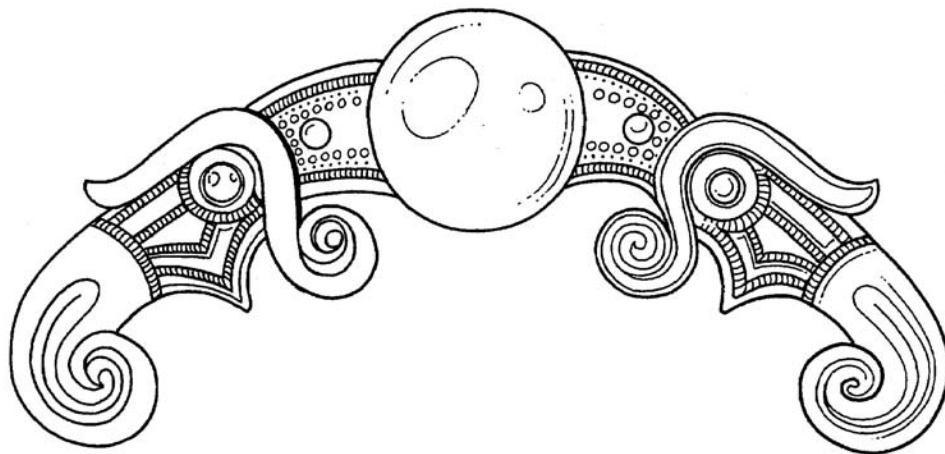
The book may be controversial for Christians because Cahill sees the Bible as a collection of edited truths and myths, that is, stories revised over the years for religious, social, and political purposes. For Cahill, the divine revelations of the Bible do not start with Genesis 1:1. He believes scripture starts with Terah's patron god calling Terah to leave Sumer. Earlier portions of Genesis he attributes to Hebrew versions of Sumerian myths.

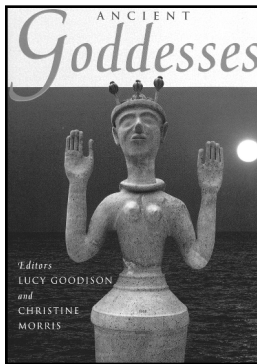
The book may be interesting for Pagans in that it deals with the very birth of Judeo-Christian beliefs in a Pagan world. The culture of Sumer is described in detail, including a strong description of Pagan concepts. The Epic of Gilgamesh is quoted and paraphrased at some length.

Some Pagans may see the birth of western thought as a wrong turn from matriarchy to patriarchy. Cahill looks at those very same concepts and arrives at the opposite conclusion. He sees linear time as superior to the wheel of the year, and the foundation of all humans have built since then.

Personally, I did not find Cahill's poor opinion of a Pagan world view convincing. He dismisses the Sumerian culture too easily after spending so much time describing it. He claims the wheel of the year meant everything was locked in an endlessly repeating cycle of sameness where nothing ever changed and nothing truly new ever began. However, a few pages earlier he recognized that the Sumerians made great advances and discoveries in a short time span. Cahill downplays their advances because Sumerians claimed their inventions were gifts of the gods. What's wrong with seeing advancements as a gift of the gods? Such beliefs may help stabilize a culture that is changing as its technology advances.

Personally, I felt that parts of the book spoke to me, such as his request that the reader respect the god of Abram, Issac and Jacob and what he has contributed to the world. This has added some sweetness to a bitter opinion.



**ANCIENT GODDESSES**

EDITED BY
LUCY GOODISON
AND
CHRISTINE MORRIS

British Museum Press, 1998

224 pages

ISBN: 0 7141 1761 7

Reviewed by Skip Ellison

The purpose of this book was to reexamine the archaeological evidence from the 1960s and to look at new archaeological evidence concerning two questions: 1) the idea of an original Mother Goddess or Great Goddess, and 2) the idea that early polytheistic civilizations were matriarchal and peaceful before the stirrings of the patriarchal, monotheistic religions.


The editors assembled a group of ten eminent scholars and joined with them in addressing these questions in the field of their expertise. The group includes: Professors Ruth Tringham and Margaret Conkey (Overall look at figurines in past cultures), Dr. Lynn Meskell (Archaeology of Çatalhöyük in Turkey), Dr. Joan Westenholz (Ancient Near East 3000 - 1000 B.C.E.), Professor Karel van de Toorn (Early Israelite Religion), Professor Fekri Hassan (Earliest Goddess of Egypt), Dr. Lucy Goodison and Dr. Christine Morris (Sacred World of the Minoans), Dr. Mary Voyatzis (Origins of Greek Goddesses), Dr. Caroline Malone (Ancient Malta), Dr. Elizabeth Shee Twohig (North-West Europe 4200 - 2500 B.C.E.), and lastly, Dr. Miranda Green (Gallo-British Goddesses).

The individual chapters are wonderful with a wealth of photographs and illustrations. The overall picture developed is that most of the early civilizations were true polytheists. The goddesses they worshiped were individual goddesses, not just different aspects of an overreaching Great Goddess. For each of the areas examined, examples of the original and new archaeological evidence is given, showing where the idea of a Great Goddess came from and what evidence has been found to change that conclusion.

The second question turned out to be a little harder to answer definitively. There are compelling arguments that show that the early civilizations were male dominated. In some of the areas, women were equal in status and ability to hold property, but there is no real evidence of a matriarchy.

Overall, the book is an excellent addition to the bookshelf of any Neo-Pagan or person interested in the history of religions.

efforts to please them. Learn as much as you can about the deities to whom you seem drawn and speak to them, with offerings, whenever you can, and you will begin to develop relationships with them.

Every household could stand to adopt a daily ritual or prayer to the household gods Vesta, the Lares, and Penates. Invite them into your home, your life, and your family, and they will protect you and keep your home safe from harm. Most Roman households did so as a matter of tradition, regardless of religious piety, and the Romans survived and prospered for centuries. They must have been doing something right. 

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Storytelling

The Dancing Lady

by Laura Shoemake



“Ma, read me a story,” the sleepy-eyed, red-haired Colleen clamored at her mother’s elbow.

Lucie took stock of the kitchen around her. The noon meal’s dishes were done, and supper was simmering on the stove. Smiling, Lucie took off her apron and folded it over a chair.

“Sounds like a good idea! You get the book and I’ll get the quilt. Meet me under the ‘Dancing Lady.’”

The Dancing Lady was an old oak tree with branches that stretched out like the graceful arms of a lady at a grand ball. Her dress changed colors with the seasons. The first sign of red fringe was beginning to show on her now. As the wind swayed to a tempo Lucie recognized, a brief shower of acorns landed softly on the quilt as she and her mother spread it out.

Lucie settled against the oak, and Colleen lay down on the quilt next to her mother, gazing up at the swaying branches above her.

Lucie began her tale:

“In a land far away, and in a time distant from here, the gods and people called Druids lived together. The people understood that the creatures of the earth, sky, and waters were created by the gods for everyone’s care. The people knew they were surrounded by plants and animals which were to be honored.”

“Trees, in particular, were important in this world. They touched the sky, earth, and water, giving them wisdom beyond our own. In their wisdom was strength; in strength was courage. These were qualities valued by man and by the gods.”

“Do you believe that, Ma?” Colleen asked through a yawn. She lifted her head sleepily from the quilt as she struggled to stay awake. “Do you believe the trees are wise?”

“I believe that trees, like any living thing, have a message or a lesson for us, if we just stop and listen,” replied the mother.

“Even the Dancing Lady?” Colleen asked, as she sat up, wide-eyed.

“Yes, especially her. She’s an oak tree, and like any tree, she offers shelter and protection. But there’s more to her. From her branches to her roots, if you reach for her, you can feel her how strong and wise she is. There is a joy

—Continued on page 30

Casting a gaze of awe upon the old grizzled storyteller, a child comes forth with a simple request: "Tell us a tale please."

"So, you would like a story, young one," replies the ancient man. "Very well then, sit and listen to a true story, a tale of our ancestors."

This was the story he that told.

Our people once basked under the rays of two suns. One rose from our very midst; the other from the south-east. Both were strong, vibrant suns; but since one was far away, we paid it little mind. It, however, looked upon us with lust in its eyes and hunger dripping from its ravenous mouth. For while the two suns were born of the same fire, they were very different indeed.

The sun that rose from our midst was a nurturing sun. It shone down upon our way of life and our prosperity. Its warmth preserved our people and its light gave us strength, inspiring our freedom.

The sun from the southeast arose with fire in its eyes, its rays gleaming against the hilt of a sword and the plume of a helmet. The light it gave shown down upon a civilization built on the backs of slaves, paid for by the spoils of war. Wherever this sun beat down, the shadow of the centurion was cast.

The two suns might have been brothers once, but their separate worlds forever cast them as adversaries. The fires that fueled their existence were different as well, defined by their differing paths, yet both burned with equal intensity.

It was only a matter of time.

The sun from the southeast moved swiftly across our plains and forests, burning everything in its path. Some of us tried to stand against it, but alone we were swept away by the onslaught. Finally, and perhaps too late, we looked to the sun from our midst for help.

Marshaling all of our forces, we set out with the sun guiding our way. The battles were fierce and long; the tide of war turned back and forth many a time. The two suns fought with all their might and all their skills. But alas, with the fates seemingly against us, in the end, we could not hold back the invading sun.

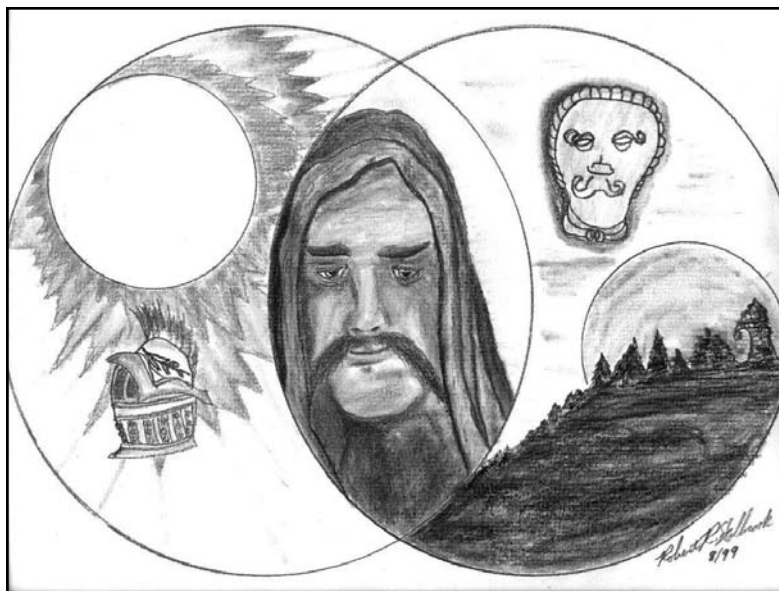
Knowing the end was near, the sun from our midst took to his black war-horse and strode out to offer himself so

—Continued on page 30

Storytelling

The Tale of the Two Suns

by Bryan Morache



The Dancing Lady

Continued from page 28...

that rushes through her. She will share this joy with you, if you get to know her. Hers is the magic of discovery, waiting to be found.”

“What can I discover from listening to a tree? I think you’re making that up.” Colleen protested.

“Lay back and listen. The story will answer your questions.” Colleen lay down as Lucie continued her tale. “One day, new people came into the land and told the Druids they were wrong and should not worship their gods. Some people got hurt, and others became afraid. They stopped worshipping their gods and turned away from taking care of the earth and its creatures.”

“The trees continued to worship the gods because they knew the gods were their sources of light, water, and life. One god, Lugh, was the god of the sun, and with him came great skill and wisdom. The trees followed the cycle of Lugh; they worshipped and honored him. So Lugh continued to bless them with his strength and wisdom.”

“The trees honored Lugh by blooming in the spring, welcoming the sun’s return to the earth with new life and fragrant blossoms. In summer, the time of Lugh’s greatest strength, the trees were full with life as well. In autumn, to say goodbye to Lugh, the trees turned their leaves to brilliant colors, to reflect his brilliance upon the land. In winter, they lay still and quiet, awaiting his return to the land, so that they too could live again.”

“The trees continued to care for the other creatures of the gods, offering them food and protection. They lived as the gods desired. Because of they way they live, the trees still live long and strong today . . .”

Lucie’s story trailed away as she watched Colleen curled up sleeping next to the Dancing Lady, an acorn in her hand. Silently she patted the tree as she bade it watch over her daughter. Quietly, then, she went to the house to check on supper.



The Tale of The Two Suns

Continued from page 29...

that we might make our escape. In a noble act of defiance, the sun from our midst hurled his spear towards the enemy camp. It came down not one foot from where the sun from the southeast stood in his crimson robe.

Our sun was his prisoner, but he would not allow his spirit to be crushed. Locked away in a dungeon or tortured to the very edge of death, his soul refused to be enslaved. Finally, infuriated that his “pet” would not bend a knee to his will, the sun from the southeast used all of his strength to strike down the sun from our midst.

But while his body passed from this life, even in death, his spirit refused to yield.

Those of us who remained sought the seclusion of the deep woods and mountains. We kept to ourselves and lived as our ancestors had done, practicing the old ways in cathedrals of forest and glen. All of us knew what had happened to the sun from our midst; we had our ways of knowing such things.

When he was killed, part of his spirit went into each one of us. The light of the sun from our midst now rests within our spirits. It is the fire in our souls, the passion of creation, and the fuel of our inspiration. Most of all it is the flame of freedom; for it is as free people that we best honor the Shining Ones, each in our own way. It is this great gift that binds us together and gives meaning to who we are.

The sun from the southeast may shine everywhere now, its rays scorching all of nature; but it may never destroy our spirits. For it is the sun from our midst that burns within us all.

“But how does it end?” asks the little one.

With a gleam in the old man’s eye he says, “The tale will end when our people are no more, when the end of time is at hand, and when there is no one left to tell the tale.”

“But there’s no such thing as the end of time,” states the child with a quizzical expression.

“Precisely,” is all the old storyteller would say before closing his eyes to fade from the world about him.

The day was hot and dusty, the wind making the digging slow going. The sun was beating down upon us like a torturous overseer, its rays might as well have been a whip on our backs. We had been out here now for over a month and had uncovered almost half of the great library. It was just one of several networked storehouses all over this land. Each one represented the history of their surrounding culture. The two men whose life's work it was to preserve this history must be truly admired.

"Dr. Westlayan, I think this is the last of their books," called my assistant.

"Thank you William," I replied. "Just put it with the rest of them for deciphering."

It was difficult to translate their writings, as we had only recently unlocked the key to their confusing language. They put so much to history that creating a timeline was tremendously difficult because they tended to record the past as well as the present in no particular order. I found this eastern society to be extremely violent and corrupt. There were government takeovers, espionage, betrayals, murders, and too much intrigue to possibly imagine. They were totally crime ridden, as evidenced by the great number of detectives and crimefighters in their culture. This must have been a society in great turmoil and constant flux.

There were other discoveries of sister libraries throughout this land. Each reflected the culture and technology of the society around it. To the north there was a tremendously advanced civilization with spacecraft and interplanetary travel. The best speculation is that they migrated to another star system. One has to wonder though, why they would leave behind such a rich record of their accomplishments. They had put stations in space and founded a Federation of Planets.

According to one of their scholars, the people of this civilization had even conquered time itself.

In the south, there was a great romantic tradition. It seems the culture in the south was centered on emotional involvement. There was an extremely social civilization and they were very open about sexuality and all matters regarding intimacy. Indeed, most of their technical journals were related to acts of sexual intimacy, and through them we have regained much lost knowledge. There are many historical records confirming that the notion of love and the activity of sex were paramount in their civilization. It has been speculated that the entire society was based upon these raw emotions with their leaders chosen for their virility.

—Continued on next page

Storytelling

The Great Library

by Bryan Morache



While the west had a great pioneering tradition, it was strangely primitive and lacking much of the technological advances of its neighboring cultures. Westerners relied on four-wheeled carts pulled by animals for mass transit and at times rode them for sport. Their towns were small and always agriculturally or herd based, cattle being the primary stock animal. There were usually two factions; one represented by a man with a star, the other with a dark colored hat. Usually, the two factions would meet at a time referred to as “high noon” in the main street to conduct violent battles. These people were very racially biased, with many conflicts between two races, the red and white men. We have literary evidence of a hot and dusty climate, much like the weather now.

Oddly enough, throughout all this historical evidence, we have never been able to agree on what this civilization’s social order was. Women, at times, were the most noble of the two sexes and at other times they are the most devious. It is clear that in the west, the men were dominant and that women were generally the homemakers or saloon keepers. Other cultures made a less clear distinction between men and women. They tend to vary from equality to downright domination of one sex over the other. It seems to matter little what technological advances may have been made; the role of women and men, much like the society we have seen here, was in a constant flux.

One discovery of note— in the center of this land we have uncovered a library of tremendous thought and religious significance. The books presented here show a great sense of foresight and spiritual enlightenment. They seem to be the complete opposite of what we have discovered elsewhere. There are books on meditation and communication with the divine, tales of the spirit world, and past life existence. It seems that while these people had an ever-changing culture, their spirituality remained a constant. They should be commended that while they seemed so set in their cultural ways, their religious practices were very diversified. They appear to be very open to differing spiritual paths and extremely tolerant of different religions. This advanced spiritual thought process is very commendable for a civilization lost so long ago.

Of final note, as we decipher more of the material of this broad and varied civilization, it can only be concluded that their one common success has been in their skill at recording history. We would know nothing of this great culture without the likes of Tom Clancy, Ruth Westheimer, Danielle Steele, Louis Lamour, H.G. Wells, Gene Rodenbury, and Stuart Piglet. Even more so, all of these works of history would be lost to us if it had not been for the life’s work of Mr. Barnes and Mr. Noble.

Poetry

SAMHAIN

Black folds, eternal

Invite and terrify

Dagda’s seed within

Embrace and mortify

Gravid now, The Lady

Maiden and yet The Crone

New life strains within

Vital and bound for death

Her knife ensanguined

Her blood and all the world’s

— Ravenbard



UNTITLED

Inhale,

let the mustiness fill your lungs.

Take note,

of where your pumpkins grow.

The flames tame themselves,

and the ground cools...

—Jason Garner

LUNA 7.1.99 7:30PM

Age old contract

Rythm of life

Cycles turning

Flowing

Daughter of life

Lifts arms

To Old Ones and Moon

And Earth

Night

Quiet

Time of comfort

Rest, renew

Moon

Shining bright

Caressing sleeping face

Moon's daughter

— BirdLady



LAMENT

I've known stones.

I've known barrows older than history and sarcens raised as testament to and home for the Gods and Goddesses of my ancestors.

My soul stirs with the fluttering consciousness of past lives and ancient times when the Earth and Humanity were as one with another.

I danced around the luminescent standing stones of Lewsian at Imbolc where the awakening Goddess was a tangible presence.

I understood the language spoken by those granite giants and they accepted with love the sacrifice of our remaining harvest, promising fertility for the coming year.

I looked upon the moss-covered cairn at Cnocan na Gobhar and sank into its lush vegetation at Beltain, reveling in the ecstasy and fecundity of nature.

I stood on the brink of reality at midnight of Samhain amongst the symmetry of Cairnholy and embraced the souls of loved ones who had passed beyond the veil between this world and the next.

I sat in the shadow of the Rudston Monolith at Winter Solstice and heard the Earth mourn the slaughter of the children of Erin when the New Ones came to uproot our way of life and dismember us from Her.

I've known stones:

Stones still inhabited and loved by the Ancient Ones,

Who now are alienated from all but a few who still listen for their wisdom, while they remain watching over the souls whose bones rest at their feet.

— Jenni Hunt 9/1/1997

On the Solitary Path

The Celebration of Samhain

By Judith Anderson Morris (ladytoad)

Samhain. The damp ground is thick with fallen leaves and the winds breathe cold; the harvest has passed and the fields lie naked, stripped of their fecundity. We stand barren as well, unsure, our old year past, our new year yet to come.

Samhain. The time between the worlds when all is possible and potential crouches, ready to spring into reality. A day that is not a day nor reckoned by any calendar. A night that exists outside of time. A day of past and present and future knotted into one.

A two-faced god presides over the celebration which begins at sunset and lasts until the following sunrise. Straddling both past and future, he represents both our reverence for those who have passed and our hope for divining our future paths, the two inexorably entwined in the dance of life, death, and rebirth.

In the Celtic view of time, *Samhain* is not simply another holiday marking a place on a line that stretches like a straight road through the future. Celtic time is cyclical, and on this day the natural order of the universe dissolves. Chaos rules, and the universe prepares to reestablish itself from the void. At no other time is the veil between this world and the Otherworld so thin. At no other time is divination so powerful, the future so possible.

Samhain. A festival of the dead hosted by the living.

According to the *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, the celebration of *Samhain* dates back to as early as 6000 B.C.E. when all the fires in the village were extinguished for a full day. Only a central communal fire burned, signifying the sun and its gift of life. When at last all the hearth fires were reignited from this central blaze, a community was again birthed as a union, a tribe.

Traditional celebratory bonfires blazed on every hilltop, and all the anxieties and griefs of the previous years were symbolically burned away. Feasts blessed every table, and places were set for those who had passed on. Entrances to burial mounds were opened to let the spirits roam and their interiors lighted until cock's-crow. The spirits of the kings of Ireland were said to live in Caer

Sidi, the Spiral Castle, guarded by a revolving wheel at the entrance that allowed no one to exit or enter. On this night, the wheel was stopped, the veil between worlds lifted, the dead walked among the living, and faeries were abroad.

Samhain. If you listen carefully you will hear the *Bean Sidhe* wail— she who once prophesied the death of kings.

Leave fruits outside for the faeries as did your ancestors to ensure a good harvest in the coming year. Carve lanterns from turnips (rutabagas) by cutting off the tops and scooping out the insides. Thread wire through to make a handle. Lit with candles, these hanging lanterns will provide an eerie light for the spirits to follow. Welcome them to your altar. Lay photos and mementoes there of your loved ones who are no longer with you. Remember in your blood and in your very cells who you are and who you have come from and pay them homage.

You may wish to perform rituals for the dead. Wear black. Pierce an apple with whole cloves, one for each person you wish to remember (animals count here, too). Tell stories of those you remember and honor them with your fond memories. Lay empty an empty place at your table in honor of your ancestors.

Samhain is both the ending and the beginning. It is a perfect night for reflecting upon the past year, your accomplishments and your failures, and it is equally perfect for looking ahead, for planting the seeds of change in your life. To rid yourself of unwanted aspects of your personality or of bad habits, write what you wish to be rid of on a piece of paper and burn it on your altar fire. Write what you wish to bring into fruition in the new year on a piece of paper and place it in the earth like a seedling. Spend the night in meditation and vision work, in divination, in eating hazelnuts for inspiration and knowledge, in feasting with the dead. Embrace the arms of darkness and then pierce it with fire or candlelight, acknowledging the creation of a new year, a new world. Recreate yourself and greet the dawn with outstretched arms, grateful for a new beginning.



Passages

Green Man Grove, ADF, in East Jersey, announces to the community the handfasting of our Senior Druid, His Leafiness Bryan Perrin, to artist and rainbow activist Susan Shaftan in an ADF Summer Solstice ceremony in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on June 20, 1999. They were blessed by the kindreds, the goddesses and gods of love and the sun, and the assembled multitudes.

The grove would especially like to thank Jan and Anthony of Hearthfire Grove for their invocations and invaluable help, and Bard Dafydd, Merdyn and Josh of Red Oak Grove for their attendance and support. They would like to thank the Rainbow family and farm for the sacred space, the gourmet food and all the love. And, of course, kudos to the various members and family of Green Man Grove.

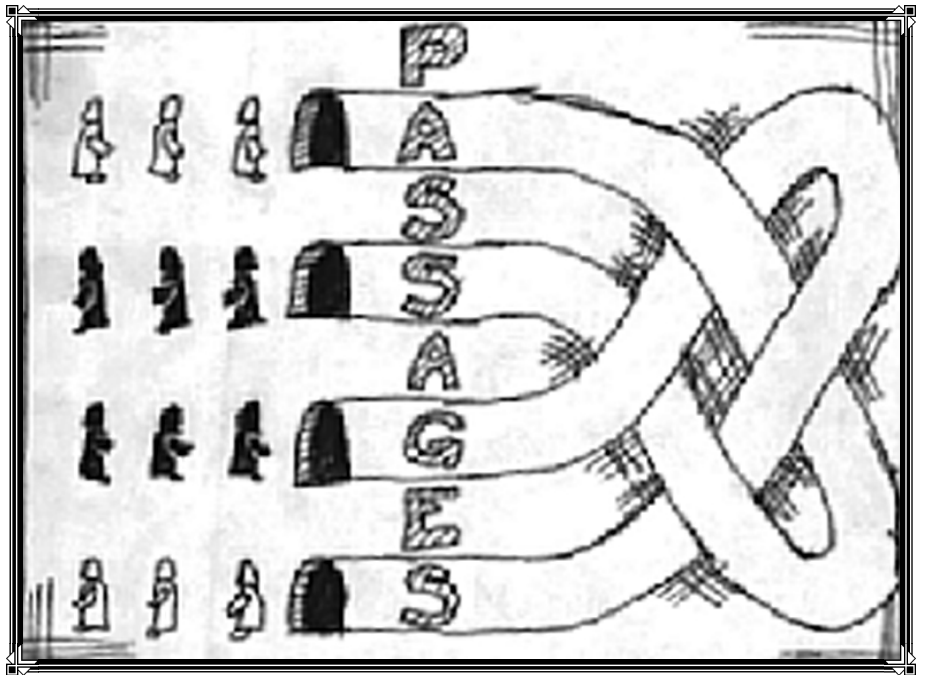
The bride wore pale green and a funky hat with various natural things stuck in it while the groom wore camouflage shorts and a top hat.

The event was featured (with photos) on the cover of the "Religion and Ethics" section of the *News-Tribune*, a regional newspaper.



Senior Druid Amergin Aryson would like to thank all those who helped make the first annual SummerLand Gathering festival of the 6th Night Grove a tremendous success! They had 35 adults and 4 children in attendance, wonderful rituals and workshops, and the best potluck feast and pancake breakfast in Pagandom! The event brought together many local Pagans from many different organizations and solitary paths, who shared in laughter, learning, and the love of the Mother.

Special Thanks are due to Ian Corrigan and Liafal, who were fea-



ured guest speakers, and to all the other members of Stone Creed Grove, Triskele River Grove, and Little Acorn Grove for their support and help in pulling this event off.

The grove has already reserved the site for next year, and are looking forward to expanding the SummerLand Gathering to become the regional event for the Ohio River Region of ADF.



On July 7, 1999 Matt Ducar was married to Teresa Rae. On Sept 3 they will leave for Boston— Terry to study Expressive Arts Therapy at Lesley College and Matt to start a research position with MIT.



White Owl, or Barbara Knox, of Mugwort Grove celebrated her 75th birthday on August 26th. She is a member of the Naturalist Guild, and both the Guild and the Grove enjoy holding retreats at her farm.



The *Oak Leaves* Editor, Seabhac Fionn, would like to thank Jennifer Kennedy, the outgoing *Passages* Editor for her dedication to *Oak Leaves* over the past 2 years or more. Now, she has accepted another task, to edit the new Book Reviews column for *Oak Leaves*. As of the next issue, we welcome a new editor for the *Passages* column: Imari Nuyen, who will be turning 33 this Samhain.

If you have news to share, please email Imari at:

Imari@EN.COM

or write to:

Imari Nuyen

c/o RT

14837 Detroit Ave #115

Lakewood, Ohio 44107



Falling Acorns



The 6th Night Grove, ADF
by Amergin Aryson, SD,
September 1, 1999

During the quarter from Beltaine to Lughnassadh our Grove experienced tremendous growth, adding 10 new members! We currently number 19 members. This is truly amazing, considering we just received our provisional Grove charter in December of '98! Our membership ranges in age from 13 to 50. We are family oriented, with an eclectic Celtic ritual focus. The Summerland Gathering, held in June of 1999 and our first attempt at hosting a festival, was also a tremendous success! We had 45 people attending, had some great workshops and music, and the best potluck feast in Pagandom! Many thanks again to Ian Corrigan and Liafal, our featured workshop presenters, from Stone Creed Grove. We made enough profit from this one event to fund our Grove's ritual expenses, community outreach, and printing expenses for the entire year. Also, many thanks to Triskele River Grove and the Pagan Community Council of Ohio for all of their help in making the SummerLand Gathering such a success! We have already reserved the site in Yellow Springs, OH, for the weekend of June 16-18 in 2000. We hope to make the SummerLand Gathering festival the regional event for the Ohio River Region of ADF. Hope to see many of you there next year!

The 6th Night Grove continues to hold open to the public ADF rites on the first and third Sunday of every month. We also hold a Dedicants Program study group on the fourth Sunday of every month. We continue to hold inter-Grove rites on many of the high days with our neighbor Grove, Triskele River Grove, in Cincinnati, OH. Our two groves have a great relationship, and many of our members attend rites at both Groves.

We recently held a special election to elect a new Grove purser-warden. Let me take this opportunity to publicly congratulate Pam P. and welcome her as our new purser-warden. Pam has many years experience with accounts payable/receivable. I am confident she will serve our Grove well! If any ADF member is ever in the southwestern Ohio area, please feel free to join us in ritual.

Brightest Blessings to All!

Grove Report-Peachtree Grove

By Londubh, SE ADF Representative

Peachtree is growing very nicely. We have begun a grove Dedicant's program based on ADF's model, with a cycle of one year for the basic introduction. New members may enter the program at the Solstices, which gives the grove ample opportunity to have mentors in place for new dedicants. As part of the program, we hold monthly "dedicants only" meetings, book discussion meetings at a local book store, and open public rituals around North Georgia.

We held our Summer Solstice celebration in Carrollton, Georgia, with 10 members attending. A covered dish supper followed the ritual, with lots of fellowship.

Several of our members attended the conference held by Caitlin Matthews here in Atlanta, and

brought back great information and guides for our new dedicants. We also were present at several local festivals in the Atlanta area.

The Grove has also instituted a monthly spirit walk. In May we visited Kennesaw Mountain, and in June we visited Stone Mountain. These two sacred areas are part of the ley lines in the Atlanta/Chattahoochee River Basin area. The spirit walks have allowed us to become more in tune with the local dieties, and we are actively seeking their advice and participation in our rituals.

Londubh attended the town meeting in Marietta where Congressman Bob Barr of Georgia faced the local Wicca/Pagan community, and made contact with several local groups opposing Representative Barr's stance on Wicca in the military. Through these contacts the Peachtree Grove has become active in a local organization called the Wiccan-Pagan Educational Association dedicated to educating the public on modern paganism.

We have established a presence on the web. Our web site is up and everyone is welcome to join our discussion lists. Contact us at any time at <http://www.peachtree.druid.org>. Our lists are mainly used to keep in touch and up to date on the goings on in the area.

Peace, and Bride Dhuit!



Regional Reports

Great Lakes Region

by Sue Parker/Liafal, Great Lakes Regional Representative

Since the elections at Wellspring, I have spent most of the summer traveling to various ADF sponsored festivals and to Ireland. I have had the opportunity to visit with a number of the members of the Great Lakes region at these events. These retreats and festivals have created and strengthened relationships between members, groves and protogroves in ADF and I suggest you make an effort to attend them. Besides that, we have a great time!

ADF has been growing steadily, and the Great Lakes region has one of the largest populations of members. It would be helpful for us to create and take advantage of every opportunity to get to know each other and share ideas about all aspects of the organization. A mailing list specific to the Great Lakes region had been discussed, and may be created in the future. All of you are welcome to contact me at (440) 428-6627, sueparker@ncweb.com or 2451 Bennett Rd. Madison, OH 44057.

So, what can we do together to improve and strengthen ADF in the Great Lakes Region? As mentioned earlier, retreats and festivals bring people together, but most of the ADF-sponsored events that I know of already occur in the Great Lakes region. These include Wellspring, Shining Lakes Lughnasadh, Muin Mound Madness, and, in the past, Triple Guild. Also, there have been two leadership retreats in the area, one in Michigan and the other in Ohio. If there are any individuals or groups who are interested in sponsoring an event please contact me and I'll do what I can to help organize and make it a reality.

We also might think about creating more groves in the Great Lakes

region, particularly in Toronto and Buffalo, to help the solitaries out there. Any takers?

Ohio River Region

by Amergin Aryson, Ohio River Regional Representative

Greetings and Blessings to All!

I am Amergin, the newly elected Regional Director for the Ohio River Region of ADF. I am very happy to announce that the Ohio River Region has been a very "happening" place to be an ADF member these last few months! The SummerLand Gathering Festival, hosted by The 6th Night Grove of Dayton, OH, and Triskele River Grove of Cincinnati, OH, was a great success! The site in Yellow Springs, OH, has already been reserved for next year (June 16-18) and we are planning next year's Regional Festival to be even bigger and better! Any ADF members interested in leading a workshop or merchanting next year at the SummerLand Gathering, please email me directly.

There has been some great community happening between the Groves in the Ohio River Region. The 6th Night Grove, Triskele River Grove, and Sassafras Grove in Pittsburgh, PA, have all been sharing their calendars of events and newsletters with each other. Triskele River Grove and The 6th Night Grove, both in southwestern Ohio, continue to come together on the High Days for intergrove rites. I am hoping to make a trip to Pittsburgh in the near future to attend a Sassafras Grove ritual.

On a sad note, we have recently lost two Groves in the region. MudFireWindSpirit Grove, in Columbus, OH, and Stone Hawk Grove, in Indianapolis, IN, are no longer operating. I am hopeful that some ADF members in the region will pick up the banner and organize

some new protogroves in the region. I pledge to do everything I can to help any new Grove Organizer get off to a good start. How about you ADF members in Kentucky? I know you're out there!

If any member in the region has a question, needs advice, or has a complaint, please feel free to email me directly. I can't guarantee that I will have all the answers or be able to fix every problem, but I will do my best to at least point you in the right direction to someone who can.

Beannachtai!

Pacific Region Report

by Dragon, Pacific Regional Representative

I am pleased to announce that the number of groves and protogroves in our region has been growing. These include new protogroves in the Los Angeles area and several more which are about to be planted. Our Vice Archdruid is planning a visit to our region this fall, which I expect will help strengthen our membership and our Groves.

I am continually seeking out new ways to draw more attention to our region, including the formation of an email discussion group, and additional assistance on the Grove Organizing Committee.

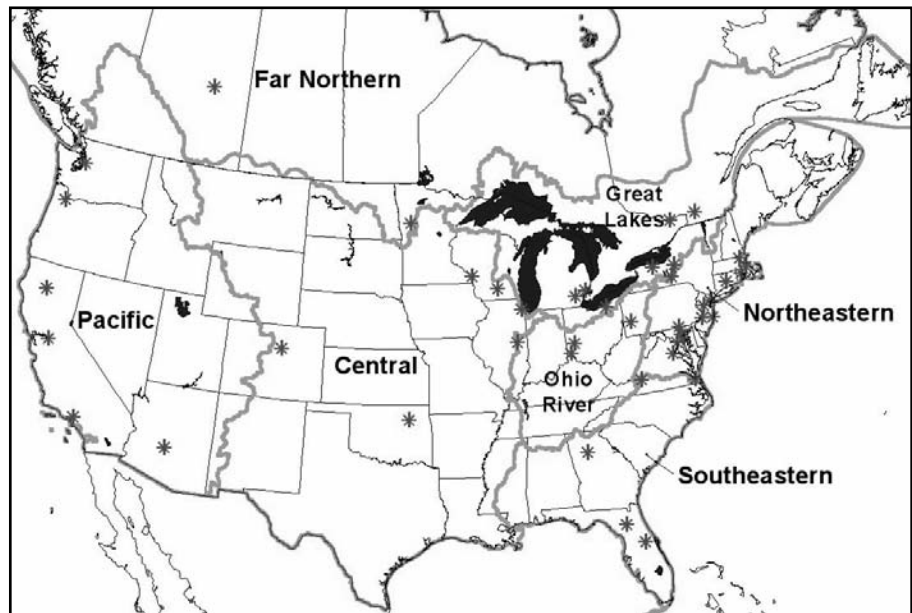
There are many projects in the works for the near future. I hope you will support the region and encourage its growth. I may be reached by email at northwest_dragon@yahoo.com. If you are interested in joining the email discussion group, drop me a note and I'll add you to the list.

Peace and love of the gods be with you always.

—Continued on page 42

Below is the current listing of ADF Groves, Protogroves, SIGs, and ADF officers. Groves are listed alphabetically by region, and as of this writing there are a total of 43 groves (40 in the U.S., 3 abroad).

If you find errors, please contact the ADF Office at ADF-Office@ADF.ORG or at P.O. Box 15259, Ann Arbor, MI, USA 48106-5259



Groves

CENTRAL REGION

Crescent Dragon Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Hawke
c/o ADF Main Office
Urbana, IL
Areas: IL
E-Mail: windstrm@apocalypse.org

Golden Aspen Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Loren Eason
P.O. Box 260354
Lakewood, CO 80226
Areas: CO
E-Mail: nous_athanatos@yahoo.com

River of Fire Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Hekatatia
P.O. Box 3443
La Crosse, WI 54602-3443
Areas: WI, MN
E-Mail: rivrfire@aol.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/river-of-fire>

Sun Raven Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Suil Bhran
PO Box 8212
Madison, WI 53708
Areas: WI, MN
E-Mail: suibhne@centuryinter.net
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/sun-raven>

White Rose Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Estelle Newton
539 South Richmond
Tulsa, OK 74112
Areas: OK
Phone: (918) 836-0907
E-Mail: candlemajik@juno.com

Wild Onion Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Christopher Sherbak
PO Box 87651
Chicago, IL 60680
Areas: IL, IN, MI, WI
Phone: (773) 489-5766
E-Mail: sherbak@ibm.net
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/wild-onion>

FAR NORTHERN REGION

Flickering Shadows Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Jennifer Kennedy
PO Box 65
Ardrossan, Alberta T8E 2A1,
CANADA
Areas: Alberta
Phone: (403) 922-2499
E-Mail: falan@planet.eon.net

Song of the Hounds Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Cirulious
P.O. Box 1444

Detroit Lakes, MN 56502-1444

Areas: MN, ND
E-Mail: rdragon@djarn.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/song-of-the-hounds>
Publication: Acorns

GREAT LAKES REGION

Clairiér du Renard Argenté

Silver Fox Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Paradox
2624 Jeanne d'Arc
Montreal, Quebec H1W 3V9,
CANADA
Areas: Quebec
Phone: (514) 259-8916
E-Mail: one@cedep.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/silver-fox>

Muin Mound Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Skip Ellison
PO Box 592
E. Syracuse, NY 13057
Areas: NY
Phone: (315)-656-8681
E-Mail: sellison@twcnny.rr.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/muin-mound>
Publication: Muin Light

Red Maple Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Drahkan
200 Earl Grey Drive
Box 110
Kanata, Ontario K2T 1B6, CANADA
Areas: Ontario
Phone: (613) 839-3962
E-Mail: drahkan@nitemaster.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/red-maple>

Shining Lakes Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Fox
PO Box 15585
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-5585
Areas: MI
Phone: (734) 487-4931
E-Mail: robh@cyberspace.org
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/shining-lakes>
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This listing was last updated on: 9/8/99.

Southeast Region Report

by Londubh, Southeast Regional Representative

Attention Southeastern Regional Members:

Hello everyone, and blessings. I am Londubh, ADF's SE regional representative. Big title, but small powers. I am here to help all of you. Whether you are a solitaire, or want to start a grove, it is my job to help you in any way that I can. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns or questions.

In the planning stage is a SE regional Druid Synod hosted by Peachtree Grove in Atlanta. We hope to have a couple of speakers, but would like to depend on the talent we already have — you all! — to share information, rituals, and fellowship. I would like to plan this for Beltaine 2000.

I would like to also invite all SE ADF members to join Peachtree Grove's announcement and discussion lists at <http://www.peachtree.druid.org/>. These two lists are not very active and will not SPAM you with email, but they do provide a forum for information exchange and event information. There are lots of things going on in Atlanta and the surrounding area, so it would be nice to keep in touch— especially for those of you traveling to Atlanta and needing a place to stay, a hot meal, and fellowship.

Bride Dhuit!

ADF World Wide Web Page:

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P.O. Box 15259, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-5259

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To whom it may concern: _____ has my permission to become a

(Enter child's name here)

member of ADF, and I am fully aware of the Neopagan nature of this organization.



Parent or Guardian's Signature

Parent or Guardian's printed name

Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for membership processing.

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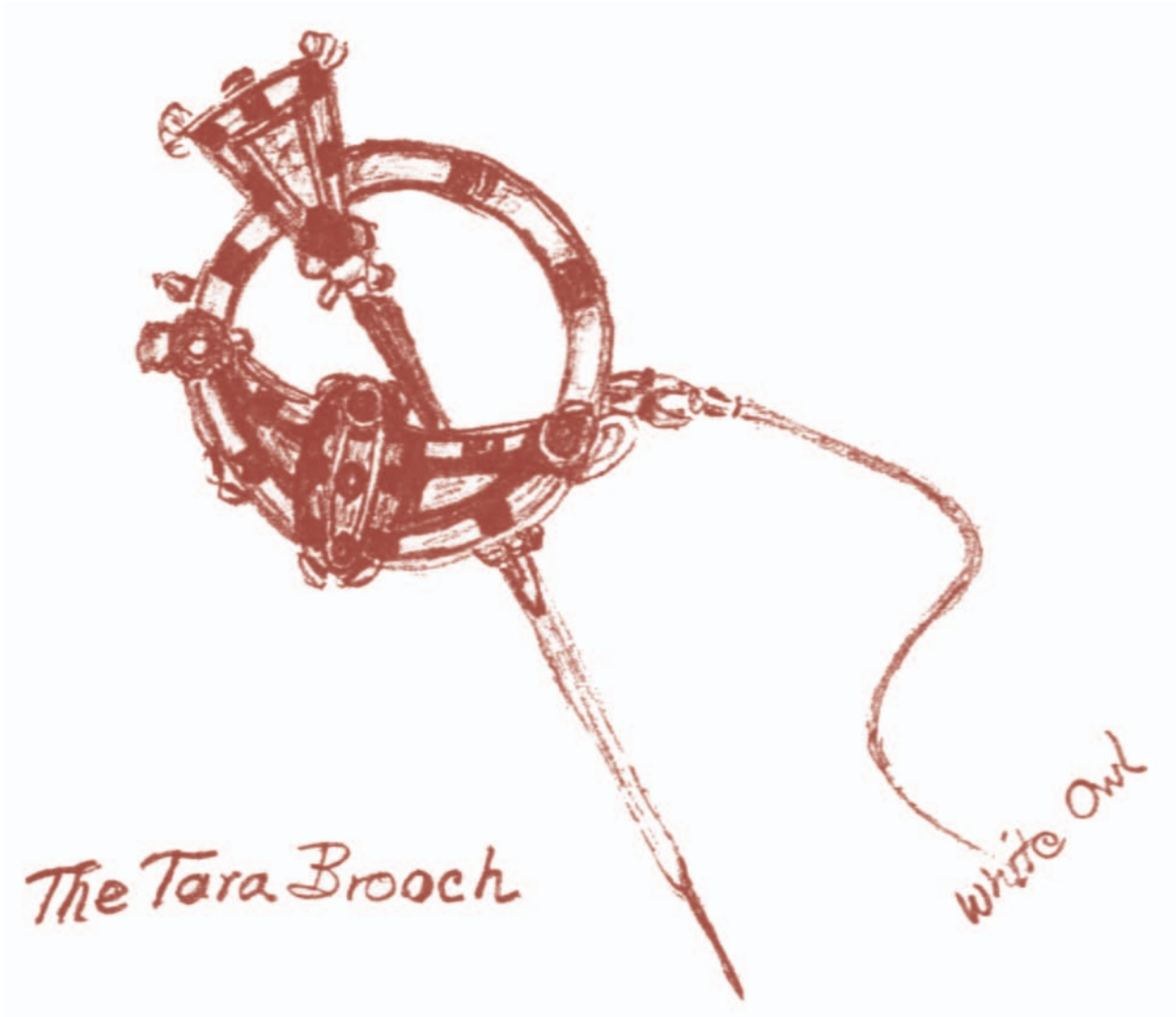


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The Tara Brooch

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