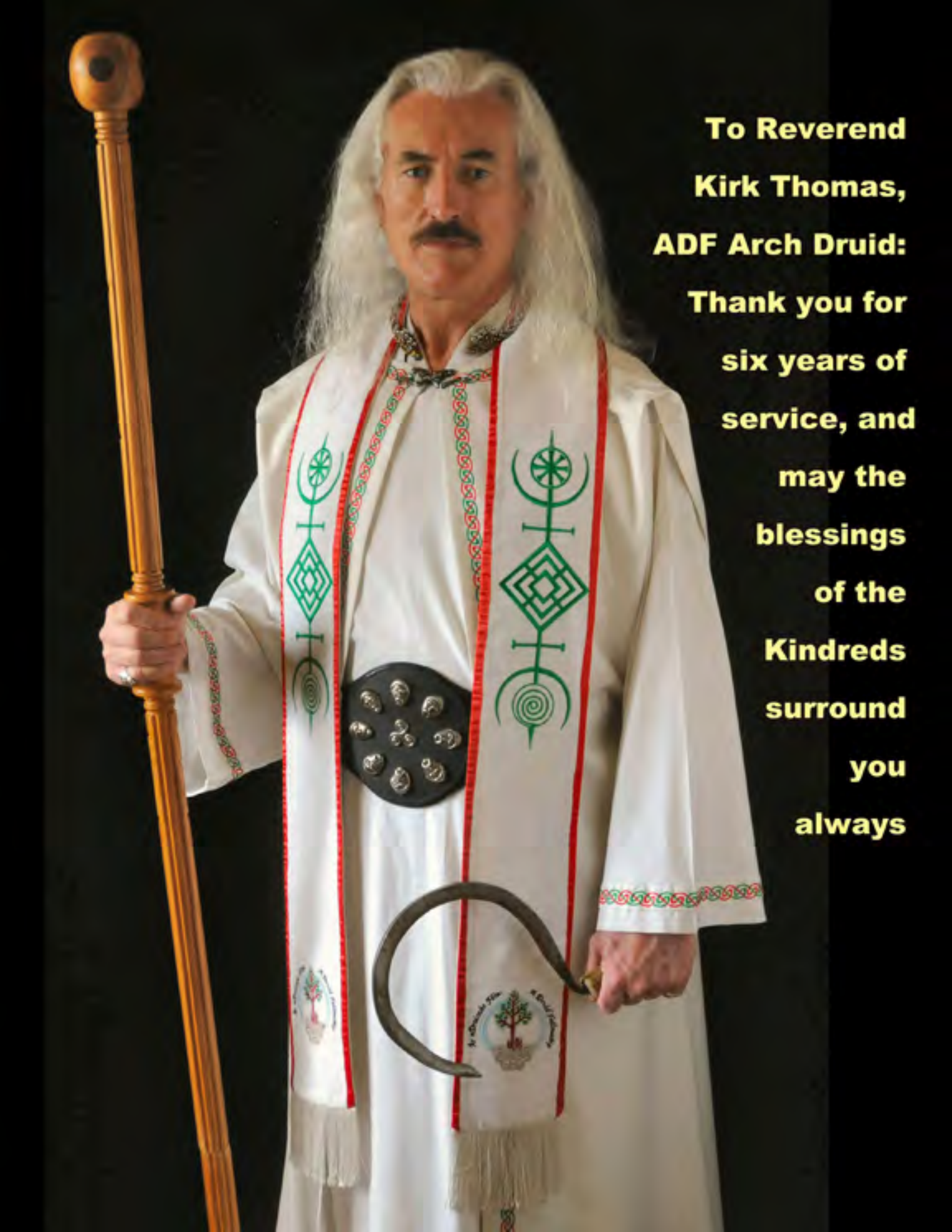


O A R L E A D E S

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin

Spring 2016 ~ Issue No. 72



A man with long white hair and a mustache, wearing a white ceremonial robe with green and red embroidery, holding a wooden staff and a curved blade. The robe features intricate green and red patterns, including a central diamond shape and a circular emblem at the bottom. He is standing against a dark background.

**To Reverend
Kirk Thomas,
ADF Arch Druid:
Thank you for
six years of
service, and
may the
blessings
of the
Kindreds
surround
you
always**



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OAK LEAVES

Spring 2016 • Issue 72

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Front Cover: "Awaken the Bear" by Chris Wityshyn. Awaken the Bear refers to the new beginning of spring. After months of dark and hibernation, bear awakens and becomes again the master of forests, mother of animals and the totem of spring. Acknowledge the spirit of the bear and glimpse a new beginning in your life!

Back Cover: "Tree on the Hill of Uisneach" by G. R. Grove.

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Change

This will be my last column for Oak Leaves as Archdruid of ADF. My successor, whoever it may be, will be writing their first Oak Leaves column for the next issue (Summer), and so I write this with both a sense of accomplishment and one of sadness.

Change always brings emotion along with it because all changes involve a loss of some kind, be they big or small. And loss brings on grief even if we're not aware of it. But change also brings us opportunities, for without changes of some kind how can there be the physical, mental, and emotional space needed within ourselves for new challenges and opportunities to occur? As a species we all fear change to some degree (and the older we get the less we seem to like it) but change is also the only thing in life that we can absolutely rely on happening.

Back in the day when Isaac Bonewits had to resign as Archdruid due to health reasons, there was serious and justifiable doubt that ADF could actually survive him. The successor Archdruid, Rev. Ian Corrigan, managed to pull together the first Archdruid election, and Rev. John 'Fox' Adelman, as the first elected Archdruid in our history, set the tone and began the process of consolidating our church into a strong and democratic institution. His successor, Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison, held the office for a full nine years, granting us stability and continuity.

Over the past six years I have been pleased to see support for our longevity through the creation of policies necessary for any successful non-profit organization, as well as the promotion of spiritual growth and experience for the members of ADF.

And now it will soon be time to hand over the reins to a new Archdruid. I have enjoyed working with so many talented people over the years and I fully intend to remain active in ADF as a priest and writer. I pray that the Kindreds will aid and support the person we elect, granting them wisdom, strength, joy, and peace as we all look forward to the next stage of our spiritual growth in ADF.

So be it!

*-Rev. Kirk S. Thomas
Archdruid, ADF*

The Relationship of Humankind to the Gods, Spirits and Outdwellers

By Rev. Carrion Mann

Our relationship with each of the three Kindred is reciprocal in nature and these reciprocal relationships have existed since ancient times. From Greek lore a relationship between humans and the Noble Ones or Noble Spirits can be identified in the worship of local nymphs. Nymphs are female beings associated with springs and other features of the world of nature, who are believed to have powers and knowledge localized to particular places that can benefit humankind. In addition their power and knowledge is believed to be superior to that of human beings and a relationship with them is therefore beneficial to our world and our lives. For some individuals in ancient Greek culture the worship of the local nymphs became their life's work and devotion. Archedamos of Thera was one such individual, whose life was dedicated to the local nymphs at the cave of Vari in Attica. He carved inscriptions into the wall of a cave explaining his devotion and planted and tended a garden, as well as improved the cave according to the will of the local nymphs he served. Upon his death this location became a place of pilgrimage (Greer 8).

For all human beings there is no denying the existence of those who have come before us both of blood and of spirit, our Ancestors. Everyone has them, but not all human beings continue to venerate and worship them or continue to call upon them for their wisdom in the reciprocal way that we do in ADF. From ancient times, "there are indications of a cult of the ancestors among both Irish and Scandinavians, but these are difficult to establish clearly" (Ellis Davidson, *Myths and Symbols* 127). Within both the Irish Celtic and Norse cultures ancestors of blood were venerated, as well as those of spirit in the form of cultural heroes such as Sigurd of the Volsungs and Cu Chulainn respectively. In many cases ancestors of spirit or cultural heroes attained god-like status. Graves were often revered as sacred places to attain wisdom and inspiration. Finally, traditions associated with the modern Neopagan high days of Samhain and Yule often stem directly from Ancestor veneration practices occurring within

these two cultures.

Human beings have had reciprocal relationships with the Deities since ancient times, providing offerings, sacrifice and devotion in an attempt to gain the favor and blessings of a particular God or Goddess. The Deities are more powerful and possess greater magical ability than humankind and have the ability to alter the course of events in our lives if it is their will. From ancient lore, "seafaring in antiquity was exposed to incalculable risks" and "offerings are made on embarking and on disembarking" (Burkert 266) to gain the favor of the God of the Sea. For the ancient Greeks this would have been Poseidon, and among the Norse, the sea god, Njord. The sea gods are most likely to have received the sacrifices and offerings of people that traveled the ancient seas. According to Burkert, Poseidon is described in Homer's *Illiad* as the ultimate power of the sea. "The sea opens up joyfully in his path, and the sea beasts, the monsters of the deep, come and play beneath him in the water: they know their master" (Burkert 137). From the preceding example, the power possessed by Poseidon is evident, and as an ancient traveler of the sea it is easy to see how his favor would be critical to an individual's continued existence.

As human beings we identify, acknowledge and should respect those beings in our cosmos which stand outside what we have determined to be our shared worldview, the Outdwellers. In ADF, relationships with these beings vary widely from no relationship at all, to calling them into our workings, a practice of which I am not in favor, incidentally. These beings have their purpose and their function and just because in a particular religious observance they don't happen to support what we do and in some cases are opposed to what we are doing, this does not make them any less important to maintaining balance in our cosmos. For the Norse and Irish Celtic cultures it is remarkably easy to identify within the mythology of both of these pantheons beings described as "those

older Gods or tribes that fought against our Gods” (Ellison 91). In an Irish Celtic context from the *Book of Invasions* we find two groups of Gods that stood against the Tuatha De Danann as they invaded Ireland, the Fir Bolg and Fomorians (Green 130). Within the Norse culture the Aesir battle throughout the mythology with Outdweller beings among the pantheon including Loki and his horde, Fenrir, Jormungand and Hel, as well as etins, trolls and the frost giants. Early in the mythology the Vanir, or Deities of the Land, could have been considered Outdwellers prior to their assimilation into the cosmos of the Aesir.

In conclusion, we seek, as our ancestors once did, to understand and acknowledge those who stand outside our cosmos and build relationships with the beings from among the three Kindreds, based upon reciprocity to strengthen our work, our world, and our lives.

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Rev. Carrion Mann is an ADF Senior Priest and the Senior Druid and Chief Liturgist of Whispering Lake Grove. She has been a member of ADF since 2001 and is currently the ADF Preceptor and a Non-Officer Director on the ADF Mother Grove. Additionally, she is one of the coordinators of Summerland Festival and the Leader of the ADF Order of the Dead.



This Morning I Spun

By Christina Marvel

This morning I spun
In the quiet, with tea
And morning birds.
I hooked roving to spindle
Pinched and set wool
Rolled and twisted
The soft cloud
Into usable
Knittable thread.

This morning I spun
And I thought
About fate and potential:
How the roving
Was chaos
The spindle, intent
And the final thread
Our actions -
Choices in this world
Of men.

This morning I spun
And the soft wool
Healed me
As I could hear
The clacking of old
Gods spinning
The webs of fates
As I was spinning
My own thoughts.

This morning I spun
Reflecting back
On choices made
Alliances formed
And severed.
Weaving and Unweaving
We choose the nature
Of our own threads.

This morning I spun
and
This morning I spun
my own heart.

Connecting with the Land Spirits

By Kevin Jenkins (*Arth yn Rbedeg*)

This article is based on a presentation given at Chokecherry Grove's Colorado Retreat on October 10, 2015.

Before going forward, I want to say that what I am about to share with you comes strictly from personal experience. As I will elaborate a bit later, I was not taught by some school of thought or some New Age book. I was taught by the example of an individual's tradition and given the chance to learn by doing. No theory in the classroom, followed by practicum and verbatim. It was simply show and follow. Not unlike Yoda's "Do or do not". This has been a gift and a difficulty in preparing this presentation. As such I have tried to organize the ideas, and concepts, in a systematic fashion that can be shared with others in today's context.

I have broken the process down into four pieces, which I will call The Four Permissions.

The Four Permissions are:

- Permission to connect with the Land Spirits.
- Permission to suspend disbelief.
- Permission to see the world through the eyes of a child.
- Permission of the Land Spirits - Acceptance

Before we can connect with the Land Spirits we must give ourselves permission to do so. It may sound strange that we have to do this but before we can step into a new or unfamiliar world we must first have permission. Think about it. Everything we do in life, whether directly or tacitly, begins with permission. Every milestone in life has this element. Before you could ride your bike outside of mom's gaze you had to ask permission. Before you could get your driver's license you had to get your parents' permission. Before you could legally drink alcohol you needed permission. We call that permission, a law. Before you made love, for the first time, you needed your partner's permission. Each new skill, each new milestone has an element of permission to it.

Therefore, in order to connect with the Land Spirits, you need to give yourself permission to do just that.

The Second Permission is to suspend disbelief.

Your own experience may have taught you this important truth about what we learn as children. And if you are so blessed, you are already on your way to connecting with the Land Spirits. The vast majority of what we learn as children is not reading, writing, and arithmetic. It's not "the sky is blue and the moon is not made out of cheese". It's not that things that go up must come down. Oh, no my friends. The vast majority of what we learn as children is not what to believe, but is in fact what not to believe.

Think about it... pretend, make believe, imagination; these are words we mostly reserve for children. When a child has an imaginary friend we know they are making it up; but are they? We know they will grow out of it; but will they? Should they?

I would like to pose you a question. Do children really outgrow such silly things, or do we teach them what to disbelieve, so thoroughly that they lose the precious ability to see a world made blind to adults through well-intentioned learning?

Many developmental psychologists believe that most of our childhood memories are lost to us because, as we mature, we process the world around us through an adult, more mature, perception. Could adult perception actually refer to the systematic loss of, or perhaps better, skewing of perception by changing the very foundation of perceived reality? If much of what I know as a child, what to believe and what not to believe, is skewed through learning, it's no wonder we can have trouble connecting to the Land Spirits.

So the Second Permission is to suspend disbelief. Much of what you will gain, in connecting with the Land Spirits, will violate accepted “grown up rules”.

The Third Permission is predicated on the second. Give yourself permission to see the world through the eyes of a child.

Once you’ve suspended disbelief, you are well on your way to connecting to the Spirits of the Land. But, know this, once you begin to see the world through the eyes of a child you will begin to perceive things that fly in the face of what society says are real. This is where many travelers in this quest fail. The natural tendency for many is to take what they perceive and analyze it until it exists no more. The first time you reach the Second Permission you may hear or see or sense something that your “adult self” knows better than to believe. So, the learned tendency is to analyze it until you can explain it against the things you were taught, as a child, to disbelieve. After all, who wants to be labeled schizophrenic or delusional? When this happens, the wonderful experience you just had disappears in a puff of logic. Remember, the rules of logic are also set up against the principles of what is real and what is not. This renders even logic an unreliable method of measuring your experience. It’s very difficult, initially, to just experience and let it happen. If there is a profound meaning, your subconscious will figure it out. And remember, your subconscious is not fettered by such arbitrary things as logic. Therefore the subconscious can render the experience truly considered without prejudice. After a while, you will learn to again see the world through the eyes of a child.

Well, we’ve gone through the first three Permissions; now what?

Let’s save the Fourth Permission for a bit later. We need some practical application exercises to help us through the first three. The Fourth Permission will be like our graduate study.

How can we pass safely through the First Permission? How do you give yourself permission to connect with the Spirits of the Land? There are probably as many ways to achieve this as there are people, so I’ll share just one for now.

I have been fortunate. Through my early years I was taught lessons from the Native Peoples of this Land. Some of my father’s best friends growing up were Navajo. I learned many styles of Native American dance. My name was given by the Hopi. My arts were greatly influenced by the Pawnee, and my blood, be it small in percentage, comes from the Cherokee. As a youngster, I never tired of hearing the stories and legends, especially when told by an Elder, who would seem ancient to me at the time. These stories planted the seed of doubt in my mind when it comes to the idea of what is real and what is not. These lessons showed me that, in the class, there could be some things that are different from without the room. I learned that some answers that were correct in the classroom were sometimes different than what was correct when sitting in The Circle, listening to The Elders. This created that seed of doubt that I mentioned that allowed me, when I was ready, to experience those who live in, around, without and through nature itself.

So, I encourage those of you who have not done so, to plant that seed of doubt about reality. In this way, you’ll be ready to receive this most wonderful gift.

The First Permission, allowing yourself to connect to the Spirits of the Land, like all the others, is critical and can’t be overlooked if you wish to connect to our Land Kindred.

Remember this, connecting to the Land Spirits is a two-way street. Without giving yourself permission, the Land Spirits are unlikely to meet you in the middle. Connecting to the Spirits of the Land is not like opening a door, walking through, and you’re just there. Each Permission lowers an obstacle which demonstrates the intent of your heart and the Land Spirits will then choose to reach back. The best exercise I can suggest to accomplish this First Permission is to just sit and be.

Whether we live in a concrete jungle or out in the country we can find nature; it can be the forest behind your house, the garden you so lovingly tend, a neighborhood park, a number of potted plants on your balcony, or a quiet corner of your front or

back yard. Go there and just be. Sit comfortably and do nothing, say nothing, think nothing. It is meditation at its purest. If a thought comes to mind, let it pass, unmolested. If a vision comes, watch, let it pass, but don't consider its meaning, After all, in light of what we're trying to achieve here, its meaning is truly irrelevant. This exercise isn't just to center you, but more importantly to demonstrate that you can be present without trying to analyze everything. It shows that you can become nature without all those pesky, preconceived ideas getting in the way.

Now, you've sat, you've been, and you've done nothing. It's time to move on to the Second Permission.

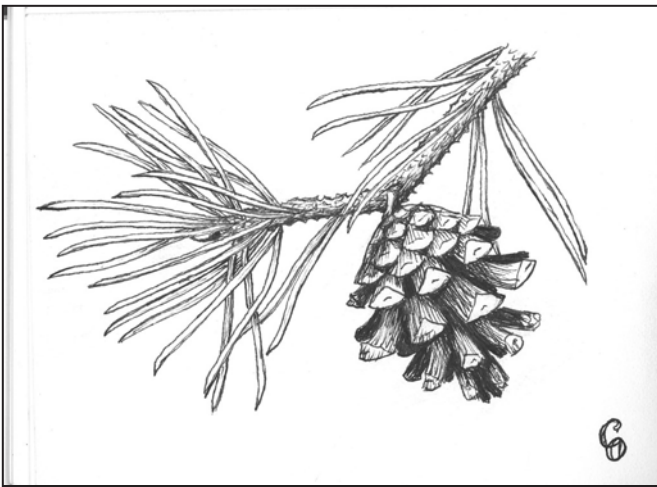
At this point, I will mention that you may have already felt the presence of the Land Kin. Just sitting, in the quiet place you did in the First Permission, is a curious thing indeed. Many of

the Land Kin are curious by nature; if you'll excuse the pun. They may have already come closer to you out of simple curiosity. They may already be asking, "What is this two-legger up to?"

Now the Second Permission - Suspend Disbelief.

In your quiet place, give yourself permission to accept everything at face value. No matter how absurd it may seem to you in the moment, do not let yourself be caught up by the temptation to analyze anything. Think about it like this, admittedly absurd, analogy. I am a Land Spirit, proudly driving my new Lexus, and I allow you to see this. Now, I would be greatly offended if the "human" discounted my new, prized possession, just because Land Spirits don't drive cars. (By the way, they don't.) Remember, the Land Spirits choose whether or not to share their world. Disbelief therefore is tantamount to denying their reality. If you deny my reality, I sure as all get out won't want to share it with you. Take what you





see, hear, smell, taste, feel or experience at face value and do not analyze its relevance to anything. Also, understand that you may perceive things that don't fit into our anthropomorphic understanding of the world. I will tell you, some things that walk in nature do not directly walk in the mundane world.

Doing all this shows the Land Kin that you are sincere in what you are doing. They will understand that you are not judging their world by the standards of your own. This, taking things at face value, will lead you to the next Permission and it's the most difficult of all the Permissions.

The Third Permission - See the World through the Eyes of a Child.

Now, why do you suppose I said this is the most difficult of the Four Permissions?

First of all, some might say that it would seem that the Second and Third Permission were pretty much the same. I mean, isn't suspending disbelief the same as seeing the world through the eyes of a child? Actually, they are distinctly different from one another. In fact, one thing you cannot do is move to the Third Permission without first mastering the second. Here's the difference.

To suspend disbelief implies that we believe and make no differentiation between real and not real; we recognize no specific relationships; we have no expectations. When we suspend disbelief everything is right.....or not. Now think about this a moment. In its purest form, the suspension of disbelief also means not having any relational or

structural ideas working on anything. This is a fairly decent definition of Chaos.

So, how does seeing the world through the eyes of a child differ and keep this chaos in check? After all, doesn't seeing the world like a child imply everything's good and correct? This is where many miss the meaning of child-sight. Children don't just arbitrarily "make stuff up". What they have though is the freedom to make their own decision based on a framework where only the evidence prevails. Adults, on the other hand, have all their years of learning the social and personal prejudices of their family and society, as well as the occasional "just plain wrong information" they've picked throughout their life to use as their baseline to defining reality. Everyone in this room knows things, does things, or believes things they were taught growing up and never questioned or tested them. Even if we are presented with sound and logical information, we are hard pressed to accept an argument that doesn't fit our preconceived concepts surrounding reality. Going beyond this is the crux of the Third Permission. Because a child's interpretation is not fettered by this "baggage," they are free to experience all things in the light of their own context. Let me share another analogy with you.



Today, I stand on Mars and look through a telescope and see Earth. Now my disbelief in Earth has been suspended.

Looking at Earth, I know that the blue stuff can't be water. After all, liquid water can't exist on a planetary surface. (Remember, I live on Mars.) There can't be any oxygen because there are no signs of oxidation. (Remember, I live on a highly oxidized world, the red planet.) These are actually rational conclusions based on my disbelief that other planets can have different temperatures or that there are no non-red planets with oxygen. Martian children would believe that there is water on Earth because they see the blue. Martian children would think there is oxygen because they know that where there is water there is also oxygen. The Martian child's argument prevails, to us, because the child looked through their child's eyes and weighed their conclusion only on what they saw, not what someone told them they should or shouldn't see. Now, how can we apply this insight to our exercises?

First, sit and be. Second, suspend disbelief. Third, observe and understand.

At this point we simply see what we see and apply none of our references and beliefs to what we see. At first, this is nigh impossible. We naturally don't like not knowing how things are related, how they work with one another. But to take advantage of what we see we must do this. What this does is allow us to make new definitions and new understandings of the relationships. Eventually, you will perceive the reality as the Nature Kin know it. Eventually, you see the world as, I believe, you once saw it, as a child. From there, the final step is straightforward.

This is the easiest Permission you will experience. Why? Because you have to do nothing.

It's my belief that the Land Spirits can, to a great extent, keep their presence unknown. The Fourth Permission is given, not by yourself, but by the observed. Your sincerity has borne through and now those who once hid from you are pleased to be seen.

You now should realize that the "connecting with the Land Spirits" I'm sharing is beyond, and more,

than appreciating seeing a duck, bear, or moose. It's more than the awe and majesty that you see when looking at a canyon or towering peak. It's not walking with nature, it's walking within nature.

Personally, I do not believe that the Spirits of the Land live in a realm "beyond the veil," but that they actually live here, in the mundane world; perhaps beyond sight but not beyond the veil. Surprisingly, as you advance through the Four Permissions, you will gain the insight that all that you perceive lives right here, next to you. Side by side with all of us the Land Kin go about their day to day. This insight is the real gift. You once could see the Land Spirits and now you can see them again.

As a side note, sometimes accidents happen and, to paraphrase Bob Ross, these are "happy accidents". The accident I refer to is when the Land Kin realize you can see them and they didn't even realize they had even allowed that to happen. One final thought: The more you walk within nature, seeing and communicating with those who live beyond "grown up" sight, you will learn and see things that are beyond the capability of words to convey. However, they will be forever housed in the repositories of the heart, where all that is truly real resides.

May the gods bless your journey through the Four Permissions.

Kevin Jenkyns ("Arth yn Rhedeg") has been a member of ADF since 2012. He is sometimes referred to by friends as the 'Walker Between Worlds' due to his ability to be accepted into sacred Rituals and Ceremonies across belief systems and cultures. Kevin holds an ordination from the Universal Life Seminary and a certificate of completion from the Theological Education Institute of Colorado. He is Tanist (Vice Senior Druid) of Chokecherry Grove, ADF.



Using Indic Texts to Reconstruct Indo-European Cultures: Issues and Methodologies

By *Vedarion*

This is the first in a planned series of articles aimed at a general audience which discusses some issues in Indo-European (IE) studies. Because my specialty is the South Asian branch of the IE language family, many of the articles will be from that perspective, although some of the articles will likely focus on other groups. As a result, much of the material may be of interest to those with a purely Indic, or South Asian, perspective as well.

This article in particular introduces the difficulties in reconstructing Indo-European cultures using the extant documents. It suggests that Indic texts might provide valuable cross-cultural insights, due both to the size of the corpus and the long time period that it has existed. The article then investigates select methodological concerns using Indic texts as examples.

Tools for Reconstructing Indo-European Cultures

One of the difficulties in reconstructing Indo-European (IE) cultures is the scarcity of data. Although the Proto-Indo-Europeans (PIE) are considered to have started diverging anywhere from the 7th millennium BCE (Renfrew) to the 4th millennium BCE (Gimbutas), the earliest significant textual evidence is not found until around the 19th century BCE and much of this is unclear in meaning.[1] Most importantly, many of the important members of the language family are attested only from a much later date, for example, Celtic, Germanic, Baltic and Slavic only appear well over 2000 years later.

In addition, some of these late texts, which ostensibly reflect pagan society, were recorded under the influence of Christian missionaries. As the history of Christian polemics has shown, many writers did not accurately represent the teachings of even their fellow Christians with whom they disagreed

(Ehrman), much less their pagan forebears (Fox). Even in Ireland and Wales, where the recorders of the texts were more sympathetic than in many other places in Christendom, there is evidence of priestly editing. Take, for example, the Irish Book of Invasions, or *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, which purports to tell the very early history and mythology of the pre-Christian Irish. It begins, not with the Druidic cosmology, but with the Judeo-Christian Creation Story, the Fall of Man, the Flood, etc. Similarly, the Welsh *Mabinogion* includes as one of its characters an archbishop, who would presumably have been an archdruid in the original telling.

Are there any other tools that might help us better understand these important pre-Christian Indo-European cultures? One important tool is archaeology; another is linguistics. But, as Indologist Michael Witzel points out: "pots don't speak." (The Home of the Aryans 7) And, we might add: syntax doesn't sing the blues. There is a limited amount of information, albeit important, that we can glean from these sources about the lives and beliefs of the IE people.[2] Archaeology quite often cannot even identify which language was spoken – that has to come from a comparison with other evidence; and a linguistic analysis alone rarely makes the hopes, fears and loves of the speakers come alive. Better at this is comparative mythology which was pioneered by Georges Dumézil, and who was followed by such scholars as Jaan Puhvel and popularized by Joseph Campbell. But, as we have seen, very little of the mythology has been preserved, and almost none of it in an unedited form.

There is yet another field, related to comparative mythology, which we might call comparative textual studies, or perhaps comparative textual anthropology (Tatlow). It involves studying the texts of different groups of Indo-Europeans in order to try and fill in some of the gaps. It is widely known, especially through the work of Dumézil, Puhvel and others, that the Indo-Europeans show not just remarkable linguistic similarities. They share signifi-

cant cultural similarities as well, especially given the very long separations in both time and distance from Neolithic India to early medieval Ireland, for example.

Of course, as has been pointed out in critiques of Dumézil and his followers (Palmer 10-16; Thapar 99; Brough; Littleton[3]), we must be careful to distinguish between what was truly Indo-European and what is simply parallel development that is to be expected by any culture with a similar level of material culture, in this case the Neolithic and Early Iron Ages. Yet even data from non-IE cultures with similar levels of cultural development may give insight into IE cultural processes.

Above all, one branch of Indo-European literature shows great promise in allowing us to reconstruct Indo-European culture: the Indic[4] texts of South Asia which are members of the Indo-Aryan (IA) subgroup which are, in turn, part of the larger Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family. These texts are among the very earliest among the Indo-European corpus, if the words 'text' and 'literature' are the proper terms for what was an oral tradition for much of its history (Ong). The Rig Veda dates from at least 1700-1500 BCE, and it is claimed that parts of it are even older (Jamison and Witzel 6, fn. 8)[5], dating back to the Indo-Aryan sojourn in Central Asia before they entered South Asia.[6]

What is remarkable about the Indo-Aryan material is not only its antiquity, but how extensive and relatively complete it is. While hardly encyclopedic, compared to other IE groups it portrays a multifaceted picture of the society at the time – as long as one was a male belonging to the upper classes. The longest text is the Mahabharata which contains over 100,000 couplets, or approximately 10 volumes, making it about ten times longer than the Homeric Iliad and Odyssey combined. One web page (GRETEL) lists over 1000 online documents in the ancient Indo-Aryan corpus [7] with a wide range of dates, many of them older than the Homeric Greek material and almost all of them older than the extant Germanic myths.

Central to this approach is the continuity of the Indo-Aryans (Jamison and Witzel, 3 fn. 4; Gonda Change and Continuity in Indian Religion). Modern North Indians still speak IA languages so we

find an unbroken tradition of three to four millennia. There is a clear and gradual transition, well-documented in both the texts and archaeological record (Singh; Doniger), stretching from Vedic times, perhaps beginning around 1700-1500 BCE, to the Hindu period, which might be said to begin around 500 BCE (Jamison and Witzel 2), and on into the modern age. There was, of course, significant diversity in South Asian thought, and many heterodox groups arose, including Buddhists and Jains, but the core Indic pattern continued unbroken. Even many of the divergent tendencies remained well within a recognizably Indo-Aryan pattern.

Methodological Issues

There are certain issues in textual studies that need to be mentioned. Many of these will be applicable to all of the IE cultures, whereas others might be specific to the Indo-Aryans. Some of these require an essay of their own to do them justice, and will be treated in greater depth in future publications.

First of all, because of the large separation in time and distance between these cultures, the correspondences will not be exact. Discrimination must be used. At the same time, a certain symbolic sensitivity must be shown. Discrimination can prevent making sloppy identifications between cultures where no true connection existed. Symbolic sensitivity, however, such as that shown by scholars like Puhvel, allows us to tease out valid connections that may not be obvious by just a surface reading.

Secondly, these texts are incomplete in many ways, so they do not give an exact picture of their societies (Gonda Change and Continuity in Indian Religion 199-200, 206, 349). Starting with the Rig Veda, it must be borne in mind that most of these are priestly texts (Thapar 82). In addition, they were preserved orally for many centuries before being written down. There would have been other traditions that were not preserved because they were not deemed crucial by the Brahmin intelligentsia (Rocher; Kane; Gonda History of Vedic Literature (Samhitas and Brahmanas), Gonda The Ritual Sutras). Tradition states that there were 21 main versions of the Rig Veda (Deussen).[8] Only one, and part of another, have been preserved. We have evidence that there were variations, now since lost,

even within the one version that remains (Gonda The Ritual Sutras 576). There were said to be hundreds of branches of Sama Veda but only two survive (Gonda History of Vedic Literature (Samhitas and Brahmanas) 313, 319, 321, 322).

The documents that still survive reflect primarily the concerns of higher class males – the kings and priests who were tasked with running society. As we have seen, a very large percentage of even the Brahminical texts have been lost or destroyed, so there may have been many important alternative priestly/kingly teachings that were not preserved. Other groups such as women, ascetics, the trading and laboring classes, etc. are hardly mentioned at all. In fact, one might say the history of Indic literature is, in part, a record of increased recognition of the other parts of society. To illustrate some of these points we'll look at two examples: ascetics and women.

The Rig Veda contains 1028 hymns making it about as long as the Bible. But it mentions ascetics only in passing, e.g. Rig Veda 1.158.6, 10.72.7, 10.129.4-5 and especially 10.136 devoted to the Keshins. They probably lived on the fringes of society, in the forests and mountains, but they were held in awe even at this early date. These *munis* (silent sages) already show some of the signs by which they are still recognizable today: their transcendental wisdom (10.129.4), celibacy (10.129.5), and long matted locks; they may have been naked (*vātarasānāḥ*) or worn ochre or yellow (*piśāngā*) clothes, and reputedly had supernatural powers like the ability to fly through the air (10.136). By the time of the Upanishads they have often become the main characters.

Similarly with women: needless to say, in Rig Vedic times we would have found many women – all of those Vedic seers must have come from somewhere. But that is not evident if one judges only by how often they were mentioned. When we reach the period of the Upanishads, a few women sages are described.[9] In the later Ramayana, the heroine Sita, albeit subjected to the cultural limitations of women during the period when the text was compiled, is also a goddess-incarnate who can be viewed as pulling the strings to make everyone else dance to her tune (Doniger 229). By the medieval period you have Puranic texts that declare the goddess to be the supreme power over all the gods

(Vijnanananda; Doniger 371). Thus there is, over time, the emergence, or perhaps more accurately, the recognition of women as students and teachers of the Vedas, warriors,[10] and even sages. They had been there all along (Klostermaier 311ff.; Olivelle 184, 189; Kane 293-96). We will see woman sages and warrior queens again when we turn to the Irish and Welsh material, except, in this case, it is the Celts who have preserved what may have been the original freer status of women among the Indo-Europeans. The contributions from cross-textual studies do not always go in only one direction.

In fact, one is led to wonder if women may not have been even more widely represented in the Indo-Aryan teachings of the early oral period, perhaps having their own schools of thought. This is hinted at in the section of the Ramayana when Sita studies with Anasuya, the wife of the sage Atri. Anasuya was a miracle-working sage in her own right.[11] Ironically, we see an increasing mention of women in the texts around the same time as their social rights appear to be decreasing (Doniger 292-303). The evidence suggests that it was only later, in post-Vedic times, that women's freedoms began to be severely curtailed (Doniger 305). This process became even more extreme during the periods of Muslim and Christian invasions.

The early to middle Hindu period was marked by a conservative reaction. This was reflected in some of the shastra texts[12] and would have corresponded roughly to the time when writing became increasingly common. As a result, these female-oriented teachings were not recorded in writing and thus lost. This may have been true for lower classes and Aryan heterodoxies as well.

The transition from an oral to a literate tradition can have dramatic repercussions (Ong). The attested date of a text generally refers to its final compilation. Many of these texts were not simple compositions, however. Studies of oral traditions, pioneered by Parry and Lord, originally on the Greek Homeric material, have shown that the final versions are often the work of many people adding to and amending the story. Sometimes, especially with regard to texts of great antiquity, this process went on for centuries. It is recognized, for example, that parts of the Atharva Veda, are actually older than parts of the Rig Veda (Michaels 56), although the Rig Veda is generally dated quite a bit earlier.

Thus, texts cannot accurately be spoken of as having a specific date: they are multilayered documents and scholars work diligently to tease out the different chronological layers in what may mistakenly appear, at first glance, to be a unified work (Hegarty).

One result of this is that even mainstream scholars often conflate, i.e. mistakenly combine, genre with chronology (Hock, *Chronology or Genre?*). Bloomfield observed that the difference between the hieratic and the popular hymns is not necessarily one of date, but also, or even largely, one of dialect, style or subject matter, and, we may add, of origin, i.e. the concerns of a particular social or religious group. Ignoring the layered nature of texts to focus on the whole may be fine if our concern is dating the final redaction of texts or their impact on society in the periods after the texts were finally compiled. But, in many cases, we are more interested in the knowledge contained within the texts across all periods of their development, and what they tell us about those societies, rather than just their final date. As Gonda (*Change and Continuity in Indian Religion* 350) observes: “One should not mistake the date of the codification for the age of ritual practices themselves.”

The Rig Veda, for example, contains hymns that may have been collected and organized with ritual in mind (Jamison and Witzel 30ff.) – the Sama and Yajur Vedas carry this even farther. But the use of the Rig Vedic hymns in rituals implies ritual practice, largely discussed in the Brahmana texts which are assigned a later date, and the Shrauta Sutras which are later still (Jamison and Witzel 5). It also implies a metaphysical understanding of the purpose of ritual, which is recorded in the Brahmanas and elaborated in the even later Upanishads (Jamison and Witzel 75; Hock, *An Early Upanishadic Reader*). There are, in fact, Upanishad-like speculations in the Rig Veda itself (e.g. 10.29; 10.90).

All of this would have been imbedded in a mythological worldview (Jamison and Witzel 52-62). The Rig Veda shows evidence of a well-developed mythology, although many of those myths are referred to only in passing in the Rig Veda, implying that the people of that time were well aware of them and only needed a brief mention to understand the context. Yet the mythology was only systematically collected more than a millennium after the Rig Veda, in texts like the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the

Puranas (Doniger 212, 370). By this time they had certainly changed significantly, although not enough to make them unrecognizable. This issue has been widely recognized (Parpola 58, 117; Winternitz 1: 394 ff.; Parpola “The pre-Vedic Indian Background of the Srauta Rituals”, “Interpreting the Indus Script”; Gonda *History of Vedic Literature (Samhitas and Brahmanas)* 1975:114-127,203, 206-219, 359, 384, 391, 393, 408), *The Ritual Sutras*; Rocher 97-99) but there is a need for further work to better understand these early influences.

Thus, when attempting to speak of the knowledge of a particular area it is not entirely accurate to speak of a Brahmana period or an Upanishadic period because even at the earliest dates there would have been oral traditions of proto-Brahmanas, proto-Upanishads, and Proto-Puranas that dealt with ritual practice, metaphysics and mythology, respectively.

While it might be objected that the Indo-Aryan texts evince numerous examples of modification through interaction with non-IE cultures, which they do, (Deshpande *Genesis of Rgvedic Retroflexion*; Vedic Aryans, non-Vedic Aryans, and non-Aryans; Witzel *Autochthonous Aryans?*) the same can be said of all of the IE material (Hock and Joseph 35-64). So that argument does not, in and of itself, invalidate the method. If we were to apply that criterion then we could use none of the Indo-European corpus! What is remarkable is that the Indo-Aryans have preserved evidence of this change as it occurred from a very early date all the way up to modern times (Hock and Joseph 60-61). In contrast, many of the other IE groups show only the relatively late final product of that long evolution. So by viewing the Indo-Aryan evolution, both on the level of content and of structure, [13] we may be able to better understand parallel processes that occurred in other places across the Indo-European world, and in other language families, as well.

In addition, the remarkable similarities between some of the later Indo-Aryan material and that of the other Indo-Europeans suggest that there may have been quite a bit of information from the Proto- or Early Indo-European periods that was transferred among the different groups of Indo-Europeans which is not directly reflected in the

earliest attested textual evidence.

In future articles we will examine the chronological evidence for the earliest dates of the various stages of development in the Indo-Aryan branch and compare them to the major subgroups of the larger Indo-European language family.

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- [1] Over 25,000 tablets were discovered in the 20th century at Bogazkoy. Beekes (21) says: "The script is a form of the Babylonian-Assyrian cuneiform. This causes many difficulties since it is a

syllabic script... it is not always clear what is intended.”

[2] Mallory is an excellent overview of the evidence from all of these fields, although I don't agree with some of his conclusions.

[3] Littleton, while critical of some of Dumézil's work, ultimately defended his approach, holding that, overall, it was still valid.

[4] It is still common for scholars of ancient South Asia, i.e. Indologists, to continue to use the words “India” and “Indic” to refer to the larger historical and cultural group although, in this post-colonial era, the term refers geographically to the modern states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and parts of Afghanistan, Burma and Tibet.

[5] Hock (*An Early Upanisadic Reader* 23) dates the Rig Veda at 2000-1000 BCE.

[6] There are also what we might call Hindu Neo-traditionalists (e.g. Talageri; Agarwal; Feuerstein, Kak and Frawley), and a few Western scholars like Elst, who suggest that the Vedas, and perhaps materials from other Indo-European groups, are not only much older, but perhaps originated in India. They claim they may date from the Pre-Harappan period. This debate can become quite heated at times. Two particularly balanced and in-depth discussions of the evidence are Bryant and Bryant and Patton.

[7] <http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil.htm> GRETEL lists about 1300 Sanskrit documents although the actual number of texts is slightly smaller because some of the texts are broken up into more than one document. There are also several hundred texts in later Indian languages, many of which are relevant to IE studies.

[8] Deussen (2) refers to the tradition that there were 21 schools of Rgveda, 1000 of the Samaveda, 109 of the Yajurveda and 50 of the Atharvaveda.

[9] Notably the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 2.4 on Maitreyi and 3.6 and 3.8 on Gargi.

[10] Vispala may be the first recorded warrior queen in the world (Rig Veda 1.112, 1.116-118, 10.39.) This is based on the medieval commentator Sayana (died 1387) and translator Griffith; also Klostermaier 311ff. Translator Geldner (1852-1929) interprets the name as referring to a horse.

[11] Ramayana, Book 2 (Ayodhya Kanda), sections (Sargas) 116-117.

[12] A future article will have further discussion of these texts.

[13] (Hock “Philology and the Historical Interpre-

tation of the Vedic Texts” 303) points out that some might question the validity of using the Vedic texts in a historical context because they are said to be *apaurusheya*, or uncreated by humans, and, thus, beyond time. It should be pointed out, however, that from early times there has been the concept of at least three valid levels of interpretation:

adhyatma, *adhidaiva*, and *adhibhauta/adhiyajna* (Holdrege 352-353). The modern teacher Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has given the concepts renewed emphasis although he called them, respectively, *rishi*, *devata* and *chandas* (Maharishi 1985). In addition, a three-fold understanding of the universe, although perhaps not this exact interpretive schema, is found as early as the hymns of the Rig Veda.

Thus, while the concept of *apaurusheya* is applicable from the *adhyatma* perspective, that does not invalidate the more mundane *adhibhauta* level of interpretation, even for traditionalists.

Link to website containing this article: <https://sites.google.com/site/indoeuropean3102/home/using-indic-texts>

Vedarión has studied paganism since his youth over 40 years ago. This included Eastern paganism as well as Western. He has a doctorate in Indology (the scholarly study of ancient South Asia) and has lived and worked, off and on, in India for decades.



From Shards, Arise

By Rev. Jean Pagano

The knowledge of Hittite texts,
Rituals and lore,
Found in scattered piles of clay,
Broken shards of wisdom,
Old,
Scattered,
Waiting,
For a hand to gather them,
Assemble them,
Into a cohesive whole.

Cuneiform-like script,
Thought and expression
Gathered in a special way,
Almost like a painting of
Lines and marks;
Words as art,
Art as meaning,
Meaning brought across
The many years.

My mind's wandered from
The task at hand,
To clouds assembled in the sky,
Light,
White,
Cuneiform-like images,
Thought and expression,
Gathered in a special way,
Carried by the wind.

The Sun,
Crossed autumn-wise
Makes a strange angle in the
Solar dance of days
Shines upon those tablets
Still
Collected and waiting
For a guiding hand.

The Sun,
Just right an angle makes,
Illuminate those pieces
From Anatolia to my sky,
An ocean and a sea apart.

From shards, arise
And sends those fragments
To the sky
To tell a story,
Long past,
Now wind blown
And waiting
For decryption.



Two Family Prayers

By Traci Auerbach (Aka Ravenna)

Simple Family Morning Prayer

Kindred three, please come to me
as I begin my day.
May virtues reign and wisdom gain
And good fires light my way.

Simple Family Bedtime Prayer

Kindred three please come to me
as I lay down to sleep.
So rested mind and peace I find,
In guarded slumber deep.

Between Scylla and Charybdis

By David Fickett-Wilbar (*Ceisivw Serith*)

Next to pass were Scylla and Charybdis,
death-dealing guardians of the sea's passage.
The one a monster, Lamia's spawn,
whose triple-toothed jaws were eager to feast
on those who drew too near;
the other Charybdis, the whirlpool
which sucked down ships which came too close:
their fame so widespread, their danger so great,
that people would say "between Scylla and Charyb-
dis"
when they wished to speak of a choice to be made
between two things, each too much to bear.
And this was what lay before Odysseus and his
crew.
And the clever man, goddess-protected,
who sat in the stern, guiding the fleet wisely,
was left to decide, his men looking to him,
which danger to choose:
Whether, trusting to skill of sail and oar,
and a momentary lapse of the World-Shaker's
notice,
or a sudden release of the hate he held,
they could make their way through Charybdis' pull.
Or whether to challenge the man-eating monster
whose jaws closed tight on those who dared pass.
And so, knowing the hate of the Lord of the Sea,
he chose certain death for some
over possible destruction for all.
And Scylla struck, and drew Odysseus' men
into her open maw,
devouring all, leaving behind
not even their white bones to be gathered together
and reverently laid in their family tombs.
And the ships sailed on, with frantic rowing,
to escape the passage before the monster,
hunger sated, could strike again.
And reaching calm water, the men carried on
alive and grieving,
their deaths postponed,
if only for a while,
their lives prolonged,
if only for a time,
their fates still certain on their voyage home.

Dawn in the Clouds

By Rev. Jan Avende

The clouds lie thick and heavy across the land.
Wet and dark.
A glimpse of red fighting to break through:
Insistent. Perseverant.
Rising despite the darkness comes the Dawn.
Rays of rosy light striking through the clouds
Piercing the gloom.
Hopeful Dawn comes
Ever rising, ever resplendent,
Bright and beautiful behind the clouds.
Still there, breathing life into the world with her
radiance.
Burning away the gloom that seems it will never
leave.
Imperceptibly she lightens the clouds,
From grey to pink,
Caressing them to life, until suddenly
The sky is alight and singing new songs of hope.
Rekindle the light of the world, and be welcome,
ever-rising Dawn.

The Truth of Brigid

By Wayne Keyser

Each one of you is a child of imbas,
wreathed round in radiant flame,
hallowed by the hand of holy Brigid,
that worker of wisdom, that wellspring of poets,
see-er of the human spirit, not as the seers of the
broken world do,
as a crouching, cornered rat, cowering in the dark-
ness;
hidden in an abandoned alley, among discarded
condoms
and bloodied, broken needles, bearing the stains of
inconsolable anguish;
but as a falcon in flight, fierce and joyous
wings catching wind, wheeling above a distant
plain,
eyes alive with the hunt, exultant and free.

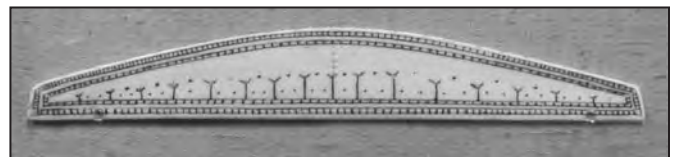
For like armorless Achilles, ablaze with divine fire,
 rising above Illium's ruined plane like a radiant bea-
 con,
 tearing a terrible, echoing shout from his trembling
 breast;
 it is a powerful, godlike gift, glorious to behold.
 And because none knows better the numinous
 contours of the human heart,
 she sends songs to stir the unconscious spirit,
 upending the illusion that all is inert and profane.
 For a teller of truths she is, terrible and bright,
 larger and loftier than the subtle lies told
 by gross annual income or academic transcripts,
 Awake! Awake! August and noble spirits.
 Let peals of purest music plunge liquid from your
 lips
 washing away a soul-weariness too small for you.
 Greatness is your gift, grandeur your inheritance.
 Yours is to laugh and love, and be loved in return;
 yours is to stand unafraid, and stare boldly into the
 future;
 yours is to dream and dare, and dream again.
 And when subtle, slippery despair, sickly and allur-
 ing,
 conspires to convince you that it cannot be,
 that all is empty, an inconsolable grief beyond
 speech;
 bright Brigid, beloved of dreamers,
 will whisper soft words, wondrous and gleaming,
 sweet syllables that will salve the wounds of cruel
 time;
 as delicate as daylilies, as demanding as thunder.
 And upon the hour of your ancient doom,
 when the clarion call of the mighty cannot be ig-
 nored,
 and the gray pilgrim's passage opens before you,
 perilous and dark,
 she shall walk there too, shining like the sun.



Inspiration

By Christina Marvel

Great Ecstatic One,
 You who burn with the fires of Wisdom
 Who drank deep from the well of Inspiration
 I give thanks to thee.
 You who roused the hearts of poets
 And cries of warriors, who sees all that was
 And what will become,
 I give thanks to thee.
 It is you who gives my artist's heart the fire of expe-
 rience
 And the surrender into the infinite.
 It is you who steals the cowardice that would
 Halt the works of my hands.
 It is you who loves amidst the madness of creativity
 And who challenges each of us to see
 All there is to see.
 You bid us drink deep from the well,
 For you know the battles of life will come
 And we all need to know what we are fighting for.



Dawn becomes Day

By Chelly Couvrette

With the light she does awaken us,
 Red horses draw her near,
 From the east she rides into our lives,
 Darkness hides in fear,
 Uṣas, the dawn, the bringer of day,
 You who draw Agni near,
 Light our lives, our hearts, our minds
 And turn the darkest nights to day.

Book Review: *The Seer in Ancient Greece*

By Ted P. Gilliland

The Seer in Ancient Greece

By Michael Attyah Flower

University of California Press, 2008

ISBN 978-0-25229-5

It wasn't my intention to write a book review when I first picked up *The Seer in Ancient Greece*. However, after reading through it I thought it an extensive study with Flower educating the reader with an in-depth look at the Greek seer, circa 800-300 BCE. This is a book that could easily find its place among the suggested reading lists of ADF.

As with most books of this genre (scholarly historical), the author begins with a summary of the common perceptions and misperceptions of what people think of as a seer, provides us with definitions for his translations of frequently used words, and gives us the basis for his sources. What I found refreshing was that this information, famous for being 'dry', is not. Flower has found a way to present it so as to captivate the reader.

Continuing this style throughout the book he paints for us a clear image of who the seer was, how he viewed himself, and how he was viewed by the general public. Also, a thorough understanding is given by the author of the place of the seer within the military, polis, and society. All this is supported by writings historical, epic, of tragedy, and of comedy; though the latter three may be considered fiction, it is used as a source because of the beliefs and views of the populace at that time.

The seer was not the only type of 'diviner' in ancient Greece, and Flower explains well the differences and commonalities of oracles, sorcerers, priests and begging priests, as well as their worth in Greek society. The author has also made it unquestionably clear that virtually no decision of any import was made without first consulting a diviner, be that a seer or an oracle.

Within the book he also addresses the integrity of

the seer, disbelief in the seer versus skepticism in the system (divination), avoiding bad omens, and the dangers of disregarding the omens.

Cross-cultural comparison of the seer is made by Flower, but only within the context of extispicy (divining entrails), and only to the Assyrians and Babylonians of the Near East. Personally I would like to have seen more comparisons to other Indo-European cultures. Be that as it may, whether this limitation is due to Plover's focus, design, or lack of sources is unknown, and is one of the few detracting elements of this book.

We are told that the many roles of the seer included the abilities for augury (bird sign), extispicy, understanding portents, and interpreting dreams. He was able to purify, capable of performing rites, and had many of the same functions as the priests. Flower touches on all these aspects, as well as



stating and defining 'natural' and 'artificial' divination. However, he seems to give the majority of the focus to extispicy and the seer's role in military service which, in my opinion, presents an unbalanced representation of the seer, removing some of the potential from this book.

One kernel of information I found illuminating and would like to share, was that several references are made as to the reliability of the omens. I find this interesting because Flower points out there was a common belief that just because a seer may have been 'wrong' in the interpretation of the divination it did not constitute fault or unreliability with the whole of the system, it was simply that the seer was not very good at his craft.

Overall this was a very informative book of high value and substance. It was well written and Flower does a good job of making it extremely readable for the average person. He does justice presenting the seer as he would have been seen by the peers of his own time, rather than by a historian looking to understand him in a modern context.

In the Preface to the book, Flower stated that the reason he decided to undertake this project was because he was convinced of a need for a book on Greek seers due to what he saw as a lack of scholarly representation of them. I don't disagree with his assessment. And, in my understanding, the image Flower portrays of the seer is based on solid research to enlighten today's reader on not only how the seer was perceived, but also insight into how divination was viewed as a whole.

This is the only book of its kind I have found, and though I have perused the bibliographies of other works on Hellenic culture, I ended up discovering this book elsewhere. Other than a short chapter on the role of the seer in Burkert's *Greek Religion*, I had no real understanding of who the seer was, what divination he performed, or his place in the community. The Seer in Ancient Greece has filled this gap in my education.

To conclude, I see this as an influential book that is well worth the read. I feel it would be a useful resource not only for those interested in Greek and Hellenic culture, but also to those in the Seer's Guild and to ADF members in general.



Pick it up for yourself, you won't be disappointed.

Ted P. Gilliland has been a practicing Pagan (of the Wiccan variety) since 1998, but has recently change his focus to Druidry. As a member of the Frog Stone Circle Prison Worship Group since November 2011 and ADF since January 2012, he has completed his DP, which was approved in June 2012. He has also complete the Seeker Path of the Demeter and Eleusinian Order (DEO). Currently, Ted is working on the GSP and the path of The Lesser Mysteries Initiate for DEO.



Developing a Roman Divinatory Set

By: Maria Stoy

While looking for a divination tool appropriate to rituals performed in the Roman Hearth culture that did not involve disembowelment, a grove member suggested we look into drawing lots. Instead of using a fixed symbol set, ancient Romans inscribed small pieces of wood or other materials with symbols relating to specific outcomes of the questions being asked. The lots were either cast into an urn of water, or tossed like dice.

Since the lots would be used in public ritual, we wanted to develop a closed set that would be appropriate for many different occasions. The first step was determining what symbols to use.

We started with a brain-storming session, tossing out words that came to mind when thinking of Roman history, art, and mythology. Once we had a list of ideas, we contemplated the images each word brought to us, and settled on twelve words for the initial set. We shared our thoughts and condensed them into a word or short phrase that contained the divinatory meaning of the image. "Aqueduct" brought images of technological advancement. "Wolf" brought blessings of nurturing, and "Salt" represented wealth.

For our first set of lots, we wrote the words with Sharpie on small, glass aquarium rocks. To take the omen, we dropped them into an urn of water and pulled them without peeking. Several seers worked with the set off and on for over a year, and used it successfully for public and private divinations.

We used them at Wellspring to take the omen for a small ritual performed at the Roman Kin meeting. Following that rite, several more images came to us and after reflection, we added those images to our set, bringing the number of lots to 16. On occasion we have added event-specific lots to the mix.

Soon after, we replaced the glass rocks with wooden disks. This added a new level to the

divination. Instead of blindly pulling a stone, we poured the disks into water and looked for disks that floated face up and for words covering other words as they floated.

We have been using this method of divination in rituals for several years and have found it to be successful. Developing our own divinatory tool based on an ancient method was challenging and it is exciting to see the method enlivened and functional in ritual.

Maria is currently the Bardic Guild Preceptor and Chieftain of Eldr ok Is: Kin of Fire and Ice. She is a member and former Senior Druid of Sassafras Grove in Pittsburgh. She continues to serve the grove as a liturgist and bard, and is working her way, slowly, through several ADF Study Programs.

Making the Effort: A Commentary on Study Programs

By D. Rowen Grove

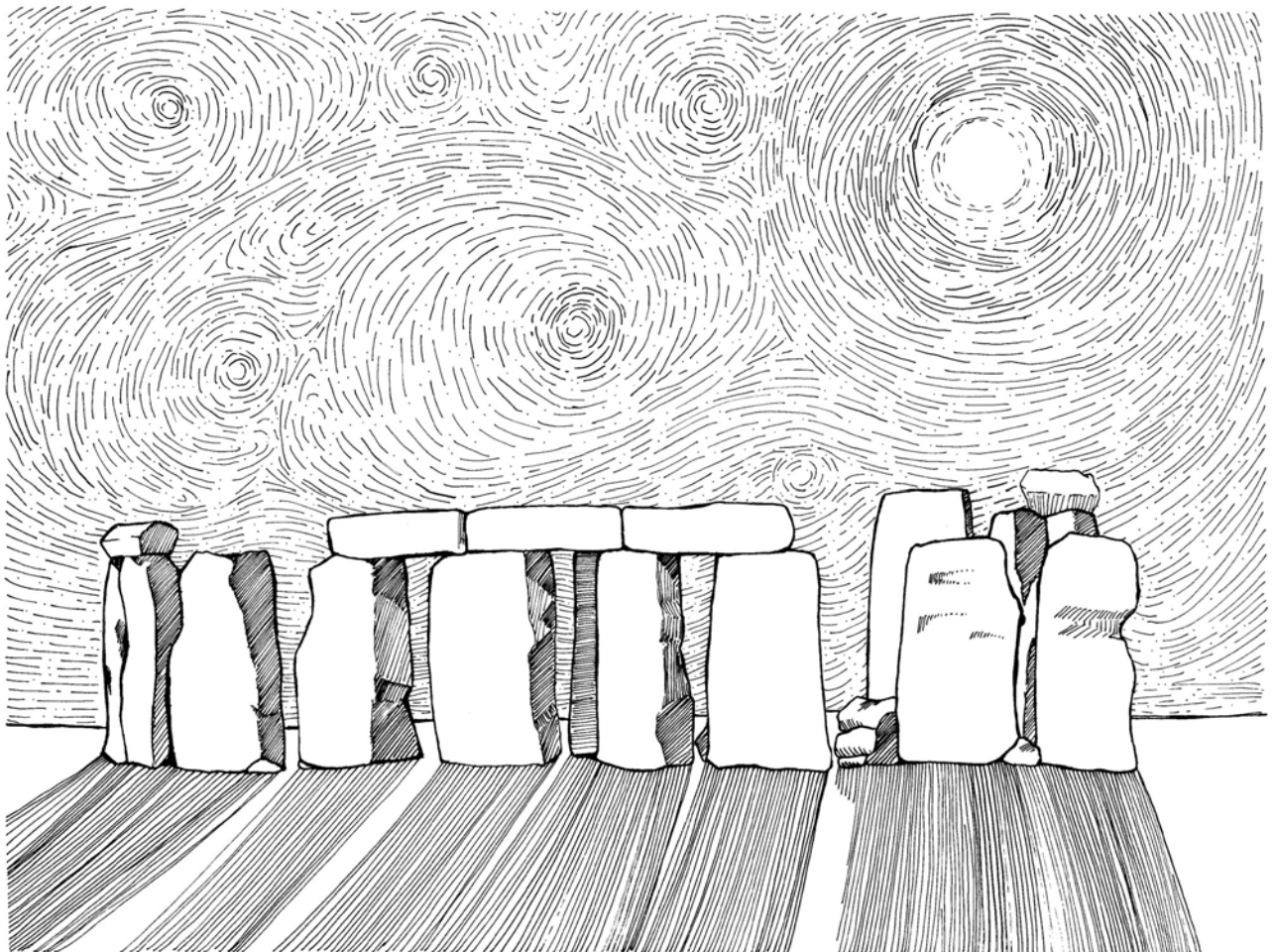
Now and again, someone expresses concerns that they found the ADF study programs inaccessible, whether for folk who had physical challenges, those who do not study alone well, or those who simply found the reading levels or questions required by some of the study programs too challenging. Is it good to make study programs accessible for those who live with ability-challenges? Of course; it is both fair and laudable to make a study program accessible in various ways, so that all those who wish to pursue it may do so. There are many computer programs, for example, which can read course material for the visually impaired, or those who more readily absorb information when presented aurally. Folk who do not study alone well can form discussion groups, or request mentors to aid them. However, to change the material of a study program to be "easier" for the sake of those who find the program as it stands more difficult than they wish to attempt, may be quite another matter. This notion concerns me in many ways.

Not all folk have the same talents; I will never be an athlete, nor the conductor of an orchestra. To

change the rules so that someone can “win” a competition or “complete” a study program with less work strikes me as if I were to demand that the organizers of a 5k marathon have a “special track” for me to walk half the distance, yet still claim to have completed the entire race. I believe that many would agree – although some, perhaps, would not – that for a judge to award, in an open arts competition, the prize to the less-skilled work of a relative novice specifically “to encourage them” would be to insult those who have put in the effort and work to strive for excellence. Nor, in the long run, would this aid the awarded novice, who would then find no reason to improve their technique. Neither would a university professor be inclined to award a passing grade to a student for merely showing up, and asking that their work be made easier. Universities do not, in general, make upper-division classes less complicated so that anyone who wishes can pass them with little effort. I would be thoroughly

puzzled if faced with an exam in calculus, or molecular biology; I have not studied those things, nor am I willing to expend the effort to do so. If I am *not* willing to expend said effort, to study, perhaps to first take and pass appropriate preliminary courses, with all the work that those entail, then I should hardly be surprised if I am not capable of passing such a course. So it is with some of the ADF study courses. They are not all easy. I do not believe that they were designed or intended to be easy, but rather to cause the student to think, and to learn, not least about themselves. And isn't that one of the things we're here for?

Rowen Grove joined ADF in the spring of 2010, and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She is an Initiate of ADF, chief of the Seers' Guild and preceptor of the Scholars' Guild, and has recently completed the coursework for the first circle of the CTP. Rowen is also a co-founder of Chokecherry Grove.



Christina Marvel

Jan's Little Room – Banishing Rites & the Druid's Gate

By Ian Corrigan

Ceremonial magic includes rituals of 'banishing and purification', intended to render a space claimed and made ready for holy work. These rites are often conceived of as methods of 'driving away ill spirits'. This can be especially so at the end of rites, when tradition teaches that various larvae and shades may have accumulated to seek the work's light. Ceremonial magicians are concerned to avoid intrusions by ill-spirits, and often live in a mythic cosmos populated by 'demons' who might choose to attach themselves and do ill to a magician or his environs.

When ceremonial magicians have looked at ADF rites there has occasionally been a concern that we do not banish at the end of the rites. There is no call to 'depart now to your own place', a custom that lingers even in Wiccan ritual. There is no 'banishing sign' used to shoo away the crowd of spirits. This has dismayed some magicians.

Why do we feel that we are safe and the work is well-done using the methods we do? I think it comes from several basic differences in emphasis



between traditional ceremonial magic (maybe as far back as proto-hermetic times) and a tribal, spiritist perspective.

1: The Worship Pact: The entire thrust of our rites (at least our religious rites, rather than magical rites with specific goal-effects) is to welcome all beings to receive their due offering with honor.

2: The Protections of *ghosti: (Can I capitalize that asterisk?) Since we do not divide the spirit world into Our side and Theirs, good spirits against evil ones, we expect all arrivals to abide by the peace of the holy place. Even ill-doers think twice before breaking guest-custom, and all the spirits that come are guests at our fires.



On a more technical level, I think that the Gate Opening & Closing is our equivalent of CM 'banishing' rites. However, it operates using a different metaphor. Rather than thinking of the Otherworld as identical with our perceived space, and 'clearing out' spirits from a perceived area of space, the Gate Opening opens a Way between two continuous realms. When that Gate is closed contact is not easy. When that Gate is opened the way is clear, and the spirits and mortals are visible to one another. We can quibble about whether and in what way the Gate spell is *required* in order for one to speak with the Gods and Spirits. However, in a technical ritual sense, the opening and closing is our equivalent of "Now we are open to communication" and "Now we intend communication to end". By closing the Gate we say to the spirits "you no longer have my permission to influence me". In other words, they have returned to their realms, full



of our offerings and with our thanks.

If there is an advantage to the Gate form, it might be that we are less likely to insult or offend spirits of place. To come into a place filled with spirits who precede the magician there and demand in the names of your God that all spirits depart, perhaps with implications of uncleanliness or other insult, is a good way to end up needing banishing rituals all the time after that. While we do some basic cleansing rites, and ask spirits specifically unfriendly to stand aside, we are mainly simply ‘turning on a light’ so that we may speak with the spirits. When we leave the place, we turn out the light and all the local wights are left in peace, with offerings to remember us by.

So that’s why I don’t worry when I don’t end even a serious conjuring rite with a banishing. I am an ally of the spirits, protected by my own familiars and by my own authority. That’s not to say that knowing a few charms for sending away spirits isn’t a useful thing, but I don’t think our Order of Ritual is lacking in good methods of keeping us safe.



Rev. Ian Corrigan is a Senior Priest of ADF, Archdruid Emeritus, and ADF Bard Laureate Emeritus. He is a constant presence in the festival scene and provides a great deal of scholarship and fun at any fire. His heart is as big as his laugh, and his love for the Earth Mother and the Land inspires the hearts of all who have chance to pray with the same fire.



Journey Song

By D. Rowen Grove

A few years back, a Heathen friend asked if I could come up with a song to sing someone into trance. I said “let me think about it,” and perhaps ten minutes later, this had appeared. There is, of course, a tune.

Forth through forest fare you on,
Harken to your journey song;
Wend by Well and by the Tree –
In the shadows wait the Three.

Field and fell and stream and sky,
Pass you onward, pass them by.
Frithful find before your feet
Pathway to the place you seek.

Forth through forest fare you on,
Harken to your journey song;
Wend by Well and by the Tree –
In the shadows wait the Three.

Weaving wyrd there, They will tell
Words of wisdom, heed them well!
Hence from where the great Tree stands,
Fare you forth to farther lands

Forth through forest fare you on,
Harken to your journey song;
Wend by Well and by the Tree –
In the shadows wait the Three.



Why the Tree?

By David Cranford

While working through the Clergy Training Program one of the requirements made me stop to think “*why?*” The specific requirement was in Liturgy 1 in the CTP-Preliminary course. It asks the student to “Discuss the significance of Fire and Water in ADF liturgy.” Why isn’t the Tree listed in this requirement? Does it not play the same significance as Fire and Water? The short answer is “No and Yes”. But...*why?*

In the Dedicants manual, the most basic Druidic ritual tools are listed. “Druid ritual, at its simplest, requires only a fire, a bowl of water, the Druid’s body, and the proper offerings to the spirits” (Ár nDraíocht Féin 53) All other things are, well, just beautiful dressings to please the senses of the Druid. But even the bowl of water is not a requirement within ADF ritual. But...*why?* First, if we look at the Core Order of Ritual, the only element that is listed as a “must” is Fire (3838). The reasoning behind this is that “Druidry is a fire religion” (Dangler). Fire is a central element in all cultures of humanity. It is the single most important elemental “tool” within the Druidic cosmology. It spans the three realms and into the three worlds. Rev. Dangler says it best: “Kindled on the earth, the fire’s flames leap into the atmosphere, and the pillar of smoke created supports the celestial realm” (Dangler). The heat radiates outward, upward, and down towards the Underworld. It is a transformative force which carries out offerings to the Kindred. More importantly Fire is a metaphor for the work which the Druid priest performs. It calls the Kindred to the sacred place. It transmutes the offerings into pure energy, which makes these offerings tangible to them, and does all this naturally as part of its very nature.

Water is no less prevalent within the world’s symbolism. Water has always been seen as a force for change. It has the ability to break down walls and to reshape the land. Water was also seen as a purifier to the land as well as the soul. It is also seen as the life blood of the Earth. The waters fill the well, which is the foundation of the Tree. But Water was



also seen as a gateway, just as Fire was, into the other realms of existence. Many times Water was seen as the entryway into the Underworld, into the realm of the dead. Through the link of Water with the Underworld it also gains the property of being a symbol of rebirth, or reincarnation, which in turn becomes a symbol of the Well (Corrigan).

Within ADF these two common symbols can be seen as a part of the Three Hallows. Fire is the gateway and symbol of the gods and the Upperworld. It is the receptacle for offerings to many of the great Shining Ones. Water is seen in the form of the Well in ADF rituals. The Well is connected with the Underworld and the Ancestors. Just as in ancient times, the Fire and Well are significant in our ADF rituals as gateways to reach the Kindred. As both are seen as existing separate from our own, “*How do we reach them?*” We do not actually physically climb a tree as part of our rituals, though

one surely could, much like ancient Pagans climbed mountains to reach temples for the gods that resided in the Upperworld. Or we could descend into a cave to perform rituals and offerings for those of the Underworld.

Then, *why* the Tree? Not all Indo-European nations used the Tree as their central *axis mundi*. Some, such as the Hellenics, used things such as mountains, caves, and even the omphalos stone (also known as the navel stone of the world). What function does the Tree serve in ADF Ritual? Though views varied from culture to culture among the ancient Indo-Europeans on what the importance of the Tree was, there was very little variation on the fact that the Tree was held as sacred. From the Celtic Druids to the Priesthoods of the Greeks, Trees were symbols of gifts from the gods and revered as the very symbol of nature (Burkert 39). Today the Tree holds a great many purposes within ADF. It is our symbol for the Nature Spirits. Though in many cases there is no need for a gateway to reach Nature Spirits, the Tree is still seen as the gateway to connect with them. Also the sacred Tree symbolizes the path between the Three Realms. Its roots reach deep into the Underworld while its branches reach towards the heavens giving us a path to the Upper World. The trunk grows stoutly here in the Middle World, the realm of mortals, Nature Spirits, and the earth deities (Corrigan).

So we have a why, but *why* is it *not* required? In the Vedic culture there is not much in the way of the *axis mundi*...or is there? Perhaps it is their lack of a *physical axis mundi* that gives us the answer. I believe that this has to do with the Druid him or herself. As discussed, the Dedicants Manual states that the "... Druid's body..." is required. And *that* is the answer to *why not*. The Tree serves as the pathway that extends to the Upperworld and the Underworld. It is our portal to travel to and from these realms. But when we look deeper at the meaning of the Tree you see that *we are* the Tree. It is through ourselves that we open this portal into the Otherworlds. The external use of a Tree is not much different than any other tool. It is there as a focal point. In the end we open the portals of travel within ourselves. Even our Two Power meditation walks us through visualizing *ourselves* as the Tree. Through this guided imagery we open the pathways within ourselves to tap the powers of the heavens and the powers of the waters deep within the



world.

So the next time you are planning or writing ritual, take a moment to think about your relevant use of the Tree. Is it serving more than just a focal point for you to access the Tree *within*?

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David Cranford has been a member of ADF since 2006. He completed the Dedicant Study Program in December of 2007, the Clergy Preliminary Program in 2014, and the Clergy first circle in 2015. He was ordained as an ADF Priest in August 2015.

Our Indo-European Roots: Why the Past Matters

By G. R. Grove

ADF stands for the Irish words “*Ár nDraíocht Féin*”, usually translated as “Our Own Druidry.” Despite this, our rituals celebrate hearth cultures spread across the whole Indo-European-language-speaking continuum, from Iceland to India. Based though we are in the modern Pagan community, we look back in many ways through five thousand years or more of history to our Proto-Indo-European roots. Are those roots pertinent to our spirituality today? I would answer “yes.”

I am, I hope, a bard in the Welsh tradition, which I have studied long. The fourteenth century *dwmed* (poetic grammar) of Einion Offeiriad (“Einion the Priest”) contains the following triad: “*Tri pheth a beir y gerdanwr uot yn ayl: kyfarnydyt ystoryaen, a bardoniaeth, a bengerd.*” In Rachel Bromwich’s translation (*Trioedd* lxxi) this runs: “Three things that give amplitude to a poet: knowledge of histories, the poetic art, and old verse.” In this quotation, Bromwich explains, the word “*ystoryaen*”, here translated as “histories”, is the nearest equivalent which exists in Welsh to the Irish term *seanchus*, and implies the whole body of a nation’s past records in oral form, including mythology and traditional history. If the bards (as many believe) were the inheritors of the Druidic traditions, then the same standards should apply to us as their joint inheritors. Whether or not we practice all that we can learn of those traditions – blood sacrifice, for example, is rather out of fashion – is our own choice, but it should be a choice made from knowledge, and not from ignorance. A group with the audacity to name itself after the Celtic priests of ancient Europe should needs be familiar with what lore exists about those times and that priesthood: our commitment to excellence demands of us no less.

That ancient lore, alas, is so fragile and fragmentary that on close examination it often crumbles to dust in our hands, like those votive offerings of wood or bone, which when taken from the bog where they were placed two millennia ago, cannot abide the light and air of our present, but shrivel away and

lose their shape and form. Escaping from the Christian order which has ruled our world for centuries, we Pagans must build our religion now anew from the stones of fallen temples, reordered in patterns which spring both from the past and from our present lives. We cannot know in full the thoughts and rituals of their ancient worshipers, yet some of what they knew – some spiritual essence – remains, I think, in those broken stones, those fragments of the past, to be called forth, if we have strength enough and skill, by our present-day





minds and magic. Our tastes and thoughts may be as different from theirs as our modern-day garb, but our bodies are made of the same earth, our eyes see by the same light, and our ears hear and apprehend like theirs the sounds made by voice or drum or horn. Fire warms and excites us as it did our ancestors, ice or water chills, darkness womb-like enfolds us or fills us with primal fears. Picking our way through the depths of time, with open eyes and ears and watchful mind, we can find unexpected treasures from the past and burnish them to serve our needs anew, regain old skills, and in this way reclaim – if not all that we’ve lost – yet something still of our heritage, and make it now our own, rebuild and raise our voices to our Gods – our ancient Gods – and singing, bring them home.

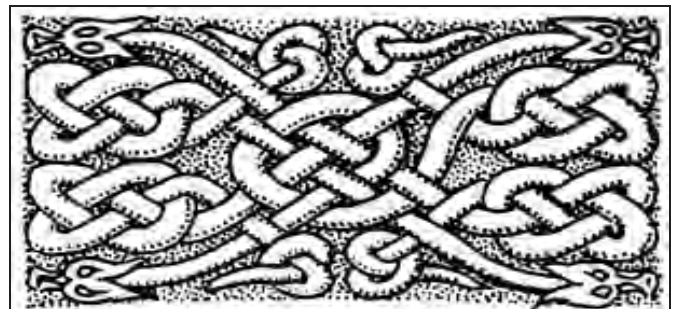
But are those Gods still there, in their worlds beyond our world, and if still there, will they hear and answer us? We cannot know, unless we call them by their names – the names, if possible, that our ancestors used – and listen for their answer. Here once again scholarship is called for, a sifting through old records and the remains of silent tongues – to quote a great modern Welsh bard, “*tafod neb ni eihw arnynt mwy*” (Williams *Waldo* 12). It is those lost or half-remembered languages “on which no one now calls” that carry the Indo-European traditions which have made us who and what we are today, and given us the inheritance we

will carry forward into our Pagan future. Let us study and honor them, and keep them as part of our practice, however difficult in our monoglot society this may be. Old Gods may learn new tongues, but I think they answer best to those they knew when they, and our world, were young. As the Irish storytellers say, *sin e*.

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G. R. Grove (Gwernin) joined ADF in 2009 and has been making her way through the study programs ever since. She completed the DP in 2012, the GSP in 2014, and the IP in 2015. In addition to being a poet and a novelist, she is also Chief of the Scholars Guild and the Welsh Kin, ADF's third Master Bard, and Senior Druid of Chokecherry Grove, ADF, in Denver, CO.



Bríghid Rises

By Slaine na Mailpe

Rise, Silver Moon...

Take your place on high, oh beauteous queen
among stars.

Command the waters, call forth the waves
and tell them they too must rise.

Rise, White Swan...

Spread your majestic wings, great Trumpeter, and
pierce the sky.

Return to the marshes, nurture your clutch
and tell them they too must rise.

Rise, Brown Hare...

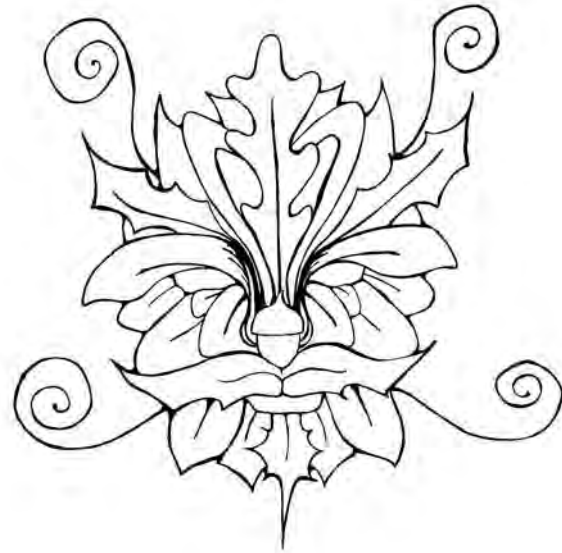
leap through the dry, night air in endless, powerful
bounds.

Whisper to the sages as you scatter the grasses
and tell them they too must rise.

Rise, Gold Flame...

dot the scattered hill-tops, fuel the forges, and warm
the hearths.

Comfort those who tend you and, as they keep their
watch,
tell them they too must rise.



Christina Marvel

She Stands

By Rev. Jean Pagano

Tall, in the tallest tree, she stands;
Dark against the night,
Dark that is the night,
She stands, balanced between the seasons.

Black, against a one-half moon, she stands;
Dark against the white,
Silhouette absorbing light,
She stands, balanced between the spheres.

As the old season slips away,
With its battles and losses,
With its lightness and love,
With its grey, indeterminate nature,
She devours it as it slips from time and memory.
By consuming all that is,
Regardless of value or purpose,
Satisfied,
She stands.

Black, against a starless sky, she stands;
The moon is consumed,
The stars are devoured,
She stands, blended into the darkness that is home.

Imbolc: Rhiannon

By G. R. Grove

On your white horse so slowly you rode,
yet none could catch you unless you so willed –
ambling along on the hot dusty road,
teasing the watchers upon their green hill.

One, then another, although they rode fast,
loud hoof-beats pounding along in your wake,
failed in your catching, until one who came
and begged you to stop for your true lover's sake.

He was the one – you had come for his finding,
making your plans, to implore him to wed,
and he agreed; then you promised him feasting
a year from that night, and your sweet bridal bed.

But though he had wisdom, and generous his
heart,
cleverness lacking, he almost lost you.
Quickly you thought, and you taught him his part,
to overcome ill, and to win you anew.

At last you were married; a son from your bed,
new-born and helpless, was snatched in the night.
Though others blamed you, your husband was true
and kept you his wife in his nobles' despite.

Long your false penance, but patient you sat
and bore it by bearing all comers; at last
your child was restored, and your suffering done:
Worry, you named him; your worry was past.

When your lord died, you sorrowed some while,
and worried anew when your son went to war;
but homeward he came, and forgetting the past,
you welcomed the new lord he brought to your
door.

Trouble and joy both before you still lay;
but this man, you found, would not bend to your
will.

Yet he was wiser, you learned, in his way
than the lord who first watched you atop his green
hill.

On your white horse so slowly you ride,
and always around you the song of your birds –
may my voice rise now as sweetly as theirs,
and long, O Rhiannon, your praises be heard!



The Cailleach of Spring

By Jennifer Seaton

As the Wheel of the Year turns once again,
The Cailleach takes on her renewed form.
No longer the hag cloaked in grey for winter,
Revelling in the seasons blistering storms;
She has shed the visage
that invokes witches of olde
And now appears as a goddess of spring,
With the beauty of the fearies.
A sister of the earth and wise women of the wheel,
She carries out her duties
with the grace of the earth mother.
She takes pride in the earth
which is where she dwells in all seasons.
She takes pride in knowing
that those who honour her also honour the earth
By cleaning up the mess left behind by others.
Through our acts of kindness
towards her sacred lands
She will hold us within her favour
And look favourably
upon us in the coming seasons.

Reading Anglo-Saxon Poetry Aloud

By Maria Stoy

Anglo-Saxon poetry was an oral tradition, so one of the best ways to experience it is to read it aloud. Gather a few like-minded friends who have an interest in the old stories, and set up a read-along.

The Anglo-Saxon Riddle Poems are short, fun, and a good place to start. Ask folks to bring along two or three they think are particularly interesting or entertaining to share with the group, or provide riddles for people to read aloud while the others try and guess the answer.

Longer poems can spark interesting discussions about the culture: Germanic hero imagery in “The Dream of the Rood”, a story of Christ's crucifixion; effects of abandonment on women in “The Wife's Lament”; or consequences of outlawry in “The Wanderer”. Christian images imposed on pre-Christian stories or Germanic ideals presented as Christian virtues can shed some light on the late Pagan/early Christian worldview of English culture.

For a longer piece, maybe one that continues over more than one meeting, “Beowulf” is the obvious choice. Take turns reading, switching after 20 lines or so.

To select a poem to read, look at various translations and decide which you prefer. Have different people read different translations of the same poem to get a feel for different styles. Keep in mind that even the Old English version of the poem is only the version that happened to be written down. The story itself would have differed with each performer and performance. For a piece like “Beowulf”, try switching translations every few stanzas. If you know someone who can read Old English, have them do that! If not, find an online recording of the piece you are reading and listen to it in the original language. Even if no one speaks or understands the language, you can still get a feel for the sounds and the rhythm.

Sharing this literature with friends should be fun!

Create a safe space where folks can share their love of poetry. Come with an open mind and patience. Not everyone reads aloud with the same skill or comfort. There are no microphones or spotlights. Instead of following along line by line, close your eyes and listen. Share mead, beer, or beverage of your choice and some snacks. Relax, listen, and let the poetry cast its spell.

Maria is currently the Bardic Guild Preceptor and Chieftain of Eldr ok Iss: Kin of Fire and Ice. She is a member and former Senior Druid of Sassafras Grove in Pittsburgh. She continues to serve the grove as a liturgist and bard, and is working her way, slowly, through several ADF Study Programs.

The Gates

By Chelby Couvrette

Logs lie together,
arranged and not tossed.
A spark lights the tinder,
a flame begins to roar.
The logs are engulfed
in the flames as they burn.
To lift our offerings to the kindred.
A gate to the gods.

A shaft into the earth,
the trickle of a spring comes forth.
Soon the shaft is filled,
with the waters from below.
The cool magnetic waters,
which sink down into the earth.
To take our offerings to the kindred.
A gate to the dead.

The tree stands tall,
at the centre of the worlds.
Roots in the underworld,
down in the earth.
Crown in the upper world,
up in the sky.
To let us travel to the lands of the Kindred.
A bridge between the worlds.

Molta Brìghde: Praises of Brìghid

By: D. Rowen Grove

The six volumes of Scots Gaelic poetry, hymns, prayers, and other lore generally known as Carmina Gadelica was collected in the late nineteenth century by Scottish folklore enthusiast Alexander Carmichael. This material was preserved in the oral tradition of a largely non-literate society, some of it (by internal evidence) for many generations.

This prayer was inspired by several prayers in a section of Volume III called “Achan nan Naomh”, or “The Supplication of the Saints”, particularly one prayer, “Banas Brìghde no Molta Brìghde”, “The Womanhood of Brigit or Praises of Brigit”. (Carmichael, 154-159) Many of the attributes I have listed for Her occur in this prayer; others, I have gleaned from mention of Her in prayers and blessings spread throughout the collection. As I have done with some of my magical workings, I have borrowed some of the structure and phrasing of the Scots Gaelic language.

Molta Brìghde: Praises of Brìghid

I praise You at morning, Lady of hearth-fire –
Brìghid of the peat-stack, of brewing and baking;
Keeper of wool-flocks, keeper of milk-kine
Brìghid of the calmness, Brìghid of the dawn.

I praise You at noon-tide, Lady of forge-fire
Brìghid of the strong hands, making and shaping
Forging of bard-craft, maker of song;
Brìghid of the working, Brìghid of the day.

I praise You in darkness, Lady of heart-fire
Brìghid of the healing, augury making,
Mantle-clad helper, twining of hair,
Brìghid of the shelter, Brìghid of the night.

By day and by night I praise You,
Brìghid of the triple flame,
Brìghid friend of women, Great Woman of
wisdom –



Be Your power of healing on me,
Be Your power of poetry in me,
Be Your power of shaping with me;
May your blessings be on me and mine,
In earth, sea and sky.

Reference cited:

Carmichael, Alexander, *Ortha Nan Gaidheal: Carmina Gadelica in English and Gaelic, Vol. III; Bilingual Edition*, Edinburgh, Floris Books, 2006. Print.

Ritual: Indra Wins the Waters

By Rev. Jan Avende

This playlet was written for the children's programming for Three Cranes Grove 2015 Spring Equinox Ritual honoring Indra. Lexile: 680L (late 3rd grade, early 4th grade reading level).

Cast::

OFFICIANT: The person who is doing the Return Flow portion of the Ritual

INDRA: The Vedic Storm God

VRTRA: The Dragon

CELEBRANTS: The folk at the ritual

STORM-BRINGERS: sounds of the storm (can be the same as the CELEBRANTS if needed)

Optional Cast:

DRAGONS: Vrtra's family

SACRED COWS: to represent the Waters and Blessings

following the Seer's pronouncement of a positive Omen

OFFICIANT: These are indeed good omens.

OFFICIANT: But you should know that until Indra won the Waters for us, we could not have received these blessings because Vrtra the Dragon hoarded them all for himself and his family.

OFFICIANT: Here is Vrtra now, and he is holding onto [omen], [omen], and [omen].

VRTRA: These gifts are mine! All mine!

OFFICIANT: But the people wanted the blessings too, and they knew only the mighty Indra could help them now. So they called out with one voice: "Indra, Give us the Waters!"

CELEBRANTS: Indra! Give us the Waters!

OFFICIANT: Listen: Do you hear him coming? Here comes Indra the Storm-Bringer!

STORM-BRINGERS shake noisemakers as Indra enters the stage

OFFICIANT: In the thundering clouds with his lightning bolt in hand, Indra demands:

INDRA: Vrtra! You have to share the blessings!

OFFICIANT: Vrtra roars mightily and retorts:

VRTRA: No! These gifts are mine! All mine!

OFFICIANT: And the people knew Vrtra was going to hold onto those gifts of [omen], [omen], and [omen] with all of his might. So they again called out: "Indra! Give us the Waters!"

CELEBRANTS: Indra! Give us the Waters!

OFFICIANT: And Indra heard their plea and prepared to do whatever was necessary to win the waters for the people. He again shouted to Vrtra:

INDRA: Vrtra! You have to share the blessings!

OFFICIANT: But Vrtra again roared his denial and shrieked:

VRTRA: No! These gifts are mine! All mine!

OFFICIANT: Indra grew angry that Vrtra wouldn't share the blessings with everyone, and as his anger grew, so too did the sound of the storm.

STORM-BRINGERS shake noisemakers

OFFICIANT: The people knew now was the moment. Now was the time to give Indra all their support. And so they called out one final time: "Indra! Give us the Waters!"

CELEBRANTS: Indra! Give us the Waters!

OFFICIANT: The storm rumbled as Indra went into battle with the mighty Vrtra, his lightning bolt held high. With a flash he struck down Vrtra with

his lightning bolt. The Dragon bellowed as he fell.

OFFICIANT: The waters, the blessings, the gifts were now free. The mighty Indra won them away from Vrtra the Dragon and brought them to us.

INDRA brings Waters to OFFICIANT

OFFICIANT: These Waters are infused with the blessings of [omen], [omen], and [omen]. "Behold! The Waters of Life!"

OFFICIANT: As these Waters are poured out for each of us, remember how they were won for us, and how we sing the praises of the Storm God who won them.

OFFICIANT: See how the gifts of [omen], [omen], and [omen] can flow into our lives. See how they can flow into our grove. See how they can flow into our community. See how you and the world can be renewed and rejuvenated by these Waters so courageously won and freely given.

OFFICIANT: Drink deep, Children of Earth, and be blessed!

Rev. Jan Avende is the current Wellspring Bardic Chair and has been a member of ADF and Three Cranes Grove since 2009. She is an ADF Initiate, and is active as an officer and member in many of ADF's subgroups. She enjoys writing rituals and prayers on request and talking with others about how they practice Our Druidry.



Bright Flame

By Chelly Cowrette

A spark in the east, A blaze of flame.
Agni great Agni, be the messenger this day.
Bring these offerings to the great gods this day.
Agni great Agni, the spark of the flame.

A spark in the south, A blaze of flame.
Agni great Agni, be the messenger this day.
Bring these offerings to the ancestors for us this day.
Agni great Agni, the spark of the flame.

A spark in the west, A blaze of flame.
Agni great Agni, watch over us this day.
Bless our food as it cooks over your body this day.
Agni great Agni, the spark of the flame.

A spark of fire, A blaze of flame.
Agni great Agni, we worship you this day.
The three fires lit, they are your body this day.
Agni great Agni, the spark of the flame.

The View from Here: Comments from the Dice Archdruid

By Rev. Jean ("Drum") Pagano

I always view the time just after the Solstice (I will try to be non-hemispherical here) as a time of hope and renewal. The word Solstice contains two Latin-language morphemes, *sol*, "sun", and *-stitium*, "stoppage". (Language) I see this as a time to pause – however brief – before we move forward. In the southern hemisphere, the summer awaits and a time of growth is at hand. We rejoice in the season while the length of days slowly but surely diminishes. Even with the shortening days, one relishes the joy of the season and the beauty it brings. In the northern hemisphere, we toil through the winter and the slowly lengthening days as we await Imbolc and the arrival of spring. The counter-balance of the seasons between the hemispheres is one of the many undulations of the cycles of Earth and the cycles of the Earth Mother, as the seasons and the terrestrial world move through her cycles.

The Nature Spirits in many ways reflect these cycles and the smooth transition through these phases. The movement isn't really a back and forth, but more of a circular rhythm,

from solstice to solstice and back again. A pause in December followed by a pause in June and the cycles repeat themselves over and over again. These cycles, the story of the Nature Spirits, is told and *seen* each and every year. Seasons return and so do we, in one form or another. It is interesting to notice that conceptually the Nature Spirits return again and again, always following the cycles of nature, be it northern hemisphere or southern, never seeming to change. On a more individual basis, we too follow these movements, these changes, these cycles, but we grow along with the rest of nature and we too grow older. In our own lives, the aging of ourselves and those around us is of notice and often of concern. May we observe the changes even as we move through them as well as we move from solstice to equinox and ever onwards!

Rev. Jean Pagano is the Vice Arch Druid of ADF and a Senior Priest..



Spring Equinox: Arianrhod

by G. R. Grove

Silver wheel, *Llenad*, light one,
bright your track above our land.
Slow your sailing through the night
past your brother's shining court –
Gwydion's *caer* is not so great
as yours, nor ever were you caught
by his sly plans; you knew well
all his tricks. Your elder son –
gold-haired, bonny, ocean-borne –
you let go. The second one
Gwydion kept, as was your plan.

Twice he tricked you, so he thought;
you knew better; only right
he should raise his boy, and Llew
loved him well. Not then for you
that bond's breaking, Arianrhod.
By the strength of old Math's deed
he went from you. Yet, content
were you, knowing well the end.
Tried by pain, by magic saved,
Llew would stronger be than loved
in your arms, and so it proved.

Bright-haired Dylan, son of sea
had a different road to go.
On his uncle's spear he died –
fire and water are not good
partners; smith-craft that time won.
Yet, before he met his end,
Dylan ventures had in full.
Sea-craft, mage-craft, powers fell,
all were his. His song is lost,
but of wizards not the least,
of your two he was the best.

Silver Wheel, evening's goddess,
sailing quietly through the mist,
light our darkness, and mark nights
with your passage, never caught
in the nets of clouds and stars.
Share the stories and the lore
you have known. At your rising
I will greet you now in song,
watch your changes through the year,
celebrate your face so fair –
thus I make my offering now!

A Sonnet to the Nature Spirits

By Chelly Cowrette

Fur and feather and scale and skin and bone,
Those spirit folk within the unseen ether.
Tree and leaf and flower and blade and stone.
Those spirits we do not know all their features.

The spirits of nature are all around us,
Scurrying, flying, growing, surviving.
Noticing them can reduce our stresses,
You, take notice of where they are living.

Above, below and in between they live,
In cities and towns and the wooded spots,
These little furry creatures will forgive,
When their lives are not ever in our thoughts

You are in Otherworlds we look into,
The Spirits of Nature we welcome you!



Christina Marvel

News and Announcements

Program & Path Completions

Rev. Amber Doty

Completed: Generalist program
Date completed: October 2015

G R Grove

Completed: Initiates program
Date completed: October 2015

Lisa Lea Allshouse (Tiogar Saille)

Completed: Dedicant program
Date completed: October 2015

Member 8870

Completed: Dedicant program
Date completed: November 2015

Deryk Lakatos

Completed: Dedicant program
Date completed: November 2015

Member 8929

Completed: Dedicant program
Date completed: December 2015

Protogrove & Grove Approvals

Cascadia Grove

Covington, WA
Date of charter: October 6, 2015

Golden Birch Proto Grove

Pointe-Claire, QC
Date founded: October 31, 2015

Mountain Ancestors Grove

Boulder, CO
Date founded: November 13, 2015

Proto Grove of the White Pines

Ripley, ME

Date founded: November 20, 2015

Northern Mysteries Proto Grove

Zanesville, OH
Date founded: December 4, 2015

Sinnissippi Tuath Grove

Rockford, IL
Date of charter: December 10, 2015

Danu's Proto Grove of the Oak

Montreat, NC
Date of charter: December 18, 2015

~Congratulations to all~

Announcements:

The Druid Moon Podcasts 2016

1/18 2/15 3/14 4/18 5/16 6/13
7/11 8/15 9/12 10/10 11/7 12/12
[ar ndraiocht fein](#) – You tube Channel

Upcoming Events

Trillium Gathering

April 14th-17th, 2016
Thor's Hollow Retreat, VA

Wellspring Gathering

May 26-30, 2016
Tredara Retreat Center, MI

Eight winds Festival

July 14-17th, 2016
Truckee, CA

<https://www.adf.org/events>

For more festival info



Christina Marvel

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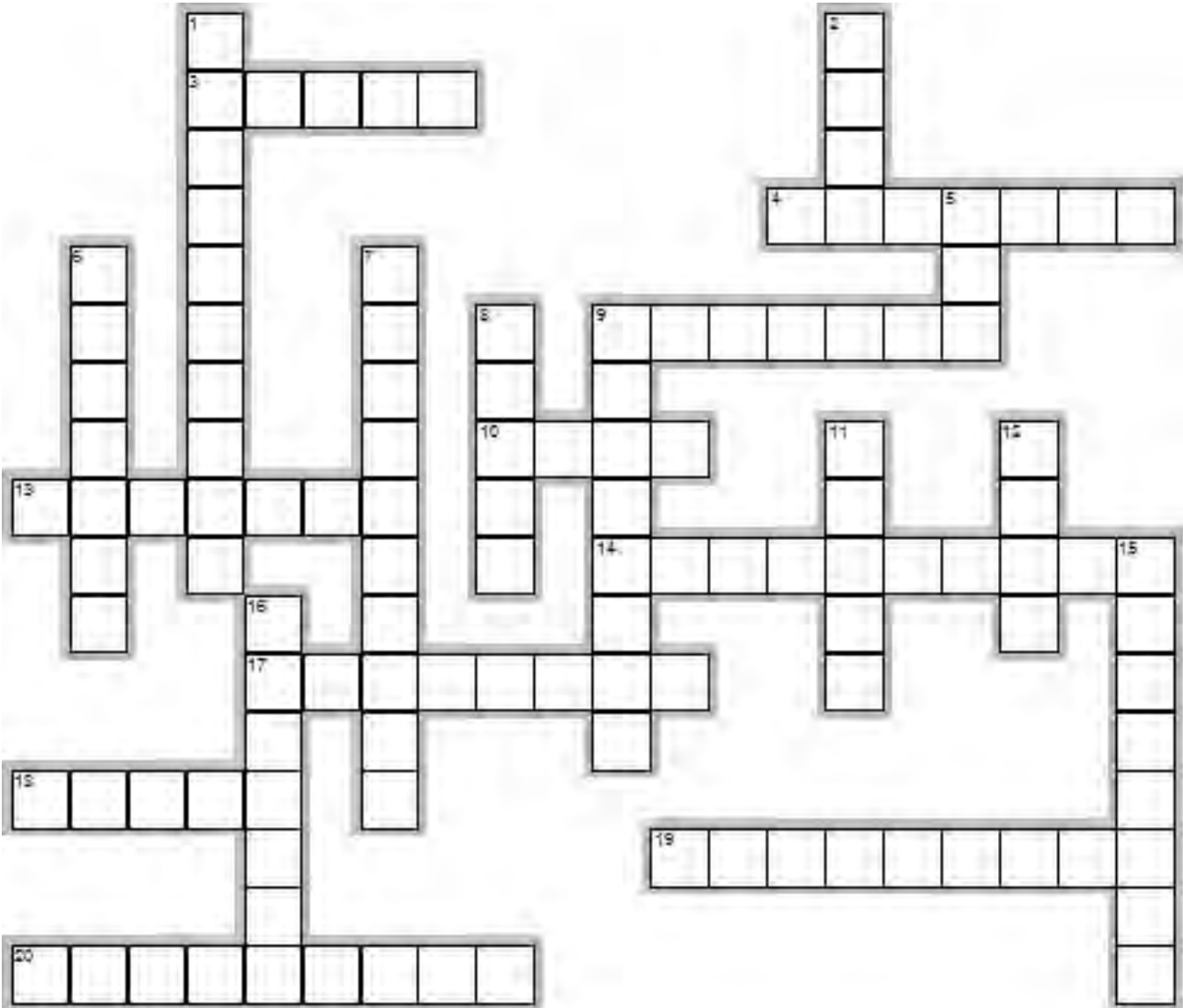
Registration includes programming and lunch/dinner for the convention.

Hotel rooms available through the grove for \$92 a night.

For more information and to register:
<http://www.ghosti-con.org/> info@ghosti-con.org

Crossword

By: Chris:)



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Across

3. A king of Britain
4. His otherworld pigs were stolen
9. Welsh name for Avalon
10. This hero was resurrected
13. Welsh Magician
14. Welsh Fair folk
17. Horse riding Goddess
18. Welsh Otherworld
19. Son of Llyr
20. Lleu's mother

Down

1. Flower face
2. Welsh Sea God
5. Welsh Mother Goddess
6. Lover of Olwen
7. Welsh Myths AKA
8. First born son of Arianrhod
9. God of agriculture
11. King of Dyfed
12. A king of Gwynedd
15. Welsh Smith God
16. Sister to Bendigeidfran

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ADF Directory



The Mother Grove

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Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison	skip@dragonskeep.us
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Clergy Council	Chair: Rev. Kirk S. Thomas	adf-archdruid@adf.org
Council of Lore	Chair: Rev. Kelly 'Carrion Mann' Kingston	adf-preceptor@adf.org
Grove Coordinating Committee	Chair: Rev. Caryn Laney-MacLuan	adf-gcc-chair@adf.org
Grove Organizing Committee	Chair: Rev. Nancy McAndrew	adf-goc-chair@adf.org
Prisoner Relations Committee	Chair: Rev. Melissa Burchfield	adf-prison-ministry@adf.org

For information on **Regional Druids**, please see the full listing at:

<http://www.adf.org/members/org/cord/>

For more information on **Groves, Guilds, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and Kins**, please see the full listing at:

<http://www.adf.org/groups/groups-list.html>



Submission Guidelines



Oak Leaves welcomes submissions of artwork, articles, poetry, letters to the editor, and anything else that might be of interest to our Druid 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. Also: please include a brief ADF-related bio for all articles and essays.

Written submissions should be sent in one of the following formats: MS Word (doc/docx), Rich Text Format (rtf), or Text Format (txt).

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 grayscale 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, tiff, etc. Please send them to the Art Director at adf-ol-art@adf.org. Contact the Art Director to inquire whether hard copies of your art may be submitted, depending on scanner availability.

Deadlines for submissions are:

Spring: December 1st,

Summer: March 1st,

Autumn: June 1st,

Winter: September 1st





Ar nDraiocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

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One form per person please.



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