

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin

Summer 2008 ~ Issue No. 41





Thursday-Sunday, September 25th-28th

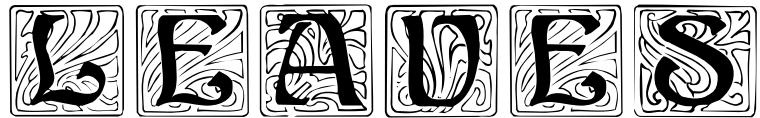
The 2nd annual Eight Winds Festival will be held at Shasta Camp, a recreational retreat nestled in the glorious mountains of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, just eight miles from the town of Mt. Shasta, CA.

Bring the whole family; special events will be held for children.

To register visit:

<http://featherrivergrove.weebly.com/eight-winds.html>

Hosted by: Feather River Protogrove, ADF
in partnership with Sierra Madrone Grove, ADF



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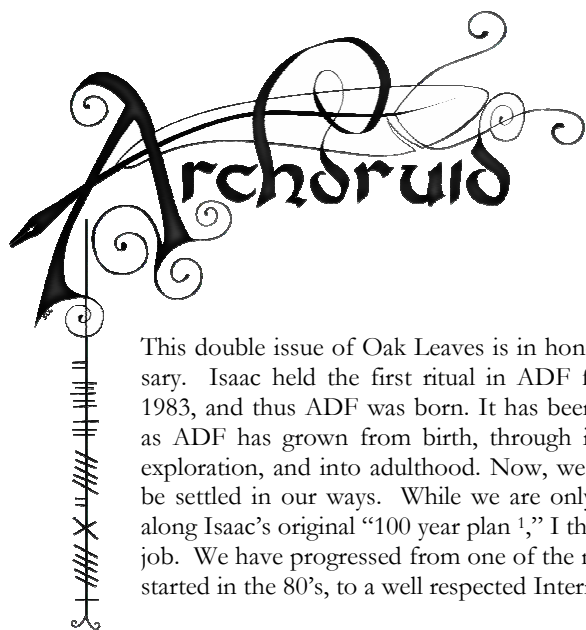
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This double issue of Oak Leaves is in honor of our 25th anniversary. Isaac held the first ritual in ADF format on Samhain of 1983, and thus ADF was born. It has been an interesting period as ADF has grown from birth, through its youthful period of exploration, and into adulthood. Now, we are slowing starting to be settled in our ways. While we are only a quarter of the way along Isaac's original "100 year plan ¹," I think we are doing a fine job. We have progressed from one of the many small groups that started in the 80's, to a well respected International Church.

I think that the next 25 years will be just as exciting. We are just now seeing our first major expansion as an organization outside the US, with the formation of ADF (Canada), and we are exploring the role of a possible ADF International governing group. While this is only in the preliminary stages, it is my opinion and hope, that at our 50th anniversary, there will be an ADF International board, overseeing the development of ADF churches in many countries! This is all in line with Isaac's plan of becoming a World Religion, with groves in all the major cities, and televised rituals on the High Days, within 100 years.

What can you do to help with this vision? We can always use volunteers in our local proto-groves and groves. Some of you may want to help with our many wonderful publication projects. And we have several ways to help in our online activities. Members can find out more about how to help us at the National level, by visiting the "Volunteer Positions" page at <http://www.adf.org/members/org/volunteers.html>. I hope you all have a wonderful summer and that the Kindreds bless you many times over!

Bright Blessings,
Rev. Skip Ellison

[1] For Isaac's Hundred Year Plan, see - <http://www.adf.org/about/vision.html> or Druid's Progress #6, page 11.

OAK LEAVES

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Thoughts on our First Quarter Century

By Isaac Bonewits

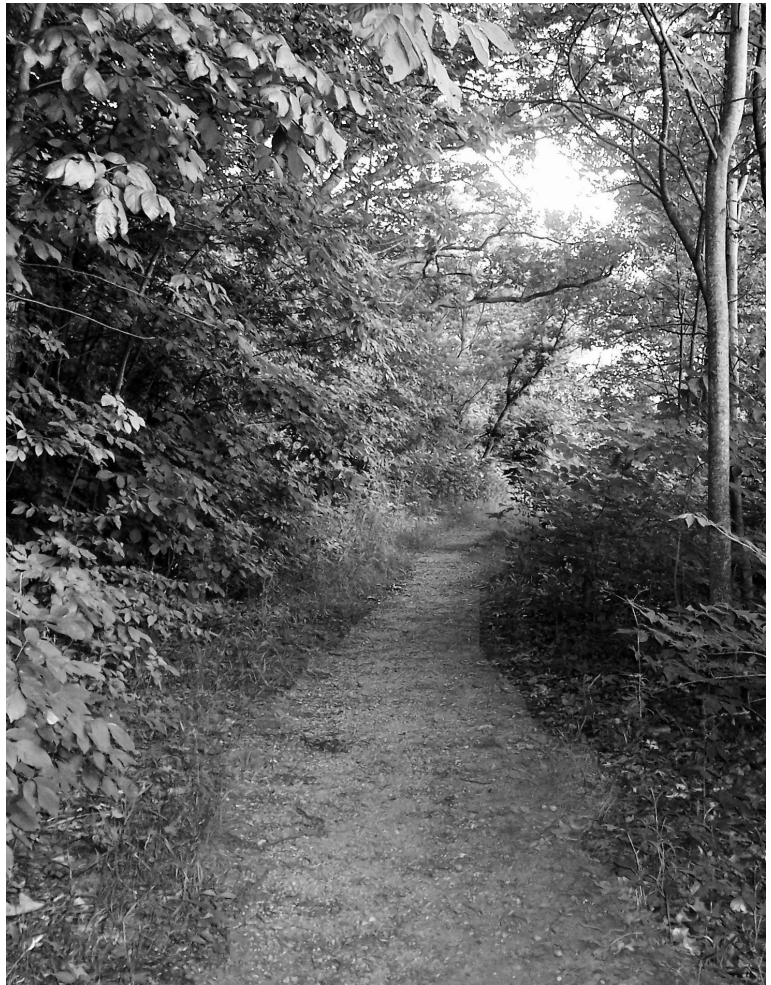
These notes were inspired by my re-reading of my original essay on “The Origins of ADF” (on the ADF website) and it’s final section, “The view from thirteen years later.”

Those additional twelve years have only increased the pride I have in Our Own Druidism. The creativity, dedication, and hard work of hundreds of people have made us the best Druidic organization now on Mother Earth!

Although our training program went through several phases of evolution, it now seems settled in and growing strongly, with hundreds involved in the various levels. We may have a larger number of working scholars in ADF than are in any other Pagan organization today, plus scores of artists and musicians working to honor the Gods.

In the organizational area, we have successfully managed to create vertical, horizontal, and diagonal communications networks. We have multiple steps vertically between the individual members and the Archdruid, including the Regional Druids, the Administrative Assistants, and the Mother Grove. We have over 50 groves throughout the USA and Canada, plus ten others in the UK, Australia, and the Czech Republic, making us truly a global religion! All of the groves and protogroves communicate with each other and their members through newsletters and emailing lists. Plus we have eleven Guilds, seven Kins, and nine Special Interest Groups with members from across the organization at all “power” levels.

I believe this emphasis on vertical, horizontal,



and diagonal communications has been our “secret weapon” in the organizational evolutionary process. While other Neopagan organizations as old or older than ADF are stagnating, dwindling, or even vanishing, ADF continues to grow and evolve in a healthy fashion.

We are achieving more and more of my original vision of what Neopagan Druidism could be: scholarly, creative, and deeply spiritual, serving the greater Neopagan world as well as our own members, as well as representing a Neopagan viewpoint in interfaith activities and discussions.

All in all, ADF is just about where I wanted it to be at this point in my infamous "100 Year Plan." My only disappointment has been that ADF groups and individuals have not been as environmentally active as they could be. As I've said many times over the years, of all the Pagan paths in the world, the ones that should be functioning as the environmental movement's "chaplains" are the Druidic ones. In this particular area of Druidic endeavor, I have to give the white beret to my good friend Philip Carr-Gomm's Order of Bards Ovates and Druids.

Speaking of white berets, I think the only decision I seriously regret from my days as Archdruid

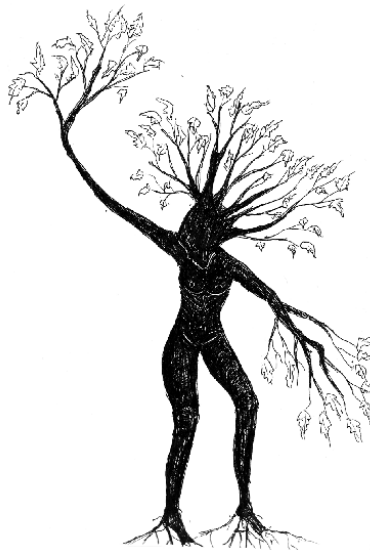
was our abandonment of the white beret as a membership symbol. We did it because the KKK was using them, yet no one ever did (or ever could) accuse us of being connected to the Klan in any way. Perhaps it's time to revive the custom?

Whether that happens or not, I want everyone in ADF to know how deeply proud I am of what a small group of Pagan scholars, magicians, and artists have managed to create and grow. Here's to the next quarter century, and the many more to follow!

Beneath the Willow Tree

By Rodney L. Aldrich

Beneath the willow tree,
I sit on convenient stone,
My feet on curling gray leaves,
Yet I have not come to be alone.
In the emerging dark
The last season regains her cold grip.
Then comes the White Lady
Beginning her fullest monthly trip.
Before she comes this way again,
This year's new leaves will have burst
And the warm rains will come,
I pray, lightly, and not their worst.
I know that in coming days
My labor will take every daylight hour
So I beseech thee White Lady
Give me bountiful crops to make flour.
Many here have lost the ways
But I still know the ancient faith.
I was taught by my mother's uncle
Where to pray and what to saith.
Most say he was loose in the head,
But I know he was really a priest,
In a religion that was here first,
I do not doubt in the least.
White Lady, hear me now as you swell
Beyond the hanging strands and yon higher wood,
For I am a tired old father
With a wife and two daughters, so good.
The older daughter, she swells too,



For in several more of your full trips
She will bear a child,
And may joyous sounds pass my lips.
So my prayers to you this night
Are those of a man, plain and simple.
May you bless my hands, my land,
My loved ones, yes, every little dimple.
May my progeny's progeny
Be healthy, hard working, and wise
And may my daughter's new family
Work fine together and strengthen
their ties.
That's almost all bright lady,
But if you have blessings to spare,
Help me compose a poem
To show your light, graciously fair.
For tonight I tie a knot
In one of your grove's slim wand
Because I pray my desires
You will think just and fond.
I promise when my crops are in,
And my grandchild in a warm wrap,
Sleeps restful with gentle breaths
Nestled in my daughter's lap,
Then among the newly fallen graying leaves,
I will come back to this spot,
I will un-twine your sacred wand
And release this springy knot.

Tribeways: The ADF Podcast

By Jack Cole

On February 19, 2008, ADF took a step toward the new-tech horizon by releasing its first podcast, Tribeways. An hour-long show featuring essays, music, chants and a trance workshop by Ian Corrigan, the podcast received over 500 downloads in its first five days of release.

Available by direct download from our host (<http://adfpodcast.libsyn.com>) and through iTunes, Tribeways is meant to serve at least two distinct functions: to be a resource for our sight-impaired Druid kin, and to showcase the talents and contributions of the ADF membership. My hope is that the podcast will be a part of ADF's next 25 years of service to the Pagan community.

What is a Podcast?

A podcast is an audio program similar to a radio show except distributed as a file via the Internet rather than broadcast on the airwaves. Podcasts can be on any subject imaginable: sports, faith, collectibles, poetry, education, news and even taking the form of a personal journal. Generally podcasts are produced and distributed free of charge, and are available through a feed or a service like Apple's iTunes Music Store.

How Do I Listen?

To listen to a podcast, you must first download the file. The files for audio-only content are approximately 1MB/minute in size (an hour-long audio podcast would be around 60MB in size). If you use a service like iTunes, you simply have to subscribe to the feed, and iTunes does the rest.

Another way to download and listen to podcasts is to use an aggregator, software that allows you to subscribe and download files via a syndicated feed. Aggregators such as Juice, FireAnt and even Google Reader allow you to add feeds via RSS (Really Simple Syndication), a URL specifi-



cally created for automatically updated web content. You can also download the file directly from its host just as you would a web page.

Once you've downloaded the podcast it's just a matter of using your computer's media player to find and play the show. One of the great benefits to using a service or an aggregator is that any new shows released in the future will be automatically downloaded for you - no muss, no fuss, just enjoyment!

How Do I Participate?

Our show serves many different functions. Tribeways is meant to showcase the talents of ADF members, to educate and inform, to entertain and even to advertise our organization to some extent. To that end, the podcast accepts many different types of submissions: poetry, liturgy, story telling, essays, chants, musical compositions, instrumentals, how-tos, book reviews, workshops. Your contribution is important -- there is no Tribeways without the Tribe.

All rights are retained by the original authors/performers, and a release form for your submission is required to clearly spell out your rights and protections. You can download a copy of the release form from the ADF website.

For those new to recording, it's not as difficult as it might seem at first. I've put together a tip sheet to get you started, downloadable from the website at <http://www.adf.org/podcast>. I am more than happy to assist in whatever way I can, so please feel free to contact me with any questions at adf.podcast@gmail.com. If instead you prefer to have someone else read your contribution, Tribeways has a volunteer staff of readers/recorders available. Send in your text and release form, and we'll record it for you.

Getting the Word Out

Our first podcast by all accounts has been a ringing success so far - over 500 downloads since it became available, and a boatload of positive comments and suggestions to make future podcasts even better. To keep the momentum going, here are a few suggestions to inspire ADFers to participate.

Grove Leaders: Please talk to your Grovemates about the podcast, and encourage them to submit their work. The podcast presents a great opportunity to showcase rituals, chants and songs unique to your Grove, so please consider recording and submitting some of the remarkable work that's going on "in the field."

Guild/SIG/Kin Leaders: Please consider contacting your members about the podcast. ADF has an amazing array of talented people -- singers, storytellers, liturgists, scholars -- having them record and submit their work to the podcast enriches us all. The essays, songs, stories, poetry and liturgical work from the Guilds, SIGs and Kin will give listeners an opportunity to learn what we believe, and who we are.

Solitaires: I would love to feature some solitary

rituals in the podcast. How does a Sol celebrate a specific Feast Day? How do they build their faith? What are their daily practices? What have they learned? If we could answer some of those questions by featuring Sols in our podcast, we could all benefit from their wisdom.

Study Program Participants: Anyone participating in a Study Program is writing material that could be used in the podcast. Works get written *and* shared with the Tribe - new wisdom, insights, analysis - having it on the podcast means that we all have a chance to learn something new.

National Leaders Past/Present: Our Archdruid, AD Emeriti, VADs, MG members, Scribes, Treasurers, Administrators, Chiefs of CoSD/RD, Preceptors, Members Advocates, NODs, List Admins - the collective experience at this level of service is phenomenal. Talk about your work, where you see the organization going, what you hope to personally achieve in ADF, how you do your job - talk about "big picture" stuff! The podcast is a chance for the rest of ADF to hear YOU.

Festival Organizers: Ask your speakers/workshop presenters if you can record their work. You could also set up a sound station for recording impressions, prayers, poetry, et al., for attendees who don't have the equipment to do so. Record and submit your opening/closing ritual, or even your bardic night. Someone hearing about your festival on the podcast could turn out to be an attendee next year! If you need any assistance with field recording, I'll help whatever way I can - just ask!

Remember that our podcast is many things to many people: training tool, community builder, introduction to ADF, educator and marketing tool, to name a few. I took on this project so that we can open our organization up to the outside world a little, while we also learn a bit more about each other at the same time. This tool can be a great way for us to kick off our next 25 years!

A COoR Tutorial: Honoring the Earth Mother

By Brandon Newberg

Confused about the liturgy? We now have a full tutorial on the web site. You can go directly to the step that's giving you trouble, or you can read through the whole thing to get a broad and thorough understanding. Just go to www.adf.org and log in. There's a link at the bottom under "Wiki pages." You can also find a link on the Liturgists Guild page.

Here's a taste of what you will find. This is Step Three. All steps follow the same basic pattern seen here. There's also an overview, epilogue on spirituality, and numerous appendices packed with goodies. Please don't hesitate to make use of this resource.

Step Three: Honoring the Earth Mother

COoR Step

Honoring the Earth
Mother

Key Terms

Earth Mother
Mother of All
Sky Father

Function

We begin with where we are: the Earth. As a Neopagan religion, ADF is nature-oriented and

earth-centered. Accordingly, early on in ADF rites we recognize and honor our crucial relationship with the earth.

Some view the Earth Mother as the planet, or the spirit of the planet, in the manner of the modern Gaia Hypothesis. She is a distinct entity, which may be addressed as the Earth Mother, or

perhaps as Gaia. Others consider the Earth Mother more of an aspect or role taken on by other deities. For example, the Norse Hertha, Greek Gaea, or Slavic Moist Mother Earth all have a strong association with the earth, and could fill this role. Under this interpretation, rites honor one of these beings by name. They represent the terrestrial, but not necessarily the planet as a whole.

In addition to the earth as such, there may also be a sovereignty aspect. Irish lore emphasized local goddesses of the land, who represented and conferred

sovereignty. Niall won kingship by kissing a mysterious woman by a well in the woods. She revealed herself as the Sovereignty of Ireland, and Niall was thereafter recognized as the rightful ruler. This aspect of local sovereignty may fall within the sphere of the Earth Mother. To give more leeway to the sovereignty aspect,



some prefer to use the term "Mother of All."

In addition to the Earth Mother, some also recognize a Sky Father. This balances genders, and honors a common Indo-European type. The Norse Tyr, Greek Zeus, Roman Jupiter, and Vedic Dyaus all share names descending from the Proto-Indo-European sky father, Dyeus Pater. The Sky Father is the masculine counterpart to the feminine Earth, and is often associated with order and rulership.

Placement

The Earth Mother is honored early in the rite to emphasize the primacy of nature in our religion. It happens before the Gates are opened because we are already in intimate contact with the earth; there is no need to use the Gates to connect.

Techniques

If you are working with the idea of a planetary entity, then you can address that being as the Earth Mother, or perhaps as Gaia. If working with the Earth Mother as an aspect or role filled by a specific being, then you can call out to that goddess by name. You can do likewise with a Sky Father, if you are using one.

Common ways to honor the Earth Mother include appropriate songs or chants, or offerings of flour or corn meal sprinkled on the ground. Some kneel and kiss the ground instead.

The Sky Father can be honored with offerings reaching the sky, such as incense.

It would be appropriate to follow Step Three with a Two Powers meditation, connecting to and grounding in the earth and sky energies just honored.

COoR History

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Honoring the Earth Mother derives originally from RDNA practice. Over the years ADF has developed the concept, linking the idea to ancient Indo-European deities and expanding it to include aspects of locality and sovereignty.

The Earth Mother was not specifically listed in the first liturgy, but she was included in the ritual script published in the same issue of *Druid's Progress*. She has been an important feature of rituals throughout ADF's history. In 1991 there finally appeared a step listed as "(6) Honoring the Earth Mother, Centering, Grounding, and Merging."

Ancient and Modern

The Earth Mother is a common type in Indo-European pantheons, as demonstrated by the examples above. The ancients had goddesses that fit the type, though they did not always pay them explicit cult. The Greek Gaea, for example, featured often in myth but only rarely in worship. The Earth Mother has risen in prominence in modern times, reflecting greater awareness and concern for the environment, as well as a new perspective following the first photos of the planet from space.

Examples

Example 1: "A Hittite Ritual of Offering" by Michael J. Dangler, Oak Leaves #36 (Hittite)

The Gods searched for her far and wide. In green meadows and underbrush, In mud that stuck to their leg hair, In mountains and flowing rivers, In holy precincts the gods searched. The Mother Goddess was found in the forests that stretched about them, though she smiled and said she was in all places they were searching. Mother of us all, be with us: This offering of pure honey reminds us that the bees found you.
[an offering of honey is given]

Example 2. "Yule 2006" by Raven and

**Carrion Mann, 2006 Liturgists Yearbook
(Norse)**

Earth Mother kneeling before the well, Nerthus,
Primal Mother of Earth, First and Eldest of the
Van, You who cradles the World Tree in your
loving embrace, Ancient Mother of Midgard, As
children of the Earth and Sky, May our weapons
be sheathed, May our thoughts be of peace, May
our fields yield plenty, Nerthus, we call upon the
life-giving magic of the Earth!

Sky Father standing at the sacred fire, arms
outstretched to the sky, Tyr, Ancient Mystery of
the Sky, Boldest and most courageous of the
Aesir, You who makes fertile the Earth with your
seed, Bright Father of Midgard, As children of
the Earth and Sky, May we show courage in our
battles, May we seek to do right by our kith and
kin, May we learn the meaning of true sacrifice
through your guidance. Tyr, we call upon the
illuminating power of the Sky!

Earth Mother and Sky Father, Great Earth
Mother and Sky Father, Through your sacred
union springs forth all life! Mother and Father of
all that was, of all that is and all that will be, We
come before you in love and
respect and ask that you
uphold and bless our
gathering!

(White bread & Clarified
butter is offered upon the
fire to the Earth Mother and
Sky Father.)

Earth Mother and Sky
Father, accept our offering!

All: Earth Mother and Sky
Father, All Hail and

Welcome!

[Examples 3,4, and 5 can be found on the web
site.]

Related Reading

"Reclaiming the Indo-European Sky Father" by
Raven and Carrion Mann , Oak Leaves #36

"The Trees: Teacher and Guardians Part I" by
RavenWolf, Oak Leaves #33

Ritual Chants <[http://www.adf.org/rituals/
chants/](http://www.adf.org/rituals/chants/)>

Self-test

1. Why is it important to honor the Earth
Mother?
2. Write Step Three for your own ritual.

This article is excerpted and adapted from
Ancient Symbols, Modern Rites: A Core Order
of Ritual Tutorial for Ar
nDraiocht Fein. The work is
a thorough exploration of the
COoR in all its steps. Those
wishing to design their own
rituals or become more
familiar with the COoR,
please visit [http://
www.adf.org/cgi-bin/adf/
wiki/view/Main/
COoRTutorial](http://www.adf.org/cgi-bin/adf/wiki/view/Main/COoRTutorial). Make sure
you are logged in to the
member's section.

The Triple Blessings of Brigid
By Carolyn Pearl

"Caim" - "the Mantle of Bridgid"

May the Power of Bridgid
protect you,

May the love of Bridgid
enfold you,

May the encircling of Bridgid
comfort you,
bring peace
and security,
to all that you hold dear.

Bright blessings upon us all.

Creating a Ritual Calendar

By “Dubhlainn” James Goodwin

One of the great gifts of ADF is the wide array of cultural expression. This is not to say that ADF is an eclectic organization, though some of its members might be, but that it does offer a greater degree of freedom for the practitioner to explore than many other Neopagan traditions do. There are some members who may practice in multiple hearths or have patron deities from two or more pantheons.

It can be very confusing to new members. Couple that with the heavy emphasis on scholarship and self directed study and it can even create an environment where one ends up feeling disconnected from the deities themselves. Or at least it did so for me.

When I joined ADF I felt a strong pull to Celtic cultures but I did not understand them very well. I had known other Celtic minded people and I learned that for the most part when they said “Celtic” they are usually referring to Irish Celtic and the Deities known as the Tuatha De’ Danann. I spent a great deal of time learning about Celtic deities and myth from all over the Celtic lands and I knew that I wanted to forge a relationship with all of them! But how does one do such a thing?

Nothing I had read really discussed how to make connections with various multiple deities. There is information out there on finding and connecting with a patron, and there is a lot of information out there on connecting with guides, totems spirits, and familiars, but almost nothing on connecting to multiple gods and goddesses many of whom are not commonly connected with the High Days and not much is really known about.

I had been performing what I can a “full ritual” weekly for several months at this point. This was originally a way for me to become more familiar

with the ADF Core Order of Ritual. My idea was the best way to learn it was to do it. Normally this weekly ritual was performed one of two ways. The most common way was to do a blessing ritual calling on the kindred but not calling any specific deity or spirit except for the Earth Mother. The second way came about after I had begun making connection with my patron, The Morrigan, and at that point she became my general Being of Occasion each week. This did little to solve my problem with connecting with multiple deities because even through I have formed a close relationship with her one cannot continue adding patrons indefinitely or swapping out patrons from one week or month to the next.

The solution I came up with was to create a list of deities I wanted to at least make an attempt at connection with and to place them on a calendar so that each week had a different Being of Occasion. In order to continue my relationship with my patron at least once during the month (usually the first week) she would be the being I called to.

It took a little bit of research. I started with a list of dates. I normally do my weekly rite on Saturdays so I looked up the date for the following year and placed them on a paper. Then I would explore various deities from different pantheons. In my case these were all Celtic deities but covering the full range of Celtic lands. This could just as easily work with those wanting to connect with deities from two or more cultures. When I found a deity whose nature seemed to “fit” in a certain time of the year I would pencil them in for that date. Some were easy, Brigid and Lugh already have feast days of course and deities like Arawn (the Welsh God of the Dead) certainly seemed fitting at Samhain time, others were more complicated. A basic rule of thumb I used was that if a deity had a nature that had to do

with the sun or fertility I would place them during the spring or early summer, deities that had to do with the underworld, war, or harvest seemed to work best in the late summer or fall, and in the deep winter I chose hot spring and healing deities.

As I filled out my calendar I did not worry about writing evocations right then and there. I just looked at the most basic of their given aspects and used that as the location for the ritual day. Then later, each week as the ritual approaches, I look more in depth at each deity and write an evocation and perhaps some key words to meditate on when I call to them. The evocations are simple and follow a general format - an article for another day perhaps.

Although it is still early in the process I have made very few changes to this since I created it. I also have been continually amazed at how appropriate the particular deity being called has been each week.

One final note, I have chosen to use the same Gatekeeper each week, in my case a nature spirit which is not associated with any specific culture. For others who prefer to use deities for this task it would be appropriate to assure the correct gatekeeper for the correct culture was used. What follows is my ritual calendar for 2008.

Jan 05 - Morrigan (Patron)
Jan 12 - Gwyddion (Welsh)
Jan 19 - Borvo (Gaulish)
Jan 26 - CuChulainn (Irish)

Feb 02 - Brigit (Pan-Celtic)
Feb 09 - Morrigan (Patron)
Feb 16 - Cernunnos (Pan-Celtic)
Feb 23 - The Dagda (Irish)
Mar 01 - Morrigan (Patron)
Mar 08 - Rhiannon (Welsh)
Mar 15 - Dubhlainn (Irish)
Mar 22 - Taranis (Gaulish)
Mar 29 - Miach (Irish)

Apr 05 - Morrigan (Patron)
Apr 12 - Damona (Gaulish)

Apr 19 - Pryderi (Welsh)
Apr 26 - Oghma (Irish)

May 03 - Belenus (Pan-Celtic)
May 10 - Morrigan (Patron)
May 17 - Aerten (Cornish)
May 24 - Sucellus (Gaulish)
May 31 - Goibniu (Irish)

Jun 07 - Morrigan (Patron)
Jun 14 - Aengus Óg (Irish)
Jun 21 - Aine (Irish)
Jun 28 - Dylan Eil Ton (Welsh)

Jul 05 - Morrigan (Patron)
Jul 12 - Abhean (Irish)
Jul 19 - Teutates (Gaulish)
Jul 26 - Fiacha (Irish)

Aug 02 - Lugh (Irish)
Aug 09 - Morrigan (Patron)
Aug 16 - Scots (Scottish)
Aug 23 - Creidhne (Irish)
Aug 30 - Barinthus (Welsh)

Sep 06 - Morrigan (Patron)
Sep 13 - Essus (Gaulish)
Sep 20 - Fionnuala (Irish)
Sep 27 - Cerridwen (Welsh)

Oct 04 - Morrigan (Patron)
Oct 11 - Bé Chuille (Irish)
Oct 18 - Grannos (Continental)
Oct 25 - Carlin (Scottish)

Nov 01 - Arawn (Welsh)
Nov 08 - Corra (Scottish)
Nov 15 - Morrigan (Patron)
Nov 22 - Blodeuwedd (Welsh)
Nov 29 - Druantia (Gaulish)

Dec 06 - Morrigan (Patron)
Dec 13 - Branwyn (Welsh)
Dec 20 - Cailleach Bheur (British)
Dec 27 - Tuireann (Irish)

From Nature to Myth: Owls and People

By Virginia Carper

Owls spark people's imaginations. These silent predators of the night both inspire and frighten people. For nighttime, when owls are most active, is also when magic is afoot. To many people, seeing these shadowy birds with their glowing yellow eyes is to experience the Other Worlds.

This worldwide Order of Birds ranges from the tiny elf owl of North America to the huge eagle owl of Eurasia. As predators, owls regard anything that moves as fair game. While the elf owl eats insects, the eagle owl feasts on deer. Because most owls fly at night, they occupy the same niche in the eco-system as hawks and eagles. Native Americans called the Owl Family "Night Eagles".

Owls are divided into two families-True Owls (*Strigidae*) and the older family of *Tytonidae*, to which only the barn owl and the bay owl belongs. Barn owls can be thought of as the more ancient version of "Owl". They do not hoot like true owls, but instead make a hoarse "Khurrew" noise. In addition, they have heart-shaped faces, longer beaks and heads, and forked tails. Barn owls live in Europe and the Western Hemisphere, and bay owls live in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Australia. This makes the Barn Owl Sub-Family, one of the most widespread land birds in the world. The round-headed owls, that most people see, are from the larger

Strigidae Family which contains 300 species.

Because so few birds are nocturnal and the majority of owls (*Strigiformes*) are, most people respected but distrusted them. The Romans believed that any owl sucked the blood of babies. However, the ancient Greeks welcomed the little owl as their Goddess of Wisdom's Friend. Meanwhile, the Celts look upon the tawny owl as one of the five oldest animals on earth.



Barn Owl: Bird of Doom

A master mouser, the barn owl (*Tyto alba*) can pinpoint the locations of small rodents with only sound. As a nocturnal hunter, the barn owl has such an acute sense of hearing that she can swoop down on a mouse, in the dark night. Because the barn owl is so good at hunting, many people think she spends many hours

just loafing about.

In Europe, the barn owl had a sinister reputation because people associated her with darkness and death. Best known for her eerie skeletal appearance and bloodcurdling scream, the barn owl was regarded by the British as the "Bird of Doom". Since she nests in church belfries and abandoned buildings, the barn owl became associated with ghosts. Furthermore, she was thought to possess the souls of the dead.

Barred Owl: The Owl of Fairy Tales

A great actor, the barred owl uses his voice to great effect. He startles others with a loud and resounding hoot. The barred owl may seem imposing, but he is actually quite harmless. Called “Barred”, this owl has horizontal barring on his chest and vertical bars on his stomach. He is abundant in wetlands, swamps, and second growth forests. Not fussy at all, the barred owl will use hollow trees or abandoned squirrel nests to raise his owlets in. He eats anything he finds from fish to lizards to rabbits.

As the most benign of owls, the barred owl reassures others with his charm and grace. With his big round head and black eyes, he is the prototypical Owl of fairy tales and children’s picture books. His melodious call “Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?” often elicits positive feelings.

The barred owl’s scientific name, *Strix varia* (“Diverse Owl”), reflects his diverse nature. People’s names for him also reflect this. They call him: Swamp Owl, Hoot Owl, Eight Hooter, Wood and Rain Owl. These common names for the barred owl convey people’s sense of friendliness towards him.

Great Horned Owl and Eagle Owl: Rulers of Their Domain

Easily recognizable for his feather tufts that resemble horns, the great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) is one of the most fierce and powerful of the owls. Known as a swift and graceful bird of prey, the great horned owl is the apex predator of his territory. His acute hearing allows him to find prey in the dark. The flat disks of radiating feathers that surround his eyes enhance his hearing by gathering and concentrating the sound waves. As he flies in search of food, the great horned owl makes no sound. Hunting at night, he swoops down to snatch up unsuspecting prey with his sharp, hooked claws. Known as the “Night Tiger”, the great horned owl will even take on eagles for food.

When Europeans first saw the great horned owl, in North America, they mistook him to be their eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*), his close relative. Later, when the French recognized his ferocity in hunting, and protecting his nest, they called him “*Le Grand Duc*”, the Great Duke of the Forest. The great horned owl rules his forest with an iron talon. After silently making his presence known, He quietly encourages the other animals not challenge him. If this approach does not work, then the great horned owl hoots to remind everyone of impending death and misfortune.

The great horned owl’s European counterpart, the eagle owl is also one of the world’s most formidable predators. This large owl attacks golden eagles and carries off small sheep. Like the great horned owl of North America, the eagle owl of Eurasia also rules the forests. Out of respect, the French call the eagle owl “*Grand-duc d’Europe*”, the Grand Duke of Europe, and the Italians call him “*Gufo reale*”, the Royal Owl.

The eagle owl’s scientific name “*Bubo bubo*” means that he is the prototypical owl. All the other owls’ “owlness” is judged by his. The great horned owl comes the closest as *Bubo virginianus*, (the Owl of Virginia i.e. the New World). Both these owls are harbingers of death. In North America, the great horned owl’s hoot was the signal for ambushes. Meanwhile in Europe, the Saxons used the hooting of the eagle owl for night attacks. Therefore, these owls’ hoots came to represent death in many people’s minds.

Little Owl: Friend of Athena

Ancient Athenians observed the little owl (*Athene noctua*) nesting in their temple to Athena, Goddess of Wisdom. Perched on the niches atop the pillars of the Acropolis, the little owl and her friends stared out at the bustling city beneath them. At night inside the temple, the little owl’s glowing yellow eyes seemed magical and penetrating. To the Athenians, the little owl was both the Friend of Athena and Her Representative.

As Athena's Emissary, the little owl promised victory to the Greeks at the Battle of the Marathon (490 B.C.) over their enemies, the Persians. While fighting the invaders, the Greek soldiers saw the little owl perched nearby. So inspired by her presence, they drove the Persians back to their ships. Afterwards, the Athenians issued a silver tetra drachma coin with the likeness of the little owl and Athena. The little owl, on the coin, kept a watchful over Athens.

Avoiding forests, the little owl prefers the open countryside of orchards, farmlands, and hedgerows. Active during the day, she perches on a fence post watching for prey. Sighting a rodent from her hedgerow perch, the little owl suddenly takes off to drop down on her victim. The little owl's flexible lifestyle allows her to stay in one place. Because she lived among the Greeks on their farms and orchards, they became familiar with her comings and goings. To the Greeks, the little owl was a friend.

Tawny Owl: The Crone of the Night (*Cailleach-oidhche*)

The earliest records show that the tawny owl has inhabited Eurasia since the end of the Ice Age. Nesting in tree holes and squirrel dreys, the tawny owl is the most numerous owl of the forests. Largely nocturnal, she is extremely adaptable, and has made her home in city parks.

The tawny owl's distinctive "twit twoo" is well known to people. Some of their many names for her reflects this: Brown Hoolert, Ferry Hoolet, and Hill Hooter. However, the hooting is a mated pair of the tawny owls communicating with each other. The male owl says, "twit", and female owl answers, "twoo". Together it sounds as if one owl is calling.

The Celts were of two minds concerning the tawny owl. They regarded her to be both wise and a bringer of death. They called the tawny owl "Night Hag" and "Corpse Bird". Her Gaelic name "*cailleach-oidhche*" is a direct refer-

ence to the Celtic Goddess of Death (*The Cailleach Bheur*), the blue-faced crone of winter and death.

However, the tawny owl is one of the five totem animals of the Celts. The earliest story of King Arthur tells of his search for the Divine Youth Mabon. He went to the Blackbird of the forge, who sent him to the Stag, who lead him to Owl of Cawluryd. This Owl guided him to Golden Eagle who took him to Salmon, the Source of All Wisdom. (Carr-Gomm, 51-52) In this myth, each animal imparts a certain wisdom to those who seek them. Owl's wisdom is that of objectivity and detachment. Adept at disappearing from view, the tawny owl came to symbolize esoteric wisdom and secrecy.

Conclusion

Various owls have exploited all kinds of environments ranging from frozen tundra to arid deserts. Owls live in dead trees, on buildings, and burrows in the ground. More importantly, they will hunt during the day if necessary. Because of that, those owls are often regarded as friends by people.

Owls represent the fears, anxieties, and wisdom of people. However to see owls as they truly are brings about a greater appreciation of their role in nature. Owls are master predators that keep their territories from being overrun by rodents. By encouraging barn owls to nest in New York City, the health department has noticed that the rodent population has dropped substantially. Like all owls, the barn owl is the bird of death to her prey, and a bird of life to people.

Gods Have a Strange Sense of Humor

By James Lock

This happened a few years before I joined ADF, but it has had an impact on every aspect of my life, including my being in ADF. I had been Pagan for quite some time, but had no particular Patron deities, which was something I really wanted. I felt that having one or two specific deities to whom I could direct more personal worship was something that would help my spiritual growth. So I started to search for a Patron.



As is not uncommon among people involved in such searching, I started looking at the gods of my ancestors. I am half Cherokee, on my mother's side, so I looked to the gods and practices of the Cherokee. I made such thorough studies as I could and began to pray and offer to those gods. After some time of approaching Them, I began to sense Their presence. Eventually I began to understand what They were saying to me. And what They said was, "You're a nice enough guy and all, and you're welcome to visit, but this isn't where you belong."

Okay...so much for that.

I then turned to my father's side of the family. I have mostly Scottish ancestry with a bit of Dutch thrown in, so I began to look into those cultures. I went through the same process as before: learning about the gods of the Celtic lands and making offerings to Them and praying to Them, ask-

ing to make Their acquaintance. The response I got was basically the same as what I received from the gods of the Cherokee.

Up next, the Norse deities, as they were the only ones I could find connected to the Dutch culture. You can see where this is going, can't you? The Norse gods were also uninterested in me.

No longer sure what to do, I made a fairly substantial offering and asked for the deity or deities willing to be my Patron to please show Themselves. Yes, I know that can be a dangerous request to make, but I was getting frustrated.

Things started happening almost immediately. I started seeing and hearing things that connected to the Hellenic god Apollo. I didn't think these could actually be the signs I wanted, because worshipping the Greek gods just seemed so foreign to me. I had no Greek ancestry nor had I

ever had much interest in ancient Hellenic culture. I assumed what I was seeing were meant to indicate some other deity.

The signs continued, and they more and more strongly indicated Apollo. And I kept resisting it. I still don't really know why.

Finally, after flipping through television channels one night and seeing consecutive programs on dolphins, ancient oracles, the geography of Delphi and surrounding areas, and lyre music I decided to try another tact. I burned frankincense, having read that it was sacred to Apollo, and prayed, "Apollo, You are said to be the god of oracles, so I am asking You for a sign. I need something to indicate, beyond my ability to question, that You are the One I need to turn to. If You are actually willing to offer me Your Patronage, I will be Your devotee."

The next morning I went to work, knowing I would be spending most of the day overseeing

distribution of telephone directories...that being a seasonal part of my job at the phone company where I work. I got to the office and went to my desk. What I saw almost made me freeze in my tracks. A note had been handwritten and put on my computer monitor. It said, "James, there's a problem with the Apollo information. Please check all the data, it appears that you're missing something." (The city of Apollo, PA is one of the areas for which my company publishes the phone book.)

That did it. It's hard to argue with a prompt and sarcastic response like that.

Apollo now stands as First among my Patrons, others having come to me once I got over my "it can't be the Greeks" issues. And I now know that not only is Hellenic the proper Hearth Culture for me, but the gods knew what They were doing when everyone else rejected me. I had finally found the Patron I needed.

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Comparative Mythology: Why Bother?

By Jenni Hunt

In any given ADF grove, you're likely to find people with a variety of interests. A particular grove might have members whose hearth cultures are Irish, Norse, Greek, Welsh, Gaulish and Roman, for example. This grove might celebrate each High Day with a different cultural focus or even celebrate more than one ritual for each High Day. Can it really be one big, happy Indo-European-based, Neopagan, family?

Indeed, you might wonder what magnet draws people together to worship as a community, in spite of their seeming differences. Its commonalities, not its differences, make a community out of a collection of individuals. In fact, it is *because* individuals gather together with their varying interests that they are able to perceive what might not be readily apparent to others – that they really do have a lot in common. In learning more about each other and the lore of all the different hearth cultures, they deepen their connection with each other AND their own hearth culture.

Examining the myths of different cultures brings us closer to our own roots. There is a great deal of value in celebrating the uniqueness of a particular culture while exploring the commonalities it shares with other cultures. It's not just an intellectual exercise. In the process of searching for themes common to different cultures, we find ourselves examining what we know from a different point of view, and so we open our minds to gain new insights we might never have dreamed of had we not been searching. In exploring commonalities among Indo-European cultures, we learn to be less judgmental and compartmentalized in our world view, and more sympathetic with other cultures. We find that other cultures really aren't all that different from the ones with which we are familiar.

It is human nature to compare and contrast, a

very useful exercise in deepening understanding of any subject. Any sort of comparative study of culture helps us better understand and appreciate our own culture, as well as that of all other cultures. In this sense, examining Indo-European myths with an eye toward common themes is particularly insightful. Comparing and contrasting the mythologies of a number of cultures encourages us to think 'outside the box'; to examine our own beliefs and assumptions from different perspectives; and to discover patterns and tendencies we might otherwise have not considered.

Anyone who has read a bit about Indo-European peoples can point out cross-cultural similarities with respect to sky fathers and thunder gods, gods of sea, reverence for fire, and respect for the dead. Other common themes are less apparent, though. It is in exploring the more difficult themes, looking for parallels that don't seem to exist, where the student of comparative mythology gains real insight.

For example, it's easy to say that no other Indo-European mythology includes anything like the Norse World Tree, Yggdrasil. In Norse lore, Yggdrasil is elaborately described; numerous beings inhabit this giant ash, sheltering in, feeding upon, and, in turn, nourishing and protecting it. The World Tree is a reflection of the cosmos itself, the source of creation and sustenance of the world. But do other cultures have a similar tree? No? How about a similar center of the cosmos?

In looking for World Trees among the Greeks, we find ourselves scratching our heads. Although there are numerous sacred groves and sanctuaries in Greek mythology, the Greek cosmos has no cosmological centralized tree like Yggdrasil. There has been some attempt to trace

the roots of Greek mythology back to a "Minoan Tree and Pillar Cult" (Burkert 39), but this tree, which is inside an enclosure and beneath which a goddess is enthroned, is cosmologically different in nature from Yggdrasill. More cosmologically similar, however, is the Greek *omphalos*, or "navel." Tradition has it that Zeus sent two eagles – one from the west and one from the east – to meet at the center of the world. Where they met, Delphi, is where the stone *omphalos* sits, the center of the world (Burkert 85) – much as Yggdrasill is the considered center of the world.

When scholars look for parallels, they may or may not find them; however, in the process of the search, gems of information can be unearthed. In searching for a Greek World Tree, not only does the scholar find a similar theme, but he also discovers a wealth of information about sacred groves, the *omphalos*, ancient tree cults, dryads and other mythological figures inhabiting the forest world. But the research cycle continues: What Norse parallels might a persistent scholar discover with respect to all *these* themes?

A search for a Roman "divine war" might find a scholar scratching his head over where he might look for stories of a new race of gods defeating an older one. Most laymen assume that Romans did not have any mythology of their own and that they borrowed everything from the Greeks. While there was a large amount of syncretism in Rome, it certainly did have a body of mythology distinct from the Greeks, and much of the Ro-

man mythological efforts involved para-historical stories about the founding of Rome and its Golden Age. The scholar need look no further than Book I of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* (*From the Founding of the City*) to find his 'divine war,' with Romulus's Romans defeating and assimilating the Sabines (Livy 15-17). In the figure of Tarpeia, the

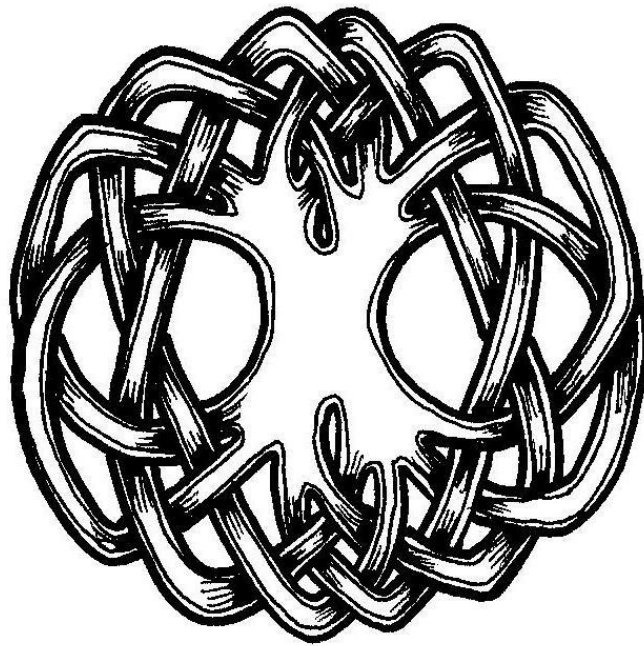
scholar even finds a parallel to the Norse Gullveig, and so a seemingly minor detail may become more important by the very fact that it is repeated across cultures.

Another problematic theme is that of the divisions of the worlds, particularly divisions of the middle world. Norse myth elaborately details the cosmos, with a variety of divisions and subdivisions of the worlds

– vertically, horizontally and temporally (night and day). *Midgard* is the middle of the trunk of Yggdrasill, and is surrounded by a huge ocean, on the same level as three other of the nine realms.

It's not so simple to find such detailed divisions in other cultures. Roman mythology was not overly concerned with the origins of the universe, but Ovid, through the god, Janus, relates that the world originally consisted only of Chaos – "fire, water and earth were a single heap" (Ovid 6). Janus explains that each element went its own way – fire to the heavens, air just below, and earth and water at the base.

The Greeks tended to view the universe as a spherical land surrounded by a great ocean with air above and Hades below. In mythology, there is little mention of the middle realm; Greeks



don't seem to divide the middle world into regions quite like the Norse do. However, there were also four gods of wind: Boreas, the north wind, Zephyros, the west wind, Notos, the south wind, and Euros, the east wind. Digging ever further, the scholar may learn that Eratosthenes, in his lost work entitled *Hermes*, described five zones of the earth: two cold, two temperate, and one hot (Shipley 246).

It is not difficult to see the parallels among cultures of the divisions of the worlds into distinct regions, both vertically and horizontally. But it may be that only in searching for parallels to the Norse divisions does the Greek or Roman scholar examine what he might otherwise assume are insignificant details in Classical mythology.

There is immense value in this cross-cultural navel-gazing. Shan Winn points out that "an awareness of tripartite thought patterns, so embedded in our daily lives and rampant in academic life (threefold reasons, theories, and divisions of all

kinds), leads to a reassessment of notions which are taken for granted and seldom challenged" (Winn 7). It keeps us on our intellectual toes. *Vive la difference! Vive les commonalities!*

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Prosperity

By Linda Costello

In ancient days, a king had to be unblemished in order to rule, and upon being chosen as a worthy ruler, he was wed to the land to ensure the prosperity and safety of the kingdom.

What do I mean when I use the term, prosperity? According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, prosperity is defined as: the condition of being successful or thriving; *especially*: economic well-being.

Given this definition, naturally I am referring to money, the agreed-upon economic exchange that we use in our culture. AND I am not just referring to money. I am talking about that which causes us to succeed and thrive, which, admittedly, in our culture, is usually money.

We all define success in our own ways. Merriam-Webster defines it like this:

Success: a favorable or desired outcome; the attainment of wealth, favor, or eminence. Of course, “favorable” and “desired” are both subjective words and mean different things to different people. What constitutes success for me may be something completely different for you. And what constitutes success for me today may be different tomorrow. However, even given the individuality of our definitions of success, I believe I can say with confidence that having more than enough money to meet all of my needs could be construed as some semblance of success.

Lately I have been exploring these ideas of success and prosperity, and I have discovered some crucial connections to the having and/or the not having of money.

I have discovered that my own feelings of lack

are rooted in a poverty consciousness that was part of my upbringing, to some extent brought on by the Depression. I was born to parents who knew the horrors of losing jobs, being on food rations, and all of the other hard times that came about during that period of history.

Growing up, it always felt as though we didn't have enough to make ends meet.

No matter how much money I have managed to earn in my five decades of life, I seem to continue to have that experience of not having enough. This is not

to say I don't appreciate all that I have. I absolutely do. However, the net asset value hasn't changed much because as my income has increased, so have my expenses. I believe that I perpetuate that belief of not having enough because it was ingrained in me at such an early age. Can I change that? I certainly hope so. Should I?

Here we get to the meat of the matter.

I believe I should. I believe I should do everything I possibly can, as long as it benefits others as well as myself, to increase my wealth. I be-



lieve that, as the sovereign ruler of my own personal kingdom (or queendom as the case might be), it is my responsibility to be a fit ruler, and to ensure the prosperity of my kingdom. And, in doing so, I will have more to use on lofty missions, more to donate to worthy causes, more to use to make this world a better place. I owe it to myself and the world in which I live.

Thus, I have begun to study and learn what it would take to increase my wealth.

I was fortunate enough to attend a 10 week Master Mind group based upon the book, *Think and Grow Rich*, by Napoleon Hill. Napoleon Hill spent twenty-five years of his life studying the habits of the wealthy and successful businessmen of his time, and he discovered a few characteristics that they all had in common. One of the primary defining characteristics was a strong faith that they could and would succeed. Hill's book outlines the other characteristics possessed by men such as Andrew Carnegie, JP Morgan, and Charles Schwab, and how they made their fortunes.

These characteristics all indicate the existence of a Law of Attraction in which we attract the manifestations of our lives by our thoughts. Where you put your attention is what manifests in your life. It's an interesting paradox, because if you don't believe in it, then it doesn't work, and thus it IS working. It is not a new theory to me, but this time, it's been presented to me as a way of building wealth, which is novel for me. As I reprogram my thoughts to allow myself to receive opportunities for wealth-building, so do I begin to see the results in my life. It is fascinating to watch it at work.

I can see the application of the Law of Attraction in my Druidic practice. As I concentrate on the virtues, I start to see evidence of their presence more in my life; evidence of hospitality, of fertility/creativity, of piety and integrity, and so on. As I learn and study about sovereignty goddesses and the prosperity of the kingdom, so do I see

applications in my own life, to feel my own sovereignty, to see the need to ensure prosperity in my life.

Our beliefs are tricky. How many times have we heard, "Money doesn't grow on trees?" And yet, money is made out of paper, which comes from trees. How many times have we heard that "Money doesn't buy happiness?" This is certainly true – we don't need money to be happy, but neither does NOT having money buy happiness. It doesn't mean that we can't be happy if we HAVE money. Money and happiness aren't mutually exclusive. Another perspective is that money may not buy happiness, but it sure can make life more comfortable. Why do I deny myself?

In some ways, I think I am trying to make the best of a difficult situation. Yet, according to the Law of Attraction, every time I do that, I am asserting my current position in life and not letting myself attract the abundance I desire. I choose to engage in activities that are not income-producing. I choose to find reasons why I shouldn't want money – I judge myself for being selfish, or for being calculating, rather than recognizing that, to the contrary, I probably give away too much to others, and I am probably not shrewd enough.

How will I achieve my dreams if I do not change this way of thinking? How will I found a community based upon principles of sustainable living if I do not have the resources to obtain it? How will I make a difference in a way that matters to me if I don't have the means to carry out my plans? How will I be able to grow both my local druid grove as well as the non-profit institution of which my grove is a part, if I don't have the resources necessary to do so? Oh, I could be content to build my own little homestead and live off the land in a sustainable way, but why not dream bigger than that? Why not share that with others?

Money matters. Resources matter. Prosperity

matters. And it is up to me to prove myself to be the fit ruler of my kingdom, to wed myself to the land so that it may bless my kingdom with abundance.

In an interesting twist, I am finding my path leading me in two unexpected directions. I am training others on how to change their thinking so that they, too, can achieve the resources and success that they desire by running Master Mind groups in my area. I am even negotiating with my current employer to present such groups to some of our business clients.

Even more importantly, I am focusing my real estate practice on eco-friendly housing; in other words, I am seeking out energy-efficient housing to sell, seeking out buyers who want such housing, and consulting with interested clients on how to make their homes more energy-efficient. I am taking continuing education classes in real estate to be certified as an eco-broker. I am car-

ing for the land as I build my business and helping others to live in more healthy environments.

I've felt quite encouraged by the talk about green building in Arizona these days. In fact, I recently found out that there are initiatives in Scottsdale, the city I have lived in for twelve years, to increase energy efficiency in homes exponentially in the years to come. I am also seeing that people are starting to take this seriously, and I am excited to be riding the wave on something that has been near and dear to my heart for so many years.

As I strive for my own prosperity, with the tenet that I am also helping others in the process, I am also helping to increase the prosperity of the land around me. What better way to dedicate my life and live in piety? With the help of the Gods, I will succeed and thrive, for Them, as much as for myself and my kingdom.

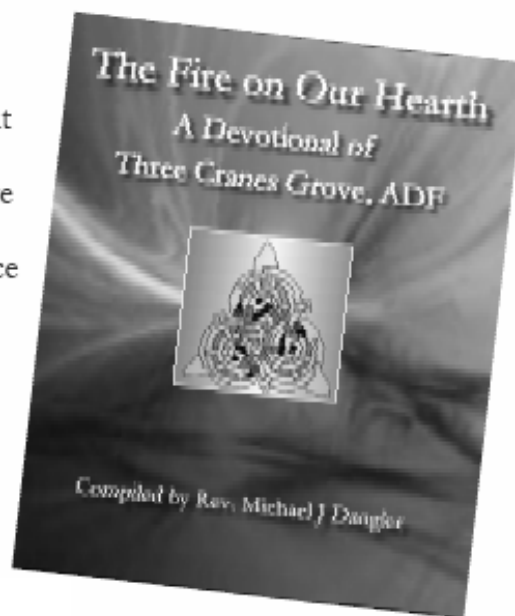
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Musings from the Mountain Mists

By Noira

It's mid-February and I have found a refuge in a mysterious mountain locked spa where I will spend the following month. With the upcoming anniversary and special OL edition, I thought I could share my story of Our Druidry and how it changed my life. As You might know, I hail from Czech Republic, Central Europe and founded the first ADF Protogrove there not long ago.

...
The spa brochure lists a quote on the cover from its 19th century founder: "I don't have to heal them o to understand the language of the birds or the trees. This land has so much power it-self." Somehow, it sounds familiar to me as a Pagan. I later learn that he has been even called "a priest of nature."

...
I though it would be interesting to have a contribution to this issue by somebody whose freshmen year in ADF is the organization's 25th anniversary year. Oh yes – I've only joined in Summer 2007. At that time, I was completing my first year at university, comparative religion. I fell in love with knowledge so passionately that I applied for *another* study program at another faculty to join the legion of the madmen who take on two schools at the same time. For my religious identity, this was a time of deep crisis though.

...
A few days after my arrival I found myself going to the swimming pool. The sun sets early, making a good part of the day dark. It gets surprisingly quiet after dawn. The

atmosphere is eerie – mountains bathing in mists, melting in darkness surround the spa from three sides. The fourth one is the forest covered hill on which it's built. On my way back to the hotel room, I realize it's close to full moon.



...
A lot of it had to do with our local Pagan community. Religion equals community, I was taught, and I was just experiencing the burden of this truth. The local Pagan community... I entered it shyly in 2005 somewhat unexpectedly due to my newly set-up Wiccan website (when You want to learn 'bout something set up a website first, ya know) which later brought me certain fame and perhaps created an idea in people's heads that I am – or I strive to become – an “influential” person. I fought some petty wars with other e-Pagans; at

that time it was a boom of Pagan (Wiccan) Internet. A Wiccan chat room appeared for a short period and I attended one of its real-life meet ups. It looked more as a Goth gathering though with a bunch of wannabe (elder, male) occult celebrities boasting their knowledge over (young, female) Wiccans and eventually seducing them. From what I gather the occult chatrooms scene hasn't changed ever since but rather – to my growing worries – merged organically with the springing Pagan/Wiccan community, influencing it in a questionable manner.

When approximating adulthood I also became engaged in the local “leather folk” community, searching for my sexual identity, where I spotted a conspicuous number of Pagans too. Needless to say some of these overcame my former worst experience with Pagans and leather folk alike; like Thor’s Hammer wearing drunkard “Asatruars” convinced of their irresistible male charms or witches threatening to wipe me out magically... Oh Ye fellow Druids, it was a stone age of my Paganism and the arrival of civilization still far beyond the horizon. To amuse the gentle reader I must add that I also tried to form a coven. It would consist of me, my boyfriend and my best friend. For some reason it didn’t quite work out, especially after we broke up and the friend stopped talking to me. But growing up was unavoidable and I ended up experiencing a longing for spiritual community and group practice once again. This is where we are approaching contemporary, although the story didn’t go in an exactly linear way and I omitted some side plots. I don’t remember how exactly it turned out that I attended some Pagan pub moots, organized by our informal leader, a Traditional Wiccan (the *only* initiated Wiccan in the country, ya know, a glowing aura recognizable at distance). Oh yes, I guess it was my questionable Wiccan webmaster’s fame that brought me there. The pub moots belonged to a close knit community of Pagans/Wiccans attending a regular retreat surrounded by the most adventurous gossips. The retreat eventually got opened (due to the gossips being more and more difficult to disprove) and I attended twice.

It was about the same time when I finished the Catholic high school which prevented me from taking a hard look on my own spiritual identity, and moved out from my parents. I became a passionate seeker and ended up studying comparative religion. My romance with knowledge was not without quarrels though.

...

I feel sweaty, tired, just horrible. They say it’s a normal reaction to the climate change. Finally I find a way to describe how I’ve felt since arriving – I feel like being a

part of some giant mysterious creature’s metabolism. Just a single cell in some unspeakable organism living all over here. They say it’s a geological rarity.

...

After attending the afore mentioned retreat for second time I returned disillusioned, even more than the first time. I had feelings impossible for me to decode. I told my professor of New Religious Movements about my experience, how I felt I didn’t fit it and so on. He just laughed and to my utter shock finished the rest of the story without hearing it; it seemed that my feelings were a result of some well-described mechanisms that just occur; but heck, the Pagan community is supposed to be something different, is it?

...

On March 1st it’s raining when I struggle my way uphill to the bath house. Sky is tearing apart wildly and sun fills my sight with the wind making such a noise that I think for a moment that a flood must be going on. It’s no flood though – it’s just a “spring rain”. Even the slightest wind and rain takes on such a violent form here in mountains that one would believe that the spirits themselves are fighting the doomsday battle.

...

They say religion is a set of shared values. So at the time when I thought there is nobody I could share them with, I felt like loosing my religion.

My perception of our local Pagan community has been distorted by my cult studies and Psychology of Religion classes. I had nobody to talk to, nobody to help me regain my intellectual security. I missed a spiritual authority figure from my own tradition so I turned to my teachers. The more I talked to them, the more I was internally drifting apart from the Pagan community. I’ve been visiting various religious communities and churches as a part of my studies. I became increasingly ashamed of my own religion and found myself jealous about the devotion, openness, success and organizational structure of other churches. Even here, where religion is a marginal thing in society and is seen with suspicion, Paganism just seemed such a joke in comparison to any church. To solve the puzzle, I chose Neo-Paganism as my major research topic. Somebody should have

warned me that by this decision I had shut my gate to “the world of the common believer” forever.

...

Peculiar quiet comes after the rain. Back at the reception I read a note that a hurricane is coming just like last year and that we keep the windows shut.

...

Towards the end of my first year of university I was half on my way to an inner exile and close to honorably burying my Paganism. I was getting far more positive feedback, appreciation and satisfaction from my academic life than from the Pagan one and the two seemed incompatible. I chose a “Pagan in hiding”, somewhat ashamed of her religion, walking the halls of Sofia rather than an “intellectual



in hiding” trying to fit in the Pagan scene. Out of rage I wrote my first scholar papers thinking “if I cannot grasp it emotionally and be happy, I must beat it intellectually”. And those two papers drew attention and success; yet there's been a delay of a few months before they got noted – and in the meantime I stumbled upon ADF.

...

The morning after my solitary Imbolc it starts to snow. I realize it takes time for spring to come in the mountains.

...

Considering how insecure and linguistically, culturally and geographically disabled I was, it must have been the will of the Powers that I eventually decided to join, although the prospective of joining an “American” organization promised nothing spectacular, considering my former experience. I knew in my heart that I've exhausted all local resources and it's time to join somebody who “has been there”. I asked around on Pagan forums about correspondence courses and clergy

training programs. I was allured by ADF's study programs and liturgy so I fearfully searched the procedures to inquire whether there's something any problem, such as money or distance etc.

...

On March 9th I finally get myself to climb the hill above the spa, transformed by a sculptor into what looks on the first sight seems as a “Pagan way of the Cross”, just instead of the cross a giant mystical portal oversees the hill from the top. It's called The Path of Life. The brochure

says it's a “Pilgrimage site... of the modern cult of nature... the artist builds on a tension between the harsh forms of the rocks and the smooth curves of a human body.”

...

The more I got to know about ADF, the more sense it all made. It was a healing experience to become a part of a community where

pursuing an academic degree in a related field is not seen with suspicion but respect; where speaking ancient languages is highly prized; where being pious is not something to belittle; where real theology, liturgy and ethics are cultivated and where Your status depends on what You *do* rather than *how popular* You are. I regained my intellectual security about what I am doing and what is my place in Paganism and this time it won't crumble easily.

...

A closer look reveals that the sculptor himself looked as a hippie Jesus, working on his piece with nothing but shorts and waving hair. It's astounding – in the gray reality of the Communist regime somebody was able to communicate his message without words. It speaks about freedom, the journey and how we are inextricably bound to the world of nature. I climb and take a few pictures. It's a cold morning, and world is just rising from the mist. I take a look through the portal – it's promising.

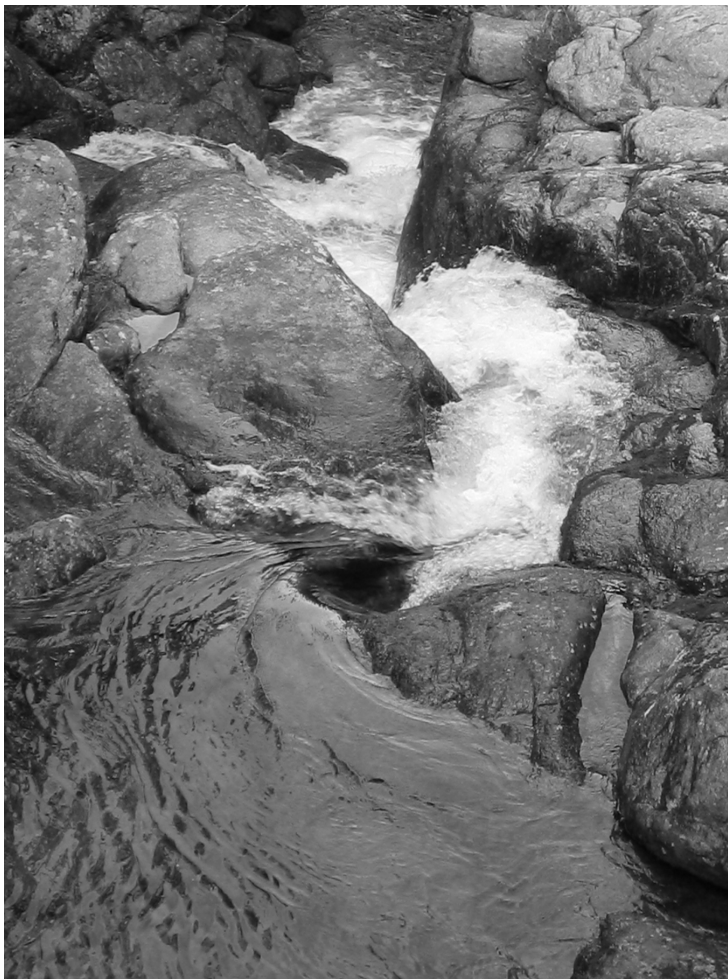
Experiences with Water Taking

By Illious

It's 3 AM and I was on the road, heading up I-87 in New York, heading to the headwaters of my Grove. I was driving, drinking coffee, having had only two hours sleep, and listening to Beowulf on CD. I was psyched that I was finally heading back to the headwaters of Tear of the Cloud Grove, ADF, and my first time since the Grove was founded in 1999. The last time I was there, I was a Boy Scout, and leading a troop on a trek that eventually lead them to realize they were not backpackers. My intent for the day was to make the hike and do what I thought would be an important ritual to take waters for my Grove. It turned out though that the hike was more meaningful.

I arrived around 5 at the parking lot for the shortest distance to these headwaters, 9.5 map miles and 2000 foot elevation gain away. I scarf down some food, throw on my pack of about 40 pounds in heft, and hit the trail as the sun was rising. Before I knew it, I was 5 miles in, and eating snacks for breakfast, it was now 9. The hike had been good, and I was making great time, even with the heavy pack I had on my back. This was not to be the case soon though. I was at the base of the climb that would go on for the remaining of the hike. Even at that, I made it the next 3.5 miles (8.5 miles by now if you were keeping track) and have gained about 1000 feet in elevation. The easy part was done.

That last mile, and 1000 feet of elevation gain was not easy. Every 100 feet or so, I stopped and asked myself what I was doing. What was I doing? Why was I hiking to these headwaters? What was my purpose out here? Did I really



need to be going through all this pain and suffering? These were some of the many thoughts that went through my head that last mile.

So, why was I here? I was on this trip to collect sacred waters for the Grove's well and our rituals. When the Grove was founded, we named ourselves after the headwaters of the biggest and most important water feature in our area, the Hudson River. While there are many streams and tributaries that can be called the headwaters, we called ourselves after the highest, Lake Tear of the Cloud. It was from this lake that we wanted our sacred waters, it was my task to get

them this day.

What made this lake the source of our sacred waters? Well, that was the question I debated the whole way up. Why couldn't I just say that the first bridge I crossed that morning be the source of them? That is where the Hudson River is first named that, and it would be an easier trip by far. As I was to discover, there was something more to these waters I was after than just us declaring them our sacred waters. They were by far very special and sacred waters.

I climbed up this terrible final mile, walking over these boulders that were the trail. The trails out west are nice, I thought to myself, they are gentle in climb and have switchbacks. What masochistic person decided to start at point A, go to point B, and go in as straight a line as possible? This is how most of the trails here in the Adirondacks are though, straight up the mountain, following a stream, or some other difficult route that even at times includes ladders and ropes.

Along the way, I stopped so many times, I was wondering if I should just sit, turn, stand, sit again, and walk my way up that way. I didn't, but one stop, I did just sit and listen and see what was around me. To my surprise, I actually saw a mouse, and it didn't bother him that I sat there and watched him. I was coming to one of the many revelations of why I was there. I was there to get back in touch with nature, and nature got back in touch with me. This was a major outcome of the day, reconnecting with nature.

Eventually, 7 hours after I started, I reached the lake. I dropped my pack and got set up for the ritual I was to do. Once this was set up, I just sat and communed with the area. I got to know, on some level the spirit of the lake, and got the distinct impression it was female. I got in tune with the land there, the moss under foot, the evergreens that were above and next to me and my makeshift altar, the huge rock that shielded me from the trail. Little did I know what would happen when I started the ritual though.

The weather was cool, but not cold, breezy, but not chilly. I had been sitting for an hour, meditating, connecting, and getting myself mentally prepared. I turn on the video camera that was one of the major sources of weight in my pack, and light the tea candle that was my sacred fire. That is when it hit.

I was full of energy that was not there seconds before. I was visibly shaking. I was not sure if I was going to be able to do this. I have felt this kind of energy before, but only when I had sixty people sending it through me to open the gates, and I was burnt out and exhausted after that. I came all this way, I was not going to turn back without doing the ritual, so I started the ritual, and things go well. Then came the point where I make sacrifices to the lake, to request waters to take home. This was THE moment.

I came these nine miles so that I could ask to take waters from the lake. I had spent an hour communing with the land and the lake preparing to ask for the water. I burnt the rest of the incense I brought. I sacrificed the remainder of the grain I brought for offerings. I then took the silver knife I bought for the main sacrifice, and tried to break it. It did not break but instead it bent. It was broken though as it could not be used by humans again.

I then walked to the lake a few feet away and set up the camera to catch what was about to happen. I then made the sacrifice of the knife and the Grove's trove of silver to the lake. While I wish I could have thrown it into the lake, there were people around and was unable to. Instead I buried it in the muck and mud by the shore. I then took the water from the lake to bring back to the Grove.

So, I asked, what my omens were. I received Ehwas, spiritual travel in reply to how the sacrifices were received. Good start I thought. I then asked what the Grove received and got Hagalz, hail and major changes. That was interest-

ing. Then I asked what did I receive and I got Jera, the year and harvest. As I thought on it then, I thought that this was the lake telling me that I was doing the right thing, coming and getting these waters. The waters though, would be the start of some changes to the Grove in the future. Looking back now, many months later, this was surely the case, and it has been change for the better, both for the Grove, and me personally. While I found the ritual fulfilling, the hours of hiking and communing with the land and lake were by far more important to me.

Then came the time to clean up and hike back to the truck. The hike up was long and torturous. The hike home was just a little easier, but it resulted in me rushing, and pulling major muscles on the way. I thought of bivouacking for the night, but realized that the pain I was in would not result in a happy morning. I hobbled the last mile or two back to my truck and got in it at 9, about an hour after sunset, and was home by 11. When I woke up the following morning the full extent of the muscle pulls were discovered, as I couldn't even roll over due to the pain.

Was this trip worth it? It sure was. It has given me memories I will have for a lifetime. Are these waters I retrieved sacred? They definitely are. They were a gift from the

spirit of the lake. How much more sacred can one get than the body of water giving part of themselves to you? The hours of communing with the lake and nature gave me lasting memories, and even more significance to the waters than I could have gotten any other way.

There were a few lessons learned though. Many of them were on a personal level, such as bring extra clothing to keep warm, carry a lighter pack, and watch your footing when going downhill. Others could be applied more generally through ADF though.

Go and visit the headwaters of your Grove. The journey there can be a pilgrimage like mine was, or it could be quick and easy. It will be well

worth it though. Spend time at the headwaters. Connect to the spirits there, get to know them. If you can, do a ritual, make sacrifice to the spirits and bring some water back for yourself and your Grove. When you work with these waters again, your connection will grow stronger to the headwaters. You may also just find the spirits of the headwaters showing up at your rituals.

If you are interested, you can see the video of the ritual at: <http://tearofthecloud.org/Writings/water-taking.html>

Draise for Taranis

By Cheryl Angst

Striding across the face of the sun,
with flaming fiery hair,
his footsteps peal out thunder.
His countenance full of storms.

The countryside reverberates with his presence.
Sea, land, and sky become one
Within the veil of darkling clouds.
The wheel brightly spinning in his hand.

He rolls across the landscape,
all bow before him.
Winds and driving rain bring
even the strongest to their knees.

Lord of Thunder! Wielder of bolts!
His power can be felt in the kiss of a breeze.
He is wild, uncontrollable,
his power rages through the storm!

He cannot be stopped.
Those who do not bend in the wind will break.
Taranis is the Lord of Thunder!
Let his power surge throughout the land!

Baltic Darna and the Roles of Bees

By Roger Pomplas

Whenever I think of, speak on, or write about the Baltic concept of **Darna** (dar-NAH), my spirit always, always brings me to the memory of sitting on the warm carpeted floor at the feet of “*mano senelis*” (my Lithuanian grandfather). In so many ways he was my mentor, spiritual guide, and teacher during the “*shaping-years*” of boyhood. My grandfather died when I was twenty-six. He is still my guide though. And his discerning thoughts are reborn in the unique metamorphosis of my own thoughts.

“*But who dwell in the ancient earthen mounds and what sort of creatures could breath deep under the waters,*” my innocent and trusting young voice would inquire, for he, *mano senelis*, had filled my psyche with the “wonders of the Old Country.” Now, my grandparents lived in Cleveland, Ohio (home to many Lithuanian emigrants), in a house close to edge of Lake Erie. And we would walk to the pier at Euclid Beach Park, then step down to the rocky shores of the lake, and for the hundredth time he began, again, with the story of Jurate (a sea goddess) and of her love for a mortal fisherman named Kastytis. And as we stood there, overlooking the grey skies covering this vast lake (almost an inland sea), my young seven-year-old mind would transform Erie into Baltic.

Actually Kastytis had great skills as a fisherman and was catching so many fish in the Baltic Sea that Jurate went looking for him in order to put a stop to his activities. This was her attempt at restoring **Darna** (harmony). But instead of issuing a warning, what emerged from her lips and from her heart was affection and love. And on seeing such a handsome young man, she immediately wished to have him as a husband. Beneath the waters of the Baltic, Jurate built a vast and fantastic castle, made of holy “*gintaras*” (amber), where the couple lived contently. But Perkunas, the great storm god and purveyor of Justice and



Harmony (Darna) saw, in this marriage, a state of “**Blogis**” --- the condition of being out of sacred harmony, a state of discord and impurity. Perkunas sought to have the marriage ended; for mortals are to marry mortals, while only a deity

could marry a deity. With one of his bolts of lightening, Perkunas destroyed the amber (gintaras) castle and took the life of Kastytis. Jurate was chained to the castle ruins deep down upon the floor of the stormy Baltic Sea.

Even to this day, bits of Jurate's castle wash up upon the eastern shores of the Baltic - upon Lithuanian and Latvian beaches. During an especially powerful gale, one can see the glow of Perkunas' lightening that strikes out from the swirling blue-grey clouds far off upon the watery distance. And from the deep, emotionally stirring waters, the sighs of Jurate can be faintly heard, as the formidable, crushing waves wash up castle pieces (amber) upon the lonely, wet shores. Occasionally one may find a small rounded, polished fragment of gintaras. Everyone knows that these are the "tears of Jurate," who is still crying for her lost love. "*Senelis, is this a story of Darna or Blogis? Why does Jurate have to be in such pain? It doesn't seem fair,*" my confused, young voice quivered. "*Sometimes the restoration of Darna brings with it much anguish and ache,*" was his quiet and sobering response.

It is in the "seeding of the spirit-of-the-young," with the sharing of stories, the singing of the old songs, the retelling and explanation of the significance of myth, that the power of culture thrives and children learn. This conscious feat "IS" Darna in action. "Mano Senelis" (my grandfather) would tell stories about Gediminas' dream of the *Iron Wolf* and the founding of Vilnius (Lithuania's capital). Sometimes my brother and I would hear about the beautiful, but deadly, *laumai*, gorgeous fairy women, who could be found naked in the forest, combing their long hair. I learned at an early age to seek out and respect "the *Wonder one finds all around.*" "***Live a life of Darna ----- Live a life of Darna, do not fall into "Blogis,"*** mano senelis would often remind us.

How does one accurately describe Darna? Its the "lynch-pin" of Baltic (Latvian-Lithuanian) spirituality. The most used English translation is

"harmony." And perhaps one's initial response is that this concept is ubiquitous to all culture. Possibly, but for Balts the concept of Darna is "THE FILTER" by which all behavior is evaluated, all ritual understood and all connection with divinity grasped. To fully comprehend the power and pivotal position of Darna, one must recall that it is not static; rather, like pure water, it ebbs and flows. One must work to preserve and maintain Darna -- the darna in the world, in our communities, in our families, and in ourselves.

Darna, like its Indo-European cousin (the Sanskrit "***Dharma***"), surrounds itself with the balancing of forces which leads to fertile growth and deeper understanding, OR, by shunning it, leads to one's desperate crash into the forces of confusion and anguish. One must learn to balance the energies of : Female/Male; Win/Loss; Success/Failure. Darna is finding equilibrium on the "razor's edge." It is a state which, like water flowing, is always changing, growing, mutating and at times moving into unknown and occasionally misunderstood directions. To seek and preserve Darna is "*Sventas Kovas*" (sacred struggle).

The falling out of darna does not necessarily mean that one is evil, or that one's actions are by definition to be considered "sinister." It does, however, mean that one is out-of-sink, disconnected from the sacred flow. And this lacking of darna, called "Blogis," can create situations of conflict, even leading nations into warfare and to one's inevitable, but untimely death. Within the bewilderment of Blogis, one may even work against the re-creation of Darna.

Daily ritual and reverence to the deities; maintaining an awareness of the sacredness of our actions and thoughts; and in re-creating our holy connections with sacred Nature; all this helps to build a state of Darna. The Deivos (deities) request and expect that people honor and seek to establish darna in all actions of one's life. Seeking darna is "cleansing one's spirit" in the pursuit of appropriate worldly and spiritual growth.

Growth, development, advancement -- “**Dereti**” is the Lithuanian word what means both the growth of our fields, families, and personal efforts, and it also means the resulting, and appropriate, harvest from our efforts. “*Dera*” (grow), and find Darna in all you do! It is paramount that each of us nurture & grow, and become like the holy azuolas (oak tree), like those that one finds in the center of each village of the Baltic countries. Provide “wholesome” water for this azuolas, as one would honor and sustain the axis mundi of your own world.

I, like many Balts, think of the azuolas (the oak) as the World Tree. Like all Indo-European world trees, the sacred Azuolas has its roots in the cavernous underworld of Ancestors, while its top ascends into

the world of Divinity. Kankles (ancient Baltic zither-like instruments), playing the Dainos (the old songs), color the underworld. The Falcon, bird of divinity, sits atop the tree with piercing eyes, seeing all. And flying, in the middle section of the tree, can be seen the Bite (the Bee) One of the ancient, pre-Christian dainos celebrates these images:

*On the side of the Road stood the tree,
From its roots could be heard the kankles' sound,
With the buzzing of bees around its middle,
One sees the falcon on its zenith.*

*As one perceives the Falcon,
One listens to the chiming of the kankles*

*that sound for our grandparents,
And one listens to the buzz of bees.*

Just as this sacred tree connects the Three Worlds and provides stability to the universe, the life of the Bite (BIT-eh) provides, for humans, the moral compass of Darna. Balts look to the Bite (bee) for guidance. The regularity and order of the hive is an example of how one should run one's own “*Namas*” (homestead). The industrious life of bees, and their keen understanding of

their “place” within the “*harmony of the hive*” are to be emulated and honored. Its no wonder they are offered a revered position within the description of the World Tree.

“Dereti,” with its explicit meaning of growth and fertility, is

metaphorically tied to the fertility and morality (“**Dora**”) of the hive. The Bite was viewed as ardently moral. Those who were lazy, those who cheated one another, those who were dishonest in their daily lives were prone to be stung by the Bite; for the constant striving to preserve Darna was an intrinsic aspect of Bee behavior. One may think that the hive is placed high in a tree to keep it safe from predators. But the Balt would share something very different with you, “*Hives are located in an elevated position in the trees so that the bees may be closer to their Gods*”.

Bee Gods? Gods for bees? YES. They, like humans, are honored by divinity and have deities which look over them and provide guidance.



Austeja, a goddess of fertility (for the bee and as well as for the human), also functions as “the“ ” *protectress of the Bite*.” Linked to the Lithuanian word “**austyti**,” meaning to “repetitively open and close a door” it is also connected to the word for “weaving.” Just as the Bite would repeatedly fly in and out of the hive, carrying nectar and “weave” the honeycomb, so too would the woman move the loom leavers back and forth as she weaves cloth of linen. A famous Lithuanian riddle goes as follows: “*There sits a maiden in a dark chamber weaving without a loom or a beddle. What is it?*” Answer - a bee!

During the festivities directly after a wedding, the bride would take a glass of mead and toss it up high towards the ceiling as an offering to Austeja and the Bite, with the hope that DARNA may inhabit her marriage. When the young bride enters the home of her in-laws, she would bring gifts of wild flowers and honey, indicating that her future role within this new family would be bordered with ethical behavior, good works, and a harmonious bearing.

In looking at the hard work of a man ploughing his fields, the god **Praamzis** first created the bee. The individual beads of sweat falling off the wet brow of Praamzis transformed into bees. And these first bees flew to the high tree tops of a nearby forest, began gathering nectar, and commenced the making of honey. Early on in the life of the bees, humans, however, began to learn the skill of smoking out the bees from their hive for the collection of honey. Naturally the bees were upset and quickly flew to see their god Praamzis. “*Please, please give us the power to sting the human and thus protect our hive,*” they implored. “*I will grant such a gift, but always remember, with the stinging of a person comes also your own death,*” Praamzis quietly answered. At that point began the harmonious relationship between the bee and the human. Special hives were created by humans for the bee and the role of beekeeper was sought and honored within the Baltic community.

So---just as bees are connected with humans at birth so too in death. When a bee dies, Lithuanians will use the word “*mirti*” (to die). The use of this verb is restricted solely to humans and, of course, to bees. If one finds a dead bee, it is required upon the person to take the bee’s body and bury it in the holy forest, just as if one would find the body of a dead human.

Traditionally the human beekeeper, called the “**Bicius**” (BITCH-uss), was an elderly member of the community; one who exemplified all the moral and ethical attributes valued by Baltic society. The Bicius, meaning “*fellow bee keeper*,” acted in the unique role of teacher, priest, and physician. The relationship with bees was as sacred and meaningful as the association with one’s human family. The pact, made in the presence of the god Praamzis ages before, between Bite and Human carries obligations both ways. The bite shall provide sweet sustenance, as well as continuous ethical examples, for both the Bicius and his family; in fact for the community at large.. And the bicius will assure the members of the hive that their larvae will be thought of and considered when honey is removed. There must be adequate distribution of sacred honey for both bee and human. Honey, as a holy item, would “never” be sold. Just as the bite freely offered the honey to the bicius, the bicius, also, could only offer honey as a gift. Honey is never to be sold, nor is “**Medus**” (mead) the divine drink made of the sacred honey of the Bite. When visiting a Baltic home you may consider bringing a bottle of **Krupnika**, traditional Lithuanian honey liquor.

The honoring of the bee and the bicius even appears in the description of the concept of the “harmonious” friendship. One’s best friend(s), the one to whom you would freely share money and secrets; to whom you share you food and drink at festivals, this person has a special name within Lithuanian society. Such a friend is called one’s “**Biciulus**,” meaning “*dear fellow bee keeper*.” For just as bees and bee keepers preserve the darna of the community, so too does one preserve fraternal darna between friends in the form

of one's Biciulus (bit-CHUL-uss)

To this day the use of Biciulus is ubiquitous in Lithuania. There is a children's science fiction book out, with a young boy and bizarre looking aliens, entitled "*Galaktikos Biciuliai*" (Galactic Buddies -- though they are really "*dear galactic fellow bee keepers*"). One of the Logos used by the Lithuanian Ministry of Health has emblazoned across it the word "*Buiculia*" (one's health care buddy). But before we quietly smile, let us recall the relationship between Bite, honey, health, and Biciulus. For the Lithuanian it all "weaves" together in perfect ---- harmony. These words represent images that are appropriately housed together. The "Biciuliai Kovarnis" (an "Istorijos klubas"), an association for historical reenactment, of course promote *Biciuliai* frienship. Although many battles are staged, between pagan Balts and German Crusader knights; as well as the historic re-enactment of Napoleon crossing the Nemunas river and entering the city of Kaunas on his way to Moscow, there is one event that is dear to my heart -- the battle of Apuole, held annually in August. This commemorates the successful warding off of Viking invaders upon the Aupole Castle in the Skuodas region in 853. (Go Balts!). But I believe that a deep and meaningful example of biculius occurred recently between the Presidents of Lithuania and Ukraine. Being aware of the importance of bees to the Balts,

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko gave a gift of three bee hives to the Lithuanian President Vldas Adamkus during his 2005 visit to Vilnius, Lithuania. Let there be peace and harmony between these two nations. What better example of Darna and the power of bees could be found?

Live a life of Darna, do not fall into "Blogis," mano senelis would often remind one. Yes, senelis, that is understood. Yet as I listened to the television's rant here in Cincinnati, Ohio, while typing this article, I couldn't help but hear that more of the Antarctic ice sheet is melting, that warfare continues, cruel debt threatens the lives of many families. Blogis is everywhere. And then I remembered that the bees seem to be leaving us. Whether it is a combination of pesticides, fungal disease, or genetically altered crops, the bottom line is that are relationship with Darna, with the Bite is crumbling. Yet our sacred struggle, our "*Sventas Kovas*" is to continue to strive and ***Live a life of Darna.***

Imbolc 2007

By Penelope McFadin

I am the heart of the fire
That burns in the forge
I move the hand to the hammer
The strike that sparks on the anvil
I am the candle light that fills the
room
Bringing warmth to all who ask
I drive away the cold
And fill again with creative power
Even the coldest of hearts
Warm at my touch
I am the first light of spring
That quickens the seed
Still in the ground
I am the sparkle in the snow
As it relents to water
I bring forth the Sun
And I wake the Earth

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Great Mother and Sovereign Ladies of the Land Rite

By Z. L. Bennett

First practiced at Pagan Pride Day L.A. – September 9, 2007

Items Needed:

Regular fare for Inspiration, Hallows, Gatekeeper (silver triskel), Kindred – Nature Spirits (small painted rock). * Main Deities: Three Hazelnuts; Herb, fruit, flower; Scented Essential Oil; Blue Corn

Main Offering: Flowers * Blessing: Pieces of Brick; Water * Inspiration: Large rock with triskel; Anvil; Hammer

I. Preliminary Work

Opening Musical Signal - Chime 3 x 3

(All present are already in a circle – they are asked to turn outward keeping their circle as Outdwellers are addressed to the South. During this time censuring and aspersing of the space will take place within the circle.)

-Outdwellers

D1: We offer this to the energies that would pit their will against ours and we ask that you trouble neither this rite, nor those gathered here this day. *(offering of grain is made at outdweller area, signified by a skull).* Outdwellers, accept our sacrifice. All: Accept our sacrifice.

-Protector

D1: Golden Lugh, of the strong and long arm, we ask that you join us here and lend your protection here this day. *(offering of ale to the North, outside the circle to the warrior area, signified by a spear).* Samildanach, accept our sacrifice. All: Accept our sacrifice.

PD: Turn now and face the center.

- Opening Statement and Precedence:

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PD: Dear Pagan Folk, We gather in this place to share circle with each other, to honor the gods and allies, and to thank the Land itself for nurturing us. We also will work collectively here to ensure that Pagan Land becomes more and more a reality so that we as a people can protect the Land and have more places to safely gather and worship in the Old Ways.

Let us begin by preparing ourselves and this space. We call first on the powers of inspiration to guide us.

- Powers of Inspiration –

D1: A Brid, Lady of Inspiration who manifests the divine to us in this world through vision, shaping, and speech. Join us here and guide us now in beauty. May our words and actions be sweet and true to the gods and the spirits all around us. *(Offer oil to the anvil placed on a rock (which has three spirals painted on it) in the center and then hit three times.)* Brigid, Accept our offering. ALL: Brigid, accept our offering.

PD: We will now prepare ourselves for our work. *(Participants will chant the following while sensing takes place.)*

From water and fire, We are reborn.

From chaos and order, We create form.

Sacred space we here set apart,

In the worlds and in our hearts.

-Purification of Participants

(Cense and asperse– asperse starting from the South, cense starting from the north.)

II. Opening of the Grove

- Grove Attunement – Two Powers and the

mists *(Using Ian Corrigan's Nine Breaths for axis attunement, toning for horizontal attunement, joining hands).*

- Attuning with the Airts and/or Land, Sea, and Sky

PD: May there be peace in the East,
May there be peace in the South,
May there be peace in the West,
May there be peace in the North,
May there be peace in the Center, the axis of
all Worlds, and the Threshold of Myth and
Magic.

(Standing in center wand, spear, or staff is
pointed toward each direction).

PD: And may there be peace in Land, Sea, and
Sky, in Body, Mind, and Spirit.
*(With wand, spear, or staff a triskel is drawn over-
head in the center of the Nemeton).*

Let there be peace in the known

(1st spiral of triskel drawn),

The unknown

(2nd spiral of triskel drawn),

The realms that are far beyond our reach

(3rd spiral of triskel drawn),

And those that are all around us

(a large circle deosil drawn above).

*Inspired and taken in part from work of
Ian Corrigan.

- Honoring the Hallows (Well, Fire, and Tree)

PD: Let us now sanctify the hallows from which
we make offering.

*(3 Druids come forward and go to their chosen hallow
were they remain until all hallows are honored)*

D1: Cauldron of the Underworld and Chthonic
Ones, Portal to the Ancestors, Dark churn-
ing waters of mystery, chaos, and wisdom,
we sanctify you here with reverence and of-
fer this to you. *(offer silver to well)*

D2: Fire of the Heavens and Shining Ones, Por-

tal to the Gods, Bright tongue of inspira-
tion, order, and will, we sanctify you here
with reverence and offer this to you. *(offer
oil to fire)*

D3: Ancient World Tree, of the Mid-Realms
and the Sidhe, Portal to all the worlds,
Sturdy keeper of the Land, of history and
time, we sanctify you here with reverence
and offer this to you. *(offer smaller painted
stone to tree)*

D1: (Still standing at hallow) Sacred Well, flow
deep within us! All: (Repeat).

D2: (Still standing at hallow) Sacred Fire, burn
bright within us! All: (Repeat).

D3: (Still standing at hallow) Sacred Tree, grow
strong within us! All: (Repeat).

- Opening of the Gates

PD: Now that we have prepared ourselves and
this place, let us open the portals for our
work. We call upon our Gatekeeper, Mhan-
nain Mac Lir.

D: Masterful Prince, ride your gilded chariot,
and come gently to us.
Piercing the elegant blue of seductive, tur-
quoise seas
Deep in the dappled mist of ancient spi-
raled threes,
Where the breath holds still, in the journey.

Move toward your seekers here and open
the mystery,
Where moonlight shines from islands of
silvern apple trees.
Fine-formed one, ward our steps, part with
ease the boundaries' way,
Where all worlds flow as one, and let us
now, together, open the gates.

D: Gatekeeper, Accept now this gift of silver
(offers silver triskel to the well) and
Let our words sound in the depths. *(speaker
uses hands or wand to direct energy to each hallow
as...a grove sacrificer adds oil to the well)*

Let our offerings rise in the fire.

(a grove sacrificer adds oil to the fire)

Let the devotion in our hearts be carried to all the worlds.

(a grove sacrificer puts oil on bile)

(Toning or movement could be done here to build energy and accentuate the opening in a strong way).

A Mhannain Mac Lir, Osclaitear na Geatai anois.
Let the Gates be Open!

ALL: Let the Gates be Open!

(Hold with brief pause so that the energies can be felt more acutely by the attendees).

III. Offering to the Powers

- Honoring the Kindreds *(Ancestors, Nature Spirits, Shining Ones – each spoken from the heart. Each should do the following: 1) Evoke images for the folk; 2) honor/praise deity; 3) Ask them for their presence here; 4) Give offering (all while keeping as brief as possible :o).*

Ancestors: ... Accept our sacrifice.

Nature Spirits ... Accept our sacrifice.

Shining Ones ... Accept our sacrifice.

- Praise offerings of the folk?
- Calling on the Deities of Occasion: Banba, Fohla, Eriu – and the Mother of this Land

PD: We call upon the Triple Three who bestow Sovereignty and abundance, wed to the light of inspiration, the waters of wisdom, and the Land's bounty, the great goddesses of the Land of Ireland and sisters of the Great Earth Mother of all Lands.

D1: Banba, you are both the waters of chaos and the land that would first emerge from those pulsating seas. Queen of mountains, lakes, and islands, Lady of Munster magic, wed to MacCuill, wisdom's son, Your children remember and honor you here. Join us at our rite and accept our offering. *(Offer to the well, 3 hazel nuts).*

D2: Fotla, you are the furrow, fertile and ready, wed to MacCecht, plowshare's son. Queen of the harvest time, vine-ripe, potent, and strong, Lady of Bounty, Boon, and Blessing, Your children remember and honor you here. Join us at our rite and accept our offering. *(Offer to the tree, a combination of herb, fruit, and flower).*

D3: Eriu, You are the high ship, the lofty green, an incantation most cunning. You grant land to the generations of all time. It is you for whom the land of Ireland is named and it is you to whom Amairgen kept his promise. Regal, Stately One, who secures balance and judges rightly, wed to MacGréne, the Golden Son. Your children remember and honor you here, and we wish to do you honor. Join us at our rite and accept our offering. *(Offer to the fire three draughts of scented oil).*

PD: Mighty Queens and Dear Sisters Three, Hail and Welcome.

We now call to One like you, a sister, the Great Mother of this Land, of this place.

D4: Mother of this Land, our ancestors traveled here from many lands and you sustained them here, with your rich, fine body and myriads of treasures. You sustain us still and whisper close in the tall grasses that embrace in your cool, sweet breath. Queen of this place, You, who laugh in coyote songs, thrash in quakes and storms, survey on hawk pinions, and dance to native drums, we, your children remember you, and we wish to do you honor. Join us at our rite and accept our offering. *(Offering of blue corn (3 pieces each) to each of the three hallows).*

PD: Queen of this Land and Place, Hail and Welcome.

- Main Offering:

PD: As Pagans we remember our tie to the Earth

first and foremost, and we are called by our traditions to live in balance with Her. Today, in the presence of the Great Mothers and Grandmothers and all the Kindred, we will offer up as a community our commitment and love to the Sovereign Spirits of the Land and to the Land itself. With the flower you now take, send through it your love and commitment when you are ready please bring it forward and place it in the basket in the center here.

Now, we will amplify our offerings exponentially by charging these flowers together, Send the Great Mother all you can for her to use as she needs.

(Charging as a group is done over the offerings – raising through tone)

PD: Dear Mother of us All, hear your children, know our love, and accept our offering.

(Offer flowers to the fire).

ALL: Repeat.

-Taking of the Omen

PD: Before receiving our blessing, let us first still ourselves to hear the message the Kindred wish to impart to us.

IV. The Blessing - Calling for Blessing

PD: The flow has now turned and now it is the happy time when we received the blessings of the Kindred into each of our lives. We begin first by asking for the waters of life.

Sovereign Ladies and a Dheithe, we have offered here to you and have made commitment to care for and protect the land. In the way of the boons of ancient hospitality we say. Shining Ones Grant us the waters.

All: Shining Ones Grant us the Waters.

A Shinseara, we have remembered you here and stand as your blood and bone in honor in this life and in this realm. To further our connections and traditions we say, Ancestors,

grant us the waters.

All: Ancestors Grant us the Waters.

A sprideanna na talaimh, we have honored you this day, seeking for you a peace between us, seeking for you a happy land in which to dwell. In offering you our alliance we say, Spirits of Nature Grant us the Waters.

All: Spirits of Nature, Grant us the Waters

PD: These are the Waters of Life! – And now holding these blessings in my hands, I ask on behalf of the community standing here for the blessings of the Land. May we own businesses that serve Her, may we have Land to care for and protect, and may we come to realize the building of temples on pagan Land so that we may come together to worship and build community for the long term, in safety and in peace.

Here in this cauldron lie pieces of brick, the mixture of fire and water, earth and air, shaped by human hands in order to build. I now pour the Blessings of the gods onto these bricks and charge them to imbue these blessings so that each of you may carry these chards as a symbol of laying the foundation for the future, of placing the first brick into a means of service to the Land and our people. Let us stand for a moment in silence as each of you receives your brick to contemplate and visualize the foundation we build, each of us standing here together. *(Brick is passed out)*

V: Closing and Ending

- Affirmation of Success:

PD: Happily we have offered to the Great Mothers and happily we have received their blessings which will serve the Land and the people of the Old Ways.

- Thanking the Powers: We now thank the powers that have aided us in our rite.

Mother of this Land, and Banba, Fotla, and Eriu

Kindred

Powers of inspiration

Protection

Great Mother of All – *(offering back what is left of the blessing to the earth – hole is dug under the Center Stone – It is lifted away and the remaining waters and brick are buried there)*

- Thanking Gatekeeper and Closing the Gates

PD: We now call upon our Gatekeeper once more.

D: A Mhannain Mac Lir, Lord of the mists through which we travel, for holding the gates open with us and keeping vigil over our steps, Go raibh maith agat, we thank you.

Now, Ageless One, we ask that you work your will with ours so that we may close the gates while allowing this sacred time to linger here as we walk in the Realms of the Kindred.

Let the well now be, the water that sustains us.

Let the fire now be, the flame that warms our nights.

Let the tree now be our shelter and comfort when we gather under its leafy boughs.

A Mhannain Mac Lir, Dúntar na Geataí anois!
Let the Gates Be Closed!

ALL: Repeat.

- Regrounding and Centering

Final Blessing and announcement of ending:

PD: Thank all of you here for joining us here in sacred time... and as we began, so let us end.

- Closing Musical Signal - Chime 3 x 3

PD: Brothers and Sisters of the Old Ways, our rite is now at its end, let us sing together and then go forth to enjoy fellowship and peace.

- Recessional – *Walk with Wisdom* by Sable

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Prayers and Invocations from The Grove of the Red Earth, ADF

By James Lock

In the Grove of the Red Earth, ADF we have formalized our High Day liturgy to provide us with the same opening and closing of our rituals. This provides a sense of comfort and familiarity as we enter and leave worship. Our grove is Pan-Indo-European, so the parts of the ritual that are done at every High Day have been made to reflect no specific culture. The Main Rite of each ritual is, of course, geared toward the purpose, culture, and deities of that particular holiday.



I hope you enjoy this. This particular set of prayers and invocations would not be appropriate for other groves to use, but perhaps if it is to your liking, you can modify it to work for your own group. Or, if you see ways that it can be improved, please let me know! Sharing our ritual practices is one of the best possible ways to improve our worship of the Kindreds.

(All prayers and invocations were written by me, James Lock, with the exception of the Cup Litany, which was written by Fionnuala Bloom.)

Offering to the Outsiders:

You who stand outside our rites,
Who are not part of what we do,
Your ways are mighty,
But your ways are not ours.
We offer you this gift,
And ask you to go upon your way.
Outdwellers, turn from our grove!

All: Outdwellers, turn from our grove!

Offering to Poetic Inspiration:

Sacred spirit of words most pure,
Who guides mortal man in speech and deed.
We, the people of the Red Earth,
Call out to you and offer you this gift.
Guide our words and actions.
Aid us to say what should be said.
To do what should be done.
To act in rightness,
And to please the powers beyond.
Spirit of Inspiration, be in our grove!

All: Spirit of Inspiration, be in our grove!

Offering to the Earth Mother:

Lady Sustainer of life upon
Her surface firm and seas true deep,
Mother of all, life from you comes
Upon death, all to you returns.
We are of your body,

And you of ours.
We, the people of the Red Earth,
Call out to you.
We give of our bounty, Fair Mother,
As you give of yours,
And ask you to gaze upon us,
And join us in our worship.
Beloved Earth Mother, be in our grove!

All: Beloved Earth Mother, be in our grove!

Hallowing of the Well:

Spirit of the Well, formless base of the world,
The people of the Red Earth call upon you,
Flow beneath & about our grove and nourish
our path.
Deep sign of birth and passage after life,
We give you this gift, this offering,
And invite you to be with us.
Spirit of the Well, be in our Grove!

All: Spirit of the Well, be in our Grove!

Hallowing of the Tree:

Spirit of the Tree, living axis of the world,
The people of the Red Earth call upon you,
To stand in our midst, and reach skyward with
us.
Towering sign of life and this world,
We give you this gift, this offering,
And invite you to be with us.
Spirit of the Tree, be in our Grove!

All: Spirit of the Tree, be in our Grove!

Hallowing of the Fire:

Spirit of Fire, divine light of the heavens,
The people of the Red Earth call upon you,
To shine upon us and light our paths.
Bright sign of the gods and heavenly realms
We give you this gift, this offering,
And invite you to be with us.
Spirit of Fire, be in our Grove!

All: Spirit of Fire, be in our Grove!

Invocation of Raven:

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Raven, winged messenger, flyer 'tween worlds
Dark feathered wanderer twixt this world and
yon.

Accept this offering and,
Come hold open the Gate,
Shadowed messenger divine,
To carry our praises,
Our offerings
And gifts,
From this mortal realm
To the Kindreds beloved
In this worlds beyond.
Honored Raven, come to our Grove!

All: Honored Raven, come to our Grove!

Opening of the Gate:

Let the Well reach into the depths of the Sea
And be no more a well,
But all wells, all water,
Let this be the foundation of the world,
And the anchor of the Gate

Let the Tree span the breadth of the Land
And be no more a tree
But all trees, all life,
Let this be the axis of the world,
And the anchor of the Gate.

Let the Fire alight the span of the Sky
And be no more a flame
But all light, all power
Let this be the crown of the world
And the anchor of the Gate.

By the Power of the Hallows,
Let the Gate be open!

All: Let the Gate be open!

By the sacred power of Raven,
Let the Gate be open!

All: Let the Gate be open!

By the will of these people,
Let the Gate be open!

All: Let the Gate be open!

The Gate is open.

Offering to the Ancestors:

Honored dead of our own kin
Who came before that we might be

Forefathers, foremothers, of flesh and blood
Forerunners of spirit, united in cause
Hear now our words, we pray.
We, the people of the Red Earth,
Wish to do you honor
We seek to honor the dead

And all who have passed beyond this world.
Beloved spirits of the dead
Attend our rite, accept this gift
And join us in our worship.
Beloved Ancestors, accept our offering!

All: Beloved Ancestors, accept our offering!

Offering to the Nature Spirits:

Noble spirits of nature pure,
Souls of beast and bird and stream,
Souls of stone, herb, and wind,
Of flame and tree and blooming flower
Hear now our words, we pray.
We, the people of the Red Earth,
Wish to do you honor.
We seek to honor the land
And all that dwells upon it,
Within it,
And above it.
Noble spirits of nature,
Attend our rite, accept this gift
And join us in our worship.
Spirits of Nature, accept our offering!

All: Spirits of Nature, accept our offering!

Offering to the Gods:

Shining gods of immortal realms,
You who live above us, Who dwell beneath us,
Who walk among us,
Honored by ancient peoples wise

Hear now our words, we pray.
We, the people of the Red Earth,

Wish to do you honor.

We seek to honor the gods
All who stand as the forces of the world,
Part of creation and lords thereof,
Bright gods of our people,
Attend our rite, accept this gift
And join us in our worship.
Mighty gods, accept our offering!

All: Mighty gods, accept our offering!
Cup Litany:

If you have heard our voices, you ancestors who
watch over us,
If you have been drawn close to our fire by our
praise,
by our blessings, by the gifts we bring,
then you'll do what is right, Mighty Ones.
You will remember us kindly
You will bless us
You will be close kin to our folk.

All: THE GIFTS OF THE GODS FOR THE
PEOPLE OF THE GODS!

If you have heard our voices, you spirits of the
living land,
If you have been drawn close to our fire by our
praise,
by our blessings, by the gifts we bring,
then you'll do what is right, Noble Ones.
You will remember us kindly
You will bless us
You will be good neighbors to our folk

All: THE GIFTS OF THE GODS FOR THE
PEOPLE OF THE GODS!

If you have heard our voices, you keepers of
every Art and Mystery,
If you have been drawn close to our fire by our
praise,
by our blessings, by the gifts we bring,
then you'll do what is right, Shining Ones.

You will remember us kindly
You will bless us
You will be dear friends to our folk.

All: THE GIFTS OF THE GODS FOR THE
PEOPLE OF THE GODS!

In the name of Memory, the preserving shrine,
In the name of Earth, our common mother,
In the name of Truth, which has no beginning
and no end, Let no one who comes to the Great
Feast go away unsatisfied. Let the Blessing Cup
never run dry.

Behold, the Waters of Life. Let all who drink do
so in gratitude, mindful of the blessings con-
tained within.

Return the Waters to the Earth:

Of the blessings we have received,
We now gladly share.
That the power of the Kindreds be given
Unto this place where we stand.
That the land may be bettered
For our having been here.

Thank the Gods:

We give you thanks, O gods,
For having blessed us with Your presence.
Accept our well-wishes and honor,
And take with You our gratitude.

Thank the Nature Spirits:

Noble spirits of all the world,
Natural souls of the land and sky,
We give you our thanks and honor,
Please take with you our love.

Thank the Ancestors:

Beloved Ancestors, we thank you
For turning your attention upon us.
To your eternal realms, departed ones,
We send you our honor and thanks.

Thank the Earth Mother:

Earth Mother, you who never leaves us,
And whom we never leave.

We thank you for your attentions.
Accept our honor, we pray.

Thank the spirit of Poetic Inspiration:

Spirit of Poetry, of words and deeds,
We thank you for touching our hearts,
Our minds, and our speech.
Thank you for your presence,
Remember us, and heed our next call.

Close the Gate and thank Raven:

Let the Gate now be closed.
Let the Fire be no more the crown of the world,
But only a flame.
Let the Tree be no more the axis of the world,
But only a tree.
Let the Well be no more the foundation of the
world,
But only a well
Raven, we give you honor and thanks,
For holding this Gate for us.
Now we ask you to fly upon your way,
And to heed us and answer when next we call.

By the power of Raven departed,
By the Hallows retreated,
By the will of the people,
Let the Gate be closed,
Let the Gate be closed,
Let the Gate be closed.

The Gate is closed.

...

These are the set prayers that we in the Grove of
the Red Earth, ADF use in our worship the Kin-
dreds as a group. It has proven to be a very ef-
fective form for us; the regular use of the same
prayers help build our identity as a grove and al-
low us to enter and leave ritual comfortably on
each High Day. As we continue to use these
prayers in worship, we grow closer as a commu-
nity and closer to the Kindreds.

The Nature of Sacrifice

By Rev. Kirk S. Thomas

When modern people use the word ‘sacrifice’ today, they usually mean something negative and uncomfortable, such as when we refer to the ‘ultimate sacrifice’ when speaking about the deaths of our soldiers in war. But the word had a quite different meaning in the religious lives of the ancients.

The word ‘sacrifice’ comes from two Latin roots, *sacer*, meaning ‘sacred’, and *facere*, meaning ‘to make’ or ‘to do’. So sacrifice would mean, ‘to make sacred’ in this context.

The word ‘sacred’ probably comes from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) word **sacros*, which means ‘holy’ (the * means that the word is a recreated one). Cognates for this PIE word also include the Latin *sacerdos* ‘priest’ and the Tocharian B word *sakre* ‘happy’. There may also be a distant connection with the Hittite word *saklai* ‘rite, custom’, which is intriguing if you consider that some think ‘sacred’ might also come from the PIE word **sek-* ‘cut’, which, in a ritual sense, could mean to ‘cut off from the world’. So a rite in which something was made sacred could be one where something was set apart from mundane reality. Another interesting word related to the sacred, ‘consecrate’, means to ‘declare or set apart as sacred’, according to the American Heritage College Dictionary. The PIE root for consecrate would have been **weik-*, and this has some interesting cognates as well, such

as the Latin *victima* ‘sacrificial victim’ and even the modern word ‘witch’. The Sanskrit cognate, *vinákti*, means to ‘select out’ (Mallory, 412). All this suggests that a good definition for the word ‘sacrifice’ might be ‘to make something set apart from ordinary reality.’



So why did the word sacrifice come to have such a negative meaning? The answer may be in the Christian re-making of the word based on the crucifixion of Christ. This sacrifice on the cross summed up all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, and was seen as the last sacrifice ever needed, as it created a new relationship between man and the angry, wrathful God of Judaism (Rogerson, 50; Sykes, 62, 73-77). So sacrifice came to mean giving up one’s life, or, at least, ‘giving until it hurts’. The concept of ‘giving up’ here rather than the ancient religious concept of ‘giving to’ is important and will be covered later in this essay.

Sacrifice as a religious act in Pagan thought appears to have taken place in four ancient contexts as well as in one modern one. They are:

1. Maintaining the Cosmic Order
2. Delivering Services Through Gifts
3. Providing Protection
4. Commensality (Community)
5. Mitigating Order with Chaos (the modern idea)

1. MAINTAINING THE COSMIC ORDER

There are many myths concerning the creation of the cosmos in the ancient Indo-European (IE) world, but some of them share remarkable similarities. In general, a primordial being is killed or dismembered and from the pieces of his body the universe is made (Lincoln 1986, 2). Sometimes, though not always, the central characters are 'Man' (**Manu*) and 'Twin' (**Yemo*), who is often referred to as a king, and they are sometimes accompanied by an ox. Together they decide to create the universe. The 'Man' would be a priest, and he makes a sacrifice of the other two in order to accomplish their goal. This may be the original PIE creation myth (Lincoln 1991, 7).

In the *Rig Veda*, the book of hymns from Vedic India, there is a creation myth where Purusha (meaning "Person" according to Mahony, 112) is sacrificed and dismembered by the Gods. It can be found in Book 10, Hymn 90, verses 11-14 (Griffith, 603):

- 11 When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make?
What do they call his mouth, his arms?
What do they call his thighs and feet?
- 12 The Brahman (Priest) was in his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya (Warrior) made.
His thighs became the Vaisya (Commoners), from his feet the Sudra (Servant) was produced.*
- 13 The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth;
Indra and Agni (Fire) from his mouth were Born, and Vayu (Wind) from his breath.
- 14 Forth from his navel came mid-air;
the sky was fashioned from his

head;
Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions (directions?).
Thus they formed the worlds.

** This is the only hymn in the Rig Veda that mentions the four castes of Vedic society (Griffith, 603, n.12).*

In the Poetic Edda, a repository of Norse lore written in Iceland during the 12th or 13th centuries, a similar idea exists. The Lay of Grímnir (*Grímnismál*) has the following stanzas (Hollander, 61):

41. Of Ymir's flesh the earth was shaped,
of his blood, the briny sea,
of his hair, the trees, the hills of his bones,
out of his skull the sky.
42. But of his lashes the loving gods made
Mithgarth for the sons of men;
from his brow they made the menacing clouds
which in the heavens hover.

The Romans also had some similar themes in their own lore. It must be remembered that IE mythology in Rome was remembered along civic, rather than religious, lines, where the mythic themes would play out in the 'histories' of the founding of Rome, the monarchical era and even the early Republic (Puhvel, 146-7).

Two myths concerning the founding of the city (the 'cosmos' of Rome) reflect these themes – one of the killing of Twin and the other of dismemberment. In one tale, the twins Romulus and Remus were laying out the walls of the city. Romulus was plowing a furrow to mark the walls while Remus, who had just lost the right to name the new city after himself, taunted his brother by jumping over the furrowed 'wall'. In anger, Romulus killed his brother (Morford, 653-5). The sacred name of Romulus, *Quirinus*, (**Co-virinos*) comes from the word for 'Man', and the

name 'Remus' is cognate (with initial consonantal deformation) to the word *yem- or 'Twin' (Lincoln, 1984, 174n.3).

Plutarch mentions a story in wide circulation about Romulus in his *Life of Romulus*, chapter 27:

But others conjecture that the senators rose up against him and dismembered him in the temple of Hephaistos, distributing his body (among themselves), and each one putting a piece in the folds of his robes in order to carry them away.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions later that the pieces of his body were buried by the Senators, and Walter Burkert has argued that by being placed in the earth, Romulus *became* the earth, a form of cosmological creation (Lincoln, 1984, 42).

These transformations from the microcosm (Twin) to the macrocosm (creation of cosmos) also occur during sacrifice. IE priests claimed to be doing the same thing, though perhaps on a smaller scale, where each sacrifice would be distributed to the cosmos. Without the matter derived from these offerings, the cosmos and the material world would become exhausted and depleted (Lincoln 1991, 12). Herodotus, in his *History* (1.131) mentions the practices of the Persian priests where sacrifice is given to the cosmos (Rawlingson, 1.131):

Their wont, however, is to ascend the summits of the loftiest mountains, and there to offer sacrifice to Jupiter, which is the name they give to the whole circuit of the firmament. They likewise offer to the sun and moon, to the earth, to fire, to water, and to the winds. These are the only gods whose worship has come down to them from ancient times.

An Indic text, the *Aitareya Brahmana* 2.6, gives instructions as to the handling of the body parts of an animal victim in sacrifice (Lincoln 1991,

13):

Lay his feet down to the north. Cause his eye to go to the sun. Send forth his breath to the wind; his life-force to the atmosphere, his ears to the cardinal points, his flesh to the earth. Thus the Priest places the victim in these worlds.

But sacrifice is a two-way street. Not only do we offer to sustain the cosmos, but we can also use sacrifice to transfer the power of the universe into our own bodies. Food (through the 'shared meal' taken after sacrifice) and healing are the two prime examples of this. Healing shows up in the story of the healer Dian Cecht and his son, Miach, found in the *Cath Maige Turedh*, (The Second Battle of Moytura) 33-35. The King, Nuadu, cannot rule because he has lost his hand in battle. Dian Cecht makes him a new one of silver, but Miach goes and re-grows the hand on the King's arm, thus infuriating his father. Dian Cecht strikes his son three times, but Miach repairs the damage each time. Finally, the father cuts out his son's brain, and Miach dies. The story continues (Blamires, 115):

35. After that, Miach was buried by Dian Cecht, and three hundred and sixty-five herbs grew through the grave, corresponding to the number of his joints and sinews. Then Airmed spread her cloak and uprooted those herbs according to their properties. Dian Cecht came to her and mixed the herbs, so that no one knows their proper healing qualities.....

There is a Middle Persian text written after Zarathustra's reforms which tells of the evil spirit Ahriman and his first assault on the 'good creation' in the *Zad Spram* 3.42-51 (Lincoln 1991, 170):

Ahriman came to the cattle. He struggled against the cattle. As the first ox died, because it possessed the nature and

form of plants, fifty-seven species of grain and twelve species of healing plants came into being.

Sacrifice is performed to feed the cosmos, as well as the reverse, to regenerate life. The sacrificed animal gives food to the family, promoting life in another form. And as the pruned vines give new and stronger growth so does harvested grain, buried in the ground as seeds, give new grain. It's all a continuing cycle (or circle, if you will) of life and death.

2. DELIVERING SERVICES THROUGH GIFTS

As mentioned earlier, sacrifice is about 'giving to' not 'giving up'. And a good motivation for giving could be the formation of relationships where gifts can be received in return. This idea is well summed up in the Latin phrase, *do ut des*, 'I give so that you may give'.

**ghosti-*

The term, **ghosti-*, is a recreated Proto-Indo-European root which means, 'Someone with whom one has reciprocal duties of hospitality'. Cognates include the English words 'guest' and 'host' as well as the Latin word *hostis* 'enemy', which just shows that strangers could potentially become either friends or enemies (Watkins, 31).

Hospitality, and the obligations pertaining to it (on both sides) were extremely important. In the tale of the Trojan War, Zeus resolves to destroy the city because Paris violated the laws of hospitality when he stole Helen away from Sparta while staying as a guest under the hospitality of her husband, Menelaus (Burkert, 130).

Relationships based on mutual exchange were similar to 'kin' relationships but crossed the boundaries between families and were usually accompanied by ritual gift giving. This would create an obligation of mutual hospitality and friendship that could continue in perpetuity.

One famous example of this type of relationship continuing on through generations is that of Glaucus and Diomedes in the Trojan War. Though on opposite sides of the battle, they discovered that Glaucus' grandfather, Bellerophon, had been a guest of Diomedes' grandfather, Oeneus, years before (Butler, Book VI):

"...we two, then, will exchange armour, that all present may know of the old ties that subsist between us."

With these words they sprang from their chariots, grasped one another's hands, and plighted friendship.

Since the time of Hesiod (c. 700 BCE) it was said that the absolute value of a gift to the Gods was not what mattered, but rather that each man should make sacrifice according to his means (Burkert, 274). In other words, those who have more shall give more.

The Greeks carried this to an extreme in their rite called a *hecatomb*. This rite was a magical act of multiplication. The Greeks would offer one ox in the expectation of receiving 100 oxen from the Gods in return (Burkert, 18)!

But the idea of 'he who has more shall give more' plays out well in the Patron-Client relationship that appeared in many parts of the Indo-European sphere.

Patron – Client

In this form of reciprocity, called clientship, the patron and client have mutual responsibilities towards each other that form the basis of the relationship. The patron, the richer and more powerful of the two, provides supplies, money or other needs and the client, in return, performs tasks or provides political support. In Rome, the patron might supply a steady income and in return, the client would run errands or vote as he is told.

In ancient Celtic society, clientship was fundamental and a patron's status would depend on the number of clients he had. Since this relationship embraced social, military, political and economic obligations, it was in large part the basis of the power of the nobility. The patron would supply his clients with legal support, political protection, the possibility of sharing in the spoils of war, and even a place filled with the needed tools of farming. In return, the client would pay an annual food rent, supply manual labor, give political support and fight in the patron's army or at least under his command (Green 1995, 92). A patron who was stingy in fulfilling his side of the bargain might not last too long.

In the Irish tale *Cath Maige Turedh* (The Second Battle off Moytura) the Tuatha de Danaan have elevated the half-Formor Bres to the Kingship. However (Blamires, 123),

36. At that time, Bres held the sovereignty as it had been granted to him. There was great murmuring against him among his maternal kinsmen the Tuatha De, for their knives were not greased by him. However frequently they might come, their breaths did not smell of ale; and they did not see their poets nor their bards nor their satirists nor their harpers nor their pipers nor their horn-blowers nor their jugglers nor their fools entertaining them in the household.

Finally Coirpre son of Etain, the poet of the Tuatha De,

pronounces a satire on Bres concerning his stinginess and "there was a blight on him from that hour" (Blamires, 124 & 133). With this blemish Bres could no longer be King.

Another example, this one from Rome, shows clearly the importance of maintaining the reciprocal relationship. There was an ancient, public ritual called the *Evocatio* (evocation) that involved luring the Gods of an enemy city being besieged by the Romans into deserting that city and joining the Roman camp. The Romans would vow to set up a residence and cult for the enemies' Gods among the Romans (Sheid, 104). But part of the ritual involved calling on the Gods to instill fear, terror and *forgetfulness* (italics mine) in the enemy people. Should the enemy forget to make their sacrifices to their Gods, the bonds of reciprocity would be broken. So the Gods, driven forth from the city, would still retain their honor because of the forgetfulness of the people (Lincoln 1991, 232).

The Expectation of Heaven

Heaven in Vedic India was the reward of those who did rigorous penance, or heroes who risk their lives in battle (which resonates with the Norse ideas of Valhalla), but most of all to those who give liberal sacrificial gifts (Macdonell, 167).

In the Rig Veda, Book 1, Hymn 125, verses 1 and 5 (Griffith, 86-87) we see:

1. Coming at early morn he gives his treasure ; the prudent one receives and entertains him. Thereby increasing still his life and offspring, he comes with brave sons to abundant riches.



And

5. On the high ridge of heaven he stands
exalted, yea, to the Gods he goes,
the liberal giver.

The streams, the waters flow for him
with fatness : to him this guerdon
(reward) ever yields abundance.

A Gift Is Part of Oneself

The sacrificer is the person who actually performs the sacrifice, while the sacrificant is the person who will be receiving the benefit of the sacrifice (Bourdillion, 11). In Vedic culture a householder and his wife would pay the priests to perform a sacrifice, with the intention that the blessings would come to the household. Similarly, in the cities of the Mediterranean, the sacrificers would be professional priests, and the sacrificants would be the people (or the State). In cases where a person would be performing their own sacrifice, they would be both sacrificer and sacrificant.

Sacrificers can be priests, sacrificing on behalf of clients or the people, senior members of the family (such as the Roman *Paterfamilias*) sacrificing for the family, or indeed the supplicant herself. People usually make sacrifices at times of personal or group crisis, or periodically, at special seasonal times, or at the advice of seers or diviners. And what folks usually are doing in sacrifice is performing an act of propitiation, which is done to cause the deities to be favorably inclined, to induce or regain their good will, or to appease or conciliate them (Beattie, 31-32).

In giving, a person gives a part of himself. The best gift a person might give to the Gods would actually be his own life, but a sacrificial offering of oneself is rare. One example might be Decius Mus as recorded by Livy in his *History of Rome*, 10:28. In battle against the Gauls, Decius put on ritual garb and went to the priests (Roberts):

After the usual prayers had been recited

he uttered the following awful curse: "I carry before me terror and rout and carnage and blood and the wrath of all the gods, those above and those below. I will infect the standards, the armour, the weapons of the enemy with dire and manifold death, the place of my destruction shall also witness that of the Gauls and Samnites." After uttering this imprecation on himself and on the enemy he spurred his horse against that part of the Gaulish line where they were most densely massed and leaping into it was slain by their missiles.

And thus the battle was won.

The problem with sacrifice of the self is that once you're dead, you can't personally receive any of the benefits of the sacrifice.

Substitution

The ancients came up with a handy solution to this problem through the concept of substitution. In the ancient world, the usual and most ideal substitute for the sacrificant would be a domestic animal, such as an ox, goat, sheep, etc., to be killed in his stead. Other items were also acceptable, such as precious objects, the first fruits of harvest, etc., but animals were preferred. The reason for the use of domestic animals was that they were identified with the home, the people who lived there and therefore with *man* himself, as opposed to nature or the wild (Beattie, 30-31).

The closest substitutes for the sacrificant would be another person, a domestic animal, cultivated plants or their products (like wine) and precious objects.

Human Sacrifice

This brings up the question of human sacrifice. The closest substitute for a human being would be another human being. And the choice of the victim would be important. It would need to be

someone separate from the community (criminals, strangers, foreigners, slaves) but not *too* separate, or the substitution might not be of enough equality (Green 2001, 30) to act as a stand-in for the sacrificants. Often these sacrifices would be for the purpose of averting evil, such as in the Roman 'extraordinary' (Plutarch's word) sacrifice of a pair of Greeks and a pair of Gauls (one male and one female in each couple) in 228 BCE to avert the threat of a Gaulish invasion (Green 2001, 32).

In Acy-Romance in the Ardennes of France, a bizarre burial was found. Over the course of about a century in the 2nd century BCE young men were killed, their bodies placed in a seated position and then desiccated. After drying out, the bodies were buried under the terrace of a temple, accompanied by great feasting on cattle and horses. Each event saw the reburial of a young man in a seated position, either guarding the temple or as a symbol of burial alive. As most other graves were accompanied by cremation and grave goods, this is seen to be a human sacrifice rite, possibly for fertility purposes or as a gift to chthonic gods (Green 2001, 129-130).

As Caesar remarks in his *De Bello Gallico*, 6.16 (Koch, 22):

All the people of Gaul are completely devoted to religion, and for this reason those who are greatly affected by diseases and in the dangers of battle either sacrifice human victims or vow to do so using the Druids as administrators to these sacrifices, since it is judged that unless for a man's life a man's life is given back, the will of the immortal gods cannot be placated.

But human sacrifice was rare in the general course of things, and usually seen as an offering for protection in a time of threat or for the purposes of judicial execution, where a criminal would be "cut off" from society. Indeed, it can be difficult to determine whether the burials

found by archeologists are sacrifices or executions or both.

Sacrifice Without Killing

As stated earlier, the killing of animals was a preferred form of sacrifice. Besides the fact that domestic animals made good stand-ins for the sacrificant, they were also a good form of animal protein for ancient peoples. In fact, in Greece, the only meat that was eaten was sacrificial meat (Green 2001, 42). After all, death is necessary for a carnivorous meal.

But since death is something that is final and irrevocable, it also implies a change of status. A death causes something to no longer be of human use. Once it's gone, it's gone.

So weapons could be 'killed' and offered, and precious objects could be buried or thrown into bodies of water, and therefore go out of human use. The force needed to snap or bend a bronze object would imply violence of a kind, similar to the killing of animals. Weapons, chariot fittings, precious objects and even slave chains have been found in lakes and rivers all over Europe, such as at La Tène in Switzerland, Hayling Island, Hampshire, UK (Green 1995, 470-471) and especially Llyn Cerreg Bach, a lake on Anglesey in Wales, where they even found a trumpet (Green 2001, 183).

Julius Caesar, in *De Bello Gallico* 6.17 (Koch, 22) says of the Gauls and their worship of the God Mars:

To him, when they have decided to fight a battle, they consecrate a large part of the plunder;

Perhaps this is an indication of a warrior cult? In any case, large deposits were made in temples and lakes in the Celtic world. Diodorus Siculus (who wrote between 60-30 BCE) in V.27 states (Koch, 12):

The Celts of the interior also have a peculiar custom concerning the sacred places of their gods. In temples and sanctuaries throughout the country, large amounts of gold are openly displayed as dedications to the gods. No one dares to touch these sacred depositions, even though the Celts are an especially covetous people.

And Strabo (who wrote between 64/63 BCE – CE 21 at least), in his *Geography* 4.1.13 said (Koch, 15):

But as that one [Posidonius] and others have reported, the land, being full of gold and belonging to men who were pious and not extravagant in their living, contained treasures in many places in Celtica. What provided safety more than anything, however, was the lakes into which they had thrown heavy weights of silver and gold.

Further north in Sweden at the time of the Romans, on Öland and Gotland, deposits of gold rings and various ornaments were found. H.R. Ellis Davidson speculates (131) that these could have been sacrifices to Gods connected to rings, such as Thor, Freyr and Ull, since rings were used in oaths, but that there could have been a fertility connection since the Vanir dispensed wealth and were linked to gold in early skaldic poetry.

Women many have been involved in these sacrifices as well. Danish bog finds at Thorsbjerg included gold rings, personal possessions, pottery and wooden objects and even textiles. Women have a great stake in fertility (Davidson, 132).

First Fruits, Libations and Votive Offerings

Gregory of Tours in the 6th century CE referred to a lake of the Gabalitani tribe, and stated that in the recent past (Davidson, 132):

Into this lake the country people were used to throw, at an appointed time, linen cloths and pieces of material used in male attire, as a firstling sacrifice to this lake. Some threw in woolen fleeces and many also pieces of cheese, wax and thread and various spices, which would take too long to enumerate, each according to his ability. They also used to come with carts, brought with them food and drink, slaughtered animals for the sacrifice and feasted for three days.

A firstling (or first fruits) sacrifice refers to the idea that the first part of any harvest should be reserved for the Gods. In ancient Greece, whenever a wine jar was opened for drinking, the first cup of wine would be poured on the ground as a libation, again a type of first fruits sacrifice.

Libations were once the most common of sacred acts performed in the ancient world, particularly in the Bronze Age (Burkert, 70). In Greek thought, it stood in opposition to the killing of the animal sacrifice. While the sacrifice burned on the altar, the libation would be poured around it, a sort of ending of hostilities, as it were. Libations poured on the ground were usually intended for the dead or Chthonic Gods under the earth and libations would be made into shafts built into tombs for the dead (for the dead were always thirsty). And it is not only the dead that drink, but the earth as well. Libations were also poured on stones to mark significant spatial orientations, such as at a crossroads (Burkert, 71-73).

A votive offering is an offering made in consequence to a vow. It is usually set up as an 'if – then' formula, such as, "If, mighty Gods, my fields produce more grain than last year, *then* I will sacrifice an extra bushel to You!" The vow comes first, and if the desired outcome occurs, then the sacrifice is made. Often, the vows would be to increase first fruit offerings, linking them to the votive offering in a continuing chain

of sacrifice.

The types of offerings usually promised in ancient Greece would be simple sacrifices, costly robes or other items, a gift of a slave to a sanctuary, a vow of service to a sanctuary, and even the building of new sanctuaries or shrines, though usually a divine sign would be needed for this (Burkert, 68-70).

3. APOTROPAIC OFFERINGS FOR PROTECTION

An apotropaic offering is one having the power to avert an evil influence or bad luck and is a safeguarding against evil. This could be a "Take this sacrifice and go, please!" type offering.

Executions could be considered apotropaic, as they are about removing the criminal from society, to safeguard it from more evil. Even today they take place surrounded by a ritual that prescribes what takes place before the event, the place of witnesses, the manner of killing, etc. (Bourdillon, 13).

Offerings to deities to prevent death and war, or disease, or any other ill would be considered an apotropaic sacrifice. In Greece and Rome, offerings to the dead could be considered apotropaic as well.

Pollution

The removal of dangerous power could only be performed through expiation, which is the act of making amends or reparation for wrong-doing or

guilt. In Rome and Greece, this could be done in a variety of ways, including through sacrifice.

A piacular sacrifice (from the Latin *piaculum*) would be any sacrifice offered in expiation for any wrong doing (Scheid, 98), from more minor crimes such as performing a ritual incorrectly all the way up to sacrilege.

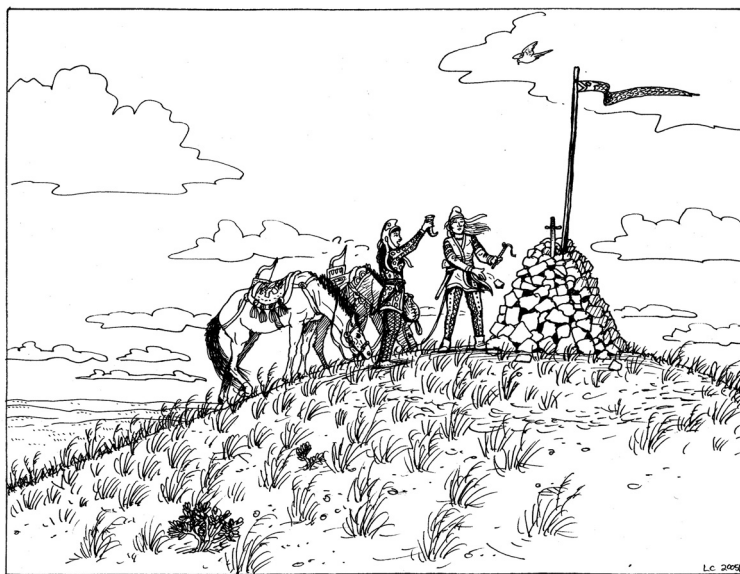
In Greece, purification was a social process. To belong to the group led to purity, while to be a reprobate, a rebel or an outsider was to be unclean. So rites of purification were involved with

acts of cleaning and in celebrating the removal of filth (physical and spiritual), and the rites elevated people into a higher state, out of a place of genuine discomfort to one of purity (Burkert, 76).

In Rome, purity was connected to piety. Purity was a bodily state not directly related to in-

tentions or morality. Associations with mourning, the dead or dying could lead to an impure state which would require rites of purification ranging from simple ablutions (washing) to periods of waiting. In like manner, washing of hands before a rite would be obligatory. But impiety could encompass more than just purity. The crime of offending a deity could be expiated if the offence were unintentional, but an intentional offence could not be cleansed (Scheid, 26-27).

Purification through water was the chief method in the Greco-Roman world, as it cleaned by removing dirt, but fumigation through censuring was also used, as it could remove foul smells and was a primitive form of disinfecting.



In Greece anything that set everyday life out of kilter required purification. This included sexual activity, but other events were far more serious. Contact with death would require extravagant signs of mourning, such as the tearing of hair and clothes, for a certain amount of time, ending with the family purifying themselves by pouring water over their heads, cleaning the house and making a special sacrifice on the hearth. Diseases, especially caused by plagues, were occasions for sacrifice and purification rites, and the purification of a murderer required purification with blood (Burkert, 78-81).

Scapegoat

The word 'scapegoat' actually comes from the Abrahamic Old Testament referring to an actual goat that was used to cleanse the people of sin (Green 2001, 48). But a similar concept existed in the Indo-European world as well.

In Greece, the *pharmakos* is a man chosen on account of his ugliness and is feasted on figs, barley broth and cheese, and then he is whipped out with fig branches and sea onions, and very importantly, he is struck seven times on his penis (Burkert, 82). The idea is that an animal or person is used to carry the pollution of the city or group away, which purifies everyone else.

One thing that appears necessary is for the scapegoat to be first brought into intimate contact with the community or city, so that he can absorb, as it were, the pollution there. After he is driven out, only purity remains (Burkert, 83).

Oxen and beautiful maidens could also be scapegoats (Burkert, 84) though men were more likely. And in Greece, the scapegoat might not be killed necessarily (Green 2001, 145), and adolescents chosen for this role might even have gone through rites to reincorporate them back into the community.

One famous example of the death of the scape-

goat is from the Greek city of Massilia in southern Gaul. There, a poor citizen volunteered himself on behalf of the town. For a year the people of Massalia feted and cosseted him, and then at the end of the year they dressed him up in a sacred robe and leaf crown, led him through the city with the people cursing him all the way, and then murdered him (Green 2001, 145).

Hellenic Oath Sacrifice

The Hellenic oath sacrifice could be seen as the reverse of an apotropaic rite, in that terror and destruction are used to bind an oath, giving it the greatest importance. Here, after sacrifice, the oath-maker plunges his hands into a bucket of the animal's blood and then treads on the severed genitals of the animal, compounding bloodshed with castration. And acts of self-cursing follow to really bind the act, asking utter destruction to fall upon the oath-breaker and his line – with killing off the family corresponding to castration (Burkert, 251).

4. COMMENSALITY – THE SHARED MEAL

A common part of the sacrificial process in the ancient world was the cooking and eating of the flesh of the sacrificial animal. In Greece, only meat obtained through sacrifice could be eaten (Green 2001, 42) – they didn't have butchers on the street corners. These sacrificial rites were the occasion of great feasting and joy. The sharing of food symbolized and enhanced the unity of the people in celebration. It also allowed for communion with the Gods invoked (Bourdillion, 20).

Generally, in Greece, only the skin, bones and fat were given to the Gods while the rest was reserved for the people. Feasting was extremely important at any festival, and continues to be so today.

And in the patron-client relationship, the client provides food rent to the Patron in return for

protection, a share in the spoils, etc. The sharing of food with the Gods in the shared meal also reflects this human bargain, giving man the right to make demands upon the Gods.

5. CHAOS MITIGATES COSMOS (Modern)

Finally, we come to the modern form of sacrifice that appears in current practice. If cosmos equals order, and chaos equals lack of order, then there is an area in between the two, a sort of liminal place where order and chaos are in balance. While too much chaos causes everything to fall apart, too much order can cause brittleness. Ceisiwr Serith introduced the idea that chaos can feed cosmos in 2000 (Serith).

Imagine a pine tree in a hurricane. The tree's lack of flexibility will cause the tree to snap in the storm. But a supple palm tree will bend with the wind, its leaves folding back to protect the heart from the wind, and after the storm has passed, the palm tree will usually spring back as if nothing had happened.

In parts of the ancient world, rituals had to be performed absolutely correctly or the Gods would be offended. In Rome, if there were some error or omission committed in a rite, the pontiffs would first have to perform a rite of expiation (*piaculum*) to conciliate the offended God, and then repeat the badly performed rite all over again (Scheid, 117). Spontaneity was frowned upon.

In modern times, however, some spontaneity is valued because too much predictability and order can be seen as boring. Spontaneous prayers and offerings of praise can be seen as positive additions to any rite. Here, the mitigation of cosmos

(order) with a bit of chaos (disorder) can be a good thing. No matter how carefully organized a Praise Offering section of a modern rite may be, there is always the element of uncertainty involved when the people have their chance to praise, sing, dance or do whatever it is that they have elected to do as a sacrifice for the Gods. This bit of chaos mitigates the normal order of any rite, giving it life.

SACRIFICE FOR MODERN PAGANS

Let's face it, the killing of animals just isn't acceptable for most people in public ritual, and the killing of people is guaranteed to get one into a great deal of trouble.

But we need to have something to give to the Kindreds so that they might give back to us in return, and here substitution comes to the rescue. Items made by the sacrificants or valuables owned by them make wonderful sacrifices, to be thrown in the Well (for later disposal) or hung on the Tree.

Food and drink was often given to the Powers in the ancient world, and we can do the same today. Items the ancients used in-

clude oil and butter (or ghee) offered to the Fire, wine to the fire altar (but remember that wine and beer don't burn and will put your fire out if poured directly on the flames), and other food-stuffs can be offered to the Fire, etc., as well. Remember that non-flammable libations are best when poured directly on the ground.

Weapons like swords can be 'killed' by breaking or bending them, or they can just be offered whole to the Well or a shaft or buried in the ground. Likewise hand-made items can be broken or buried or otherwise given to the Kin-



dreds.

Apotropaic offerings are already being performed in ADF in the form of the Outdwellers offering that many of us do. This bribe would be a propitiatory offering. We also perform purifications through the use of water and incense or sage (Water and Fire). Rites and sacrifices of expiation can also be performed for failed oaths and for squabbles among the People. Anytime we fail to live up to our promises, it may be best to get right with the Gods.

Another idea would be to make a doll and give it a place of honor in your rites. At the end of a specified time (a month or a year, say), it can be reviled and burned in the fire as a scapegoat, carrying with it any discord or disharmony in the Grove and the lives of the People. Even a Wicker Man could be used for this purpose, to 'burn away' any impurity felt by the Grove or solitary, or to carry hand-written 'messages' from the People to the Gods.

We already perform Praise Offerings in many Groves, and any poems, songs, chants or dances created by a sacrificant would be an excellent sacrifice to the Kindreds, mitigating cosmos with a bit of chaos.

And finally, the Shared Meal is a wonderful way of joining with each other and the Kindreds in an act of unity. Part of a loaf of bread or other food could be offered to the Spirits, and the rest eaten by the People. And in Groves that have pot-lucks, a portion of each dish could be given to the Kindreds through the Fire or to the Land before the People eat.

CONCLUSION

Sacrifice was an integral part of religion, worship and spirituality in the ancient world, without which there would have been no public religion. The concept of reciprocity enables us to give and to receive the blessings we require for our hearts and spirits, giving us a roadmap for our

physical as well as our spiritual lives. And even though we aren't those ancient peoples, these simple ideas can work for us today, bringing us closer to the Gods and other Spirits, that we might know Them, and They, us.

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A Prayer to Bride Imbolc 2006

By Penelope Mcfadin

Softly
You touch me
In the soul
On my tongue and in my fingers I feel you
Like lightning
The spark of ginger
To the taste
The words flow as a river
Softly
You fill me
In the heart
In the wind and in the waves I hear you
Like Singing
The sound is golden
To the soul
The song fills as a storm
Softly
You heal me
As a fire to my heart within me
Like burning
The pain of fire
To my pen and paper
Consuming all my soul

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Roman Wheel of the Year

By Virginia Carper

INTRODUCTION:

To acquaint people with Roman High Days, Jenni Hunt wrote a series of articles on Roman festivals, found in “Oak Leaves” issues 17, 18, 19. Her series covered festivals from April to October. This article complements that series with festivals from January through March.

JANUARY

Menlis Januarius

Sacred to Janus, the God of Beginnings and Gates

Traditionally, the beginning of the Roman Year was March 15 (the Ides of March). The period of time between Saturnalia in December and the Kalends (the First) of March was not counted. According to custom, in the 6th Century BCE, Numa Pompilius, (successor to Romulus) added *Januarius* (January) and *Februarius* (February) to the Roman calendar.

Three major festivals occurred this month: the *Compitalia* (held anytime from December 17 to January 6), the *Agonalia* (January 9), and the *Carmentalia* (January 11 and January 15).

Compitalia

This movable festival was held between December 17 and January 6. Landowners would greet

their neighbors at their shrines to the *Lares Compitales*, on their mutual boundaries. These shrines were open to all four directions. This was to allow the Lares of the Crossroads to pass between boundaries.



At these shrines, the Romans left offerings of garlic and poppies to *Mania*, the mother of the Lares for the well-being of the home. The evening before the *Compitalia*, the head of the family would place a broken plow near the shrine and hang wooden dolls for each family member (and a wooden ball for each slave) for the Lares to bless. In the cities, neighbors would gather together and share honey cakes. In addition, district magistrates organized public sacrifices of fattened pigs to the *Lares Compitales*. Followed by three days of plays, dancing, and games at each intersection, this festival was like an ancient block party.

AGONALIA

This ancient festival was held several times a year – January 9, March 17, May 21, and December 11. In the January festival, a ram was slaughtered to Janus by the *Rex*

Sacrorum (priestly representative of the Roman Kings) in the Regia (originally the residence of the Kings). Linked to the structure of the civic year, the *Agonalia* reasserts the commonweal of Rome. In the January *Agonalia*, people, also,

blessed their thresholds of their homes. They offered figs, dates, and honey to Janus, as the Protector of the Door.

CARMENTALIA

(January 11 and 15)

This festival honored Carmenta, a goddess of childbirth, who had her own flamen (priests) -- the *Flamen Carmentatis*. Her name is derived from *Carmen*, which refers to a spell or prophecy. (This hints at another aspect of the Goddess. Ovid suggests that her festival honored her prophetic nature.) The *Carmentalia* was celebrated on two, non-consecutive days for reasons that are obscure. The first day commemorated the dedication of Carmenta's sacred grove by King Numa. The second day may have been to observe the dedication of another grove to Carmenta. Another tradition said that, the festival was probably celebrated on two different days by two different communities. The Romans had theirs on the Palatine Hill, while the Sabines held theirs on the Quirinal Hill. Eventually, the two celebrations merged into one, celebrated on two separate dates.

The *Flamen Carmentalis* conducted the festival sacrifice, which was attended mostly by women. Varro writes of altars in the Forum Boarium to the Carmentes, who were named *Postverta* (Backward) and *Prorsa* (Forward) (the two positions that babies are birthed -- breach or head first.). In Carmenta's temple, women went barefoot since no one could wear leather. No signs of death or the dead were allowed into her temple.

FEBRUARY

Menlis Februarius

Sacred to Februs, an ancient Etruscan God of purification

The last month of the traditional Roman year, February was devoted to purification. Many festivals in February involved renewal and cleansing. Others centered on offerings to the dead, who moved freely about at certain times this month.

Some major festivals occurring this month: *Fornicalia*, *Parentalia* (February 13-21), *Lupercalia*

(February 15), *Quirinalia* (February 17), *Feralia* (February 21) and *Terminalia* (February 23).

Fornicalia

(Moveable from February 5 to 17), includes **Quirinalia** (February 17)

The date for the *Fornicalia* was set by the *Curio Maximus* (the Chief of the Wards), who posted it on tablets in the Forum. There, everyone brought grain to be roasted by their *curia* (ward). According to Ovid, this was an ancient festival to honor Fornax, the Goddess of ovens used in parching grain.

At the *Quirinalia* (the "Festival of the Fools"), people made expiatory sacrifices to the Goddess Fornax. These were Romans who did not sacrifice at the *Fornicalia*. This festival is named for Quirinus, the God of the *Curiae*.

PARENTALIA

(February 13-21), includes the **Feralia** (February 21), and **Carista** (February 22)

At the beginning of the *Parentalia*, public officials laid down their insignias of office. Temples were closed and marriages were forbidden. During this time, the dead wandered freely about. At the cemeteries, the Romans honored their family dead (*Di Parentales*). They offered them milk, honey, oil, and salt. (The Romans reasoned that well-fed dead did not plague the living.)

The *Parentalia* ended with the *Feralia*, "the Feast of the Infernal Powers". Since it concerned the *Di Inferni*, (the Underworld Gods), Ovid hinted that this festival was a darker scarier rite. On this public holiday, a sheep was sacrificed to the dead. Later people took their own offerings to the cemeteries.

On the following day, the *Carista* was held. Family members reunited and resolved their disagreements. Afterwards, they made offerings to the *Lar familiaris* (Family Spirits).

LUPERCALIA

(February 15)

The *Lupercalia* is so ancient that few Romans knew why it was held. Moreover, the rites of this festival were such that no one could fully explain the meaning of each. Several Gods were honored at Lupercalia – *Faunus* (the God of semi-wild places), *Inuus* (a God of sexual intercourse), *Lupercus* (a pastoral God who insures the fertility of fields and flocks), and *Luperca* (the She-wolf who suckled Romulus and Remus).

At the Lupercal, the cave where Luperca is said to have nourished the Twins, the *Luperci* (priests) sacrificed two goats and a dog. Afterwards, they anointed two young boys of patrician families with blood. When the blood was wiped off, with wool dipped with milk, the youths laughed. After skinning the goats, the *Luperci* ripped their hides into strips. These, they tied around their waists. Running through the streets, the *Luperci* would strike anyone in the way. Women, wanting a child or an easy childbirth, would ensure that they were struck.

TERMINALIA

(February 23)

During the *Terminalia*, Romans honored the boundaries of their land. The head of the household sprinkled the boundary post with lamb's blood. On an altar nearby, the family made their offerings. Dressed in white, they silently gave wine, honey and grains. Afterwards, the family had a picnic.

MARCH

Menlis Marti

Dedicated to Mars (the God of War and Protection)

Romulus supposedly named March, the first month for his father, Mars. So the month of March is sacred to Mars, who was originally was a God associated with the promotion of agriculture. Only later did He become associated with the Greek God, Ares, as a protector of crops. When Rome expanded its boundaries, Mars became a God of War. The majority of the festivals during this month focused on purifying and preparing the army for the new campaign season,

which started in March. Horse races were held, war trumpets cleansed, and spears purified. This was the time that the *Salii* (the priests of Mars) danced in the streets with shields and spears.

Also, March begins the season of reawakening and renewal. Until innovations in the Roman calendar (dating back to 153 BCE), March was the first month of the year. Ovid describes traditions associated with the New Year: "the laurel branches were replaced with fresh ones at the Regia, on the Curia, the houses of the flamens, and at the temple of Vesta." Also, the Vestal fire was relit, this time in elaborate ritual, by the Vestal Virgins.

At the start of the month was the *Matronalia*, which honored mothers. On the Ides, Romans celebrated the beginning of the New Year with picnics. Later in the month, the *Liberalia* focused on the fertility of spring and the coming of age for Roman citizens.

Some major festivals occurring this month: *Matronalia* (March 1), *Feast of Anna Perenna* (March 15), and the *Liberalia* (March 17). Festivals devoted to Mars: the *Equirria* (February 21, March 14), the *Quinquatria* (March 19), and *Tubilustrium* (March 23).

Matronalia

(March 1)

The *Matronalia* was the Roman version of "Mother's Day". Women went to the temple of Juno Lucina on Esquiline Hill, where they asked the Goddess for easy childbirth. Meanwhile, their husbands stayed home and offered prayers. When the mothers returned from Juno Lucina's temple, their husbands and daughters gave them presents.

Feast of Anna Perenna

(March 15)

On the Ides of March, Romans honored Anna Perenna, the Goddess of the Returning Year. Crossing the Tiber River to Etrusca, they set up tents and held picnics. Wishing each other a

prosperous New Year, Romans drank as many cups of wine as they could. (For every cup drank was another year added onto their life.)

LIBERALIA

(March 17)

The festival of *Liberalia* had two aspects to it: fertility and the coming of age of young people. In the countryside, people paraded a large phallus representing Liber Pater, an old Italic God of fertility. Fields were blessed, as a virtuous matron placed wreaths on them. In the cities, priestesses (usually older women) passed out *libia* (cakes of honey and oil) for offerings to Liber Pater.

In a separate ceremony, young men dedicated their childhood *bullae* (charms) to the Lares. Then, they replaced their childhood clothing with the *Toga virilis* (the toga of manhood). Now they were citizens of Rome.

FESTIVALS OF MARS

EQUIRRIA

(February 27, March 14)

Dedicated to the warhorses of the Roman army, horse races were held at the Campus Martius on separate dates. The Romans often said that Romulus started the *Equirria* to honor his father Mars. Whatever the reason, these races were popular among Romans, who enjoyed these civic festivities.

QUINQUARTRIA

(March 19 – 23)

During these five days, the Salii danced through the streets wearing old-fashioned armor. In addition, they carried the Spears of Mars and *Ancilia* (the Sacred Shields of Rome). These dances were known as the Lustration of Arms.

Wearing bronze armor, miter-like hats, and *trabeae* ("cloaks") embroidered with red and purple (Roman Bronze Age uniforms), the Salii set out on March 1 in a procession. Bearing the twelve *Ancilia* on their left arms and carrying a spear in their right hands, the Salii danced, leaped, and

beat their shields. They halted in certain spots to sing the Carmen Saliare, a triple-time (*tripudium*) hymn to Mamurius. In the evening, they held a feast at a *mansio Saliorum*

The spears were kept at the Regia (former Palace of the Kings). Before going on a major campaign, a general would assemble his legions at the Regia, and shake one of the spears in front of them. He would shout, "*Mars vigia!* Mars awaken!"

The *Ancilia* were copies of the one that Jupiter Optimus Maximus gave Numa, Romulus' successor. The loss of this shield would mark the downfall of Rome. Therefore, the blacksmith Mamurius was divinely instructed to make eleven identical copies so that on one would ever know which one was the original. As payment for this, Mamurius requested immortality in that his name would be sung in the song of the Salii ("dancers" or "leapers") when they danced with those twelve bronze shields. (The shields were called *ancilia* because they were "cut away" (*recisum*) on the sides.)

TUBILUSTRIUM

(March 23)

At the end of the *Quinquartria*, the purification of the war trumpets was held. This marked the end of the festivals honoring Mars. The campaign season now began in earnest.

DEITIES OF THE FESTIVALS

Anna Perenna

Generally considered a Goddess of health and longevity, Anna Perenna is also the personification of the New Year. Her festival was at the first full moon of the New Year (Spring Equinox). Romans held rites for Her at the first mile stone of the Via Flaminia at her sacred grove.

Offerings: cakes, wine

Carmenta (Carmentis)

According to tradition, Carmenta was originally called Nicostrate. After leaving Greece, She, with

her son Evander (who was rumored to be fathered by Mercury) came to Latium. After arriving, She began to prophesize on Capitoline Hill. King Numa is said to have founded a shrine to Her there. In addition, Carmenta is said to have invented the Latin alphabet.

As a Goddess of childbirth, Carmenta's festival was to benefit pregnant women and their children. She eased the pain of labor in women, and healed sicknesses in infants. She protected the mothers and their children through childbirth. In addition, Carmenta was the Goddess of healing charms.

Offerings: milk, sweet scented flowers, bay laurel

Called: Mother (*Mater*)

Di Inferi (Dii Inferi)

These Gods of the Earth are associated with the underworld. The ruler of the *Di Inferi* is Dis Pater, Father of Riches and God of Death. Faunus, Februus, and Mania (the mother of the Lares, and a Goddess of death) are often included with the *Di Inferi*. In ADF rituals, the *Di Inferi* could be considered the Outsiders.

Offerings: Black items, black sheep

Faunus

Resembling the Greek God Pan, Faunus is the God of the woods, the borderlands along farm lands. Faunus is one of the forces of nature that reside at the fringes of the city. As Inuus, He is considered a god of fertility and sexual intercourse.

Offerings: Peony, myrtle

Fornax

As the Goddess of the ovens and bakers, Fornax was honored at the *Fornacalia* and *Quirinalia*.

Offerings: Spelt, flour, grain

Janus

60 • Oak Leaves • Summer • Issue #41

This two-headed God governed beginnings as well as gates and doors. In the Roman mind, doors were important since they kept out bad influences and let in good ones. Therefore, Janus is the Guardian of doors, as well as a gatekeeper. Invoke Him when leaving home and coming back; also when entering building entrances. As the God of Beginnings, He was invoked before Jupiter, the Sky Father.

Offerings: door knobs, 10W40 or 10W30 oil, incense, wine, and honey cakes. For the January *Agonalia*: a ram.

Called: Father (*Pater*)

Juno

The Goddess, Juno is heavily involved in the life of Rome and her people. With Jupiter and Minerva, She is one of the Capitoline Trio, who oversee the affairs of Rome. Juno is often invoked as the Goddess of Rome, and the Protector of the State. Her titles give the wide range of her worship in Rome.

The *Matronalia* celebrates Juno as Lucina, the Goddess of Light and Childbirth. Romans sacrificed lambs and cattle to Her. At her temple on the Esquiline Hill, the Vestal Virgins offered to Her, their hair. Also, mothers offered a coin to Her for each of their newborn children. As Lucina, She watched over their newborns.

Representative Animals: Goose, peacock

Titles:

Juno Caprotina - Goddess of Fertility

Juno Curitis – Protector of Spearmen (Received first fruits and cakes.)

Juno Lucetia – Bringer of Light

Juno Lucina – Goddess of Childbirth and Light

Juno Moneta – She Who Warns (Received a pregnant sow.)

Juno Opigena – Goddess of Women in Labor

Juno Populona – Patroness of Marriage, Goddess of the People Under Arms

Juno Regina – Queen

Juno Sororia – Protector of Girls at Puberty

Juno Sospita – Protector of the State
Offerings: incense, wine

Lares

These are the guardian spirits. Ovid refers to them as the 'night watchers'. There are various kinds of Lares.

Lar Compitales – protects the crossroads

Lar Domestici – protects the house

Lar Familiaris – protects the family

Lar Loci – protects a particular place

Lar Praesite – protects the city

Lar Viales – protects travelers

Lar Vicorum – protects roads

Dii Penates – guards the larder, pantry, store-house

Dii Manes – The Honored Ancestors.

(*Note: Lemures* are the souls of the dead not given proper burial rites. They were feared by Romans.)

Offerings: honey cakes, garlic, incense, salt, flowers

Liber

A native Italic deity, Liber shared a temple with Ceres, Goddess of Agriculture on Aventine Hill. He was sometimes identified with the Greek God Dionysus, because of his fertility rites. However, Liber had no association with wine. Instead, he was considered a vegetative God.

Offerings: honey and oil *Called:* Pater

Mars (Mavors)

Mars was originally was a God associated with the promotion of agriculture. As *Mars Silvanus*, He watches over the fields. Only later did He become associated with the Greek god, Ares as a protector of crops. When Rome expanded its boundaries, Mars became a God of War. One of the original guardians of Rome, Mars was a member of the Archaic Triad with Jupiter and Quirinus.

Because of his importance to Rome, Mars was honored with the *Suovetaurilla*, the triple sacrifice of a bull, ram, and boar. In addition, He is only one of three Gods (Neptune and Apollo) to whom the Romans sacrificed a bull. Mars had an

altar (*Ara Martis*) on the Campus Martius served by a single priest – the *flamen Martialis*.

Kept in the Regia were the Spears of Mars. If these spears shook together, disaster would happen. They were cared for by the Salii, who purified them at the beginning and end of the war season. (The Salii also guarded the war trumpets and the *Ancilia*, the Sacred Shields of Rome.)

The Ancilia

Legend says that Jupiter sent from heaven as a pledge of Rome's greatness, the figure-eight style bronze shield. (This shield reportedly fell from the sky on May 1.) The blacksmith Mamurius was divinely instructed to make eleven identical copies so that no one would ever know which one was the original. As payment for this, Mamurius requested immortality in that his name would be sung in the song of the Salii ("dancers" or "leapers") when they danced with those twelve bronze shields. (The shields were called *ancilia* because they were "cut away" (*recisum*) on the sides.)

The Salii, the Priests of Mars

There were two groups of Salii: the *Salii Palatini*, who lived on the Palatine Hill, and the *Salii Collini*, who lived on the Quirinal Hill. Wearing bronze armor, miter-like hats, and *trabeae* ("cloaks") embroidered with red and purple (Roman Bronze Age uniforms), they set out on March 1 in a procession. Bearing the twelve *Ancilia* on their left arms and carrying a spear in their right hands, the Salii danced, leaped, and beat their shields. They halted in certain spots to sing the Carmen Saliare, a triple-time (*tripudium*) hymn to Mamurius. In the evening, they held a feast at a *mansio Saliorum* *Representative Animals:* Wolf, Woodpecker

Offerings: bacon fat, meat, wine

Titles:

Mars Pater – Father Mars

Mars Invictus – Mars the Unconquered

Mars Gravidus – Marching God

Mars Silvanus – Protector of Fields

Quirinus

As One of the original Capitoline Triad (which included Mars and Jupiter), Quirinus watched over Rome. Romans regarded this God in two ways. One is that He is the deified Romulus (who was taken into the heavens, by Mars, his rumored father). Quirinus is also a God of the Sabines, who was worshipped on the Quirinal Hill in Rome. Either way, He is served his own Flamen (priest). In their civic sense, Romans are often addressed "Quirites".

Offerings: Myrtle, juniper

Terminus

The God of the Boundaries had his shrine under the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. The hole in Jupiter's temple allowed Terminus worshippers to conduct their rites in the open air. Sheep were sacrificed to Him, at the Sixth Milestone from Rome.

Offerings: Sheep,

wine, honey, grains

Footnotes:

Note: Jenni Hunt's articles can be found at the Roman Kin Website, "Roman Wheel of the Year".

Fiery Arrow Longing

By Jill Humphrey

I hearken from distant lands of magick and mythos;
With an Elm root wand balanced within one hand -
Broken is my harp from calling to the Gods of old.

Round is my rocky earth altar, source of Otherworlds;
Bard I am called, Mabyn the daughter of Picts -
The lover of Fiery Arrow, the matron of words.

I have been in the place where Dana gave cosmic birth;
Reflecting herself into thirty and three -
Where she causes fertility to spread upon Earth.

I have been in the place where Clenna loved a mortal;
Forcing Dylan to bring her back upon waves -
Where she eternally cries upon waters' atolls.

I have been where Myrddin mystically took human shape;
His home shifting from glass to whitethorn to mist -
Where he still appears upon the shore of Bala lake.

I have been in the place where Pwyll was crowned in Annwn;
Shape-shifted friendship for a year and a day -
Where he still descends to the blessed Underworld realm.

I have been where Bran and his men journeyed Western Isles;
His stay far too long, and his food taken with risk -
Where he still arrives at his home's shores, docking denied.

I have been to these worlds where deities are living;
But it is Brigit, Goddess of Filidh, who I long for...
From East to West, I sing for her.

I have been to these worlds where deities are living;
But it is Brigit, Goddess of Bards, who I long for...
From North to South, I chant for her.

I have been to these worlds where deities are living;
But it is Brigit, Goddess of mist-filled realms, who I long for...
Strumming my harp until every string is broken.

Until the end of my days, I await her.
Until the end of my days.
Until the end.
Until.

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With help from Jenni Hunt.

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Magic Migraine Incense

By James Lock

(Disclaimer: I am not a physician, nor any other sort of medical professional. The material in this article is not presented as medical therapy, but only as an alternative treatment that I and others have used to our benefit.)

I would like to present a mixture that I make and use frequently. It is referred to as James's Magic Migraine Incense by those people to whom I have given some of it for their own use. I tell everyone who uses this incense to alleviate their migraines that it is a combination of herbal medicine, aromatherapy, and Druid magic. The most common response to this is "I don't care what it is! If it works, I'll take it!"

All my life I have had "crawl in bed and pray for death" migraines. I have tried many, many things to halt the pain and had never found anything that would work for me. Then I started doing some research of my own. All my life I have done magic and finally decided that the time had come for me to put magic to the task of helping my migraines.

I decided to create my magical migraine cure in the form of an incense. The reasons for this were because incense can be made in advance and stored for future use (this is very important, because when undergoing a migraine attack, I do not have the strength nor drive to make incense), incense is easy to use (put it on a light charcoal disk in the brazier, and there you go!), and I like working with incense.

Much research followed, as I searched through many references on herbalism and magic. I wanted to create an incense that combined the traits of healing, rest, and recovery. My research

eventually led me to combine myrrh, cinnamon, and sandalwood to create the incense. Myrrh has an ancient magical connection to sleep, sandalwood has long been used in healing mixtures and magics, and cinnamon is seen as energizing and vitalizing.

I grind nuggets of myrrh and cinnamon sticks in a mortar and pestle used for nothing but magical



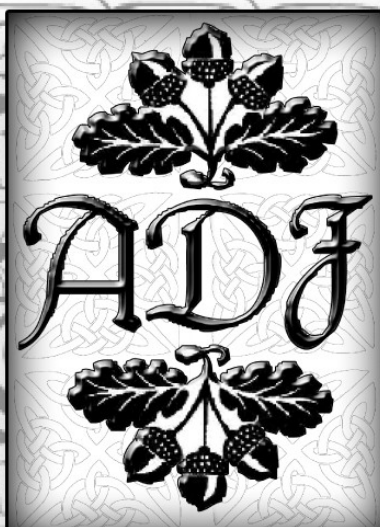
work (the exclusive use of the tool is not essential to the making, it's just what I do). I use roughly equal parts of both materials and grind them until they are as finely powdered as I can make them. During this process I say many prayers to Apollo and Asklepius to ask for the healing, peace, and well-being of the one who uses the incense.

Once I have the powder ground, I pour in enough sandalwood oil to slightly moisten the mixture. I stir everything together, still praying to the two gods of healing.

As a final step, I put the incense into a wide-mouthed glass bottle for storage. Just before capping the bottle, I say another prayer, and use my will to push thoughts of healing, sleep, and recovery from pain into the incense itself.

When I have a migraine, I light a charcoal disk, fill the hollow with the incense, and go to bed. The pleasant fragrance is a powerful aid to sleep, and when I awaken, I no longer have a migraine, nor do I experience the hangover caused by so many medications.

I hope this will be of some help to someone who might read this.



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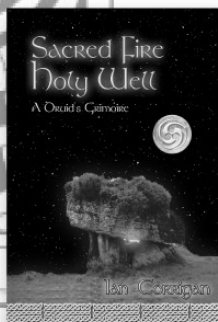
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A Shrine for a Small Space

By David Crawford



Last year my partner and I found ourselves having to move to another state without much notice. Until we can find a place of our own we have to stay with his mother and sister who live together in a large multi-level home. With them knowing my religious beliefs, I figured it wouldn't be a big deal at all for me to have some kind of altar or shrine to at least perform devotionals. But it turned out that there was an issue with me having a shrine in the home. There just wasn't space since the home was already decorated and my sister-in-law gave me the impression she didn't really care for the idea of a Pagan shrine in her home. Being the ADF Druid I am, I showed

the proper respect a guest should. I accepted her decision on the matter, showing her that I understood the rules of hospitality that my faith practices.

After some discussion, my partner's mother told me that she didn't mind at all if I had a small space for a shrine in the room we were staying in. So I decided to use the nightstand next to the bed. I had only brought a few items from my home shrine that I had not stored, the rest I unfortunately had to pack away. I had my small cast iron cauldron which I used for containing

my - Fire, a small beautiful earthenware bowl for my well, and two small statues of Persephone and Demeter. I had not been able to bring any of my plants at the time so I didn't have my tree for the shrine. I also wanted to keep with the decor of the house so that my shrine might go unnoticed, so I couldn't really use my cauldron leaving me only with my well and statues. I needed to find a vessel for my fire and a tree.

Just a few weeks before Yule, we went to a Hobby Lobby to look for some art supplies. While there I found what I thought would be the perfect symbol for my tree. It was a cast iron oak branch with leaves and acorns on smaller branches; from four of the branches hung votive candle holders. The entire piece sits on a wooden base. The votives would give me a place to have small candles to light for the Nature Spirits and the Ancestors as well as for a few of my patrons. The piece would be an incredible space saver! The tree stood about two feet tall and fit perfectly on the back corner of the area I have for my use, while fitting nicely with the way the room is decorated.

My last task was to find an object I could use to contain my Fire that would fit in as well. That item was gifted to me on Christmas morning. My partner's mother had found a beautiful spherical shaped cast

iron candle holder that looked as if it were made of an organic filigree pattern. It was perfect! She said that when she saw the candle holder she knew it would be perfect on my shrine... you got it folks... the Christian mother-in-law was thinking of her Pagan son-in-law. I was completely shocked and grateful.

The Traveling Doet

By Christine Wityshyn

From the tales of a traveling poet
I dream of days gone by
Of a green isle, surrounded by sea
Whose soft mist embraces me

Beyond the mist there lies a grove
Of blooming apple tress
Where the wind sings a song
And speaks to me of Avalon

Upon the hill sits a church
Ready to start mass
When the bells begin to ring
The many druids will cease to sing

From the tor to a glen
Old as history
Here is seen, all alone
An ancient ring of standing stone

Beyond the stones not to far
A mighty city lies
Here the warriors came ashore
And left their mark for evermore

Upon the shore, the mist now rolls
I'm loosing what I see
But my footprints are in the sand
Of this proud and ancient land

From the tales of a traveling poet
I've dreamt of days gone by
Of a green isle, surrounded by sea
His great stories inspired me

-> For Todd C.

With the new items, I was able to put together a wonderful shrine in a very small space that blended in with the rest of the decorating and would go unnoticed by others. I wasn't really sure how much work I would actually be able to do with it. But as the days start getting warmer here in the North West Arkansas Mountains I am finding also that my wonderful new shrine, in a MUCH more compact form is extremely portable. And though I lack space in the house to practice my rituals I am NOT lacking in the space outside with all the beautiful rocky mountains that surround me.

The space I have is not much more than about a two foot by two foot square so there isn't much space at all to work with, but it houses the most base of my needs for ADF devotionals and ritual. The shrine blends in with its surroundings so as not to draw unwanted attention while we are here. I have my fire, my well, and my tree... what more could a Druid ask for?

Spirits of my Home and Land

By Jenni Hunt

There are spirits all around us – some we recognize and acknowledge, and many, many of which we are, at best, only marginally aware. If you close your eyes and open your heart, you feel them all around you. If you analyze the physical and atomic make-up of your immediate universe, you know them. They permeate our world and share our very space, and yet we are often scarcely aware of them. We share our homes and our lives with them; it is fitting that we should honor them and seek to live in harmony with them. What are they? Brownies, fairies, sidhe, wights; spirits of forest, stream and home. To me and others who maintain a Roman hearth, they are VESTA, and the PENATES and LARES.

The *Penates* are the spirits of my pantry, refrigerator and cupboards. They protect my supplies and ensure that my household does not go hungry or is unable to offer hospitality. To honor the Penates, I keep a small bowl of salt on their altar and offer daily prayers to them, along with all the other household spirits. Horace suggests that offerings of corn, wine, or the occasional suckling pig were most appropriate for such occasions (Rose 28). I generally offer cornmeal or a bit of bacon, if I have some, and burn incense for them daily.

Most important of all the Penates is VESTA, the living flame, central to Roman hearth religion. The name Vesta is derived from the Indo-European *wes, which means "to dwell," or more particularly, "she of the household" (Orr). Vesta is the living embodiment of the hearth flame. That Latin word for hearth is FOCVS. Along with the other household deities, Vesta receives a portion of the each day's main meal.

I honor the *Lares* of my home (and the land on which it sits) at my *Lararium*. Within my home I honor the *Lares* (the plural form of the word *Lar*)

as spirits of the land on which my home sits. As powers of the earth, the Lares help the land (and therefore the household) to be more fertile and prosper. I share my home with some of these Lares, who have taken up residence indoors with me and have become the *Lar Familiaris*. These are the spirits of my home, and imbue it with cheerful hospitality.

Outside and around my home, the concentration of Lares becomes denser and less specific. Basically, there are two types of land: claimed and unclaimed. I currently live on the very edge of these two lands, in an apartment building directly adjacent to the riparian highway of a major desert wash, the liminality of which varies depending on the season and amount of water present. Even though I live in the middle of an urban area, I live in the midst of a wide variety of Nature Spirits – domestic ones, urban ones, and wild ones – seen and unseen.

Lares are accustomed to shifting their homes and even their very nature when humans and other inhabitants move in. They do not leave or die; they change with the land itself. While they, along with the Earth itself, are infinitely adaptable and renewable, sometimes it takes a while for them to recover from the shock of change. Where I used to live in Ohio, a developed community in a rural area, the land had been cultivated farmland for at least a century, and before that, it was all woods, streams and marshes. The Lares around my Ohio home were still recovering from the transition of farmland to residential land. I felt that when I make offerings to Lares in and around my home – cornmeal, spelt, birdseed, bread crumbs or fruit – they nourished and strengthened the spirits to help ease that transition. There was a special oak tree with its feet dipping into a retention pond full of singing frogs with its own *Genius Locus*, the guardian

spirit of that particular place. I used to take offerings to the Nature Spirits and leave them at the base of this tree. In turn, they always seem to recognize and appreciate my efforts and bless me in turn with a safe and prosperous home.

Ancient Romans were a communal folk with definite boundaries delineating their homes, their neighborhoods, their cities, their nation and their allies. Each set and subset of those communities would have an “inside” and an “outside,” along with the spirits of the inside and outside, as well as spirits of the boundaries themselves. Boundary spirits and deities maintain the balance between the inside and the outside; between city and country; tame and wild; chaos and order. Those boundaries are semi-permeable membranes, and each guardian spirit or deity of that boundary is responsible for helping to maintain that delicate balance.

For instance, one of the most important boundaries in all Roman cosmology is the PORTVS, the door. Among these are IANVS, the granddaddy of all door deities; LIMENTIVM and LIMA, god and goddess of the threshold (LIMEN); CARDEA (or CARNA), the goddess of door hinges; FORCULUS, the god of the door itself; and PORTUNUS, the protector of doors. While I wouldn’t suggest it’s necessary to make offerings to every deity of a door, it may be appropriate to offer to them all together. In any case, it’s helpful to understand that there are a number of deities associated with doors, and so under certain circumstances it may be appropriate to single out a particular one or two for specific offerings.

Perhaps the most important deity associated with boundaries is the god TERMINVS. Terminus was important not merely to establish the household’s domain, but to keep at bay the forces of the wild, uncultivated lands surrounding it. To interfere with or move a boundary stone, which was a sacred object, was not just illegal, but a sacrilege. Beyond the influence my home Lares reigns Terminus, the god of

boundaries. Even the boundary of my community has its own spirit, which I think of collectively as the Terminii. I honor these beings at the festivals of Terminalia around February 23, and with my own version of the Ambularia, around May 25. In February, I reconnect with Terminus and make offerings at the boundary of my own homestead. In May, to honor the Terminii, I carry cornmeal and walk all over the neighborhood, sprinkling offerings at its edges so that they might keep at bay the “wild” forces surrounding our community.

Beyond the Terminii are the gods of the forest, *Silvanus* and *Faunus*, whose realms include all the uncultivated land beyond the boundaries of the owned and settled land. These deities, and the spirits of such places, are wild and unpredictable. But they are also protectors and promoters of agriculture. In ancient times, the forest was not considered a safe place, and FAUNVS may be responsible for the strange noises in the woods, causing dreams and hallucinations. SILVANVS was known to have behaved with abandon and disregard for humans. As such, it was always necessary to placate him when land was being cleared. I generally pray that they teach me their lessons gently, and the offerings I make are to pick up trash and not disturb the wildlife in their realm.

Wild spirits generally tolerate my presence; I don’t often get lost, have never been attached by wild animals or otherwise molested by the creatures of the wild. And on those rare occasions when I do run into the unexpected, it’s undoubtedly because there was a lesson I needed to learn. True growth always involves some degree of discomfort or pain. From time to time we need to take our chances and adventure beyond the influence of the spirits familiar to us. We must, however, always remember to live in balance with all spirits of the land.

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Let Us The Old Man Greet

(sung to the tune of, "Let Us the Infant Greet")

By Anne Keough

Let us the Old Man Greet
In worship before Him fall,
And let us honor His wisdom great
On this His festival.

Let us to the Old Man Sing,
And bring Him our gifts rich store,
And let us honor our Wise Old Man
With praise for evermore.

Let us to the Old Man kneel,
And love Him with faithful love,
And let us honor Him for truths hard-won,
Ask His blessing on the year to begin.

Glad hymns in the Old Man's laud,
And cherish Him while we may,
At life's end, where He is enthroned as God,
Our service he will pay.

Be we to the Old Man true,
While we are dwelling on the mould,
And He will give us our wages due,
Wisdom's crown of purest gold.

The music is a traditional English carol.



Festival Review

Pantheacon 2008: ADF Hospitality at its Best
By Rev. Sean W. Harbaugh



This year's Pantheacon was the biggest yet. The annual pagan gathering, held over the President's Day holiday weekend in San Jose, is the west coast's biggest pagan event. The Doubletree Hotel was bustling with pagans of all walks of life, and the workshops were informative and provocative. ADF was well represented with members of Sierra Madrone Grove, Feather River Protogrove, Otter Bay Protogrove, Coast Oak Protogrove, Awen's Breath Grove, Raven's Cry Grove, Sonoran Sunrise Grove, and Grove of the Rising Phoenix all lending their time and energy to make a strong ADF presence felt.

Thanks to the help from Medb Aodhamair, the Grove Organizer from the Feather River Pro-

togrove, and many others including Nora and Dennis Ford from Sonoran Sunrise Grove, and Jack from Awen's Breath, we were able to present ourselves as the truly excellent pagan organization that we are by showing the pagan community what ADF means by hospitality with an incredible display of food, beverages and information. Our suite was also the place for great conversation and reacquainting ourselves with those we haven't seen in awhile.

The highlight of the whole weekend was the incredible ritual dedicated to the Earth Mother led by Vice Arch-Druid Kirk Thomas, featuring two other Dedicant Priests, myself and Meredith McDonald from Awen's Breath Grove. Modig and Jack provided the drumming, and ADF members from all over the west participated with speaking parts to this well written ritual provided by Raven's Cry Grove. The ritual had incredible power and the 80 plus people in attendance kept the energy flowing from start to finish.

We are already in the preliminary planning stages for next year and with the generous donations we received, we will have an even better hospitality suite.

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Book Review

In the Dark Places of Wisdom by Peter Kingsley, PhD.

By Fionn oMurchu

Peter Kingsley is deliberately vague as to his purpose in the opening pages of *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*. He states that the book is about neither fact nor fiction, but that it is about deception. Even when he directly points out his purpose, he merely says it is “to awaken something we’ve forgotten,” which to him is a healing process involving that for which we long. This is not very illuminating, but Kingsley writes in such a way that the reader will only gradually understand these statements as he/she begins to peel away the layers underneath them.

Maddeningly opaque, yet with a straightforward and almost conversational writing style which draws the reader on, he states that one must face death before one dies and that, since Western culture keeps such ideas at a distance, is the reason why those of us who are of the West turn to Eastern philosophy for spiritual nourishment. But, he claims, a spiritual tradition is hidden at the heart of Western civilization.

Kingsley then gets to the point as he begins to tell the story of Parmeneides, a little-known figure to most lay-people, but one who is considered by scholars to be the father of Pythagorean philosophy. Unlike most interpreters of Classical philosophy, however, he does not focus on how Parmeneides influenced later thinkers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Rather, he shows how those heirs to his teachings deliberately discarded their original wisdom; hence the “deception.”

In great detail, relying on Classical writings as well as modern archaeological finds, the author explains that Parmeneides and the “proto-Pythagoreans” were, first and foremost, priests and mystics. Originally Anatolian Greeks who settled in southwest Italy in the sixth century BCE, they were followers of Apollo – but not in

His modern guise as merely a solar deity. Indeed He was the God of the Sun but, just as the Sun must set and descend into the Underworld before it rises again the next day, so must He; as the Apollo of hidden wisdom, Apollo the psychopomp, Apollo as the tutelary deity of the Oracles at Delphi. He was also a God of healing, *Apollo Oulios* or *Apollo Iatros*.

So these Pythagoreans saw themselves as representatives of Apollo, and dispensers of His wisdom and healing. What then, was the source of this wisdom? Kingsley points out three inscriptions discovered on the base of a statue found in an ancient Italian town named Velia, in which the carved figure is given the title “Oulis, son of _____, healer (Iatros) Pholarchus in the _____th year.” The father’s name changed in each of the three inscriptions, and the year ranged from the 280th to the 446th.

The key word, Kingsley says, is *Pholarchus*, which comes from two Greek words: *archos* (lord or chief) and *pholeos* (a cave or den where animals hide or hibernate). This term seems obscure at first, but he shows that *pholeos* was also used to describe a state of suspended animation or retreat from the outer senses. It described the idea of incubation.

This, he states, is the source of the wisdom of the Pythagoreans; a deliberate descent into the Underworld by means of an incubatory process, usually in a cave or underground sanctum. Parmeneides even wrote a poem (unlike later Platonists who considered poetry and philosophy mutually exclusive) describing his own descent in which he is greeted “kindly” by the goddess and is assured that he has not, in fact, died. He describes the solar chariot which carries him to the Underworld as making the sound of the *syrinx*,

“the pipes,” which is called by Pythagoras the Harmony of the Spheres, the sound of the stars and planets, and the hissing sound of silence; and is also described in Greek magical texts as a form of breath control used by initiates. Also discussed are the Greek ideas of the hero-shrine, an edifice built specifically to honor an ancestor or teacher who was an initiator into the Underworld; and the link between Apollo and the Snake, whose hissing was the sound of the *gyrx*.

Kingsley uses many other ancient texts to corroborate his theory of Pythagorean wisdom, and states that all their knowledge – as lawgivers, warriors, scientists, healers, poets and sages – came from these incubatory experiences. He takes the reader on a historical journey showing how this mystical philosophy degenerated over time into the solely physical healing of Hippocrates and the philosophy of mere “abstract thought” carried on by Socrates and Plato. Fi-

nally, he leaves the reader seriously reconsidering the origins of Western thought and civilization, and pondering what it means “to die before you die, no longer to live on the surface of yourself”. Kingsley’s scholarship is immaculate, his ideas are profound, and his conclusions are revelatory; yet even he states at the end that this “is only the beginning: the first chapter”. As a refreshing re-examination of the foundations of Western society, though, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* is a welcome addition to any scholar’s library. What is also striking after reading this book is the thought that these Pythagoreans seem to share many of the traits of mystical thinkers and healers of all ages - especially of those who would in their time be called the Druids.

Kingsley, Peter PhD. 1999. *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*. Inverness, CA: The Golden Sufi Center Publishing. ISBN 1-890350-X.

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Illness and Ritual

By David Crawford



A few months back there was a thread in the ADF Dedicator Program List that talked about people doing ritual when they were ill. There seemed to be the idea that being ill was like being unclean and therefore unfit for doing ritual. In general practice I can see that there would be some valid points to the argument when it comes to health, especially in a group setting, but at the same time I can see where this kind of thought could become a major issue within our religion.

In everyday life everyone at some point gets sick. It simply is a part of the human condition that we must all live with. If someone has a cold or

the flu maybe they should abstain from being at ritual. It would not be very responsible to be there spreading it around to everyone there. Beyond the fact of spreading an illness there is also the issue of someone that is ill disrupting the ritual itself. Of course they would not be doing such a thing intentionally but someone that is coughing, sneezing and sniffing their nose every few minutes can break the flow of ritual. There can also be the danger that if the ill person has been taking cold medications they could stumble, falling into the fire and getting burned or even hitting something hard during their fall. But these are issues with passing or seasonal illnesses. (You should also mention the possibility of the

sick person being contagious and thus causing others to become sick as well.)

One concern with this train of thought is that there are other types of illness people can experience. I took the conversation on this thread pretty seriously. I do not like the idea of people with any illness being unfit for ritual or even magical workings for that matter. One of the things that most people don't stop to think about is the fact someone with a chronic or even terminal illness could be listening to what they are saying. I know everyone has the right to their opinions. That's what makes free will so wonderful. But we pride ourselves in ADF for our stride towards excellence. I hope that this essay will help some people out there get a little closer to that excellence.

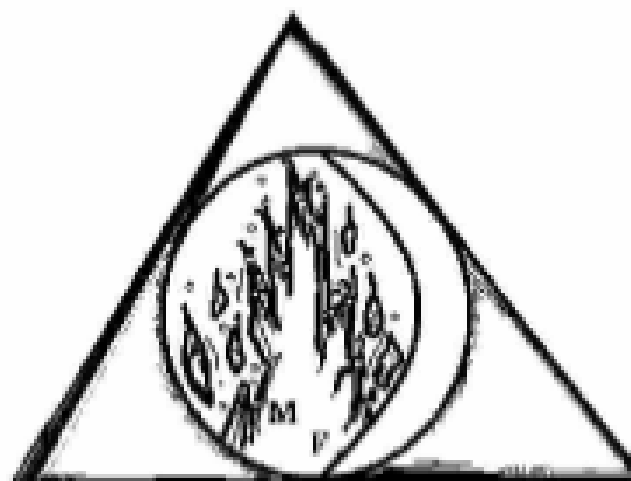
I can not speak for others; my words speak only for myself. I am person living with a terminal illness. It is something that won't ever go away. It can't be cured. And in the end it will more than likely claim my life. But does it make me unclean or unfit to do ritual?

I do not think for one moment that it does. The illness does not contaminate the tools I use. It does not taint the flow of energy that runs through my body as I do my rituals or magical workings. And it certainly doesn't taint anyone working with me that shares energy during a ritual or magic work. On the contrary, I find that it helps to fight the poisonous life that is surging

through my body. Since coming to ADF and studying the Druid way, I have learned to focus the Waters of Life's blessings into a burning light that fills my body, purging me of illness a little each time. It is a time of healing that I cannot find anywhere else.

But there is another very important factor in doing ritual even though I have this illness. I find a connection with the Kindreds that gives me the strength and courage to continue on each day despite the fact that little by little my body is failing me. I find hope in Their presence. I find a renewal for my soul that otherwise would have aged beyond my years. I do not believe that the Kindreds feel that I shouldn't be approaching Them because of this. I actually feel the opposite is true. When I turn to the Kindreds I feel a happiness and warmth, a sense of harmony that tells me I am doing right by Them turning to Their love.

Though a passing cold or flu may make you unfit to share the Waters of Life with other members of your grove because of health and hygiene issues, having a chronic or terminal illness does not exclude you; you are not unclean nor unfit to share with those around you. Try to remember that the next time you are standing by someone new at ritual. You never know who is in need of the powers that the Kindred have to offer the fit or the ill.



Midnight Flame

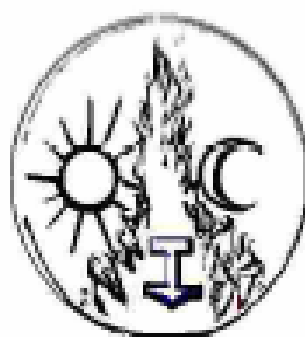
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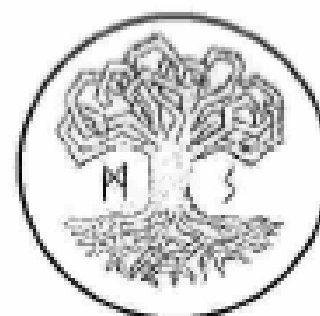


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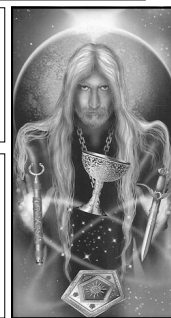
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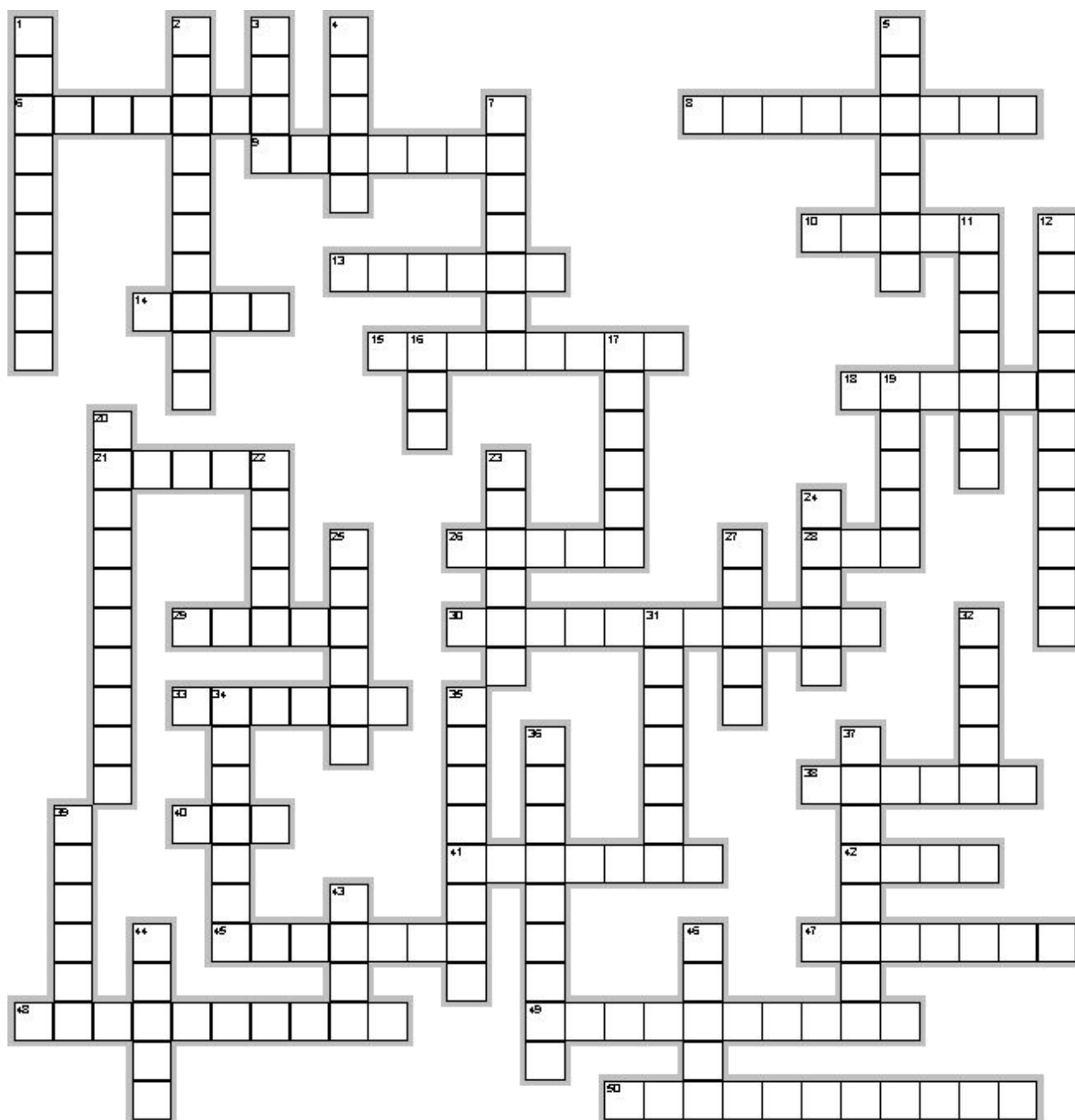
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Across

6. Gaulish for Sacred space
8. The world within us...
9. Italian Astronomer 1564-1642 (first)
10. Norse Seeress
13. Brightest star in Earth's sky
14. Welsh Poets
15. Gaia Hypothesis originator (last)
18. Moral Excellence
21. September 24 to October 23
26. Leader of the Devas
28. Norn - Past
29. Killer of Achilles
30. Marcus Aurelius' book
33. 3 Laws of planetary motion (last)
38. Sacred river of India
40. Eihwaz
41. 'crystal' magic
42. O.E. Treow
45. Stone found in Nile River 1799
47. Raido
48. Welsh myth & legends
49. Starhawks Tradition
50. Divination by tea leaves

Down

1. 12th Major Arcana
2. Canon Episcopi concerns....
3. Analytical Psychology (last)
4. Book of Irish Gospels
5. OBOD founder (last)
7. Society of inner light founder (last)
11. Latin for Skillfull
12. Circumambulation counter clock
16. Quercus
17. Older spelling of QBLH
19. A poem of Homer
20. Gk. Mysteries assoc. with Demeter
22. Fossilized tree resin
23. Foeniculum Vulgare
24. John Barleycorn poet (last)
25. February 20 to March 20
27. Archangel of the Element Earth
31. Zoroastrian evil one
32. Strabo's - Interpreter of Nature
34. 4th Major Arcana
35. Lucky Charm
36. December 22 to January 20
37. Crataegus
39. Skt. for "Right Action"
43. Founder of Stoic Philosophy
44. A God or Goddess...
46. Irish poet 1865 -1939 (last)



Altar Building on a Budget

By Mariah Sheehy

In my own experience, with some thought and creativity one can build an altar or more than one that is beautifully decorated yet affordable. My initial assumption is that the altar will be in your bedroom, but if you do live in a Pagan or Pagan-friendly household, I'd recommend having a family altar/shrine in a common and a personal altar in your own space.

Before you begin think about what kind of altar or shrine you want to have. It can serve as an everyday visual reminder of your path as well as a place to pray, meditate, give offerings and perform rituals. A shrine for a deity or spirit you are especially devoted to- or one for each of the Kindreds. A shrine focused on a vocational path such as warrior, artisan, or mundane occupation. Themes like healing, love/marriage or wisdom/knowledge can be the basis for an altar. I like to decorate my altar for each High Day- it helps me get into the frame of mind for the season, as well as prepare a sacred space for the upcoming ritual. If you work with more than one hearth culture, you may want a separate space for each of them.

First, look around your home- you may be surprised to find that odd knickknacks you have lying around might find a higher purpose. Thrift, antique stores and yard sales I've encountered often sell table linens, candles, figurines, and shelves. Craft stores sell many good ingredients for an altar or for making things for an altar. Discount stores and even drugstores may have good items as well.

Fabric can be bought to make an altar cloth but table runners, table cloths, placemats, lace doilies and scarves can also be used. The cloth does not have to cover the entire space. In choosing the fabric, think about how easy the material is to clean. Consider what kind of offerings you may

be using and how messy they will be if they spill. You might have one cloth under the offering dishes that is plainer and another underneath that.

When looking for images of the Kindreds remember that statues can potentially be some of the most expensive altar items. A cheaper alternative to this is figurines. Animals associated with deities, or to represent nature spirits are easy to find. Even dolls can work nicely. Pictures of family members and mementos can be used for ancestors.

In my opinion a Pagan altar just isn't complete without some kind of natural object. Keep in mind that some of these will fall apart eventually, so they may need replacing. Rocks, shells, feathers, dried or fresh leaves and flowers, sticks, pine cones, seeds, bird eggs and nests. If you have good light near the altar, a potted plant is quite suitable as well.

You could even make watering it part of your devotions.

The arrangement of items on the altar does not have to be symmetrical.

I'd suggest putting the larger items near the center as a focal point and surrounding them with additional decorative items, candles, and offering vessels. Consider which ritual tools you want to keep on the altar and which to store someplace else. Having a shelf or cupboard underneath the altar is really handy for this.

You can also make use of the space around the altar by hanging shelves above it and putting some of the items there. If you have limited space a knickknack shelf can be used as a wall altar. Another option is to install wall sconces to spread the lighting above the altar. Hang up pictures and cloth wall hangings around the space.



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Special thanks to the following organizations for their support:



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Submission Guidelines

Oak Leaves welcomes submissions of artwork, articles, poetry, letters to the editor, and anything else that might be of interest to our readers. Submissions, and especially artwork, relating to the turning of the wheel of the year and the celebration of the High Days are particularly encouraged. Submissions from non-members will be accepted, however, if space is constrained, preference will be given to submissions from ADF members. Certain pieces may receive preference, depending on available space.

References and Notations:

Since excellent scholarship is one of ADF's goals, please document sources of ideas and materials that you used for your writings. Detailed endnote references are preferred rather than simply providing a bibliography. Please follow the standards for references in the MLA Handbook or Style Manual. We will not accept submissions with footnotes, as they require considerable editing to convert to endnotes.

Medium of Submission:

Electronic submissions are preferred, sent as email attachments to the Oak Leaves submissions address:

oak-leaves@adf.org

Please send one submission per attachment specifying the format, author's name, your email, and membership status. Be sure the title of the piece and your name are at the top of the page, and you have checked it over for spelling and grammatical errors.

We will also accept electronic submissions on IBM PC-compatible diskettes, sent to:

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Please do not upload the article directly to the wiki as this has caused some confusion. Written submissions should be sent in one of the following formats: Rich Text Format (RTF), PDF or MS Word. Submitted materials will not be returned to the sender, unless specifically requested.

Art Submission Guidelines:

We now accept photos as well as drawings and computer generated pictures. Some of the color pictures will need to be modified to black and white but we will do that as necessary. We would like to have pictures submitted at 300 dpi, and in a useable format such as .jpg, .png, etc. Please send them to the Art Director at metrophage@gmail.com. We are not currently accepting hard copies of your art.

Deadlines for submissions are:

Spring: December 1st,
Summer: March 1st,
Autumn: June 1st,
Winter: September 1st

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Tylwyth Y Ddraig Goch: Clan of the Red Dragon
Leader: Rev. Kirk Thomas
Mailing list: adf-welsh@lists.adf.org
<http://www.adf.org/members/kins/red-dragon/>

Special Interest Groups

American SIG
Coordinator: Karen Dutton
Email: kdutton@carolina.rr.com
Mailing list: adf-americkin@yahoo.com <http://www.adf.org/members/sigs/american/>

Children's Education and Parenting SIG
Coordinator: Epona
Email: epona@mysticdruid.com
Mailing list: adf-parents@lists.adf.org
<http://www.adf.org/members/sigs/childrens-education-and-parenting/>

Ecstatic Trance
Coordinator: Linda Costello
Email: lindac5755@aol.com

Foireann Mhorrigan
Coordinator: Calliean
Email: amaairgin@pacbell.net
Mailing list: adf-morrigan@lists.adf.org
<http://www.adf.org/members/sigs/morrigan/>

Military Outreach
Coordinator: Francesca
Email: ladybythesea@yahoo.com
<http://www.adf.org/members/sigs/military-outreach/>

Solitaires SIG
Coordinator: Brandon Newberg
Email: SolSIGCoordinator@gmail.com
Mailing list: adf-solitaires@lists.adf.org
<http://www.adf.org/members/sigs/solitaires/welcome.html>

The People of the Purple Feather
Coordinator: Aethon Tobar
Email: aethontobar@gmail.com
Mailing list: adf-lgbt@lists.adf.org
<http://www.adf.org/members/sigs/purple-feather/>



Ár nDraiocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

P.O. Box 17874, Tucson, AZ 85731-7874



Membership and Subscription Form

Beside your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, please indicate whether the information is: Publishable (P), meaning it can be printed in ADF publications and we can give it out freely to people who wish to contact you; Sharable (S), meaning we can give it out to ADF members who request it; or Confidential (C), meaning that only the Mother Grove and ADF office staff will have access to it.

Legal Name: _____ P _ S _ C
Religious Name: _____ P _ S _ C
Address: _____ P _ S _ C
City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____
Country: _____ Phone Number: _____ Birth Date: ____/____/____ (mm/dd/yy)
Email Address: _____ P _ S _ C

The information on this form represents a:

- ☐ New Membership Renewal Revival of Expired Membership.
☐ Information Update (If name/address changed indicate previous)

If this is a new membership, where did you hear about us? _____

If this is a membership renewal please state your ADF membership number: _____

In which ADF Grove do you intend to participate in, if any? _____

I am 18 years of Age or Older: { } Yes { } No (If no, see waiver below.)

ADF Membership Rates:

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Subscription to Oak Leaves - Members	_____ years @ \$20/year = \$_____
Subscription to Oak Leaves - Non-Members	_____ years @ \$25/year = \$_____

Total Due \$ _____

Please mail this form with your check or money order (made payable to "ADF" in U.S. dollars only.) Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing. There are special rates for Prisoners. Please contact us if you are a prisoner or are assisting one. This form may also be found online at: <http://www.adf.org/joining/join.html>.

Under 18 Membership Waiver

If you are under the age of 18, you must have a parent or guardian sign this waiver to indicate her/his permission for you to join ADF, and that signature must be notarized.

To whom it may concern: (enter child's name here) _____ has my permission to become a member of ADF, and I am fully aware of the Neopagan nature of this organization.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Notary Seal:

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

We Gather to Give to the Great Giver in Respect for the Cycle of Giving

By Bryan Perrin

Earth Mother of life, growth and decay - from whom all things arise and are born and to whom all things come to rest. Vast, great, ancient, you are the embodiment of all histories and all mysteries and all those we have known, dreamed and imaged.

Earth, mother of all life cycles, you are complete and whole. In that wholeness we find our sense of belonging and connectedness in place. You are the ground beneath our feet, our base and our source.

As well as Mother and Goddess, you are our home -constant and continuous. Your turning, changing, and returning is the movement that we, and all life, are bound to and upheld by.

In respect for the cycle of giving, the currents and undercurrents of sustenance, we offer sacrifice to the great giver.

In gratitude for what has been given, it is our tradition to give of ourselves knowing that life is a gift to be thankful for.

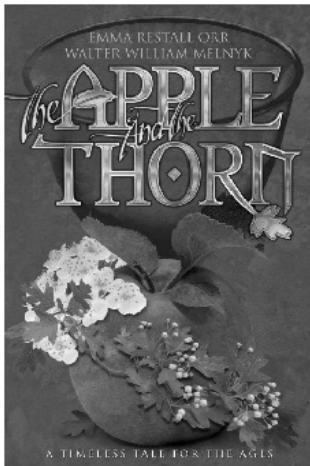
In appreciation and with a joyful heart, Earth Mother accept our sacrifice.

Out of the Ancient Mists Comes the Tale of

THE APPLE AND THE THORN

BY

Emma Restall Orr, and
Walter William Melnyk



A work of magical mythology, hanging in the balance between fact and fiction, this tale draws upon the legends and history of our ancestry, and the landscape itself, a story of worlds colliding in love and war. Major characters in the tale are the Chalice Well itself, the Red Spring, and a very special Cup of blue glass.

In the changing times of first century Britain, Vivian, Lady of the Lake, struggles to maintain peace within the lands of Avalon. Broken by the crucifixion of his great nephew, Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea makes his way back to her islands in search of understanding, bringing him more than he realizes.

In this inspiring and heart rending story of sovereignty, power and belief, as the Roman armies draw closer, these iconic figures are forced to confront each other and themselves, leading to choices neither could have imagined.

Emma Restall Orr (Bobcat) is Head of the Druid Network,

William Melnyk (Oakwyse) is a former Episcopal priest in the United States.

Expressing the depth of their own religious visions, the tale is a powerful exposition of British animistic Paganism and mystical Christianity – and what happens when they meet.



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