

OAK LEAVES

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin Summer 2020 ~ Issue No. 89



For Protection against Disease

By the Might of Brigid, Daughter of Danu
By the Mercy of Brigid,
Flame in the Hearth

By the Flow of Brigid, Water from the Well
Spirit of the Hammer, Warm the Forge
Spirit of the Quaich, Bear the Draft
Spirit of the Harp, Sing Beauty

So ring, Oh Hammer,
in the Cauldron of Warming
Let my furnace burn warm,
my power be strong, to keep me from all ill.

Be full to spilling, Oh Cup,
Into my Cauldron of Movement
Let your healing flow through every course,
to keep me from all ill

Sing like the Birds of Dawn. OH Harp,
With words of comfort

Echoing in my Cauldron of Wisdom
Mighty Goddess, make strong flesh and bone
Loving Goddess, make clean blood and wind
Wisest Goddess, Make clear mind and will

In my heart and at my hearth
For my kin and for my folk
That we may all be well.





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Chronieler: Manny Tejada-Moreno
Editor-in-Chief: Rev. G. R. Grove
Chief Copy Editor: Brenda Nix Lively
Chief Design Editor: Rev. G. R. Grove
Music Editor: Dave "TheXalon" Kleinschmidt
Advertisement Director: vacant
News Director: Chris Wityshyn
Proofreaders: Brenda Nix Lively, Rev. D.
Rowen Grove, and Manny Tejada-Moreno.
Archivist: Victoria Selnes

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Subscription Service Dept.

Ár nDraíocht Féin (ADF)
International Office
1147 Brook Forest Ave #355
Shorewood, IL 60404

adf-office@adf.org

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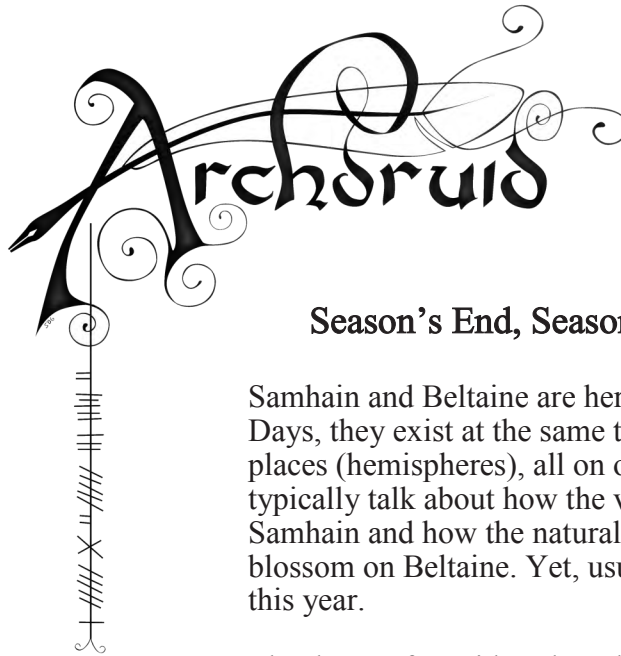
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Season's End, Season's Beginning

Samhain and Beltaine are here. Like all High Days, they exist at the same time, in different places (hemispheres), all on one Earth. We typically talk about how the veil is thinnest at Samhain and how the natural world comes to full blossom on Beltaine. Yet, usual does not apply this year.

The threat of Covid-19 has changed many things in our world. What was usual is no longer the case. That applies to life here at ADF as well. I had to cancel several trips scheduled in March and April due to the threat of Covid-19.

I think it is important that people can meet face-to-face. We now have had to adapt for the time being by being face-to-face while we are all participating in social distancing. This we do by live streaming, Zoom, Skype, and other technological means available for us to use.





Therefore, *what* we practice has not really changed, but *how* we practice surely has. Whereas solitary rituals have been hosted online for some time before the recent crisis, Grove meetings and rituals are now increasingly being held by Zoom session or the like and the results have been very encouraging.

While I personally love to witness rituals in person, the threat of Covid-19 has brought us closer together in ways that one would have only dreamt of until now. For the time being, we are all in some way solitary members. There has been ample content created to help enhance and expand our practices. I recently attended a ritual in Illinois, another in Melbourne, and sat in on a candidate Zoom session with members from three continents.

As people are home more now than ever, I recommend that they look to our programs of study to help fill in some of the hours. Whether it is the new Hearthkeeper's Program, the Dedicant Program, or the various other study programs, there is much to be gained and much to be learned. If there are any questions, please consult the ADF Preceptor, Rev. Kirk Thomas. These are difficult times with much uncertainty. If you are concerned about your membership renewal, please reach out to either me or the

Member's Advocate for a Compassionate Membership. We will help in any way we can.

With Beltaine, our thoughts turn to the Spirits of Nature and the growth that is occurring all around us. With Samhain, we are reminded of the Ancestors and lessons they bring. In any season, we are aware of the Shining Ones and the Blessings and Magic that they bring to our lives and our practice.

Let us remember the Earth Mother as the Seasons turn. As the Earth goes through her cycles, so do we follow. Let us follow her in harmony and in reverence. We live not only with her, but because of her. For those celebrating Beltaine, let us rejoice in her bounty; for those observing Samhain, let us observe her repose. In all seasons, let us make offerings for her bounty.

The blessings of the Season to you all!

Blessings,

Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano
Archdruid, ADF

Summer Issue of Oak Leaves

By Oak Leaves Editor-in-Chief Rev. G. R. Grove

By the time you read this column, Beltane will have passed here in the Northern Hemisphere, and Samhain in the South. As I write it, however, it is still an uneasy spring here in Denver, Colorado, with our usual interchange of mild days and snowy ones. In this uncertain world due to the COVID-19 virus, I have endeavored to maintain the usual mix of articles and poetry in this Summer Issue of Oak Leaves.

in Malta by Rev. Kirk Thomas, a practical guide to participating in ritual by Rev. Melissa Ashton, and advice on virtual rituals and other connections by John Hjatt. In addition, we have a family table ritual from Rev. Ian Corrigan, and my review of a scholarly book on Celtic religions which I recently acquired.

As always, our poets have been productive, providing us with a large collection of their



In addition to the column from our Archdruid, Rev. Jean “Drum” Pagano, in which he meditates on the changing seasons, we have a piece from our new Vice Archdruid, ADF Senior Priest Amber Doty. She is new in this position, but by no means new to offices in ADF. I would like to thank and congratulate her on stepping up to this challenge.

Our articles this time include a discussion of the theory and practice of mead brewing by Rev. D. Rowen Grove, a fascinating and well-illustrated Wandering Druid piece describing his adventures

works. I would especially like to thank those first-time contributors who responded to my Facebook request for submissions. I have also indulged myself by sharing a long poem I wrote almost twenty years ago which retells part of the Fourth Branch of the Welsh *Mabinogion* from a different perspective.

This issue is going to the printers about a week later than usual, as I waited for the outcome of our annual elections. I would like to congratulate the winners and thank all of the participants.

Blessings to all,
Rev. G. R. Grove

Words from the VAD

By Rev. Amber Doty

Hello everyone,

My name is Rev. Amber Doty and I am honored to be your new Vice Archdruid. Thank you to everyone who took the time to vote, and for trusting me enough to hold this position. This is a responsibility that I take very seriously and I am excited to continue serving the organization as a member of the Mother Grove.

I joined ADF in 2008, and knew I had found my spiritual home. I am a Senior Priest and Initiate. I have completed several of the Study Programs offered through our subgroups, each allowing me to explore my personal practice. I have spent time both as a member of a Grove and as a solitary practitioner, and know the importance and value of both options. ADF has given me many gifts. In an effort to give back to the organization, I have held a number of leadership roles. These roles have allowed me to take part in projects like handbook creation, bylaw revisions, and subgroup reclassifications. I take on these tasks to try to improve internal processes and clarify expecta-

tions for members and future leaders. While change is hard, I'm willing to put in the time and effort needed to make improvements where necessary.

I see ADF as an organization that encourages right practice and reciprocity. My vision is that we can be a safe space for all of our members, and move toward effective communication without hostility or animosity. I won't write this essay and make promises that I can change things but I want to see our focus return to building reciprocal relationships based upon hospitality. I want us to move away from the perceived divisions within members and the related feeling that people have to "choose sides". I hope from here to be able to move forward and to continue to make improvements as we go. I know that there are still processes we can improve and changes that we need to make. I also recognize that those items will take time.

This spring was unlike anything any of us had ever experienced. Typically, this is the time of year where we are beginning to plan for festivals, outdoor spaces, and spending more quality time in nature and with our peers, but this year definitely looked a little bit different. With social distancing and quarantines in place, each of us had to find new ways to communicate and celebrate together. We may not know what the future holds, but I'm proud of the perseverance and hospitality that I have witnessed throughout our membership. I've seen people reaching out to each other, building relationships, opening their hearts, and lending a helping hand whenever they could. The members truly are what make ADF special, and I'm proud to be a part of it.

Blessings,
Rev. Amber Doty



A Theory and Practice of Mead-Brewing

By Rev. D. Rowen. Grove

*Ask the wild bee what the Druids knew. . .
(Scottish saying)*

This article includes a fairly simple mead recipe, as well as some of my own opinions and practices which have evolved in approximately forty years of mead-brewing, when I originally set out to make meads that would be as close as possible to what might have been produced in a late medieval still-room. While mead-brewing goes much farther back (there are fermented honey residues in numerous archaeological contexts, including Bronze Age Halstatt burials,) many of the early written recipes are from the 15th or 16th century. While I continue to produce mead within a historic re-creation context, I currently approach brewing as sacred, meditative, and organic. No additives, no chemicals, everything as clean as I can manage, with no weird residues. Only the best and cleanest ingredients, and the purest water. In *Food in England*, Dorothy Hartley quoted a country wine-maker of her own generation, who summed up a good approach to mead brewing: “In wine-making, there are very few things you must have, but the fewer those things are, the better they need to be.” For my own brewing, I give much credit to the blessed Brigid, a patron of mead-brewers; She is in charge of what happens in the carboy. My job is to wash the equipment, and make sure nothing odd gets in.

The notes given here are for three-gallon batches; one-gallon lots are nearly as much trouble and time, for very little results, and my back can no longer deal with lifting five-gallon carboys.

For 3 gallons of Mead:

- **about 3 quarts of honey.**

I'm using 2 ½ to 3 lbs of honey per gallon of finished product, or one part in four. I get most

of my honey at the local Farmers' Market, or from beekeepers. The three most commonly available types of honey are clover, alfalfa, and mixed wildflower. Clover honey is pale and delicate, and makes a good base for something infused with other subtle flavors. Wildflower honey is usually darker than clover, often more robust in flavor; it will vary by locality and by year. Alfalfa honey is not my favorite, but many brewers swear by it. There are many exotic honeys available; some work better than others. Try making some basic mead before branching out; take your time. Also be aware that some herb-infused meads, or some meads brewed with exotic honey may taste rather odd initially, but be absolutely wonderful – perhaps – some months or years on. Try to find your honey at a homebrew shop, or from a local beekeeper. Honey sold in discount or grocery stores may contain corn syrup or other sweeteners, possibly preservatives (which may prevent fermentation) and some imported honey may be derived from crops treated heavily with pesticides.

- **yeast .**

I have been using the same yeast strain for some years, Lalvin EC-1118, a champagne-strength Canadian yeast strain recommended for meads and fruit wines. Champagne yeast doesn't necessarily mean that you'll get a sparkling result,



but it tends to be a little stronger. Ask about the different strengths, and what the local brewers recommend. Half a packet is usually plenty. Wine making stores sell basic wine yeasts, and they are also available online.

- **spring water to make up the volume.**

I use water from the local Eldorado artesian springs, Eldorado, CO. Use whatever good local water you have. You'll need approximately 2.5 U.S. gallons for your 3-gallon batch; keep some extra on hand.

- **time and patience.**

Both of these are very important. While it is always tempting to drink the mead as soon as possible, I have found that a year and a day is a reasonable amount of time, although some batches will take a good bit longer, and some will be ready in as little as five or six months. Mead is said to like a fast (warm weather) start, and a slow finish. I prefer to start a fresh brew during the waxing moon, but have had a few exceptions.

- **a very little bit of little tannic acid (more or less optional)**

This helps the yeast along. Elizabethan brewers often used some quantity of raisins, which were also useful for the wild yeasts contained in their skins. I usually add about a shot-glass of strong black tea, although not all meads will need this; the one made with oak-honey certainly did not.

I recommend making a few successful batches of straight mead before embarking on elaborations with herbs, flowers, fruits, etc. These are not necessarily more difficult, but I find the variety of subtle complexities, delicate or robust, obtained from different varieties of honey far more interesting than the additions of exotic ingredients. Once you have experience with the subtleties of "basic" mead, you'll know better what sorts of additives will work, and what will not. Many brewing books will recommend using sulfites, yeast nutrients, or other chemical additives; however, I found them incompatible with my original purpose in brewing, and especially so with my current purposes.



- **For equipment, you will want:**

- a 3 gallon glass carboy; don't trust plastic
- a large pot; glass, enamel, or stainless steel
- a ladle (I use a stainless steel one, or a sterling sauce ladle)
- about a yard of brewer's / food-grade tubing for racking the brew as needed
- a cork and fermentation lock
- a long-handled bottle brush for cleaning the inside of your carboy

Make sure you have all of your ingredients and equipment to hand. Now, pause. Breathe a little, settle your mind. Think about what you're going to do. Why are you making this mead? What is its purpose – for ritual use, a competition, just to drink with friends? Is it purely an experiment? If your brew is to be dedicated to a particular purpose or Deity, or if you wish to invoke your own Patron/s, now is a good time to do so. (On the other hand, as a beginning brewer, you may want to see how this batch comes out before dedicating it.)

Now begin your brew.

Check to be sure that any pans, ladles, etc., do not have a residue of scent from whatever you use to wash dishes. Rinse everything very, very well. I use an unscented organic detergent when needed, but find that scalding water suffices for most brew-related cleaning.

Depending on the size pot or kettle you have, you may need to process your honey / water blend, (called “must”) in several batches. Bring the water to a simmer, and add honey, blending well. Some brewers boil the honey and water together and skim the foam off; I do not, as I prefer not to boil the honey. Skimming can make clearer mead, considered desirable by modern judging standards; the foam contains pollen, which remains in solution and may make the mead slightly cloudy. Add some cool water, and use the tubing to siphon your mixture to the 3-gallon glass carboy, filling only about up to where the shoulder curves in. Once you have added the yeast, there will probably be some foaming-up when fermentation gets going. Some batches foam up only a little, but I’ve known others that climbed out of the carboy, through the fermentation lock, and oozed all over the table or floor. Note: if your glass carboy has been in a cool place, rinse it well with warm to hot tap water in order to avoid shocking the glass.

Allow the must to cool to blood-warm before adding the yeast; first proof the yeast in a cup or so of the mixture, allowing it to sit until the froth blooms before adding to the carboy. If your brew wasn’t specifically dedicated earlier, and you’ve realized you should do so, or if you wish to inscribe runes or ogham, etc., into the foam, now is a good time to do so. Some “dedicated” batches don’t get dedicated until they’re done, and you’re sure they’re fit for the purpose, which is fine. Add the proofed yeast to the carboy, seal the carboy with a cork and fermentation lock, and allow the fermentation to take hold. Once the initial foaming has subsided, add a little more honey / water mix to bring the liquid up closer to (but not into) the neck of the carboy.

The time needed for the fermentation to complete will vary considerably with the temperature of the surroundings, the amount and type of honey used, and other factors. The mead should be racked (transferred to a fresh container) when it has developed a thick layer of sediment at the bottom, often in two or three months. Transfer as much of

the clear fluid as possible while leaving the sediment, and top off as needed with additional honey and water mix in proportions similar to the original. Racking time means you will need two carboys; in fact, you will always need to have one more carboy than you are currently using. The best way to transfer the clearer part of the brew without stirring up all the sediment is to “rack” it, which means to siphon it using the length of tubing. Once the brewing mead is in its new home, top up with a honey and water mix. Don’t worry if you don’t have any more of an exotic honey you may have used, just mix up some clover or wildflower for the top-off. Let it alone for a while longer; this may be a few weeks to several months, or until the bubbles stop coming up. Some meads move more quickly than others, but if a batch seems not to be working, try feeding the must with a little more honey, mixed with water as in the original proportions, or move the carboy to a warmer location. Some batches will need to be racked more than once but each time you rack, you allow more oxygenation of your brew, which is something you want to avoid; for most, I find once is sufficient.

Fermentation slows considerably when the temperature of the carboy’s surroundings drops



down into the 50 – 60 degree F range. Mead that is bottled in late winter can suddenly come to life and expand considerably when the summer comes, so be cautious. If you think it might be ready to bottle – give it a little more time, especially if the carboy’s surroundings have been cool. Once the fermentation has ceased, bottle the mead in sterilized bottles, and store in a cool location. You may find that you have a nice, stable brew, which tastes odd. Not bad, just way too herb-y, or with peculiar overtones. If they’re sulfurous, you have a serious problem, but if not, it is most likely the case that your mead needs to age more. Try setting it aside in a cool dark location for a few months or years.

If effervescence is desired, the brew may be fed a little extra honey a week or so before bottling, but be careful with this – there’s very little worse to a brewer than exploding bottles. It’s better to brew a few still batches before experimenting with sparkling mead. Early bottling can also lead to effervescence, which causes increased pressure inside the bottles – this is why traditional champagne bottle are made of such thick glass. If you do have a bottle explode, immediately open the rest of that batch to release the pressure, and seal again. If you’re fortunate enough to have a

basement or cellar, this is a good place to keep the mead after it’s bottled, as the temperature tends to be cooler and more stable. If you do not have a basement (and I don’t) consider storing your mead on the floor of a closet set in an inside wall, as this will have less temperature fluctuation.

What sorts of bottles should you use? In the past, I’ve bottled in recycled champagne or beer bottles (particularly clear glass ones) but currently prefer snap-top bottles meant for home brewing, plus some “individual serving” wine bottles for gifting. Snap-tops are good for checking (if you’ve bottled in a cold time) as to whether things have started up again, and need to have the pressure released.)

Overall, I think my most important advice to a beginning brewer would be: take your time, and respect your ingredients, the honey in particular. Bee expert Eva Crane reported that a “bee-full” of nectar is approximately 50-60 mg, which is about 90% of a worker-bee’s body weight, and that it takes about 20,000 trips by a bee – roughly four million stops at blossoms – to produce a single drop of honey. Keep everything clean, and don’t rush yourself, or your brew.

Good luck, and happy mead brewing.

Works Consulted:

Crane, Eva, *The World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting*, Routledge, NY, 1999

Hartley, Dorothy, *Food in England*, McDonald & Co., London, 1954

Rev. D. Rowen Grove joined ADF in the spring of 2010, and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She became an ADF Initiate in 2015 and was ordained an ADF Priest in 2016. She is currently Senior Druid of Chokecherry Grove, ADF, in Denver, Colorado.



A Wandering Druid in Neolithic Malta

By Rev. Kirk Thomas

The Neolithic in Malta was amazing. Like in the Orkneys, but on a much grander scale, the local people constructed temples out of the local limestone, in three distinct cultural phases covering about 900-1000 years, from around 3500-2500 BCE. For comparison, Stonehenge's final phase, which we can see today, is from about 2500 BCE. So roughly similar in time.

At the end of this time the temples appear to have been suddenly abandoned, and we don't know why. Later, folks in the Bronze Age would either ignore them, quarry them for materials or repurpose them.

Tarxien Temples

The first place we visited were the four temples at Tarxien (pronounced 'tar-SHEEN'). Rather than four different temples, these started out as one temple with three more added on to make it a grand complex. The country has now put a huge covering over the site to protect it from the elements.



But in general, the temples are made up of hallways with two, four, and six apses in each section. In the first apse on the right upon entering, there are the remains of the bottom third

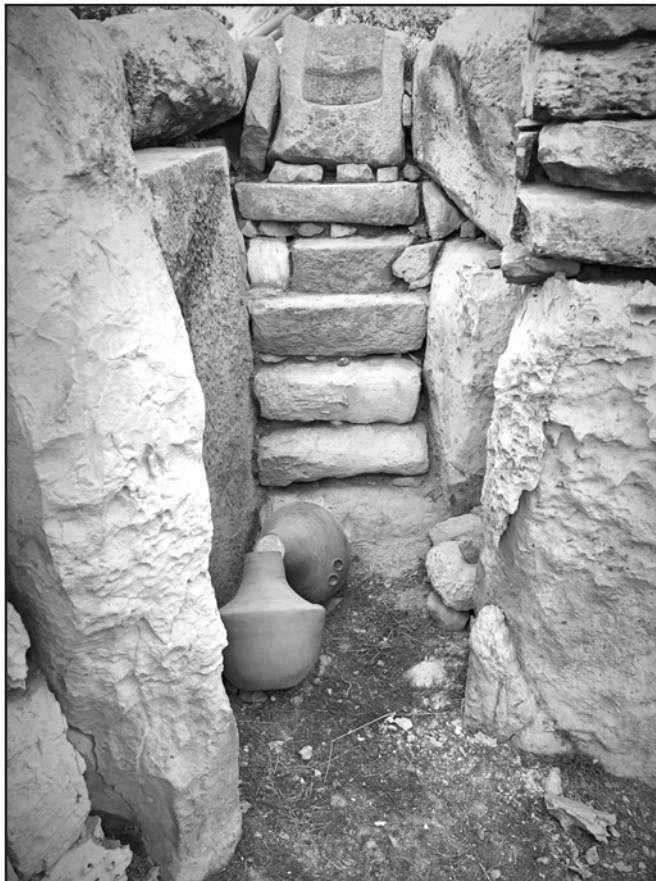
of a statue to (we think it is) a Mother Goddess. We've all seen the Paleolithic Venus of Willendorf, so know what these are, but this one is dressed and larger than life size! There are other examples of these statues in the museums, but they all seem to depict large women, which also implies a goddess of fertility. It's sad that most of the statue is missing.



Near the statue is an altar with an opening at the top. If you look towards the bottom of the altar you may see the plug, carved to fit into the altar, as a sort of secret. Inside of this hollow space they found animal bones and a stone knife, perhaps used in animal sacrifices? The archaeologists found it where it had been left for safe keeping.

At one point the passageway is blocked by a carved stone. One could easily cross over it, so what could have been its purpose? One thought is that this was the entry to a very special area, perhaps limited to only religious specialists, a sort of 'Holy of Holies'. If this is the case, it would indicate that these people had created a hierarchical order in their society of some kind.

Deeper into the temple there is a staircase nestled between a couple of walls. Was this a secret access to a room above one of the apses? It's the only staircase discovered in any of the Malta



Neolithic ruins.

In the more 'public' areas of the temple there are

also carvings of spirals, which are quite sophisticated. Deeper into the temple there is also a carving of a bull and another of a sow with a multitude of piglets. Nearby are a large bowl with evidence of a fire inside of it (this could have been burned in the Bronze Age when the place was turned into a crematorium and cemetery) and a huge cauldron. We don't know what these were originally used for.

There are also holes drilled in some of the great stones in places. They are called 'oracle holes', though we don't really know what they were used for. In some cases, they are in a main apse but open into tiny rooms while in others they are in an apse but open outside the temple somewhere.

Hajar Qim Temples.

Over on the south coast there are two temples very close to one another, and roughly of the same period (the later Tarxien period, roughly 3000-2500 BCE). The one on top of the ridge overlooking the sea is Hagar Qim (pronounced 'HA-jar EEM'). This temple probably started out as a four-apse plan but was greatly added on to, for a total of seven apses and a corridor. I have included a photo of the model of the temple found in the gift shop.



Some of the outer stones are really quite large. I have included a photo of me standing in front of one, as well as a few more photos of even larger ones. The largest stone weighs over 30 tons.

Inside, however, are many other features. There is a small altar carved with a 'tree of life' on all

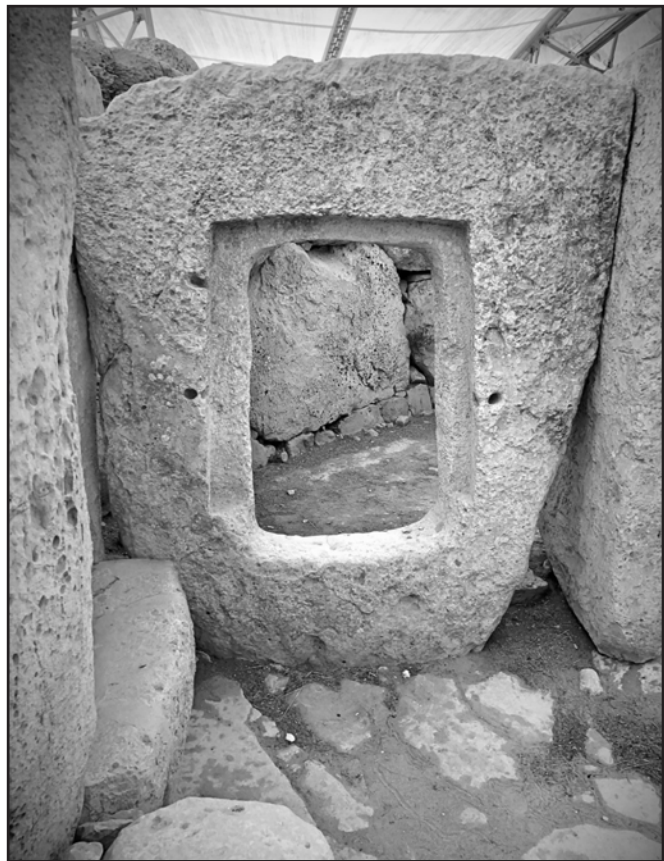


four sides. It stands just inside of the main entrance on the left. On the right side is another apse with short stones making another room inside, and on the far wall is another 'oracle hole', this one leading outside. Archaeologists speculate



that these holes might have been used by the priests to allow the Gods to 'speak' to the people. It might seem like a disembodied, otherworldly voice was filling the room.

There are also a number of those funny cut-out doors, which would require a person to at least bow to get through, and which also implies that the area beyond is somehow special. Maybe only certain people were allowed inside, or maybe the whole point was to force people to bow when entering? Hard to say.

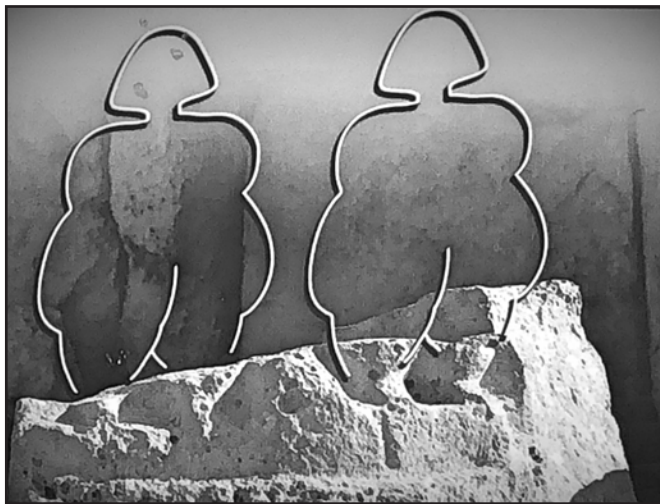


There is also an altar table with carved supports but the table top itself has broken (there are others that have been propped up elsewhere).

But also, of great interest are the apses that are entered from outside the temple rather than from inside. In one of them are two stones that archaeologists interpret as symbolizing a female (in front) and a male (behind). It's as though this apse is a chapel celebrating fertility from both sides. But while many small statues of women were found in the temple (and are now in the Museum), none were found in this apse. Just to the right of this apse is where the oracle hole comes

out. At the right time of year (I believe the Summer Solstice) sunlight pours through the hole and into the apse inside.

One rather odd detail is what may be a carving of the feet of two people. I have included a photo of the stone and one with a drawing to show where the carving is. The only problem is that this carving, if indeed it is one, would have faced into a rubble filled cavity in the wall. Why was it there? Was it originally somewhere else, and then moved to its current location for use as walling? Hard to say.



Less than a kilometer down the hill from Hagar Qim is another set of temples, at Mnajdra ('NAH-zhra'), that I will cover next.

Mnajdra Temples

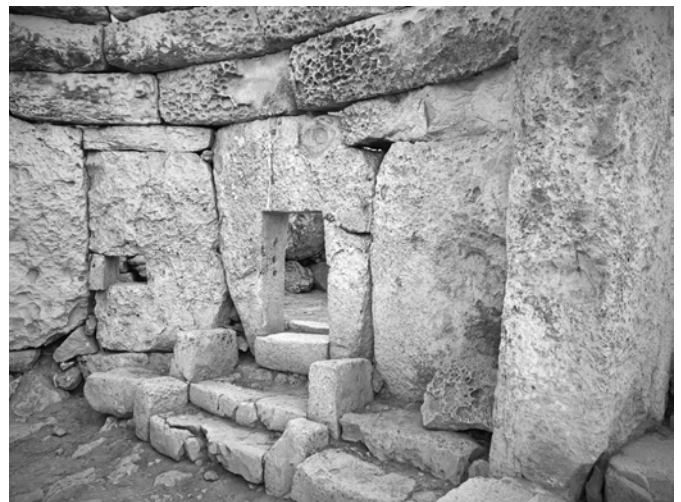
I begin with the model so the layout of these three temples will be clearer. The oldest temple is the one on the right. It is very simple with just two apses. But within a couple of hundred years the



temple on the left was built incorporating solar alignments, and then the temple in the middle was built between the two.

In the model you may see three black lines drawn on the floor leading into the Lower Temple on the left side. The center line marks the angle of the sun on the Spring and Autumn Equinox sunrises, which lights up the main aisle all the way to the back where this is a large altar. The line on the left, angling to the right, lights up the stone just to the right of the second entry inside during the Winter Solstice sunrise, and the line on the right, angling to the left, lights up the stones to the left of the main aisle on the Summer Solstice sunrise. These stones have a bunch of cupping marks on them. The fact that much ornamentation occurs on the left side while there's none on the right indicates to me that the Summer Solstice may have been more important, or had more meaning.

As at other temples, there is a carved door leading to another small room. And in one apse there is a good example of corbelling, where stones are overlaid on each other, in a way that can enable a stone roof to be built. Indeed, corbelling can be seen over the small door.



The entry to the Center Temple has two doors. The one that aligns with the back altar is one of those smaller carved doors, while the one to its left is a normal sized door. Why would this be? Could the center door be a door for ritualists, who would have to bow to enter, and the other door

for spectators? I have no idea. I'm just speculating.

The main altar, directly in line with the carved door, is massive. And high - it is higher up than I am tall. Were offerings placed on this stone? How was the space below utilized, if at all? We just don't know.



The Center Temple also had a small, carved door leading to a small room. Again, why? It's all just so intriguing!

The East Temple is the oldest one, and by far the simplest one of the three. There are three stones at the rear that are bounded on each end by two larger stones. The stone to the right also has cupping on its inside surface, and the cup marks run in straight lines, of different lengths. Archaeologists believe that these may have been part of a counting system, but counting what, we don't know. Perhaps it was connected to the movement of the stars, moon, or sun. The Lower Temple was certainly aligned to the sun. But the other two have no astronomical alignments of any kind that can be found.

Malta - Gozo and Ggantija

We visited the Maltese island of Gozo. It's just a short ferry ride north of Malta.

All of the temples I've described so far are from the Tarxien period of temple building, but the

timeline is more complicated than that. In the Zebbug Phase (c. 4100-3800 BCE) our Neolithic farmers moved over from Sicily, apparently, and started digging single-chamber tombs in the rock. By the Mgarr Phase (c. 3800-3600 BCE) small, two-apse temples were built, followed by some with three apses. Archaeologists have two possible origin theories for the shape of these and later temples. One is that they might reflect some of the more complex communal burial complexes being built, or may just be a conglomeration of the oval shaped domestic huts that were in use throughout the Neolithic.

This phase was followed by the Ggantija Phase (from the Maltese word for 'gigantic', as the existing walls on the main site are still huge). These temples developed as many as five apses. This phase was followed by another short transitional phase called the Saflieni Phase (c. 3300-3000 BCE) chiefly identified with the Hypogeum underground burial complex (which I will describe next). And then lastly comes the Tarxien Phase (3000-2500 BCE) with the temples we've already described, and which ended somewhat abruptly when the temples were abandoned for an unknown reason. It appears that the islands of Malta were abandoned as well at this time, as there is no archeological evidence of anyone being here until new folks arrive in the Bronze Age with a completely different culture. So, what happened? Climate change (drought)? Revolution? Disease? Change of religion? Something similar happened in the Orkney Islands, north of Scotland, at the end of their Neolithic.



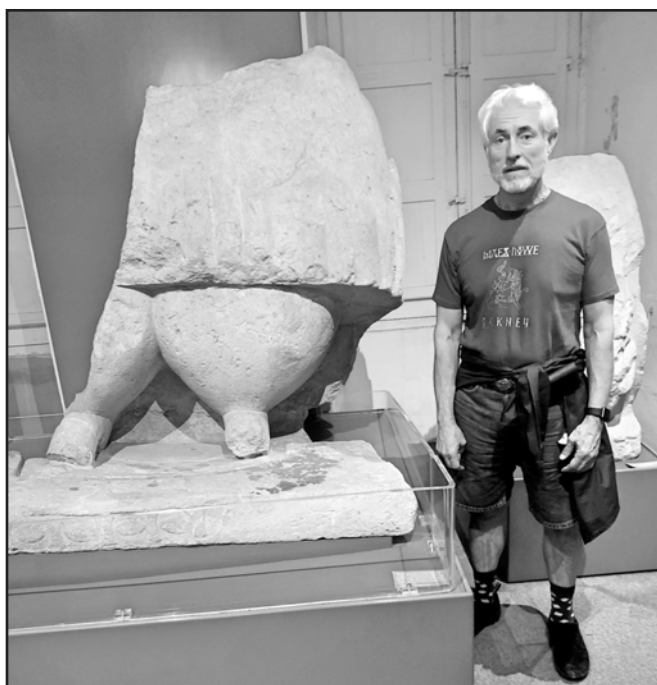
Notice in the photo the rear walls of Ggantija on the left side. The change in the curve marks where the new temple was added on to the old one.

And also note how the orthostats, placed on their edges, are interspersed with other ones placed sideways through the thickness of the walls. Also, above the great stones along the bottom of the temple, the builders used much smaller stones, even rubble (inside the temple). This technique would become much more common during the Tarxien period.



The Mother Goddesses?

Earlier in this article there was a photo of the



base of a statue at the Tarxien temple. It was actually quite tall originally. In the museum on Malta there are many examples of these figures, both large and small.

But are these figures actually women? Archaeologists aren't too sure. They certainly look female,



but do notice that these women don't seem to have breasts. Now, it could just be a stylized convention, but in another photo you will see that they also had the occasional statue of a big breasted woman, similar to earlier ones from northern Europe.

But there is one small statue of a reclining priestess (?) that is absolutely charming. She is lying on a couch (it has legs) on her side, and she seems to be sleeping. What could this represent? One thought that appeals to me is that she is a priestess lying in trance, visiting the Otherworlds. Of course, we can't know if that is true, but it is certainly an attractive idea.



Malta - The Hypogeum

The Hypogeum is an underground tomb complex that was probably started before the Temple period as small family tombs (c. 3300 BCE) but which was expanded into three levels by the end of the Tarxien period and the abandonment of the temples. Originally, the upper level was exposed to the sky, and may have been the place where bodies were exposed to rot until the skeletons were available to move into the tomb rooms lower down. This complex is only a few hundred yards from the temples at Tarxien.

It had been lost for thousands of years and was found by accident when the owners of the house above it were digging a cistern in the early years

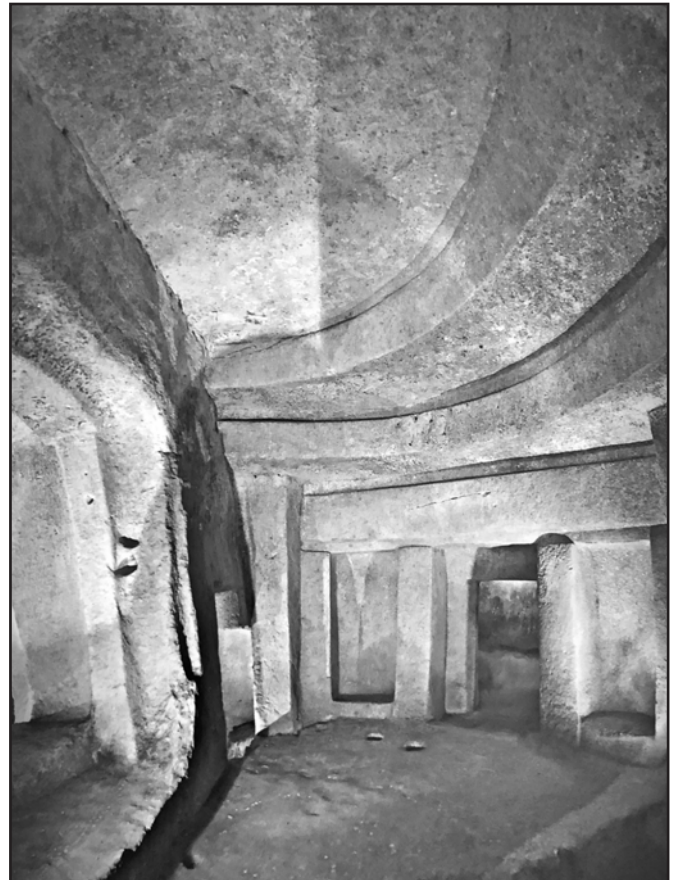


of the 20th century and broke through into the complex.

Over the years the complex degraded environmentally and the walls became covered in green algae so it was closed down and the environment closely monitored for humidity, etc. to protect it, and now only 10 visitors may enter at a time. The man who organized this tour had to reserve our tickets over a year ago. While we were there some folks were sitting around on the waiting list hoping for no shows so they could go in. Others were turned away if unwilling to take a chance and wait. Whew!

Based on the bones found inside, this complex may have housed up to several thousand individuals by the end. And the Central Hall also may have been a place of worship as well. It was carved with architectural features, such as what look like trilathons, reflecting the temples above. This is one place where the cult of the dead can be linked with the worship of the Mother Goddess (or Mother Earth). Many small statuettes of what could be goddesses (called the Fat Ladies by all the guides) were found in here.

Then there is the Oracle Hall which has niches



carved high up on the wall (probably due to all the bones filling up the room) and with the ceilings painted with ochre designs. If someone with a deep voice sounds into the niche on the right, an eerie moan fills the entire complex. And there is what is called the 'Holy of Holies' - a room carved like the inside of one of the temples above ground, even carved with the corbeled roofing the temples may have had.

And all of this, the hypogeum, and the temples, and even the island, were all abandoned at the end of the Maltese Neolithic for up to 300 years. When the Bronze Age peoples moved in they certainly noticed the temples, but they had no use for them, other than for robbing the stone or burying their dead in the temple floors. One can only imagine what they thought about these monumental constructions in their new home.

(All photos by Rev. Kirk Thomas.)

The Rev. Kirk Thomas is a Senior Priest and former Archdruid of ADF. He lives at a retreat center in Washington State where he has established a Druid Sanctuary with a Stone Circle and multiple shrines to the Gods and Spirits.

Airmidh

By Kelli Rankin

Airmidh, daughter of Diancecht,
Goddess of the growing green things of life,
Great Herbalist,
You who restored your people and kept the
Spring of Healing until its destruction,
You who chanted with your brother to restore the
King to wholeness,
You who dove into your sorrow and came out
stronger for it,
You whose tears watered the grave of beloved
Miach,
You who sorted and learned the whispered
wisdom from his grave upon your blessed
mantle,
You whose skill has surpassed that of your
Father.
Teacher of patience and calm forbearance.
On this day of renewal and new growth, we give
you your due!
Gentle Mender, this fragrant oil, drawn from
olives, full of herbs, touched by Sun and
Moon and dark deep Earth,
This sweet water drawn from swift-flowing
stream,
These herbs grown and preserved with care,
These gifts we give with Love and Hope in our
hearts,
Beloved Airmidh, Accept these Offerings!

Rooted Deep

By Bonnie Lin Landry

Rooted Deep
Like the tree I am,
rooted deep in the Earth,
crowned high in the sky, I stand;
breathless, yet filled;
empty yet overflowing,
whole and endless.

Hand Washing Prayer

By Diane Cacciato

I have been lighting a candle when I wash my
hands and sing (to the tune of Happy Birthday)

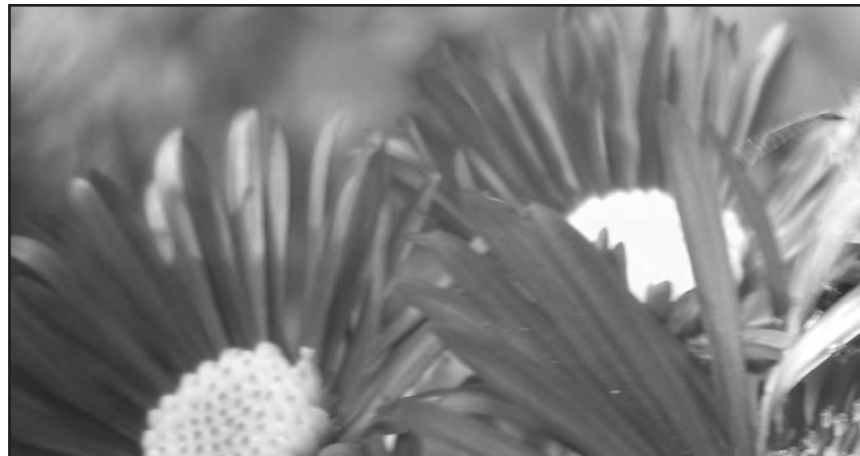
Keep me healthy and well
Keep me healthy and well
Keep me healthy dear Brigid
Keep me healthy and well

Keep the virus away
Keep the virus away
Keep everyone healthy
I thank you Brigid this day.

Ceridwen

By Diane Cacciato

O Cerridwen,
Mother of all mothers,
Mother of Cymru's poet son,
I lift my words to you.
Let them drift across the air.
Surround them with the scent of lilacs.
So that as they spread up to the heavens,
Across the land,
Through the waves,
Their sweetness uplifts all who hear them.
Bydded felly



Brigid's Prayer
By Bonnie Lin Landry

Brigid bright with healing, tend the flame of
inspiration;
Let our voices meld to hear and be heard, and
stoke the forge of healer's magic.
Bright Mother, Holy Mother, let every blow on
the anvil of life lift us out of desperation;
shield us in your shining mantle.
All those in illness within and without - let us
tend them, me and mine;
Let every spirits not suffer needlessly, but
steadfastly endure with grace.

Breath
By Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano

I listen to my breath,
Red as it enters,
Blue as it leaves,
Life flow within me.

I listen to my heart,
Beat and counter-beat
Movement of life
Life flow within me.

I listen to the wind.
Blow through me
Without effort
Life flow without of me.

I am here, now.

Sirona
By Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano

Gentle Valley Goddess,
Goddess of my people,
Sweet is the water
From your rivers flowing

I kneel along your banks:
Stones can tell your story
As you wash over them
Lightly all the way

Spring will never end here,
We turn to you, Sirona
Like trees that line your valley
Like stars that mark your skies

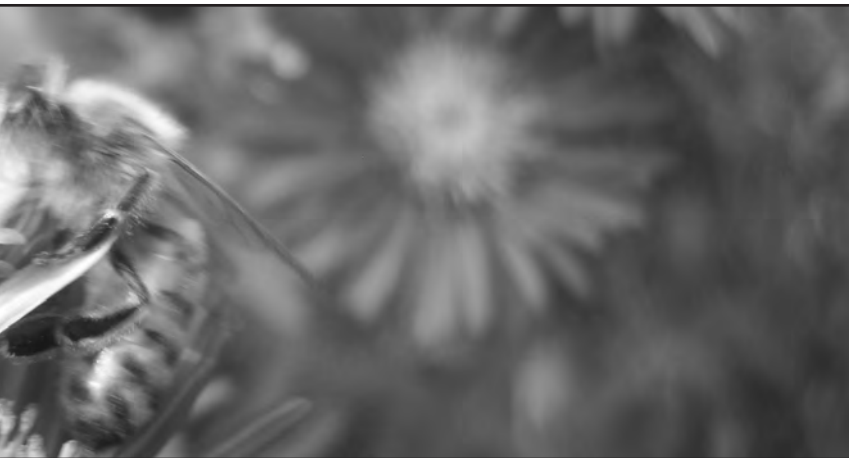
Flowers adorn you, Goddess
Like scarves of purple and amber
Painted in this valley
Where the quiet streams do flow

Has your name fallen silent?
Not heard by the ears of man?
Is your face forgotten?
Not seen in this lifetime of man?

Gently flow your waters
Quietly flow the days
Flow from ancient Gaul
In streams unto the sea

I am one of those waters,
Rescued from the oblivion of time
I flow from your arms, Sirona,
To the sea and even further

I sing your name to the valley
I sing your name to the stars
The trees and rocks remember
Rescued from the oblivion of time



Aphrodite Pandemos

By Jenne Micale

Shake the dust off the road to the sea.
Take the foam-born with you, naked and
glorious.

The common wisdoms hold their holiness

although the faces alter: this one gone now,
only their shade making the trek, that one
new and needing to be carried, like the idol

Herself. The language is new now, the old songs
forgotten. We write new tunes and call them
ancient

as we are, as She is, as the road itself.

Morning Tanka

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

First morning sunlight
strikes through the kitchen window,
turns the old teapot
to celadon jade, and
the honey to red-gold amber.

Áine

By Jenne Micale

The branches gallop, the mane of leaves
in percussive flight. Who is the rider
and what is the steed? Where is the road

leading you, and from whence does it come?
The red mare canters across the clouds,
her daily tack worn smooth by use. Áine

the radiant, rider and ridden
over the path that is all our being
from darkness to darkness and day anew .

Mnemosyne

By Jenne Micale

We tell no stories of Memory,
only remarking on her long hair
and the nine shining Daughters she had

with that young lyre-player, young enough
to be a grandson! And yet every bard
invokes her, every poet and student,

every lover tracing the sweet lines
of the one she has lost, and Orpheus
with the mists rising behind him, weeping.

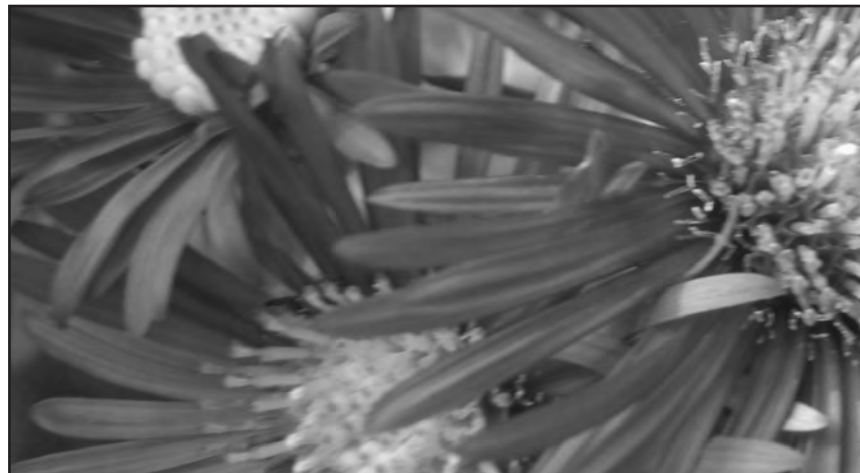
A Beltaine Night

By Charley Saratoga

The sidhe come out to dance about.
The Earth is warm and green.
Anything seems possible,
Upon a summer's dream.

Life's beauty is eternal,
But it changes day to day.
Now is the time for bonfires.
Come out to dance and play.

And if you hear the faintest voice,
Come whisper in your ear.
Pay it heed. It knows the path,
So follow without fear.



Meán Samraidh

By Jenne Micale

The Woman forged of burning light
grants Her grace. The Man with the sword
and silver hand, grasping water –

Here: offer the grapevine circle
with its cross in gold and crimson.
Here: offer the herbs of the field

and rub the reeds on the basin,
your voice twining over the hum –
made whole in water and in fire.

Airmid's Cloak

By Brian Waters

Airmid
You who dwell in nature
and in the mountains
Herbs of healing sprang
from your brother's grave
Laid out upon your cloak
and the herbs spoke to you
of their secret and healing powers
until your father shook your cloak
and scattered all the herbs.

Airmid
Teach us the knowledge
of your herbs
so we heal ourselves.

Awakening with the Gardener

By Bonnie Lin Landry

Teutates—
Gentle gardener, the leaf-strewn path was cleared
by you for walking;
the weeds removed; and from the trees, well - our
branches pruned, and gently shaped.

New growth is bonded with old, that we might
grow together; when ill or broken one
becomes, it is gently yet firmly tended.

Though wild we seem,
the presence of light touches our branches;
cooling waters we absorb; Your loving touch
surrounds us - through it, we are stronger.

Evening Tanka

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

On this moon-lit night,
I worked a rite of healing
for some folk I know,
and gave thanks to Ancestors
and to some other Powers.

The Sword of Nuada

By Jenne Micale

What is the sword of Nuada?
The thin line dividing the dome
of endless sky from the vault of sea –

Sky's dome overturned, the cauldron
of wisdom pouring out, unless we
forge ourselves means to turn it –

The cauldron of warning yawning
in acceptance, as long as we
breathe and move and live, embodied.



Pryderi's Pigs

By Rev. G. R. Grove

From purple twilight full of mist and rain
into the torchlight at my gates they came,
twelve men in sodden cloaks, mud-splashed and
cold,
and to my Porter said, as I was told,
that they were bards from Gwynedd in the north.
He did not ask their names, or state, or worth –
all peaceful men were welcome in my halls.
He lodged them well, brought water, wine and
all,
and sent a boy to bring them to the feast.
They took their seats, and when the noise had
ceased
I asked their chief if one of his young men,
to entertain us, might some story spin,
or sing a song, perchance, to make time fly.
He smiled and rose, and looked me in the eye,
and said the custom of their company was
the first night they arrived at some new house
the Chief Bard was the one who should perform,
and so he would. In mellow voice and warm
he started then a story to unfold.
Tale followed tale until the night grew old,
and laughter, wonder, fear and even joy
he conjured up. I never heard a boy
or man could any better story spin,
and when at last he came unto the end
I bade him join me at my table high.
He gladly sat, and heaved a weary sigh.
With mead I filled his cup, and merrily
we did converse, and pleasure 'twas to me.
His beard was black; to me he seemed full
young –
a green-eyed lad, born with a silver tongue.
“Chieftain,” he said at last, “I’ll tell my task –
I’ve journeyed here, a boon of you to ask.
I’ve heard you own strange beasts: ‘pigs’ they are
named –
not like wild boar, but creatures small and tamed.
I ask their gift.” I sighed and shook my head.
“Alas, my friend, though I myself were glad
to give them you, I cannot – not my own
are they to give. They came from dark Annwn,

whose lord was years ago my father’s friend,
and them I may not give or sell or lend
'til twice they've bred their number in this land.”
The stranger smiled. “O lord, leave my demand
unanswered, 'til tomorrow morn we meet,
and then I'll show you how an answer sweet
to find, for when you see what I shall bring,
you may exchange them for some better thing.”
I laughed – it seemed a joke – no more was said.
We drank our mead, and off we went to bed.
I dreamed that night of magic. Long ago
a spell was laid on Dyfed by a foe
for vengeance, and myself was held in thrall,
and only by good luck escaped at all.
That night again I knew captivity –
the prisoner’s hopeless longing to win free –
the treachery that sent me to that fate
to satisfy a long-enduring hate
conceived before my birth. I woke in fear
and lay awake to think. No warning clear
it seemed to me – and yet I think it was.
All things are clearer when you know their cause.
Clear was next morning, for the day dawned
bright,
and all my dreams and fears it put to flight.
Out of my court I went to take the air,
and splendid was the sight that met me there.
Twelve shields as round and golden as the sun
lay sparkling in my courtyard, every one
full worthy to be borne by any king,
and bright as blooming gorse in early spring.
Beside them stood twelve stallions black as
night –
six young men held them by their harness bright,
and that again was gold where iron should be –
but fairer were those horses fine to see!
Their manes and tails fell shining, thick, and
long;
their chests were deep, their legs were straight
and strong;
their eyes were bright; their hides like jet did
shine.
They looked as fleet as stags, swift as the wind.
Beside them sat twelve hounds, a splendid pack,
their breasts snow-white, and all else raven-

black.
Their collars and their leashes were all gold.
Their fangs gleamed white; their looks were
fierce and bold.
While I stood gaping, all this wealth to see,
the green-eyed stranger came and greeted me.
“What think you, lord? Is this a fair exchange
for what I ask, your creatures small and strange?”
“Indeed it is!” I scarce looked at his face.
“But I must counsel take, not chose in haste.”
I lied. Already then my heart was set
upon those lovely horses black as jet.
I called my counselors – once they had gazed
they were like me by beauty’s spell amazed.
We all agreed, and on that self-same day
I let the strangers drive my pigs away.
That afternoon I hunted my new pack.
My sons and I bestrode those stallions black,
and when at last at evening we rode home
they seemed as fresh and swift as when we’d
come.
We talked of nothing else that night in hall –
but of my pigs we never spoke at all.
Twas only next morn, waking in my bed,
A thought came to me, cold as creeping dread –
when those twelve strangers to my gates had
come
of horses, dogs, or shields, they had brought
none.
I found no stallions in my paddocks green;
no hounds were waiting in my kennels clean,
but only sticks and trash and scraps of bone –
the magic holding them alive had flown.
And in my strong-room where those shields had
lain
nothing but withered toadstools now remained.
A burning anger rose inside me then –
what sort of wretch, what poor excuse for men
could come as guests within my halls so high
and there betray my trust with ruse and lie?
I mounted then, and with my war-band raced
along the track those thieves had gone in haste,
but ere we reached the river, my pigs’ spoor
had vanished; we could follow them no more.
I knew then who that northerner had been –
such power is passing rare in mortal men,
and only from the family of great Dôn,
Mathonwy’s brood, could such a wizard come.
To all my one-and-twenty cantrifs wide

my messengers I sent, to swiftly ride
and summon war-bands ready-armed for fight
to meet me here before the second night,
prepared to march. My insult-price twice o’er
I’d have from Gwynedd, as I grimly swore,
and when at last he felt my vengeance’s sting
that green-eyed bard a different tune should sing.
Our journey could have been a pleasure ride,
an amble through the summer countryside
up Helen’s Track, through green Caredigawn,
each day to wake to birdsong in the dawn,
and sleep each night to cuckoo’s lullaby –
it seemed by far too fine a time to die.
We passed the Ystwyth, winding river clear,
and watched old Idris’ Chair draw slowly near.
We crossed above the Dyfi’s mouth so wide
through shoals of salmon silver in her tide.
Then on and up a pass, where forest thick
pressed in upon us. Grey rocks wet and slick
slid underfoot, as loud the river ran
and deer fled up the cliffs on either hand.
Then downward past Llyn Fach, where wildfowl
rose
on thrumming wings, and Idris towered close
above us as another pass we climbed,
where ferns grew thick, and falling fountains
chimed.
At last onto Ardudwy’s verdant plains
in sparkling showers of sunlight mixed with rain
we rode, and saw against the northern sky
Eryri’s snows shine on Yr Wyddfa high.
One night we camped beside the Dwyrdd stream
and set good watch. Beyond the firelight’s gleam
the hills rose full of shadows, dark and steep.
I lingered by the fire – I could not sleep.
Beside my tent there stood a old black stone,
as rooted in the land as if’t had grown.
It seemed to breathe of cold – I touched its side
and shivered. In the west the sunset died.
The river muttered in its stony bed,
a hunting owl sailed silent overhead
and summer stars bloomed in the twilight sky.
I heard far off a hunting vixen’s cry.
The camp grew quiet; the night wore softly on,
but I lay wakeful to the edge of dawn.
Next day we rode full-armed, prepared for war,
and in the early afternoon we saw
ahead of us an army. Banners bright

stood on the wind, and spearheads caught the light.

My scouts had warned us, and my captains all had got their orders. For my war-horn's call alone they waited, but ere I might blow three riders galloped forth from out our foe. They bore green branches, ancient sign of truce – no one would dare to use them for a ruse. I rode alone to meet those warriors strong – the eldest of them I had known full long. His hair and beard shone like Yr Wyddfa's snow; his power wrapped him; I could see its glow. Old Math son of Mathonwy he was named – long was his life and far his magic famed. Beside him on his left my green-eyed bard came riding – now he looked a warrior hard. The third man had his features, not his fire – a younger brother by the self-same sire – Math's nephews, surely, both his sister's sons, called Gwydion and Gilfaethwy, born to Dôn. As we drew rein, a sudden anger bright burst in my heart – I wanted then to fight. I wrenched my eyes away from Gwydion's smile and looked at Math, his manner stern and mild. "Good friend Pryderi," said he, "why come here leading an army? What have you to fear, here in my land, that needs a thousand men?" – "Do you then meet me," asked I, "like a friend? Your nephew owes me wyneb-werth and more – and I will have it from him, as I swore." "I will not pay you," Gwydion harshly said. "You made your choice – the end be on your head!"

I looked at Math. "Is that your final word?" I found my hand already on my sword. All through my life my anger and my pride had driven me; I could not now abide to be held light. Math saw it. "Wait!" he said. "Can reparation benefit the dead? My nephew may have spoke in too much haste – put back your sword, and let us talk of peace." I looked at Gwydion – in his sneering glance I wanted then to sheathe my iron-shod lance. "Then let him speak again, or by my word I'll take my reparation in his blood." – "Old man," said Gwydion, grinning, "you may try, but on the day you do, you'll surely die!" –

Math shook his head. "Pryderi, take from me your payment, and ride home, and I will see to Gwydion." – "No!" I cried, "I will not go insulted – no man lives, who's spoke me so!" With that I wound my horn, and wheeled my horse, and galloped headlong back toward my force. The war horns brayed, the war-shouts echoed loud from Arfon's peaks, dust rose in choking cloud behind our charge, as like a mighty flood we rushed upon our foes – then all was blood. Tedious to me it would be to relate all that day's fighting – combats small and great – blood-bursts from spears, those shafts of bitter pain, bespattering all with their warm scarlet rain, the reek of blood, the din of sword on shield, the dead men lying thick upon the field as in old Eiru when I went with Brân – never was there a greater fighting man! – The icy waters of the streams ran red as finest wine – it seemed all nature bled, not we alone. And yet the blood I sought could not, it seemed, for any price be bought. Long raged that fight – at last we must retreat into the pass, but fighting still, not beat. There in Glyn Coll we rallied, made a stand, and there died many another fighting man. Too many died – I cannot list their names, I am no bard to give undying fame, but only death that day was mine to give, and somewhere still I knew that Gwydion lived. As last, as evening's shadows gathered black I called for truce – to Dôl Benmaen fell back, and there we camped. Full five of my nine sons had died that day – the very rocks and stones had fought against us. Now must I in pain devise a way to save those who remained. Math sent two nobles to arrange a truce, and I gave hostages. It was no use to carp or to complain. The eldest son of my first son I gave, the dearest one, and three-and-twenty noble youths besides – I stood and watched them proudly northward ride.

Our dead we buried – far too many gone – and then rode south. The summer sun still shone, the sky was blue, the flowers bright as May,

but all the world for me was cold and gray –
for while I rode downcast and deeply grieved,
the man who caused this loss to me still lived.
My army – less than half the men who came –
marched sullenly – they felt despised and
shamed.

And all the while the Gwynedd men kept pace
and showed no self-restraint, no gentle grace,
but insults, clods, and stones at us they threw.
Of course my men fought back. Soon arrows
flew,

and blood was shed. Before we lost all peace
I stopped at Y Felinrhyd for a space.

My heart ached. Such defeat I'd never known.
I thought about my long slow journey home,
and afterwards. Another arrow fell
close by me – I could hear my soldiers yell.
I called a messenger to take my words
back to old Math. I'd settle this with swords.
The afternoon was late, the evening near.
I stood and watched them come. I felt no fear.
Around me stretched wide sands – the tide was
out.

A salt wind stroked my cheek, and all about
white seagulls swooped and cried. I stood alone,
and watched the wave-dance of the sinking sun.
Their horses stopped – I heard the steps of men
crunch on the sand. I turned to face them then,
and Gwydion stood there, the green-eyed lad
who had betrayed me, cheated, and made mad.
Like me he stood full-armed. His friends drew
back

as mine were doing. There'd be no attack.
My eyes sought his – I smiled within my beard –
if I was fearless, here was one a-feared.
To face me man to man he did not choose,
for he was young and had a life to lose
and I was old, and full of craft and hate,
full ready now to dare a throw with fate.
At last I spoke. "You understand," I said,
"the two of us must fight 'til one is dead." –
"I do." He grimaced. "I'd wish this undone.
You could withdraw, and still go safely home." –
"Oh, no," I laughed. "My meaning still you miss.
I want you dead – you've bought and paid for
this.

Though I am old, I've garnered no mean skill.
You will not find me easier to kill
than you yourself, for of no mortal breed
my mother came, and I am her true seed.

But if by luck you somehow cut me down,
remember this when I lie on the ground.
I curse you now – as you did me betray,
so shall another do to you one day.
I curse you also with my dying breath –
that thing you most do love, you'll lose to death.
So though you slay me, and I lose this fight,
you win my curse, and dead men's curses bite."
His eyes flashed fire; he swiftly drew his sword
and I drew mine. We said no other word,
but spoke with ringing blows of sword on shield,
and gasping breath, and hiss of cutting steel.
Soon both we bled, though neither wounded sore.
The fight went on, though on the distant shore
the tide had turned. The sun was sinking fast.
It mattered not – 'til dusk we could not last.
Blow after blow – my shield was broken now,
and streams of sweat ran on my bleeding brow.
My sword's strong hilt was slick with sweat and
blood;

the ground we trod was trampled into mud.
The sun's low light showed Gwydion's face was
set

into a snarl. No fiercer foe he'd met.
My sword-tip caught his leg – I heard him hiss.
He swung at me in turn, but somehow missed.
His parched lips moved. I saw him framing
words

beneath his breath, but nothing of them heard.
Those words came faster still. I gave a groan –
I had forgot the magic that he owned!
I lunged at him – he shouted, and a light
burst in my face like sunrise, fiercely bright.
I closed my eyes, unsighted, stumbled blind,
and wildly swung my sword my foe to find,
but he found me. His sword-point pierced my
breast

and I fell down. Far in the bloody west
the sun had set. The tide was coming in –
I heard its roar. A gull cried on the wind.
My blood ran out and soaked the trampled sand.
My strength was gone – I could not lift a hand.
I looked at Gwydion, and I tried to smile –
he felt my curse bite deep. His eyes were wild
and he looked old, as I had never been.
So may betrayers all betrayèd end.

A Practical Guide to Participating in Ritual

By Rev. Melissa Ashton

So, you've taken a part in ritual. Now what? ADF rituals are performed following an outline of 18 steps to organize our work and engage the attendees and participants no matter their background. Each step has its own uniqueness, but the overall performance of ritual can be boiled down to a few "pro-tips" to get even the newest ritualist started. The following guide will assist you in preparing and delivering your best ritual performance. Please also review the links at the end of this document for more detailed and specific information.

Outside the Gates

The parts performed before the gates are opened are more functional than mystical. It is the call to the Earth Mother that grounds us, the purification that cleanses us, the opening prayer that prepares us for the work to come. These are low-risk parts that are excellent for beginners or folks who are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with energy work.

Purification

Purification is a non-speaking part focused on creating sacred space, both in the physical world and within ourselves. There are often two participants, one for the water and one for the incense, to cense and to asperge the folk. This/these participants will also be called into service to cense and asperge the World Tree during the recreation of the cosmos. They are also often asked to place the silver in the Well and oil the Fire during this part of the service.

Outdwellers/Outsiders

Multiple perspectives on the Outdwellers, or Outsiders, prevail in Our Druidry. In Mountain Ancestors Grove, we view the Outsiders as "those we have pushed to the outside of our society." Mainstream society was built by the conquerors of this land, and those who were here before were pushed out. The Outsiders portion of

the rite is an offering made to signify our dedication to the work of repairing the brokenness that now exists between us. We never offer alcohol to the Outsiders, who are the Native Peoples of this land, as our forebears have used alcohol as a means of controlling them in the past, resulting in death and uncontrolled addiction. Instead, we offer tobacco into the fire that they may be a part of our work and not kept at the boundaries of our fire.

Inspiration

Inspiration is called before the Earth Mother in our rites, because we feel the Earth Mother deserves our highest praise, including the blessing of inspired words. This offering is made to either the combined powers of inspiration or given to a specific being, typically an ancestor or deity known for their inspired work. Offerings are often spirits or incense.

Earth Mother

The Earth Mother is the only deity called in every service. We call to her with the name she has in this place: Colorado. Outside, we often touch the ground when making our offerings, typically of grain. The participant inviting the Earth Mother will want to make sure their words are not spoken into the ground but toward the folk that they may participate in the delivery of the invitation.

Opening Prayer

The Opening Prayer is typically performed by a member of Clergy. In the event this portion is performed by a member of the folk, the opening prayer is an invitation to those present to join us in our work to honor the Kindreds and uphold the Elder Ways as is appropriate for the season/occasion.

Purpose/Precedent

Also typically performed by the Clergy, this is a declaration of our reasons for gathering and may include references to the season purpose (e.g.

Autumnal Equinox) or special occasion (e.g. Ancestors Night or Celebration of the Dawn) that lets those present understand the reason for the work we are doing. It essentially sets up the theme of the service.

Inside the Gates

Invitations and work done inside the Gates is more focused and involves deeper connection to the other worlds in order to ensure our gifts are received. Unlike offering to the Earth, whom we are directly touching, connecting to the spirits who are farther away requires more focus.

Ancestors

The Ancestors are the representative body of all humanity that has passed the veil and exist now in the Underworld. Offerings are typically of coin, food and drink, or beer, and are made either on the main altar to be burned later or placed into the Well, which is the gate or portal into the realm of the Ancestors.

Nature Kin/Noble Ones

The Nature Kin are the spirits of nature who share the Middle Realm (read: Earth) with us, and the Noble Kin is the catch-all term for all being who are not Ancestors and Not Deities (the “Not Gods”). These are the beings humans have named as trolls, wights, fairies, fae folk, elves, etc. Offerings are often flowers and grains or clean, fresh water and are made on the land or around the base of the Tree.

Shining Ones

The Shining Ones is the terminology used to describe the collective body of Immortal Beings we have labeled as divine. These are the Gods, Goddesses, and Deities (nongendered alternative: Godden) with whom we have built alliances. Offerings are typically high-proof spirits and oil poured directly into the Fire with incense as an alternative for indoor services.

Being(s) of the Occasion

Each service will have a specific purpose, and the Being of the Occasion (BotO) chosen as the chief recipient of our offerings is based upon the purpose of our work. For example, Beltane/

Mountain Fertility Festival is often dedicated to the Earth Mother here in Colorado, though others have chosen to honor Freyr and Freyja in Norse rites or Demeter in Hellenic services. Invitations and offerings are specific to the being called, and it is most useful to connect with this being prior to the public rite to introduce yourself and begin to build that relationship. Offerings for this Being are typically larger than the offerings made to the Three Kindreds and may include bard craft. In the event one of the Kindreds is chosen, it is customary to honor the first two and then call the third as the BotO, such as on Ancestors Night.

A Note on Three Kindreds & BotO Offerings

It is common for the ritualist to speak into the respective gate for the Kindred to whom they are making offerings. While the benefits of this for the speaker are immediately evident, doing so may make it difficult for the folk to participate. We must remember that we are making offerings to the Kindreds on behalf of the entire assembled folk, and in order for the folk to connect to the words we are speaking and send their intentions forth with ours, they must be able to hear us. The speaker does not have to be the one who actually makes the tangible offering, because this is not a personal offering. For this reason, some groves or ritualists will elect to appoint a Sacrificer whose role is to make the pours.

The Gates

Opening and closing the gates are two of the most highly “energetic” portions of the rite. They require alliance with a being whose willingness and ability to aid us is known.

Gatekeeper Invitation

Calling to the Gatekeeper is similar to inviting the Being of the Occasion. We are asking this entity to “partner” with us to open and close the gates and to hold the ways between. Gatekeepers are commonly called by more experienced ritualists, since they will also be performing the gate opening and closing. The choice of Gatekeeper relies on the relationships the ritualist/grove has built over time. Much like the Being of

the Occasion, it is important to work with the Gatekeeper directly prior to the public service. Offerings will be in line with what is appropriate to give to the Being called. Gatekeeper guided meditations are common. See the section on meditations below.

Gate Opening

When opening the gate, we commonly ask the Gatekeeper to “join your magic with ours.” Then, each of the three gates are opened in turn. When you are prepared, find your center and focus on the first gate. Trace two lines from top to bottom and then trace a counterclockwise circle over them to draw a Druid Sigil then “push” the sigil toward the gate to help push open the “door.” Do the same with the other two, speaking your liturgy as you perform the actions. After all three gates have been drawn and opened, declare, “Let the gates be open!” throwing wide your arms as though you are opening a set of double-doors. Please contact the clergy of the grove for training for this portion of the service.

Gate Closing

Closing the gates is similar to opening the gates. We make a final offering to thank the Gatekeeper for working with us, and then close the gates much the same way they were opened with a specific focus on returning the folk and the grove to mundane space and time. Instead of drawing a counterclockwise circle, draw a clockwise circle to signify the closing of the portal. Some folks will follow with a formal restoration of the ordinary grounding meditation or charm.

The Final Sacrifice

Final Sacrifice, the last push of our offerings through the gates and into the possession of the Kindreds, is the second most energetic portion of the rite. All the offerings we have made are gathered energetically and “sent” through the gates with a final push to ensure they have been conveyed to those to whom we have given. Ask the folk to lend their voice and either sing, tone, or make several successively louder requests, “Kindreds All, accept our Offerings!” making a

large pour onto the fire.

The Omen

The Omen is taken by the Seer, usually someone who has been trained (self-taught is acceptable) in an appropriate symbol-divination tool. Please contact the clergy for additional assistance with this portion of the service.

The Return Flow

The Return Flow, or Waters of Life, is the portion of the rite in which we draw down through the gates the blessings the Kindred offer to us into a vessel containing a beverage, typically water or mead/beer, in return for our sacrifices/offerings per our *ghosti relationship. Directly following the Omens portion, during which the Kindred have given us the nature of the gifts they intend to impart to us, we transfer those gifts into our Blessing cup, which may be a cup or an entire pitcher, depending on the size of the rite, to be distributed amongst the folk. This is done in a three-step process: 1) Calling for the Blessings, 2) Hallowing the Blessings, and 3) Affirming the Blessings (Newberg, Ancient Symbols, Modern Rites).

Calling for the Blessings.

After an introductory statement regarding the nature of our relationship to the Kindred and a moment of internalization for the Omens, we tell the Kindred how we would like to receive our promised gifts from them (gifts that were named during the omens). A typical phrase used to address the Kindred at this point might be “Pour down your blessings into this cup that we might receive them. Shining Ones, please give us the waters!”

Hallowing the Blessings. We take those gifts that the Kindred give to us and infuse them into our water or other mundane liquid. This is the magical part of the process. There may be a chant or guided visualization that takes place here. The drink is filled with the holy power of the Gods, and those who have the gift of visualization may see a color change or some other indication of a change in the liquid. Upon completion of the infusion, the hallowing is declared and the folk

are asked to bear witness, “Behold! The Waters of Life!” The Waters are then distributed to the folk. Some Groves hand out small cups and fill each from a pitcher to be consumed as a group, others drink from a single vessel passed around such as a drinking horn, and still others use a leaf or piece of greenery to sprinkle the waters on the participants.

Affirmation of the Blessings.

Once divvied up and consumed, it is recognized that we have received the gifts of the Kindred. As those blessings come in contact with us, we experience a connection with the Kindred and with the participants who have joined in receiving the blessings for this rite. In this step, we are recognizing that a gift has been given and accepting and acknowledging it (Newberg, Ancient Symbols, Modern Rites). A liturgical statement made at this point may be, “As we have consumed these waters and as they flow through us, may the gifts we have received also flow out to those around us that all we come in contact with may know we are blessed.”

In the previous version of the Core Order, the Return Flow also consisted of three steps, though a bit different: meditating on personal needs, a repetition of the group’s needs, and the induction of a state of receptivity. These are more generalized concepts and have been revised into a more action-focused and participatory, or group, form (Bonewits, Step by Step through a Druid Worship Ceremony).

The Working

Workings are often performed for healing, blessing, commitment, or bestowing power. These pieces must be written by or under the guidance of a more experienced mage, particularly for public services. Please contact a member of clergy for assistance.

Opening and Closing the Service

Initiating and ending the rite are signals to the folk to set aside their mundane ties and to take them up once more. These are key to ensuring everyone present is in sync at the beginning of the service and no one gets left in liminal space at

the end. Typically, there is a musical signal of some sort, such as processional and recessional pieces, the ringing of a bell, or drumming. Choose an appropriate form based on ritual location, number of participants, number of participants familiar with ADF ritual, and allotted time for the service.

The Two Powers and Other Guided Meditations

Guided meditations are used for two main purposes: to provide a grounding and centering for the folk or to help the folk connect with an entity. Special considerations should be made for the specific service and folk in attendance. Short meditations are better when children are present and allowing folks to sit is important for those who with different abilities.

Grounding and Centering

Please refer to the below article for an introduction to the Two Powers Meditation and its use as a tool for grounding and centering. This resource is provided to Dedicant students as part four of the mental discipline training for Mountain Ancestors Grove.

Connecting to an Entity by Group Mind

Guided meditations are also useful to introduce the folk to a new being. Using highly descriptive imagery, the ritualist leads the others present to visualize the Being. These are commonly placed just prior to the invitation to that Being, such as the Being of the Occasion or the Gatekeeper. There are a myriad of examples on the ADF website. See resource section below for examples.

Notes on Spoken Words

The words we speak in ritual space have power, and as such, they must be chosen with care and respect. Further, the delivery of our words is equally as important to ensure the folk are fully able to engage and participate in our work.

Writing, Memorizing, and Internalizing Liturgy

Writing is always the first step in preparing for a ritual. If you are using a pre-written piece, go

over the words and see if there are any modifications that must be made to tailor the piece to the specific service. Memorization is the skill that allows us to verbatim recite these prewritten prayers, songs, and stories. Internalization is the goal of our liturgical words. Internalizing gives us the ability to absorb the concepts held within the writing to recall at a later time in our own words. While reading from or reciting a script has several advantages, especially for the new ritualist or for those working with a new entity for the first time, internalization allows the ritualist to keep other aspects of their performance in the forefront of their minds. Memorization leaves a ritualist heavily focused on the paper, whether in hand or in mind, while internalization frees the ritualist to consider pace and flow along with relevance to how the ritual is actually playing out. In other words, the internalized script allows the ritualist to add or revise the message to be delivered as inspiration demands in the moment.

Speaking Indoors and Outdoors (Projection and Diction)

According to Rev. Kirk Thomas, the breath is one of the most important aspects of ritual performance. It is the heart of the ritualist's ritual voice. In short, the breath most directly affects the delivery of the liturgy and overall shape of the performance. Breath support is a reflection of the ritualist's control over the muscles involved in breathing and speaking. Strengthening and honing these muscles allows the ritualist to vocally command the space. Resonance is the ability of the ritualist to control where the sounds they make will vibrate in their bodies. As sound is produced in the vocal cords, the waves resonate in different places, typically either in the face (also known as the mask) or in the throat. Resonating the voice in the upper portions of the airways (usually in the nasal cavities or "head voice") allows the voice to carry much farther than resonating in the throat or chest voice. Finally, diction is the manner in which a ritualist speaks with clarity. It is important that our words are crisp and clear when spoken in ritual space,

especially when outside, because distance and background noise distort sound as it travels. In order to ensure those present in even the farthest part of the space are able to hear our words and engage in the material presented, we must speak as clearly and with as much articulation as possible.

Tempo and Pace

The speed with which we speak and the speed the folk are able to hear our words are not always matched. It is a common issue for ritualists to speak too quickly or to speed up if it appears the folk are disengaging during the delivery of the liturgy. Increasing the tempo of your speech is almost never the solution. Instead, try speaking up, increasing your energy, and placing more emphasis on key words in your sentences. This will give the impression that you have sped up, but it will not diminish the folks' ability to hear and understand you.

Notes on Designing and Performing in Ritual Space

As an action-based practice, Druidic rites can be viewed as choreographed performances. Most ritual scripts read like plays, complete with the lists of "props" (supplies) and stage directions.

Designing Ritual Space

The first consideration is the actual design of the space. We must consider whether the rite will be indoors or outdoors, how many people will be present, and the amount of space needed for any workings. The most common design is in the form of a circle with the shrine/altar on one side with the Fire and Well in the middle. There are multiple useful designs for creating sacred space, and the design we choose must ultimately support the folk in engaging and participating in the service. Moving the entire shrine to restrict movement, use of a stage, or placing seating in rows all have benefits and drawbacks. Consider carefully the way you want the folk to engage and design your space to suit that purpose.

Intentional Movement

All movement in ritual space is best kept to a minimum and should only take place when

necessary. Intentional Movement is, simply stated, movement that is purposefully performed. The movement is intentional when it conveys meaning to those who see it, when it adds a layer of understanding. For example, when the Blessing Cup is raised prior to announcing “Behold, the Waters of Life!” the folk understand that the Waters are the central point of focus. Similarly, if the celebrant were to be talking with their hands and waving them around, the motion would detract from the Waters. This is important, because energetically, we are asking the folk to aid the celebrant in transforming the water into The Waters, and the divided focus divides their energy, potentially making the blessing less potent. Further, movement that is strenuous may interfere with the Celebrant’s ability to project; movement that places their back to the audience, making it difficult for the folk to hear may dissipate the group mind and deflate the energy. (Thomas Ritualist)

When used properly, movement can ensure even the first-time attendee understands the various aspects of the rite and enables them to participate. From using a hand gesture to cue the folk to sing, to the circular motion of opening the Gates, to the blessing of the Waters as mentioned above, the motions in the script engage the folk and create the space for deepened group mind and intention in the overall rite.

Notes on the Use of Props

Our rituals require us to have “stuff.” We have several types of altar cloths, varying sacred items dedicated to the Kindreds, the Hallows, and the Offerings themselves—plus any additional props we may want to aid us in the ceremony. Props such as staffs, wands, knives, sickles, swords, and other objects are useful when they are used in a way that adds to instead of distracting from the ritual purpose. If possible, the item(s) should be placed either on the shrine or in a place that would seem expected by the folk. Leaning a sword against the World Tree will serve as a distraction until it is put into use but placing a sickle or a wand on the main altar will seem like they are part of the design and will not likely

garner attention. Much like movement, props and tools should be used sparingly and intentionally. Otherwise, they will take away from instead of adding to the ceremony.

Conclusion

Performing in a ritual can feel like a daunting task—and it should! This is the primary function of our Groves and Protogroves: to perform public rites in service to the folk and to the Kindreds. Much like any other skill, the only way to get better is to start doing it. Please read through the resources linked below to assist you in growing your practice.

Links to Resources

Ashton, Melissa. “Adopting the Core Order of Ritual for Solitary Use.” Retrieved from <https://www.adf.org/articles/solitary/coor-for-sols.html>

Bonewits, Isaac. “Step by Step through a Druid Worship Ceremony” Retrieved from <https://www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/stepbystep.html>

Liturgy and Ritual scripts are available on the ADF website: <https://www.adf.org/rituals/index.html>

Newberg, Brandon. “Ancient Symbols, Modern Rites: A Core Order of Ritual Tutorial” Retrieved from <https://www.adf.org/members/training/dedicant-path/articles/coortutorial/index.html>

Thomas, Rev. Kirk. “The Well-Trained Ritualist.” PDF retrieved from: <https://www.adf.org/system/files/public/rituals/explanations/Well-Trained-Ritualist.pdf>

Rev. Melissa S Ashton is a priest of Mountain Ancestors Grove, an Initiate, and a Master Bard. She holds rank in several guild programs and serves the greater pagan community in Colorado.

A Family Table Rite for Spring

By Rev. Ian Corrigan

In addition to service for the food, arrange the Center of the table, as desired, with four good candles, one shorter than the others, and an attractive bowl of clean water. If desired a decorative Tree symbol completes the array. A piece of silver or quartz crystal might be present to drop into the water, and incense is good, if tolerable for a meal-table. Also have present a preferred beverage, or two, to receive the Blessing.

• *With all prepared, the kin join hands, and breathe together in silence for a moment.*

• *The Head of the Table lights the short candle, drops the silver into the Water, and speaks:*
We come together to celebrate the turning of tides, the rising of light, the balance of the rolling wheel. In the name of the Earth Mother and the Spirit of the Grain, Let us seek blessing.

• *All recite:*
The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree
Flow and Flame and Grow in me
By Land, Sea and Sky, Below and On High
Let the Water be blessed and the Fire be hal-
lowed.

• *It is good to formally cleanse— pass the water, or sprinkle all — pass incense if do-able; this may be light-hearted.*

One simple charm (spoken three times) is:
By the Might of the Waters and the Light of the Fire
Let this meal/table/gathering be blessed!

An offering is given, saying:

• *Where Fire and Water Meet, Where Land and Sea and Sky are joined
There is the Sacred Center, The Crossroads of Worlds.
We light the Fire of Welcome, we draw water from the Holy Well,*



Photographer unknown.

And to the Gods of Crossroads we offer,
That this place be a sacred place, a between place,
A place of meeting for mortals and the spirits.
Let the Roads be open, let the voice be heard, let
the Gates be Open!

• *The Head, or another, lights the three tall candles in turn as all recite:*
Oh all you Holy Beings of the Worlds, In all your might
We call you, whether unnamed or by name, By these three lights
(light one tall candle)
Beloved Dead, you travelers, gone before, To you in love
(light one tall candle)
Oh wond'rous spirits of this land we call, To you in awe
(light one tall candle)
And every shining god, in every heart, To you in honor true
Love, awe and honor, these we light
With these three flames here, burning bright
And bid the spirits bide with us in peace.

The Spring Charm:

For this charm have a stone from the surrounding land (or a small bowl of dirt), a handful of seed-wheat or corn, Two offerings of incense are also ready

The Head, or another, begins:

• *Light and Dark in balance, turning; Year comes forth from Winter, changing
Shoots come forth from mud and soil, kits and*



young are birthed, as well
 Sing we springtime one and all, as all the land
 rejoices.
 Unto the landfolk we give honor, remember we
 your sleep and waking
 Give us your blessing in the planting, and multi-
 ply it in the reaping
 As spring brings summer and the harvest

*The stone or soil is taken up and held as the
 charm is said. The stone or soil may be passed
 around the table for each to contemplate, if de-
 sired.*

- To the Mother of All we make our prayer, and
 likewise give this offering.
 An incense offering is made
 Many named, who upholds every path, womb of
 grain and final tomb
 Let your power be growth in the season of
 growth.
 Let water run free, and soil be rich and quenched
 Let sun be warm and winds kind, and the storm
 bring the protection of the Thunderer
 Earth Mother, you are the Womb of Spring

Be for us the Mother of Peace

*The Corn, in a bowl, is elevated, or passed around
 the table, saying:*

- To the Spring Thunderer we make our prayer,
 and likewise give this offering
 An incense offering is made
 Thunder-wielder, who wakes the seed and guards
 the corn
 Let your power be growth in this season of
 growth.
 Shake the sky, rumble the ground, and let no
 good seed stay sleeping
 Lightning charge the air, and guard against all ill;
 keep safe the Beloved Mother.
 Thunderer, you are the Hammer of Spring
 Be for us the Shield of Protection

*This charm can be said or sung three times, or
 until all the tokens have returned.*

So turn, turn, from dark to light
 We stand in place 'tween left and right
 One hand is winter, one is spring



Between is each and every thing.

All recite or sing the prayer of sacrifice, and a final offering of incense might be given.

- Hear us Holy Ones

Offering we give to all
In Honor, Reverence, and Joy
Accept our sacrifice, we call

A daring and confident host might choose to draw an omen at this time. Many will be happy simply to proceed to the Blessing:

The Head of the Table, or another recites:

- The lights are lit, and the feast is ready. Let the blessing be poured for us all.

The prepared drinks are poured, and a single passing-cup is raised, or everyone raises their cup, and recites:

Let this be blessing, poured for us, from the Holy Powers.

Let it be wisdom, let it be strength, let it be love, between us, true.

Let the World be soil, in which our hearts sprout and bloom and bear.

Let the Season be life, and energy, and strength for the growing

Mother of All, Thunder-Champion, we ask your blessing on these cups.

- *All drink, then bide a moment in silent unity.*
- *The Head begins closing, saying:*

So we accept the blessing of Spring! To all those who have come at our call, All who have given us their blessing, to all those who bide with us in Spring, we give thanks. We bid you go in peace, if you will, or stay at our sides in blessing. Spirits, we thank you!

The Gatekeeper is thanked and the gate closed, saying:

- Keeper of Gates, Lord of Ways, for keeping the crossroad, we give you our thanks.

Now let the Fire be but flame; Let the Well be but water

Let all be as it was before; Save only for the magic we have made.

Let the gates be closed!

Then all recite the Great Blessing:

- We offer our thanks to the Mother of All. We offer our thanks to the Gods, Dead and Spirits.

May the Three Sacred Kins bring joy to all beings, and renew the ancient wisdom.

To the Fire, Well and Tree we offer our thanks.

May Wisdom, Love and Power kindle in all beings, and renew the ancient wisdom.

To the Earth, Sea, and Sky we offer our thanks.

May the ancient wisdom be renewed, and may all beings know peace, joy and happiness

In all the worlds. So be it!

- *The Head concludes, saying:*

Let us keep gratitude in our hearts for this blessing, for this labor, for this good food we are about to eat, in the light of the Holy Ones.

Holy Ones, we thank you (all repeat)

Let's Eat!

Virtual Encounters in These Times

By John Hijatt

With the publication of this edition of *Oak Leaves*, the world is in a condition of a paradigm change. At the time of writing, travel restrictions, social distancing, cancellations of events, and recommendations for people to stay at home and “isolate” due to the fast spreading Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) have altered the way we are interacting with each other. The silent streets, closed businesses, and people scurrying about to get their shopping with as little interaction with others has created a noticeable shift in the universal energy, *wyrd* in Germanic practices, that influences how we perceive the realm of spirit.

As people find ways to maintain connection through online resources such as concerts, classes, medical appointments, conferencing meetings, and more, we are maintaining and expanding relationships and connections in creative ways that will last for a while to come. During this time when in-person gatherings and events are suspended, we can take the time to strengthen and build our spiritual community world-wide by harnessing the technology we have to reach out and get to know each other locally and around the globe.

Among these conferencing meetings will be the rise of virtual rituals, light/calming meditations and healings, and divination readings. These subjects have long been frowned upon by many in the spiritual community as inferior ways in which to have a spiritual experience with others, preferring physical interactions. The benefits of virtual experiences is that that participants are able to connect and create meaningful spiritual space with others from local regions to around the world. This is particularly valuable to solitary practitioners who normally have few or no one nearby with whom they can share these experiences on a regular basis.

From the safety and comfort of one’s own home (or garden, park, other natural setting if capability and connectivity allow), we can create a setting around us and connect them together like bubbles of sacred space via the web. Let’s go over a few of the ways that we can access these virtual spaces to continue connections with our local groups as well as expanding and including others who otherwise would not have a way to connect in person.

Ritual: This is often a controversial topic as there are some in paganism, including the Druid and Heathen communities, who think that virtual ritual is not effective. They take great pains to deny it has any value and denigrate those who participate as well as the event itself. My experience and opinion are that virtual ritual is a wonderful way to provide a deeply moving and sacred experience for those who cannot do so physically with people they know, trust, and care about.

One of the aspects that will require more attention of participants is that of focusing on the ritual and avoiding the temptation to multitask and be distracted by activities and events around their location. To help deal with this, I encourage people to fully participate in the ritual, just as if they were attending one in person with a kindred, grove, or circle. Practice the very same etiquette you would at a physical event. Dress for the occasion (as you normally would – or maybe dress up more in your home), don’t type or surf the web simultaneously, set aside the time and space without interruption, and don’t talk or interrupt unnecessarily. Respect the person(s) facilitating the ritual as well as other attendees.

Another way to engage in the ritual is to not be just a virtual observer. It is different to have participants on a screen (either with or without



video; since some are concerned about being recorded, they may turn off video to participate) and to not be in the physical presence of the elements of the ritual. But by mirroring what is happening with the facilitator with elements in your presence, you can feel more engaged and part of the ritual experience. To do this, the facilitator can send out a list of what ritual tools, offerings, and elements they will be using. Participants can bring similar elements and set up an altar space before them. As something is done by the ritualist, mirror it in your physical space. I think this will help establish a wonderful connection through the cyber realm and also knit the webs of sacred experience to everyone involved, very similar (even if not exactly) to physical ritual events.

Meditation and Healings: These can also be very effectively done via a web conferencing platform. Similar to the ritual experience, participants can

use the tips provided above to help set their room or space for a meaningful experience. The caveat here is that video really should be used so that the facilitator can observe the person. It is also recommended that very deep trance and journey-work should not be done in this manner because a physical proximity is important between the participant and mediator for such deep experiences. For guidance and light calming techniques and healing discussions, video can be an effective way to communicate (just as phone guidance was prior to such advances).

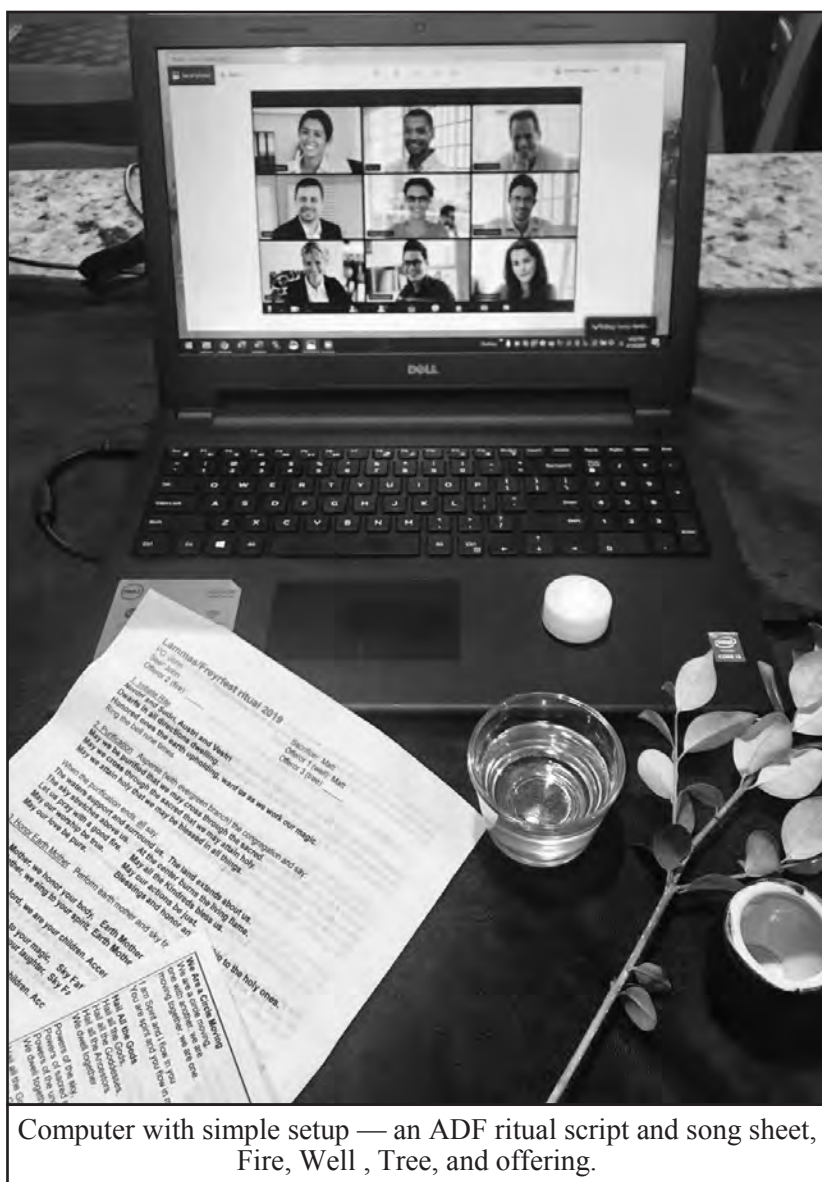
Classes/Workshops: These have been provided for a number of years already with the increase in use and popularity of YouTube. You can find a YouTube video for practically anything that you want to learn or learn how to do. What this possibly expands upon is now creating a live event that your local group can join in from their own homes. With the increase of recommendations to remain away from even small group gatherings, this makes it an effective way to maintain group

cohesiveness. It also provides wonderful opportunities to expand invitations to others in the local pagan community who may be interested in learning about your path, but may not have been able to attend because of a private location or fear of meeting unknown people. It also opens the opportunity of bringing in people from further way (such as solitary practitioners) as well as the potential for guest speakers.

For my local Grove and Heathen kindred, we normally hold a public “pubmoot” which is designed to be in a public space so we can meet new people interested in ADF and Inclusive Heathenry. With the social distancing, I’m listing it as a “Zoommoot.”

Divination/Readings: Finally, we have divination and readings. Moving to a teleconference capability expands upon a communication technique that has been around for meeting the needs of seeking divine guidance for decades. Readings have been given by telephone, chat rooms, messenger, recordings, and letters. Teleconferencing allows for an interactive experience that includes a way for each to see the other. The seeker can see the cards or oracle tool being used, and interact a little more easily than by other means. The tips above are useful here as well, since we want both parties to be present in the moment and attentive to what is occurring before them.

So we have an opportunity to truly turn a situation from doubt, uncertainty, annoyance, and isolation into one that can still include others and provide a way to share experiences and knowledge (gnosis) and maintain the vital connection of community. Something that is highly needed at all times, but particularly when we are faced with being alone (either physically or on



Computer with simple setup — an ADF ritual script and song sheet, Fire, Well , Tree, and offering.

our journey) or facing troubled times.

May your virtual encounters be blessed by the Kindreds and filled with many shared experiences.

(Photos by the author)

John Hijatt has been an ADF member since 2006. He co-founded Coast Oak Grove and is currently the Seers Guild Chief. He practices inclusive Northern Germanic Traditions including Vanatru and Heidhr Craft. He is the host of Gifts of the Wyrd Podcast, a runester, and is working on writing projects about runes.

Book Review: Celtic Religions in the Roman Period : Personal, Local, and Global

Reviewed by Rev. G. R. Grove

Haeussler, R, and Anthony King. Celtic religions in the Roman period : personal, local, and global. Publisher: Celtic Studies Publications (2017) Language: English ISBN-10: 1891271253 ISBN-13: 9781891271250 Paperback: 522 pages

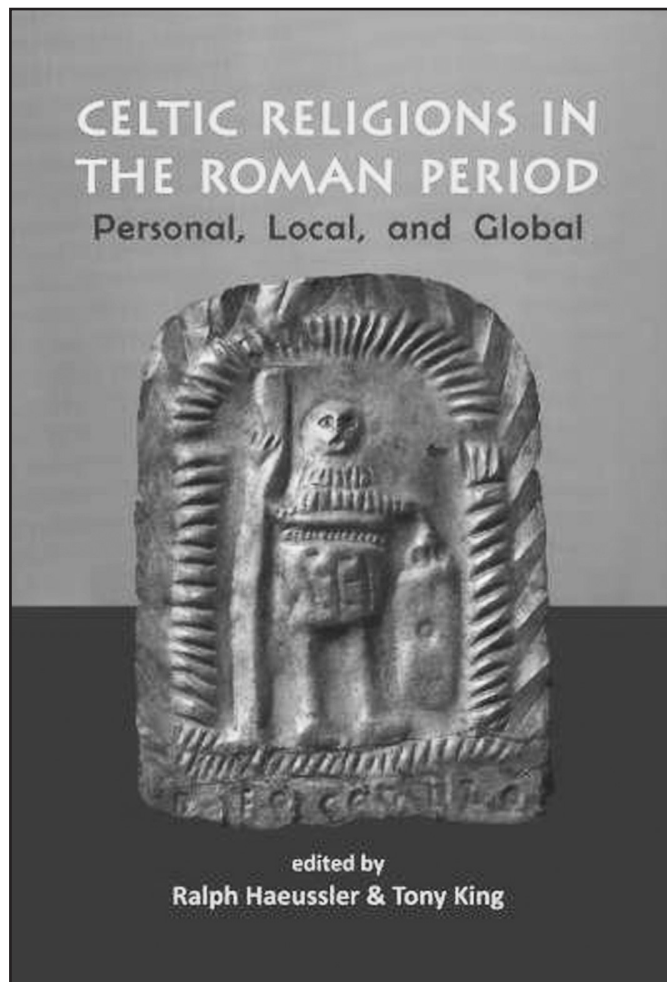
This is a fascinating collection of academic papers on evidence for Celtic religions during the Roman period (1st through 5th centuries CE). It begins with a broad wide-ranging bilingual introduction (English and Welsh in parallel columns) in which the editors discuss many of the topics covered by the individual papers that follow. I especially enjoyed the papers in the Britannia section, that being my particular field of interest, but several others caught my eye – particularly John Koch’s and Fernando Fernández Palacios’ discussion of “Some epigraphic comparanda bearing on the ‘pan-Celtic god’ Lugus” and Daphne Nash Briggs’ “Something old, something new: the names of Faunus in late Roman Thetford (Norfolk) and their Iron-Age background”. Almost all of the twenty-six articles include one or more color and/or black and white illustrations (sometimes many of both). Most of the articles are in English (seventeen plus half of the bilingual introduction); the rest include three in Spanish, two in French, and one each in Italian and German. I recommend this volume highly to the research-oriented reader.

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2. John Koch & Fernando Fernández Palacios:



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Rev. G. R. Grove is a Senior Priest of ADF and Editor-in-Chief of Oak Leaves.

Word Search Puzzle: Gaulish Deities

By Rev. G. R. Grove

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | A | N | T | O | S | U | E | L | T | A |
| O | M | M | A | G | L | O | P | U | S | B |
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| E | O | L | A | I | G | I | N | O | U | I |
| N | R | O | N | O | U | G | A | G | C | G |
| S | O | N | I | S | S | N | R | R | E | A |
| U | S | I | S | I | R | O | N | A | L | N |
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| C | E | R | N | U | N | O | A | N | U | I |
| P | R | O | C | A | M | U | L | U | S | A |
| E | T | N | O | S | U | L | U | S | N | I |
| C | A | T | H | U | B | O | D | U | A | N |

EPONA
TARANIS
ROSMERTA
LUGUS
CATHUBODUA
CAMULUS
NANTOSUELTA

SUCELLUS
CERNUNNOS
BRIGANTIA
OGMIOS
SIRONA
GRANNUS
MAPONUS

SULUS
NODENS

*(From Ancient Fire by
Segomarus Widugeni)*

The Poets

Diane Cacciato joined ADF in 2017, and is the Grove Organizer for Gary Oak Protogrove. She is an author, poet, essayist and retired teacher-librarian. She divides her time living between two islands worlds apart — Vancouver Island in Canada and Sicily.

Rev. D. Rowen Grove joined ADF in the spring of 2010, and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She became an ADF Initiate in 2015 and was ordained an ADF Priest in 2016. She is currently Senior Druid of Chokeycherry Grove, ADF, in Denver, Colorado

Rev. G. R. Grove Grove joined ADF in 2009. She is an ADF Initiate, Chief of the Scholars Guild, and one of the Bardic Guild's four Master Bards. She was ordained in 2016, consecrated in 2018, and elevated to Senior Priest in 2019. She is Grove Organizer and former Senior Druid of Chokeycherry Grove, ADF, in Denver, Colorado. She has published four collections of poetry and five historical novels (with a little magic) set in 1st and 6th century Britain and Ireland.

Bonnie Lin Landry is a human who spends her time writing poetry and lamenting about good poetry. She joined ADF in 2005 and is a member of Charter Oak Grove and a Purveyor of sun-spots.

Jenne Micale is a writer, singer, priestess and musician whose endeavors include the ethereal/wyrd folk project Kwannon and, in former times, the wyrd folk band Belladonna Bouquet. A former initiate of the Henge of Keltria, she won the 2009 DANAC Golden Oak Award for best Druidical essay, and has published articles and poetry in a variety of publications. She is currently Bard of the ADF Protogrove of the Three Gorges. Listen to her music at www.kwannon.net

Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano has been a member of ADF since 1984 (he was ADF's eighth member). He is an ADF Senior Priest, an Initiate, and our current Archdruid. He enjoys working with his various altars, spending time in Nature, and studying and teaching the Ogham.

Kelli Rankin joined ADF in 2017. She lives in Akron, Ohio, and is the Grove Organizer of Crismson Cauldron Protogrove.

Brian Waters is of the folk of Muin Mound ADF Grove. He is also a member of Uthelingu Heathen Kindred and a member of the Temple Of Tara. He creates pagan folk music with his band Green Mistletoe located in upstate New York. He is an artist, poet, musician and author.

News and Announcements

Program & Path Completions

Aimee Brannon

Dedicant Path
3 March, 2020

Stacy

Dedicant Path
1 April, 2020

~Congratulations to all~

Upcoming Events

Wellspring Gathering

3-7 September, 2020
Tredara Shrine
Madison, OH, USA

For more festival information see
www.adf.org/events

**Word Search Puzzle : Characters and Places In the First Branch of the Mabinogion -
Answers from Issue #88**

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | H | I | O | D | O | L | F | B | | U | O |
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| | E | | | I | A | A | | G | A | K | H |
| | R | T | A | L | I | E | S | I | N | E | E |
| G | | M | N | | R | N | E | | D | R | U |
| W | | U | E | | G | G | N | | A | I | S |
| Y | | S | I | | E | U | C | | G | D | |
| D | | E | R | | N | S | H | | D | W | O |
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PWYLL
GORSEDD
ARBERTH
ANNWFN
ARAWN
HAFGAN
RHIANNON
HYFAIDD HEN

GWAWL
TEYRNON
TWF
LIANT
GWRI
WALLT
EURYN
PRYDERI

GLYN CUCH
DYFED
GWENT IS COED
DOGS
COLT
STAG



ADF Directory



The Mother Grove

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Archdruid | Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano | adf-archdruid@adf.org |
| Vice-Archdruid | Rev. Amber Doty | adf-vice-archdruid@adf.org |
| Treasurer | Margaret Forsell-VanHorn | adf-treasurer@adf.org |
| Secretary | Victoria Selnes | adf-secretary@adf.org |
| Members Advocate | Bonnie Landry | adf-members-advocate@adf.org |
| Chief of the Council of Regional Druids | Rev. Amber Doty | adf-cord-chief@adf.org |
| Chief of the Council of Senior Druids | Rev. Michael Dangler | adf-cosd-chief@adf.org |
| Non-Officer Director | Arthur Shipkowski | ashipkowski@gmail.com |
| Non-Officer Director | Rev. Kelly Kingston (Carrion Mann) | carrionmann@gmail.com |
| Non-Officer Director | James Fielder | thebigpigeon@yahoo.com |
| Non-Officer Director | Julie Desrosiers | poledrasdaughter@gmail.com |

Additional Leadership Positions

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Administrator | Jane Wayson | adf-administrator@adf.org |
| Archdruid Emeritus | Rev. Isaac Bonewits | [deceased] |
| Archdruid Emeritus | Rev. Ian Corrigan | tredara@ncweb.com |
| Archdruid Emeritus | Rev. John 'Fox' Adelman | john.adelman@trw.com |
| Archdruid Emeritus | Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison | skip@dragonskeep.us |
| Archdruid Emeritus | Rev. Kirk Thomas | druidkirk@gmail.com |
| Chronicler | Manny Tejada-Moreno | adf-chronicler@adf.org |
| Information Manager | Arthur Shipkowski | adf-info-manager@adf.org |
| Listmaster and Moderator | Rev. G. R. Grove | adf-listmaster@adf.org |
| Preceptor | Rev. D. Rowen Grove | adf-preceptor@adf.org |
| Webmaster | Arthur Shipkowski | adf-webmaster@adf.org |

Committees

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Clergy Council | Chair: Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano | adf-archdruid@adf.org |
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For more information on **Groves, Guilds, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and Kins**, please see the full listing at:

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Ár nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

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Submission Guidelines for Oak Leaves:

Oak Leaves welcomes submissions of articles, poetry, artwork, and anything else that might be of interest to our Druid readers. Submissions 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, but preference will be given to submissions from ADF members. Since excellent scholarship is one of ADF's goals, please document sources of ideas and materials that you used for your writings. 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. We reserve the right to reject submissions which do not meet our standards. When planning lengthy submissions, please inquire first at oak-leaves@adf.org.

Electronic submissions are preferred, sent as email attachments to the Oak Leaves submissions address: oak-leaves@adf.org. Written submissions should be sent in one of the following formats: MS Word (.doc/.docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), or Text Format (.txt). Please include a brief ADF-related bio for all articles and essays. For more information on submissions, please see our web page at <https://www.adf.org/publications/periodicals/oak-leaves/submissions.html> or contact us at oak-leaves@adf.org.

Deadlines for submissions (two months before publication date):

Spring Issue : December 1st;
Summer Issue : March 1st;
Autumn Issue : June 1st;
Winter Issue : September 1st



Hand Washing Prayer

We call to the deep
Where the Ancestors dwell
Deep in the Mother
We pour in the Well

We call to the land
Where the spirits run free
On the shoulders of the Mother
We reach for the Tree

We call to the sky
Where our prayers do aspire
Stretching over the Mother
We give to the Fire

~ Rev. Jean Pagano ~

The Wellspring Gathering 2020



has been Rescheduled for

September 3 - 7,

at Tredara Shrine, In NE Ohio



Due to the CoVid 19 emergency,
our line-up of guests is in flux.

Sara Mastros is confirmed for the event,
and more announcements will follow.

Still Featuring:

Wellspring Bardic Chair • Warrior's Guild Games
Brewer's Competition • Artisan's Guild Competition & Salon
Pot-luck Feast • ADF Annual Meeting (?)

Special Musical Guests:

The Mickeys

Rollicking Irish Fun!

COST: \$75-ADF MEMBERS, \$85-NON-MEMBERS,

PRE-REG, \$85/\$95 AT DOOR, \$20 PER DR. MINORS (UNDER 18) FREE.

<https://stonecreed.org/wellspring> • seniordruid@stonecreed.org