

OAK LEAVES

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin Autumn 2020 ~ Issue No. 90



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.



- Rev. Ian Corrigan -



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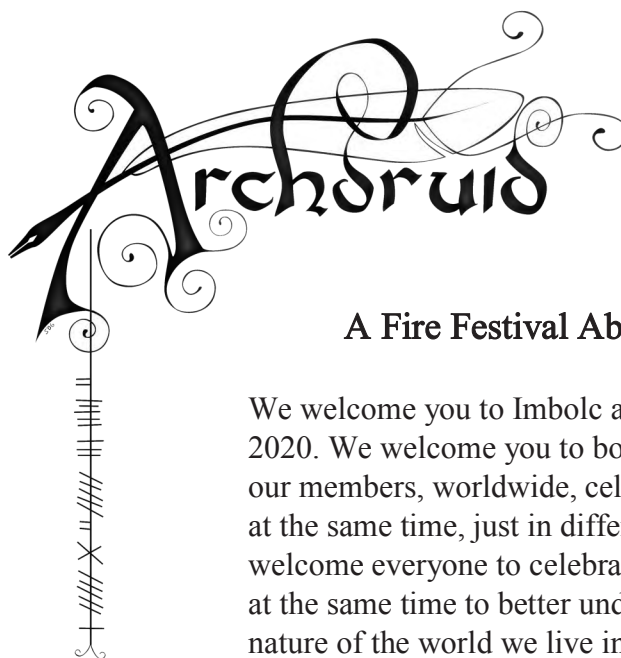
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A Fire Festival About the Sun

We welcome you to Imbolc and Lughnasadh, 2020. We welcome you to both festivals because our members, worldwide, celebrate these rituals at the same time, just in different hemispheres. I welcome everyone to celebrate both of the rituals at the same time to better understand the dynamic nature of the world we live in and the way in which we can do two differing rites at the same time and better understand them.

The ancient Indo-European people had no idea that opposite festivals could happen at the same time on different sides of the equator. For them, the land, sea, and sky around them was all that existed. We, as more modern individuals, now realise that there is much more to the world than just our little patch of earth. There is, in fact, the entirety of the planet and the experiences in the various places are many and varied.

The appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for people across the planet, both as a health crisis and as a change in the way that we live. While normalcy be return at some point, the experience we have lived through will remain with us for an exceptionally long time.

One thing that has happened during this time is the emergence of many ritual opportunities, both as an observer and as a participant. These opportunities are not just local to us but are global. For the Summer/Winter Solstice in June, I attended a Winter Solstice rite with Silver Birch Grove in Melbourne, Australia, and Summer Solstice with Wild Onion Grove in Chicago.

Both High Days happen when the Sun is either emerging from the darkest time of the year or declining from the longest day of the year. The

light of the sun acts as both an inspiration for those coming out of darkness and as a summer beacon for those experiencing the final weeks of the summer season. The sun heralds life, as the weather warms from winter, and as the warm summer days linger on before autumn.

I believe that if we try to feel both High Days at the same time, we will better understand the complex nature of the Earth Mother and the world in which we live. Both times provide their own unique inspirations and those creative outpouring are evident in this issue of Oak Leaves. We are fortunate to have such talented individuals within our ranks who bring these works of inspiration to you.

Let me share a few prayers with you:

A Prayer for Increasing Light

Come from the Darkness and the longest night,
The wheel turns again,
As promised,
As expected,
The Earth Mother stirs
And the Kindred are always present,
Yet perhaps better seen.
We celebrate the increasing light,
And say "Thank you".

A Prayer for the Fullness of Light

Under the skies and days of full light,
The wheel turns again,
Among the growing fields,
Among the swaying grains,
The Earth Mother in full blossom
And the Kindred fully felt
And easily seen.
We celebrate the fullness of the season,
And say "Thank you".

I want to welcome our new Mother Grove members, Vice Archdruid Rev. Amber Doty, Non-Officer Directors Rev. Carrion Mann and Art Shipkowski, and Members' Advocate Bonnie Landry. We wish to thank outgoing Vice Archdruid Rev. Sean Harbaugh and Members' Advo-

cate Sarah de Finney for their service to the Mother Grove and ADF.

I leave with you with a selection that I wrote, just for the Sun.

The Sun

The Sun is a goddess,
Or god to some,
No life could exist
Without the shining rays
That radiate
From the heavens
Onto Earth.

My hands held aloft,
The Sun touches my palms,
And the heat and wonder
Soak in and all the way through,
Like light
Through a prism,
Of countless colours.

My face to the Sun,
The heat caresses my visage,
And makes me think
Of summer days gone by;
Stretching across time,
Moving incredibly slowly
Like a moment frozen in Amber.

My prayer drifts upwards,
To that goddess or god
In the Sky
And ignites in proximity.
Blessings descend as the desire
Is blown like dandelion seeds,
By the winds from the Sun.

Blessings of the Sun to you all on these High Days and all throughout the year.

Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano
Archdruid, ADF

Autumn Issue of Oak Leaves

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

In this uncertain world, due to the COVID-19 virus and the ongoing political chaos here in the United States, I have endeavored to maintain the usual mix of articles and poetry in this Autumn Issue of Oak Leaves.

In addition to the column from our Archdruid, Rev. Jean “Drum” Pagano, in which he meditates on the Sun, we have thoughts from our Vice Archdruid, ADF Senior Priest Amber Doty, on ways to deal with the chaos around us.

Thoughts about Indo-European languages occupy two of our contributors – Rev. D. Rowen Grove, who shares three Scots Gaelic charms and her English adaptations, and Diane Cacciato, who considers the use of hearth culture languages in ritual.

request for submissions. I encourage others to follow their example and share their works with us.

Along with her Scots Gaelic charms, Rev. D. Rowen Grove has shared a tasty recipe for Irish Apple Cake, and I have added to the Insular Celtic theme with a story I wrote over twenty years ago after a trip to Wales, together with a brief explanation of the Welsh National Eisteddfod.

Rev. Ian Corrigan gives us his thoughts on Faith and Works in Pagan Theology – a discussion harvested from his blog at intothemound.blogspot.com, which I highly recommend. Kelli Hayward provides us with a brief review of Philip Freeman’s book *War, Women, and Druids*:



Wayne Keysor provides us with a long article on analyzing the Pagan pilgrimage narrative. This piece ran in *Oak Leaves* about six years ago, but I felt it was worth repeating. Wayne has also just sent me an article on ancient theories of the soul, which will be in our next issue.

Our poets have been extremely productive this time, providing us with a large collection of their works. I would especially like to thank those first-time contributors – Julia Brown and Gaarik Hamr – who responded to my Facebook

Eyewitness Reports and Early Accounts of the Ancient Celts. And finally, Spiral O’Neil shares their experiences with Pagan deities in a 12 Step program.

As always, I thank all our contributors, and encourage others to submit articles and poetry for future issues. Send them to oak-leaves@adf.org before September 15th, and you, too, may find your work in print.

Blessings to all,
Rev. G. R. Grove

Words from the Vice Archdruid

By Rev. Amber Doty

2020 has been a year filled with chaos, curveballs, and uncertainty. As someone who appreciates and relies on routines to be productive, this year has provided a whole new set of struggles. I've had to find a balance between home and work, and sometimes it felt like my spirituality got left behind because I was out of metaphorical spell slots. First and foremost, I want to say that it is perfectly acceptable to take a break from devotionals or spiritual practice during troubling times. You have to do what is right for you in your own journey. However, if you are looking for ways to foster a devotional practice when you're feeling overwhelmed, below are a few tools that I have been utilizing myself during trying times.

- **Incorporate devotionals into your pre-existing routines:** Devotional work doesn't have to be complicated or overly detailed. I've learned that finding ways to incorporate my spiritual practices into things that I'm already doing makes them much more approachable and easy to continue with, even when life becomes challenging. For example, I drink tea or coffee as part of my morning routine almost daily. As I pour my coffee, I pour a little bit extra into a cup I keep beside my coffee pot as an offering to my house spirits.
- **Use Social Media as a tool:** There are definitely times where social media can feel overwhelming and exhausting. There is often an abundance of negativity on those sites. Even in the happier moments, it's easy to see the posed Instagram posts and high quality YouTube videos and feel like I am not doing enough work myself. Instead of beating myself up, I've started to see social media influencers as a tool for my own devotion. If I don't have the energy to perform my own ritual, I'll find a YouTube video of someone else performing a ritual that I can watch. If a ritual is too much, I'll search the hashtags on social media to find posts from people who are celebrating when I don't feel up to it myself, like #Yule or #ADFDruidry to see photos of altars and celebrations. I view these moments as a successful devotional practice that is low impact for me.
- **Get outside:** It seems like a small thing, but sometimes simply being outside gives me the opportunity to ground and center myself and be reminded of the beauty of nature. Some days, I'll walk through my neighborhood (and leave my phone behind) to see the squirrels playing and the robins searching for food. On other days I'll simply sit outdoors and watch the clouds or the leaves moving in the breeze. Even in the heart of my small city, there is life to be found if I just remember to look.
- **Don't worry about being perfect:** It's really easy to be hard on myself if I miss a day of devotional practice, or feel like the work I'm doing is not good enough. I promise, no matter what work you're doing, it is good work. The Kindred don't expect us to be perfect. We each have our own journey, our own abilities to cope, and our own bandwidth. It's ok if your work isn't the same as mine. The fact that we are trying is as close to perfect as we need to be.

Those are just a few of the ways that I have approached devotional practice this year. I hope they are helpful for you in some way. If you have other suggestions, I'd love to hear them.

Have a blessed season,

Rev. Amber Doty
Vice Archdruid

Three Charms Adapted from *Carmina Gadelica*

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

Introduction:

The six-volume collection of Scottish Gaelic poetry, hymns, prayers, and other lore generally known as *Carmina Gadelica* was assembled in the late nineteenth century by folklore enthusiast Alexander Carmichael. Much of this material was preserved in the oral tradition of a largely non-literate society, some of it (by internal evidence) for many generations. The charms here are shown in the original, nineteenth-century Gaelic, in Carmichael's own translations, and in my Pagan adaptations, which are based on my familiarity with the structures of Gaelic folk-magic, as well as the original verses.

Part 1: A Charm for Healing:

The *Carmina Gadelica* contains a number of healing charms; this one, *Eolas an t-Sniamh*, or "Charm of the Sprain", is clearly related to the healing charm from the Merseberg Incantations, as well as some from other Indo-European cultures.

Eolas an t-Sniamh
Char Bride mach
Maduinn mhoch,
Le caraid each;
Bhris each a chas,

Le uinich och,
Bha sid mu seach,
Chuir i cnamh ri cnamh,
Chuir i feoil ri feoil,
Chuir i feithe ri feithe,
Chuir i cuisle ri cuisle;
Mar a leighis ise sin
Gun leighis mise seo.

Charm of the Sprain
Bride went out
In the morning early,
With a pair of horses;
One horse broke his
leg,
With much ado,
That was apart,
She put bone to bone,
She put flesh to flesh,
She put sinew to sinew,
She put vein to vein;
As she healed that
May I heal this.
(Carmichael, Vol. II,
18-19)

The speaker refers to a work of healing performed by the Saint / Goddess Bride, wherein the damage to a horse's leg is healed by setting the parts back together, and (presumably) by Her powers. In a sort of "as above, so below" parallel, so may the user's own particular magic be just as efficacious. The version below could use a similar form, calling on a healer Deity of their own particular hearth-culture, such as Brighid, Eir, or Airmid, or on another healer – perhaps an Ancestor – with whom the ADF healer has worked in the past. I have phrased this as a morning working, but clearly the words could be altered somewhat for use in another part of the day.

Healing Charm:

Now in the morning early
I have called out to the Kindeds Three,
And especially to Brighid, Fire of Healing!
Gracious One, aid you have given,
Setting bone to bone
Drawing flesh to flesh
Filling breath with breath;
To heal the sundered;
As your powers have healed in the past,
So may my work give healing to _____ (the
patient)
(repeat three times)
Bitheadh e mar sin! May it be so!

Although Carmichael did not so specify, I know from my own familiarity with Gaelic folklore that charms were often repeated a set number of times, then finished off with an affirmation.

Part 2: A Charm of Warding

The *Carmina Gadelica* also contains many charms of warding. This one, an excerpt from a longer piece, was, according to Carmichael, "sung by a pilgrim in setting out on his pilgrim-

age. The family and friends joined the traveller [*sic*] in singing the hymn and starting the journey, from which too frequently, for various causes, he never returned” (Carmichael, Vol. I, 316-317). This charm could be used at the start of any journey, and perhaps especially for one travelling to a religious festival or retreat, or to an old sacred site, as a modern version of a pilgrimage. Again, I present here first the original Gaelic and Carmichael’s translation, followed by my own adaptation.

Ora Turais

Bith a bhi na m’ bhial,

*Bladh a bhi na m’ chainn,
Blath na siri na mo bhile,*

Gun an tig mi nail.

*Siubhal choire, siubhal
choille,*

Siubhal fraoine fada, fas,

*Moire mhin-gheal sior dha
m’ chobhair,*

*Am Buachaill Iosa m’ dhion ’
s a char.*

*Moire mhin-gheal sior dha
m’ chobhair,*

*Am Buachaill Iosa m’ dhion ’s
a chas.*

Pilgrim’s Charm

Life be in my
speech,
Sense in what I say
The bloom of
cherries on my lips
Till I come back
again.

Traversing
corries, traversing
forests,
Traversing valleys
long and wild

The fair white Mary
still uphold me,

The Shepherd Jesu
be my shield,

The fair white Mary
still uphold me,

The Shepherd Jesu
be my shield,
(Carmichael, Vol. I,
316-317)

The traveler speaks or sings this with intent to protect, not only their life, but to maintain their sense and health, until s/he returns home. In the fifth line, a “corrie” is from the Gaelic, *coire*, which denotes a circular hollow; in a landscape, a

valley surrounded by hills, sometimes colloquially, a hollow hill, i.e. an Otherworld entrance. (MacLennan, 65) The other main meaning of *coire* is a whirlpool, and since one of the most dangerous whirlpools in the world, the Corryvreckan (*Coire Bhreacain*) lies off the western coast of Argyll, it may be this against which the speaker seeks protection. Certainly, both hollow hills and large whirlpools are dangerous to unwary travelers.

A Warding Charm for a Journey

I set forth on my journey;
Now may **ghosti* be in my speech,
and Wisdom and Piety in what I say;
May the bloom of health be on me
Till I come back again.
By pathways and by highways,
In cities and in wild places,
May my Ancestors watch over me
May the Land Kins show me the right road
May the Shining Ones stand with me
And the Triple Kin guide my going out,
And my returning home;
My going out, and my returning home.
Bitheadh e mar sin! May it be so!

The repetition of the last line is another variation frequently encountered in Gaelic charm-work.

Part 3 – A Charm of Purification

Much of the purification magic found in the *Carmina Gadelica* is closely entwined with blessing or protection, for other than later Protestant anxieties over “sins” and general unworthiness, there seems to have been fewer concerns among the Gael for the need for ritual purification than occur in some cultures. A young hunter may be purified (and admonished) before his first hunt, lest he take inappropriate prey: a beast with young which are still suckling, for example (Carmichael, Vol. I, 311). There are also ritual consecrations: of a loom, of a fishing boat, but these are not specifically purifications.

However, there is at least one *Eolas* (charm,

incantation, knowledge) for purification against the evil eye, and this is no beseeching prayer to a higher authority, but an affirmation of the speaker's own power. Note that this is not a protection against this ill, but a purification to be rid of it. As above, I present here first the original Gaelic and Carmichael's translation, followed by my own adaptation.

Eolas a Bheum-Shula **Charm Against the Evil Eye**
Saltraim air an t-suil I trample upon the eye,
Mar a shaltrais lach air luin, As tramples the duck upon the lake,
Mar a shaltrais eal air burn, As tramples the swan upon the water,
Mar a shaltrais each air uir, As tramples the horse upon the plain,
Mar a shaltrais earc air iuc, As tramples the cow upon the 'iuc,*
Mar a shaltrais feachd nan dul, As tramples the host of the elements,
Mar a shaltrais feachd nan dul. As tramples the host of the elements,
Ta neart gaoith agam air, Power of wind I have over it,
Ta neart fraoich agam air, Power of wrath I have over it,
Ta neart teine agam air, Power of fire I have over it,
Ta neart torruinn agam air, Power of thunder I have over it,
Ta neart dealain agam air, Power of lightning I have over it,
Ta neart gaillinn agam air, Power of storms I have over it,
Ta neart gile agam air, Power of moon I have over it,

Ta neart greine agam air, Power of sun I have over it,
Ta neart nan reul agam air, Power of stars I have over it,
Ta neart nan speur agam air, Power of firmament I have over it,
Ta neart nan neamh Power of the heavens
Is nan ce agam air, And of the worlds I have over it,
Neart nan neamh Power of the heavens
Is nan ce agam air. And of the worlds I have over it.
Trian air na clacha glasa dheth, A [third] portion of it upon the grey stones,
Trian air na beanna casa dheth, A portion of it upon the steep hills,
Trian air na h-easa brasa dheth, A portion of it upon the fast falls,
Trian air na liana maiseach dheth, A portion of it upon the fair meads,
'S train air a mhuir mhoir shalach, And a portion upon the great salt sea,
'S i fein asair is fearr gu ghiulan, She herself is the best instrument to carry it,
A mhuir mhor shalach, The great salt sea,
A sair is fearr gu ghiulan. The best instrument to carry it.
An ainm Tri nan Dul, In name of the Three of Life,
An ainm nan Tri Numh, In name of the Sacred Three,
An ainm nan uile Run, In name of all the Secret Ones,
Agus nan Cursa comhla. And of the Powers together.
(Carmichael, Vol

II, 45-46)
* translation
uncertain

The folk of ADF are not in general much concerned with having an “evil eye” cast on them, so I have adapted this to be used against some other trouble, whether magical attack or mundane difficulty, which has come upon the speaker; it could of course be adapted to use for someone else’s benefit. I have deliberately left the middle section very little changed.

Charm for Purification of Ill-fortune or Ill-Wishing

Be the Wisdom of the Ancestors on me,
Be the Strength of the Nature Kins in me,
Be the Magic of the Shining Ones with me,
And of the Triple Kindreds together,
I cast out this ill that is on me,
I cast out this bane that afflicts me,
I cast out this harm that comes near me.
Power of wind have I over it,
Power of wrath have I over it,
Power of fire have I over it,
Power of thunder have I over it,
Power of lightning have I over it,
Power of storms have I over it,
Power of moon have I over it,
Power of sun have I over it,
Power of stars have I over it.

Power of the Land,
Power of the Sea,
Power of the Sky,
And of the Three Realms have I over it,
Power of the Three Realms have I over it.

Be it crushed upon the grey stones
Be it flung down the steep hills,
Be it drowned in the salt sea,
Which can easily consume it.

By the wisdom of the Ancestors,
By the Strength of the Nature Kins,
By the Magic of the Shining Ones,
And of all the Kindreds together.
I swim swiftly as the salmon in the sea,
I run strongly as the horse upon the plain,

I soar purely as the swan in the high heavens.
By all the Kindreds together,
Bitheadh e mar sin! Be it so!

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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.



Analyzing the Pagan Pilgrimage Narrative

By Wayne Keysor

The figure of the religious traveler has been a recurring image within the western literary tradition. Assigned the distinctive title of pilgrim, this figure has walked, ridden, or sailed across the pages of countless works of literature, history, philosophy, and travel writing. The ubiquity of this figure and the pilgrim's liminal status as simultaneously a societal insider and outsider has challenged scholars to attempt to understand the nature and significance of pilgrimage within multiple disciplines. This study has primarily focused on what has become the paradigmatic example of the pilgrim in the West, the Christian pilgrim traveling to Christian religious sites, particularly the Holy Land. However, some recent scholarly work has been done also on non-Christian traditions, both ancient and modern.

This paper will build on both streams of inquiry to analyze an important, but idiosyncratic, Pagan pilgrimage account from the period of the Roman high empire, the account of the second century Greek rhetorician Aelius Aristides. By examining this narrative, this paper will illuminate certain aspects of sacred place in Greco-Roman Paganism and argue that the Pagan pilgrimage can be understood through Mircea Eliade's concept of a movement towards a sacred center. Eliade's view posits a consistent pre-modern view about how the sacred interacts with the mundane world, and argues that this view depends on deeply held assumptions arising from pre-historic religious thought.

Pilgrimage scholar Jas Elsner characterizes recent work on the subject as falling within three distinctive and often conflicting outlooks: the historical, the anthropological, and the theological. The historical outlook tends to see pilgrimage as a recognizable, bounded phenomenon that is susceptible to analysis on the individual scale. Historians attempt to explore the precise charac-

teristics of particular examples of pilgrimage in order to reconstruct the historical moment. Anthropologists, on the other hand, attempt to analyze pilgrimage as an expression of social processes, such as the formation of group identity or the operations of the state. As Elsner observes, this approach tends almost to "dissolve" the phenomenon of pilgrimage into its social, political, and cultural contexts; thus, effectively dismantling it as a useful category. Finally, contrary to the approaches of the two other groups, theologians tend to see pilgrimage from the inside of religious experience, and usually from within a particular faith tradition.¹

The approach taken by this paper will be to attempt to combine the best features of both the historical and the theological viewpoints. It will take seriously the notion that at the heart of pilgrimage is an individual, religious experience, while attempting not to work from within any particular religious tradition. To discount the spiritual dimension is to impoverish our understanding of pilgrimage and to ignore fundamental aspects of human experience. At the same time, this individual, religious experience occurs at a distinct time and place and is characterized by unique attitudes and beliefs. To ignore this reality would be to fall into ahistorical error. An appreciation of both viewpoints is required.

Therefore, this paper will begin by positioning Aristides in time and place and briefly introducing his signature work, *The Sacred Tales*. Publius Aelius Aristides was born in 118 CE in Asia Minor. He was the son of a provincial elite, and based on his aristocratic birth was able to obtain the best education available within his society. His life coincided with the height of the Roman Empire; an empire internally at peace and prosperous.

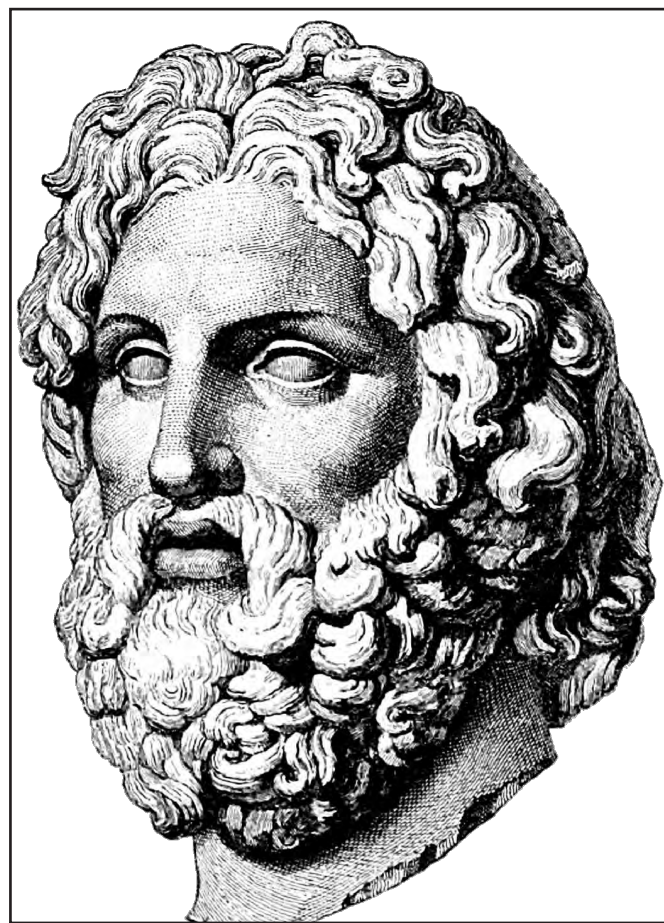
Intellectually, he participated in the second century movement known as the second sophistic; a period where educated Greek and Roman elites sought to revive earlier classical forms of language and literature, while simultaneously cultivating a scholarly interest in the past.² Aristides achieved considerable fame in his lifetime as an orator, even declaiming in front of the emperor, a singular honor in the highly hierarchical Greco-Roman society of his age. Juxtaposed against this worldly success, however, was Aristides' life-long struggle against chronic illness that left him in agony for years on end and rendered him unable to participate in public life.³

In an effort to find relief from his repeated bouts of serious illness, he turned to the physician-savior god Asclepius, who had an important temple center in Roman Asia at the city of Pergamum. Aristides' devotion resulted in a series of profound dreams and waking visions in which Asclepius appeared to him, and provided a series of cures and encouragements. In gratitude for the god's aid, Aristides penned a very personal, highly idiosyncratic work he titled *The Sacred Tales*, in which he records the actions of the god in his life over a 26-year period, from 143 to 171 CE, in order to thank and glorify Asclepius.⁴ This account provides extensive detail on Aristides' journeys to Asclepius' cult centers and his physical, emotional, and spiritual responses to them.

PILGRIMAGE AND ARCHAIC ONTOLOGIES

It is helpful in examining *The Sacred Tales* to have a structure with which to investigate the underlying elements of Pagan pilgrimage. To provide the theoretical basis to do this, this paper will employ the work of the historian of religion Mircea Eliade. Eliade provides a cross-cultural reading of pre-modern theology that provides a useful vocabulary with which to discuss experiences within different religious traditions in a comparative way.

Eliade argues that pre-modern societies viewed



Asclepius. Public domain image from Wikimedia Commons.

time and history as cyclical. Humans participated in history by engaging in behavior designed to imitate original sacred acts that occurred in mythic time, whether they be the creation of the cosmos or the introduction of important cultural practices or social structures. Effectively, all significant human acts were imitative. Reality was a function of the imitation of celestial archetypes or patterns. These celestial paradigms were reproduced in earthly ways in the construction of temples, palaces, or cities, or assigned to preexisting natural features like mountains or rivers.⁵

He called these sacred places “centers of the world,” by which Eliade meant that within a cultural and religious context, they symbolize most completely the celestial paradigm from which they derive their meaning. They are considered the “center of the world” because it is at these places that humans once again experience mythic time and space. From the perspective of

the believers, these are “zones of absolute reality”, sites where the sacred has created a rupture into the profane world and has permanently set it apart. These places take part in a reality greater than the apparent or profane reality. They embody most completely the perennial, celestial pattern and because of this, they are more intensely real in a Platonic sense.⁶ This additional ontological weight within these zones of absolute reality make the miraculous possible. Such sacred centers, in the words of Eliade, are consecrated,

“...in a space qualitatively different from profane space. Through the paradox of rite, every consecrated space coincides with the center of the world, just as the time of any ritual coincides with the mythical time of the ‘beginning’. Through representation of the cosmogonic act, concrete time, in which the construction takes place, is projected into mythical time, *in ille tempore* when foundation of the world occurred. Thus the reality and enduringness of a construction are assured not only by the transformation of profane space into transcendent space (the center) but also by the transformation of concrete time into mythical time.”⁷

In ille tempore refers back to the time when the ritual was first practiced by a god, ancestor, or culture hero, and which is now being repeated by the contemporary human. Applied to the concept of pilgrimage, these ideas suggest that a pilgrimage is a journey to a center of the world in which the pilgrim travels from the profane towards the sacred, simultaneously recreating and taking part in the original sacred act that sanctified the pilgrimage site. Eliade characterizes such a journey in this way:

“The road is arduous, fraught with perils, because it is, in fact, a rite of passage from the profane to the sacred, from the ephemeral and illusory to reality and eternity, from death to life, from man to

divinity. Attaining the center is equivalent to a consecration, an initiation; yesterday’s profane and illusory existence gives place to a new [*sic*], to a life that is real, enduring, and effective.”⁸

The rituals in which the pilgrim engages on the way to the sacred center and the practices he undertakes upon arriving have meaning because they partake in and imitate the original sacred act, drawing on that first act for their power. Seen from this perspective, the driving impulse towards pilgrimage arises from the desire to experience the sacred in its most concentrated and real form, which can only happen at a center of the world.

This religious impulse also can be manifested in a diminished form, experienced as the desire simply to witness the miraculous or the wondrous at a pilgrimage site. However, beneath this tourist



Pergamon Acropolis from Sanctuary of Asclepios. Image from Wikimedia Alike 3.0 Unported license. Author: Ingo Mehling.

impulse lies a tacit recognition, perhaps not coherently expressed, that the sacred center is a place where the wondrous might occur precisely because it partakes of this original divine energy in such a privileged way.⁹

AELIUS ARISTIDES: SACRED GEOGRAPHY AND MYTHIC NARRATIVE

To begin to apply these concepts to the pilgrimages of Aristides, both the parameters of Aristides' individual pilgrimages and a broader sense of Greco-Roman Pagan pilgrimage must first be established. One essential fact about Aristides' pilgrimages that must be immediately grappled with is their inherently local character. This local character can be jarring if one immediately thinks of the Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land or the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca as the paradigmatic examples of pilgrimage. For most pre-modern people taking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or Mecca, such trips were massive investments in

time and impressive logistical problems. Aristides, on the other hand, limited his religious activities to essentially his home province, the Roman province of Asia, which was situated in today's western Turkey, giving them a whole other quality.

Aristides was born in northwest Asia Minor, in Mysia, on ancestral estates situated in the tribal region of the Olympe.¹⁰ While he did travel outside of the Province of Asia, most notably to Egypt, Rome, and Athens, he retained these ancestral estates throughout his life and eventually died there. He spent most of his life in Roman Asia, splitting his time between the Smyrna, of which he was a citizen; Pergamum; and his family estates in Mysia. It was at the temple of Asclepius at Pergamum that he was to have his most profound religious experiences, which deeply affected his entire life. Roman Asia during Aristides' life was one of the wealthiest, most urbanized, most densely populated provinces in the empire. It hosted several internationally known Pagan shrines, as well as innumerable regional and local shrines.

In this, Roman Asia was not unique. The Greco-Roman world was filled with Pagan religious shrines of every sort, from the strictly local to the internationally famous and everything in between.¹¹ Ted Kaizer, in his work on Near Eastern shrines in the Greco-Roman world, comments on this diversity by noting that recent work suggests that the empire as a whole lacked, "an articulated religious system that integrated both ritual and belief." For Kaizer and others, this explains why the Romans "were apparently quite content to accept that things worked differently in cult from how they did in myth even if that meant that a god could simultaneously be multiple and singular, local and universal."¹² This willingness to embrace the local within Greco-Roman Paganism, at the cost of some narrative coherence within myth, meant that pilgrimage to holy sites was available to nearly all people, even if only to their local sacred spring.



This diversity and the local character of shrines was built on certain theological assumptions. From the perspective of Greco-Roman Paganism, the qualities of shrines varied not in kind, but rather in magnitude, in a way that is not the case for the monotheistic religions of Christianity or Islam. Jerusalem or Mecca as sacred places are qualitatively different in character for Christians or Muslims than other Christian or Islamic sacred places. In Greco-Roman Paganism, some shrines might host more powerful gods or spirits than others, some might be older, or have more miracles to their record, but they were all essentially of the same character, just more or less.

Based on modern, anthropological research, J.J. Preston argues that four variables govern the prominence of a shrine: the appearance of divine beings, miraculous cures, sacred geography, and difficulty of access; variables whose cumulative affect he characterizes as spiritual magnetism.¹³ Preston's selection of sacred geography as a key element of spiritual magnetism is important to highlight in the context of Greco-Roman Pagan pilgrimage because it is easy in the West, at a time when the sacred tends to be localized in a few discrete places, to underestimate the ubiquity of sacred geography in Greco-Roman Paganism.

Each city had its own tutelary deity who watched over it. Each had its own divine spirit embodying the life of the *polis*; the *genius* of the city in Roman terms.¹⁴ These gods and spirits were taken so seriously by the Romans that:

“Before the sack of a city, the *numina* are called forth from the enemy out of respect for religious scruple. That is why the Romans wished to keep secret the identity of that god in whose protection lays the city of Rome. Thus pontifical law forbids anyone from naming the *Dii Romani*, lest anyone should augur them away. And there is on the Capitol a consecrated shield, on which the inscription runs, ‘To the Genius of the City of Rome, whether

male or female.’ And for the same reason, the pontifices pray, ‘Jupiter Optimus Maximus, or by whatever other name you wish to be called.’”¹⁵

Additionally, there were multiple spaces dedicated to the gods inside cities; cult centers of all sizes from the monumental to the strictly domestic. From the Roman perspective, these cult centers were properties that had been transferred literally from human ownership to the ownership of the gods. Outside of urban centers, there were numerous natural places that were considered claimed by the gods who dwelled within them. These included groves, caverns, pools, springs, and locations struck by lightning. Finally, tombs and burial grounds were also considered sacred.¹⁶

Each sacred site, whether city, temple, or grove, had its own mythic history and its own ritual order that celebrated and referred back to this history. Each history, while loosely tied into the larger structure of Greco-Roman myth, remained largely independent and as previously noted was not part of a completely coherent narrative as might be expected in the monotheistic, textual religions of Christianity or Islam. Greco-Roman Paganism developed as a religion of independent city states and continued that tradition long after Rome had transformed the political order.

Such a diversity of sacred places meant that pilgrimage as a concept was readily available to almost everyone, regardless of social or economic status, and underlines Eliade's argument that in pre-modern, pre-Christian traditions, sacred centers of the world were multiple and represented places where the sacred has entered the profane world and marked it through the act of some ancestor, hero, or god, a figure often associated only with local traditions.

This diversity is evidenced by Aristides himself, who in spite of the importance that Asclepius' temple at Pergamum had in his spiritual life, also conducted pilgrimage activities in the cities of



The ruins of the ancient city of Pergamon. Image from Wikimedia Commons under under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license. Author: Haluck Comertel.

Smyrna, Elaea, Caicus, Aliani, Chius, Aesepus, and Epidaurus.¹⁷ Additionally, in spite of his obvious and genuine devotion to Asclepius, he also dedicated offerings to other gods at other sanctuaries. These included Athena, Apollo, Zeus, and the Greco-Egyptian gods Isis and Sarapis, causing Behr to characterize Aristides as an eclectic Pagan.¹⁸ Based on this pattern, it is evident that Aristides was more than willing to participate in this expansive local diversity that was available to the Greco-Roman Pagan pilgrim of the time.

Having established the essentially local nature of Greco-Roman Paganism, it is now important to understand how the sacred geography of these local cult centers was created and in what manner it was experienced by pilgrims. Eade and Sallnow suggest that the pilgrimage practices of Christianity, and possibly all scriptural religions, “can be examined as combining co-ordinates of ‘persons,’ ‘texts,’ and ‘places.’”¹⁹ Coleman and Elsner, however, point out that these elements are present

in many other forms of ritual and emphasize that what Eade and Sallnow’s co-ordinates do not include is the element of movement, a vital component of the pilgrimage experience.²⁰ This paper will argue that for non-scriptural religions, the term “texts” might be replaced with the more general term, “narratives.” It is the travelers’ movements through and interaction with locations that obtain special significance by being part of a mythic or religious narrative that makes travel a pilgrimage. Mere geography is transformed into sacred geography by the power of these narratives.

Such narratives might be textual in the case of scriptural religions, but for non-scriptural religions, like Greco-Roman Paganism, they take the form of oral traditions; cultural customs, including the pilgrimage rituals themselves; and the visual arts. These narratives demarcate the sacred from the profane by telling a story that defines clearly, in Eliade’s terms, what is the specific center of the world, as opposed to the

profane zone around it, how it was separated from the profane, and what the pilgrim might expect from immersing oneself into the unfolding narrative of the place. By performing the pilgrimage and doing the prescribed rituals, the pilgrim becomes part of the larger mythic narrative, placing him or herself in contact with the immensity which inhabits the locale. As Eliade noted, these rituals reproduce or recount the story of the original consecration, and by performing them, the pilgrim attempts to appropriate a share of that power accrued from the original act of the god, ancestor, or culture hero.

For a devotee of Asclepius like Aristides, the narrative of Asclepius is the story of a savior-healing god who is concerned about the well-being of humans and will listen to their pleas for relief. The myth of Asclepius, originally transmitted orally, recounts the story of a human son of Apollo, god of healing and plague, who because of his divine parentage and supernatural training gains the power to heal the sick and raise the dead. After his death, he is resurrected as an immortal and dwells, ever-present, in Asclepian temples answering the prayers of his devotees.²¹ Asclepius' mythic history at major cult centers in Pergamum and Epidaurus created a narrative for the pilgrims traveling to these sites that allowed them to engage emotionally and spiritually with the landscape.

Clifford Ando, in exploring the views of the fifth century Pagan intellectual Macrobius, captures the essence of this Greco-Roman Pagan perspective on the interaction between the narrative of mythic history and sacred geography:

“Mythic history thus concretized the actions of the divine and located them within a material and historical landscape that remained visible and numinous even in the fifth century. The consecration of particular loci by Roman priests thus did no more, and no less, than circumscribe, respect, and order the presence of the holy

in the Roman landscape. For Macrobius, the materiality of the landscape did not divorce it from the divine; rather, it was for humans through ritually correct speech and action to understand and respect the divine in the world.”²²

This mythic narrative and its connection to the “materiality of the landscape” was further reinforced by the employment of particular rituals and the testimonials of previous pilgrims. These two elements served a didactic function, which intensified the experience of the pilgrim as she moved through the sacred landscape. These two elements can be seen operating at the Temple of Asclepius at Pergamum. A consultation with Asclepius was composed of a series of precisely regulated steps that followed a specific order: abstinence, ritual bathing, payment of a fee, sacrifice, incubation, faith, healing, and thanksgiving.²³

This process began with the pilgrim purifying himself by abstaining from sexual activity for three days before the consultation, as well as by not consuming goat's meat and cheese. On the day of the incubation, the pilgrim was required to be ritually purified by bathing. She was then dressed in white, just as the god dressed in white; a point that underscores Eliade's argument that the ritual seeks to copy or recreate an original sacred act.²⁴ What happens next is reconstructed by Dillon from a partial inscription, the *Lex Sacra*, discovered at Pergamum:

“With the consultant dressed in white and wearing a wreath, an animal sacrifice would be made, then cakes decorated with olive sprigs were sacrificed to various gods; the consultant was commanded to put on another wreath when commencing the sacrifice of the cakes. A pig was sacrificed to Asclepius on the altar, and three obols placed into the *thesaurus*. This procedure must have occurred during the day, for the next injunction is to make

sacrifices in the evening, that is immediately prior to incubation. Three cakes decorated as before were sacrificed on the altar: two to Tyche and Mnemosyne, the third to Themis. The incubant then entered the shrine, having abstained from all things previously described in the inscription.”²⁵

The culmination of this entire process of ritual is the incubation wherein the pilgrim sleeps in the incubation chamber inside the temple hoping to receive healing from the god through a dream. Such carefully prescribed rituals tell the story of the relationship between the god and the pilgrims; they prepare the pilgrim emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually to enter sacred space, bringing him or her back to *in ille tempore*, that mythic time when the god first manifested his power; and they offer the possibility of receiving the benefits of that power.

Beyond the communal rituals of the temple, there were also what might be called personal rituals. These were ritual acts given to the pilgrims to perform by the god directly through incubation. They were intended to affect the cures that the god promised, and Aristides provides a record of some of these often-idiosyncratic rites. Here is one example from 146 CE when he was staying in Pergamum and received direction from the god personally through incubation:

“First having mounted a wagon, to go to the river which flows through the city, and when I was at the place where it is outside the city, to make sacrifices ‘at the trench’ – for so he called them. Therefore it was necessary to dig a trench and make sacrifices in it to whomever of the Gods it was necessary. Next upon turning back to take some small coins, to cross the river and cast them away. And he ordered some things, I think, in addition to this. After this to go to the Temple and make a full sacrifice to Asclepius, and to have sacred

bowls set up, and distribute the sacred portions of the sacrifice to all my fellow pilgrims. Also it was necessary to cut off some part of my body for the sake of the well being of the whole. But since this was difficult, he remitted it for me. Instead of this, he ordered me to remove the ring which I wore and dedicate it to Telephorus – for this had the same effect, as if I should give up my finger - and to inscribe on the band of the ring, ‘O son of Cronus.’ And if I did this, I would be saved. After this it is impossible to imagine our condition, and into what kind of harmony the God again brought us. For we engaged in all this, almost as if in an initiation, since there was great hope together with fear.”²⁶

In this account is contained a combination of both the personal and the communal. In the casting of the coins into the river, the digging of a trench for sacrifice outside the city, and the removal of the ring, we see a series of personal rituals. In the direction to go to the temple and make a full sacrifice to Asclepius having the sacred bowls set up and distributing the sacred portions to his fellow pilgrims, we see the communal element.

In other instances, the personal rituals occurred completely outside any communal context. Aristides relates that, “... he commanded me to use the mud by the Sacred Well and to bathe there.” “On the following night, he commanded me again to use the mud in the same way, and to run in a circle about the Temples three times.” Aristides recounts that he followed the god’s commands even in the face of a frigid north wind, “I smeared myself with mud and ran around, and permitted the north wind to card me well and fair, and finally going to the Well, I bathed.” Later that year, Aristides records that the god, “ordered me to take some mud pour it on myself, and sit in the courtyard of the Sacred Gymnasium, calling on Zeus, the highest and best God.”²⁷ Such personal rites are at once the direct expression of the

results of the communal rites, the proof that those rites remain powerful and effective, and the vehicle through which the miraculous cures are delivered.

Of particular importance to Asclepieia, was the second method of creating and reinforcing the god's sacred narrative: the display of healing testimonials or *iamata* and their accompanying thank-offerings. These were essential because most Asclepieia did not have a rich mythic history as compared to other sacred centers in the Greco-Roman world, having only been established in the fourth and fifth centuries BCE.²⁸ "Whereas myths suggested an initial association of a god with a particular locality, the display of votive offerings asserted his or her continued presence at the sanctuary."²⁹ Asclepius' prestige and worship was based precisely on his ability to cure sickness, therefore these testimonials and resulting thanks-offerings were central to his narrative. The thank-offerings of past pilgrims, which were extremely extensive, provided visual and sometimes textual evidence of the "unbroken line of divine manifestation" in the temple.³⁰

The power of religious narrative applied successfully to place can be seen in Aristides account of an incubation he experienced while at the Temple of Asclepius in Pergamum:

"I dreamed that I stood at the propylaea [entrance] of the Temple. And many others were also gathered together, as whenever there is a purificatory ceremony. And they wore white garments, and the rest was of an appropriate form. Here I cried out other things to the God and called him 'the arbiter of fate,' since he assigned men their fates. And my words began with my own circumstances. And after this there was wormwood, made clear in some way. It was made clear as possible, just as countless other things clearly contained the presence of the God. For there was a seeming, as it were, to

touch him and to perceive that he himself had come, and to be between sleep and waking, and to wish to look up and to be in anguish that he might depart too soon, and to strain ears and to hear some things as in a dream, some as in a waking state. Hair stood straight, and there were tears with joy, and the pride of the heart was inoffensive. And what man could describe these things in words? If any man has been initiated, he knows and understands."³¹

The above passage illustrates beautifully the profound affect that this entire process of narrative, place, and movement could have on a pilgrim. Narrative, in particular, has the ability to intensify the experiences of pilgrims within sacred geography and direct their perceptions and observations. William Hutton, in his discussion of another famous pilgrim from antiquity, Pausanias, notes that travelers tend to select and organize their remembrances based on the subjective perceptions of those places that they visited. Thus a travel account is an "intersection between the physical landscape and the cognitive landscape of personal and cultural preconceptions that reside in the observer's mind."³²

A traveler tends to make special note of those things toward which he has a predisposition, and these things are better retained in the memory. Such predispositions can be formed even before the traveler experiences the landscape if he is familiar with the landscape from narrative accounts ingested before the actual travel.³³

Hutton goes on to suggest that what makes a pilgrim's account different from that of other types of travelers is that the author's commitment to her motivating ideology causes a pilgrim's mental topography to become more tangible and rigid. These narratives allow the pilgrim to map very distinctly cognitive experiences onto religious models and symbols. "Thus pilgrims tend to approach their destinations with deeply held expectations, and their accounts are suffused with the tension between these expectations and

their on-site experiences.”³⁴ The power of expectation as well as the resulting tension can be seen in Aristides’ reactions to a pilgrimage to the springs at Aeseopus:

“Then we set out, in high spirits, as on a pilgrimage. The weather was marvelous and the road inviting. Poemanenon is a place in Mysia, and in it is a sacred and famous temple of Asclepius. Here we completed about one hundred and sixty stades, and nearly sixty of these at night, as we started when the day was advanced. And about this place we also met with some mud, from earlier rains, which was easy to cross. The journey was made by torch light. Here I was completely consecrated, as it were, and possessed. And I composed many lyrics to the Savior [Asclepius] himself, while I was sitting in the carriage, and many to the Aeseopus, the Nymphs, and Artemis Thermaea, who keeps the warm springs, to free me from all my troubles, and return me to my original state.

“When I was at Poemanenon, the God gave me oracles and kept me there for some days, and he purged my upper intestinal tract and not quite for the last time. And a farmer, who did not know me, except by reputation, had a dream. He dreamed that someone said to him that Aristides had vomited up the head of a viper. Having seen this vision, he told one of my people and he told me. So much for this.

“When he sent me to the Aeseopus, he ordered me to abstain from the baths there, but he prescribed other regimens every day. And there were purifications at the river by libation, and purgations at home through vomiting. And when three or four days had passed, there was a voice in a dream that it was over and it was necessary to return. It was all not only like an initiation into a mystery, since the rituals were so divine and strange, but there was also coincidentally something marvelous and unaccustomed. For at the

same time there was a gladness, and joy and a cheerfulness of spirit and body, and again, as it were an incredulity if it will ever be possible to see the day when one will see himself free from such great troubles, and in addition, a fear that some one of the usual things will again befall and harm one’s hopes about the whole.”³⁵

In Aristides, we see the religious ecstasy of a pilgrim who has a successful encounter with the divine. The landscape through which he moved transported him into a religious experience, which ended with a feeling of “gladness, and joy and a cheerfulness of spirit and body.” His torch-lit journey to the springs, shaped by his raised expectations, is taken in “high spirits” and this optimistic frame causes him to characterize the weather as “marvelous” and the road “inviting.” While on the trip, he receives direct communication from the god through oracles. The personal rituals in which he engages throughout his journey are “divine and strange,” akin to an “initiation into a mystery.” The rituals allow him access to the god’s power by virtue of their connection to the god’s narrative, and Aristides’ mention of initiation recalls Eliade’s observation that, “attaining the center is equivalent to a consecration, *an initiation* [italics mine]; yesterday’s profane and illusory existence gives place to a new [sic], to a life that is real, enduring, and effective.”³⁶

Evidence of Hutton’s tension between expectations and on-site experiences is also contained in the account. Based on the sacred narrative in which he takes part, Aristides expects to receive relief from his sickness, and he does, but once cured, he also experiences fear about the continued efficacy of the cure. What happened at the site raises further expectations and creates tensions about whether these new expectations might be realized or disappointed.

CONCLUSION

Aristides’ account gives us a rare glimpse into the inner, spiritual life of an ancient Pagan. Further-

more, his pilgrimage experience illuminates some of the underlying characteristics of Pagan pilgrimage, and gives us insight into the intensely local nature of Pagan pilgrimage in the Greco-Roman world. Through *The Sacred Tales*, we see the complexity and variability of ancient belief and how it interacted with the physical space through the medium of narrative. Aristides remains a valuable source for modern Pagans in understanding how ancient Pagans conceived of religious space and their relationship to it.

Footnotes:

1. Simon Coleman and Jas Elsner, *Pilgrimage Past and Present in World Religions* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 198-200.
2. For more on the influence of the second sophistic on Greco-Roman pilgrimage, see Marco Galli, "Pilgrimage as Elite Habitus: Educated Pilgrims in Sacred Landscape During the Second Sophistic," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity*, Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 253-290.
3. C.A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert – Publisher, 1968), 1-14.
4. *Ibid.*, 23.
5. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 4-6.
6. *Ibid.*, 14-17.
7. *Ibid.*, 20-21.
8. *Ibid.*, 18.
9. For a discussion of the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism in the Roman world, see George Williamson, "Mucianus and a Touch of the Miraculous: Pilgrimage and Tourism in Roman Asia Minor" in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity*, Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 219-252.
10. Behr, 1-3.
11. Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, "Visual Dynamics in Healing Pilgrimage," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity*, Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 186.
12. Ted Kaizer, "In Search of Oriental Cults. Methodological Problems Concerning 'the Particular' and 'the General' in Near Eastern Religion in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* Bd 55 H. 1 (2006): 39.
13. *Ibid.*, 38-39.
14. Clifford Ando, "The Palladium and the Penta-teuch: Towards a Sacred Topography of the Later Roman Empire" *Phoenix* Vol. 55 No. 3 / 4 (Autumn-Winter 2001): 394-397.
15. *Ibid.*, 400.
16. John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003), 63-76.
17. Behr, 121-128.
18. *Ibid.*, 148-161.
19. Coleman and Elsner, 202.
20. *Ibid.*, 202-204.
21. James E. Bailey, "Asklepios: Ancient Hero of Medical Caring," *Annals of Internal Medicine* Vol. 124 No. 2 (15 January 1996): 259.
22. Ando, 391.
23. M.P.J Dillon, "The Didactic Nature of the Epidaurian Iamata," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 101 (1994): 255.
24. *Ibid.*, 244-247.
25. *Ibid.*, 246.
26. *Sacred Tales II* 27-29.
27. *Sacred Tales II* 77.
28. Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, 187.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, 187-188; Dillon, 257-260.
31. *Sacred Tales II* 31-34.
32. William Hutton, "Religious Space in Pausanias," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity*, in Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 297-298.
33. *Ibid.*, 298.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Sacred Tales IV* 3-8.
36. For a discussion of the nature of Greek mysteries and their psychological and cultural underpinnings, see Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 276-278.

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English, Welsh, Latin, Greek, or ???

By Diane Cacciato

How would you pronounce *Dduwiau*, *Hynafiaid*, or *Ysbrydion Natur*? Unless you are a reasonably competent speaker of Welsh, you might struggle. My hearth culture is Welsh, but my native tongue is English and so I stumble and fall over these words and, thus, the following question has been rolling around in my brain. Should I try, in my bumbling way, to use the language of the Gods, or considering my ineptitude, would that just be disrespectful? Hmmm.

As I considered this question, three thoughts occurred to me. The first comes from my own life experience. I have travelled widely and, apart from Canada, have lived in two countries. I spent three years in the 1980s living in Japan. When I was hired by a school in Tokyo, I was given two weeks to pack up my life and move. As a result, I landed in Narita airport knowing not one word of Japanese, except, perhaps, “*sushi*”. As my time there progressed, I slowly learned, word by word, enough Japanese to get along in my life. Now, jump forward to 2010. My husband and daughter and I made our first trip to Italy as a family. Two years later, my husband and I were making an offer on an old house in a small Sicilian mountain village. We come to this village every year and my abilities in Italian are getting better. Something that I have noticed is that the reception I receive from the shopkeeper, or waitress, or ticket seller is so much better when I at least make an attempt to use their language, however bumbling. What I am telling the shopkeeper, waitress, or ticket seller is that their culture is important to me. It is important enough, that I want to make my ‘offering’ of their language to them. I believe that it is the same with the Gods. It sometimes feels strange or uncomfortable to use these words that are so unfamiliar, but by doing so, we are saying to the Gods, you are important enough to me to try and used these terms that make me uncomfortable now.

My second thought about this question has to do with the abilities of the Gods. As humans living in this world, in this dimension, our main tool for communication is language. As much as we try to make our language prosaic or emotional or compelling, in the experience of the Gods, I believe, it is a pale, two-dimensional tool. I believe that the Gods listen more to our hearts than to our words. So, while the Gods likely appreciate our efforts using Welsh or Irish or Latin or Greek, it is not a necessary tool for the Gods to know what is in our hearts.

Finally, when we become more comfortable using these phrases, and only when we become comfortable, it allows us to break out of the banality that our native words can hold and move into a world of higher spirituality that the “difference” of these phrases can give to us. Thus, the use of these phrases in the language of the home of our Gods provides us with an important experience that is paramount to the offering we are making.

Oh, and one last thing... about the words I gave you at the beginning? Here are their meanings. As for pronunciation... I'll let you know when I've figured it out.

Dduwiau - Deities

Hynafiaid - Ancestors

Ysbrydion Natur – Nature Spirits

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 and Sicily.

A Rising Prayer

By Gaarik Hamr

(Author's Note: a prayer I say upon rising and preparing for the day. I end the prayer with "Tod hestu", but you may end it with any "so be it" you choose, such as "Bydded felly" or "Biodh se amhlaidh".)

I honor you, Earth Mother, your soil and stones.
I honor the ways of my ancestors.
I honor the Fire, Well, and Tree,
and as I stand upon the Land
before the Upper World and Underworld,
I call to the Spirits.
Let my call reach forth
through the Gatekeeper's arms,
let my prayer part the Veil.
Hear me as I honor you,
Shining Ones, Mighty Ancestors, Noble Spirits,
with a gift in token of our kinship.
Let your blessings fall upon me,
as the sun falls upon my head,
my heart, and my loins.
With these blessings,
let me go forth to my work,
to perform worthy deeds this day
with true words and true wisdom.
I thank you, Kindreds,
and as the veil falls between us,
know that my love
is always with the Spirits of my Hearth
and the Lady of the Land.
Tod hestu.

Prayer for the Rain

By Rev. Amber Doty

The rain pours down from the heavens above
Refreshing and revitalizing
Bringing nourishment and growth.
Let the cool water purify all it touches.
Let the waters bring blessings to our lives.

Summit of Solstice

By Julia Brown

You've awakened something in me
Like rustling in the wind,
The sea, the leaves, the evergreen.
They dance among, within...
In unison together.
Our bodies joined as one,
I'm taken to the portal—
The one that we both know.
At first it's deep and dark and wild—
Vines that wrap round row on row;
Then trancing, dancing, starlight,
And we both begin to grow.

The seeds sowed, are reaped.
Everything begins, all true.
This realization illuminates,
And we dream, we are the peace
Brought in, brought forth, from anew.

Prayer to Gwydion fab Dôn

By Diane Cacciato

Lord Gwydion, crafty and wise,
Master of the twists and turns of truth,
I honour you.

Gwydion, strong of arm,
Stout-hearted in battle,
Mighty of magic and terrible of power,
You teach me to see the light in the darkness
For there is always light in the darkness.

You show me that good can come from great
evil,
Though I may have to search far and wide
And deep into my heart.

For all of this, I give you my gratitude.

Eternal Womb

By Julia Brown

At the end of the trail
You'll find a grove,
With a small cliff.
It looks quite large at first,
then just a bit of a dip!
Cradled in the wide ocean,
the maternal waters.
Calling it our home,
where our ancestors rose and lived.

With the salt we are at ease,
The deep sea crevices gives us our dreams,
The warm sun puts us at peace,
And the waves carry our tears,
Down through these streams.

Being cradled by Mother Earth,
The waters of the land
is her eternal womb.
Incubating our desires
so they may release
back into the sky.
We find what rises
with birthing so high.

We call to the Ancestors
Who saw times of need:
We call for your guidance.

We call to the Nature Spirits
Who saw times of need:
We call for your perseverance

We call to the Shining Ones
Who can change the world around us:
We call for your magic.

A Rune Poem for Harvest

By Gaarik Hamr

Three spirits I call for scythe and sheaf,
The Year turns yon to harvesting grain
As cider and mead mellow, and drying on leaf
Lingers the cooling droplets of rain
By Ger, the year turns, the harvest is gathered
By Sigel, the sun shines, guiding us on,
By Lagu, the lake's bounty for which we have
labored,
Bound to the harvest, let this work be done.
(chant while tracing the runes)
Ger, Ger, Ger
Sigel, Sigel, Sigel
Lagu, Lagu, Lagu

(Author's note: the rune names here are from the Anglo-Saxon rune poem, but the Proto-Germanic may also be used: Jera can be used for Ger, Sowilo can be used for Sigel, and Laguz can be used for Lagu.)

Call to the Cailleach

By Diane Cacciato

The season of Samhain slowly closes her doors
And we creep through the frost
Day by day
To knock on Yule's door

Cailleach, Crone of the Celtic lands
This is your season
Walk with us on this path

Let us follow your footsteps
Through the snow
Until we sit together
And feast at Yule's table.

Give Me Three Fires
By Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano

Give me three Fires
Point the corners
To the edges
Of the world

Pour oblations
To the flames:
Old,
Wizened,
Blazing as the Priest
Red,
With the flames;
White,
In purity defend,
Yellow,
The face of the Astral Flame.

You are the Fire
Priest and Power
You are the First Fire
You are the Consumer
You are the Nexus

A Fire deep in the Earth
Heart of the Mother;
A Fire high on the Heavens
Heart of the Sky;
A Fire in the Dark Forest;
Heart of the Priest

Give gifts to all creatures,
Transmute them and make them into
Blessings.
Pour waters into streams
And rivers;
Add wood to the First Fires,
The Fires of Creation.

I have seen the flames
Deep in the heart of the forest;
Rise from the vessel
Of the Shining One.

Tended by the Fire Priest
And a living homage
To the God who is Fire
Himself.

I have seen the flames
Deep in the heart of the Earth;
Rise as lava,
Molten and Holy,
In the heart of the Earth Mother,
The furnace of creation,
Where all is created
And all is consumed.

I have seen the flames
Rise in the morning,
Red in the morning sky,
The face of Creation,
Nurtured by the Dawn,
Lifted in reverence to
The bluest sky;
Burn now,
Burn in darkness,
Burn in light,
The furnace in the Sky
Self-sustaining,
Self-creating,
Self-consuming;
Coming into being
Being ever-lasting
Being the Light in the Dark
And the Darkness that is light

Give me three Fires,
The Vedas begin with This Fire
Scriptures repeated
Today and always
From corner to corner
All points of the compass
Shine in the shadow of Three Fires.



Axis Mundi

By Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano

The tree is the center of our world.
Roots,
Deep in the Ground,
Past where the Ancestors dwell,
Drink the cool, dark waters
Of the Earth Mother.
Branches,
High in the Sky,
Reach for the Sun,
Through the leaves,
Sing a song,
For the Shining Ones to hear.

The tree is the center of our world.
Breath in the vapours
And oxygen return;
Without this exchange,
Without this hospitality,
Life would not be the same.
Let us extend our thanks,
Our love,
And our offerings of
Water and care,
To the trees that support us,
Surround us,
And inspire us.

Three Invocations

By Diane Cacciato

Brigid (Gaelic)

O Brigid,
Wisest of the gods,
Let the sweet poetry of your heart
Inspire the words
That sing from my lips
So that your praises may ring
Around this grove
Raising up your folk.
Tapadh leibh.

Cerridwen (Welsh)

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.

Apollo (Greek/Roman)

Apollo, son of Zeus and Leto,
Twin of Artemis,
God of music and dance and truth.
Let the sound of your sweet lyre
Enter my soul, my cells
And pass across my lips,
So that my words of praise and honour
Will be sweet as music to your ears.
Fiat.

Brighid

By Wayne Keysor

Brighid, O goddess of the golden harp,
lady of the sacred fire and the holy flame,
I honor the light within you,
the light of healing,
the light of inspiration,
and the light of clarity.

O goddess of the starry cloak,
lady of the holy well and the deep, sacred waters,
I honor the darkness within you,
the darkness of renewal,
the darkness of regeneration,
and the darkness of rebirth.

I pray that both your darkness and your light
seep into the secret places of my soul
so that I might grow strong and wise and noble,
and be a light to those who are lost
and a comfort to those who suffer.
O goddess, hear my prayer.

Hail the Traveler

By Diane Cacciato

Hail the Traveler who has travelled this Earth;
Whose footsteps have fallen on the dust of a
thousand years;
Whose laughter has danced on the wind that
crosses deserts, mountains and seas;
Whose pain has called out to everyone and to no
one;
Whose life touched all whom she met.

Hail the Traveler who has travelled this Earth;
Whose words instructed, entertained, and com-
forted;
Whose ideas began a thousand tiny inventions;
Whose music lifted those who listened;
Whose mind enlightened all whom he touched.

Hail the Traveler who has left this Earth;
Whose friends and family can take comfort;
Your journey is one we have all taken.

Your journey is one we will all take again;
Your life never began and will never end..

We Call

By Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano

We call to the Ancestors
Who saw times of need:
We call for your guidance.

We call to the Nature Spirits
Who saw times of need:
We call for your perseverance

We call to the Shining Ones
Who can change the world around us:
We call for your magic.



Solstice Prayer

By Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano

Sol sistere,
The Sun stands still.
It pauses before moving on again.

Face to the Sun,
We call to the realms,
Land, sea, and sky,
Ever around us.

We reach for the hallows,
Well, tree, and fire,
Ever around us.

We offer to the Kindreds,
Ancestors, Nature Spirits, and Shining Ones,
Ever around us.

With the breath of Inspiration,
We reach for the Earth Mother,
Ever beneath us,
As we pause,
With the Sun,
Sol sistere.



Magic Peaks

By Julia Brown

That space
Between the mountains and volcanoes,
Are they clouds or tornadoes?
That emptiness between crevices,
Was it once taken, subdued, or vacated?
And the sky...what is she hiding?
Lights and darks, how they're lying;
The northern lights, how they're dying,
Or is it the remainder of the sun that's a'shinin'?
Those dips of colours
Are they bodies of water? (Oh, that curvature),
Seems like seas of fog, reflecting the fading
embers of light (infinite).
I no longer fear the darkness,
For the sky will go to sleep soon.
With renewal at our doorstep
This facade of beauty is so transient
(Yet so thrilling)
(So striking).
It's done some crazy things to us,
Intensifying places within us,
And encouraging us to visit places we'd thought
we'd never go.
And just around the corner,
There may be something more.



Irish Apple Cake: An “Otherworldly” Autumn Dessert

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

Apples feature prominently in the mythologies of several Indo-European cultures, and are often associated with the Otherworlds. The golden apples of the Hesperides in Hellenic mythology were said to taste of honey and have the power to heal wounds and illness; in the Northern mythologies, the golden apples held in the keeping of the Goddess Iðunna preserved the youth and strength of those Gods. Golden apples appear yet again in Eastern European and Russian traditions, as prolonging life, often guarded by magical birds. The apple as a life-prolonging fruit seems to have been quite a widespread idea.

There are traces of apples that were included with the grave goods in early Celtic burials (although their inclusion there does not necessarily imply an Otherworld connection; they may simply have been included with other foods for the after-life journey of the person buried there.

However, there are certainly apple references in the names and stories of various Celtic Otherworlds; from *Ynys Afallach*, the “Isle of Apples”, later called Avalon, to the magical Irish island, *Emain Abhlach* (also “Isle of Apples”), one of the homes of Manannán mac Lir. Manannán also owned a silver branch, from which hung three apples of gold, and a similar branch, in the hands of a woman of the Otherworlds, is said to have enticed St. Brendan to begin his voyages. In Cornish traditions, Samhain is called *Alhalwyn-tyd*, or apple-time. There is enough apple lore in the various Celtic mythologies for an article on its own, but that is a task for another day.

While this cake may or may not actually be of an Otherworldly nature, it is fairly simple to make, and in my opinion, quite delicious.

Ingredients:

4 large apples (or 5 medium ones, or 6 small, etc.)
2 large eggs
½ c. (1stick) butter
¾ c. sugar
¾ c. flour

¾ t. baking powder
1 t. good vanilla extract
3 T. good Irish whiskey (I usually use Tullamore Dew)

Optional: a good handful of ripe blackberries.

This is not the place to use those mealy, tasteless, supermarket apples. Get some good fresh tart ones, and try mixing two or three different kinds, or use up some of those tasty windfalls from your grandmother’s tree.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Lavishly butter and flour a deep 8” or 9” cake pan. Melt the stick of butter and set it aside. Cut the apples into quarters and remove the cores, and slice the apples into small-bite sized pieces. You need not peel them until you particularly wish to do so; I usually leave the different-colored peels on.

In a bowl that will hold the entire batter, beat the eggs with a whisk until frothy, then beat in the sugar, vanilla, and whiskey. Blend the baking powder with the flour; then add the flour and the melted butter alternately to the egg mixture, beating in well each time. The batter should be smooth and slightly thick. If you have used unsalted butter, add a pinch or two of salt; if you have used salted butter, it’s not really necessary.

Fold the sliced apples into the batter, coating well. Scoop the apple-batter into the pan, spreading it fairly evenly. Scrape the last of the batter from the bowl, drop the bits into any low spots, and shake the pan gently to get rid of air holes. Place the pan on a baking sheet, and bake 55-65 minutes, or until the top is golden brown, and the sides are pulling away a little from the pan. Test the middle with a toothpick, if you like. Let it cool a little, and run a blunt knife gently around the edges of the pan to loosen. Personally, I wouldn’t try to turn this cake whole out of the pan, even cold, so if it needs to be on a plate or stand, you might consider making it in a 9” spring-form pan. If so, let it cool a little, and run a blunt knife around the edges before releasing the spring-form.



Serve warm, possibly with vanilla ice cream, or some heavy cream whipped with a bit more whiskey. This cake keeps fairly well, if it's ever allowed to do so; around our grove, it tends to vanish rather quickly. Incidentally, I've found that a bit of this cake is a very acceptable offering – especially to the Ancestors, and to various of the Folk of the Land., particularly the Other Crowd.

Note: to add the blackberries, if desired, I simply poke little holes into the batter once it's in the pan, insert the washed berries one at a time, and cover with a bit of batter. (If the blackberries are very large, as are those from my own garden, I cut them in half, or even thirds.) Adding them like this keeps the berries from being crushed and discoloring the cake as they tend to when they are stirred in. The option with berries will be somewhat looser and a little sloppier to serve.

In addition to their Otherworldly associations (or perhaps partly because of those,) apples were also used in several cultures for various forms of divination and magic, particularly love-magic. Often only the seeds or peel were used, but sometimes the whole apple was part of the spell. The most common season for apple magic was in the autumn, or at Samhain; reasonable enough, as that was when there would be a good supply of

the freshly ripened fruit. I have encountered more than one reference in folklore asserting that apple wood was favored by ancient Druids for making wands, but have no documentation on that point.

Apples are thoroughly Indo-European, but it's also possible to make a variant of this cake using pears, raspberries, and perhaps almonds. I have also seen a Breton version that's very similar, but uses calvados (apple brandy) instead of whiskey.

Some Sources:

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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.

Yr Eisteddfod Genedlathol—The National Welsh Eisteddfod

By Rev. G. R. Grove

When I think of the first of August, I—like many of us—think of Lughnasadh. But having been involved with Welsh language and cultural studies for many years, I also think of the Welsh National Eisteddfod—Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol.

The word “*eisteddfod*” means literally “a sitting”, from the verb “*eistedd*”, “to sit”. In its historic sense, it originally meant a sitting or meeting of a congress of bards to formulate rules in connection with their craft. This evolved into a cultural festival where competitions are held, most famously for poetry. The most prestigious of these are the competitions for the Bardic Crown and the Chair, held annually at the National Eisteddfod. These require poetry entries for the free verse forms and the strict verse forms respectively, submitted anonymously under a fictitious name or “*ffugenw*” on topics which are announced a year in advance. The crowning and chairing of the winners are dramatic occasions, overseen by the Gorsedd Cymru (the literary circle or congress of the Bards of Britain). This is a quasi-Druidical group, instituted originally by Iolo Morganwg in the 1790s; it has its own Archdruid, who presides over the ceremonies, as well as some other ceremonies in the Eisteddfod.

I was fortunate enough to attend the National Eisteddfod in 2000, when I was in Wales studying the Welsh language, and to see the chairing of that year’s bardic winner. The ceremony, like most of those at the National Eisteddfod, is conducted entirely in the Welsh language. During it, one of the judges of the entries involved reads a long evaluation of the best of them, and finally announces the *ffugenw* of the winner. All the lights in the tent (the ceremony is held in a huge pavilion) go off, except for a spotlight which searches the crowd to find the winning bard, who has stood up when his or her name was called. Two members of the Gorsedd then go to the bard, dress her or him in an ornate robe, and escort him or her to the sage. After more ceremonies, which include flower dances by children and the presentation of a huge horn of plenty, the bard is seated in the chair (which is itself the prize, being a throne-like seat build by a master craftsman).

My Welsh was just about good enough that year for me to understand the gist of what was being said. The experience led me to write the following story, “Geraint and the Three Knots”, which I have never previously published (although I have performed it). I hope you all enjoy reading it.



Some of the tents of the 2010 Eisteddfod.

Geraint and the Three Knots

By Rev. G. R. Grove

The first Eisteddfod of which we have record was held by the Lord Rhys in south Wales in 1169. This is not the story of that Eisteddfod. But it might have been.

There was once a young man called Geraint who was apprenticed to an old bard in North Wales. As he was nearing the end of his apprenticeship, word came from the South that the Lord Rhys was holding a great competition for bards and singers at Christmas. Geraint's master urged him to go and enter this contest. "For," he said, "I am an old man, and have had many students in my life, but you, I think, will be the best of them. Go you therefore to this Eisteddfod in Deuheubarth, and show them what a bard of Gwynedd can do." So, Geraint took his harp and his cloak and his carry-sack, and made ready to be on his way. He set off in good time, to allow for delays of the roads or the weather. And as he went, he whistled and sang merrily, for his heart was high.

When he had been walking for a while and a while, he came upon a fair young woman, wrapped in a blue mantle, and sitting on the bank by the side of the road. And she had a child in her arms, and a great sack beside her, and she was weeping. "Woman," said Geraint, "why do you weep on such a fine day?" "I weep," she said, "because my man is dead, and I am going back to my father's kin, with my child and all I can carry, but I have far to go, and no one to help me, and I am weary." "I will go with you and help you," said Geraint. "Where is your kinship?" "In Nant Melangell," she said, "on the far side of Berwyn. And if you go with me and help me, I will bless you."

Now this reply gave Geraint pause, for Berwyn is a high mountain, and it was right out of his way. But he said to himself that he had time and to spare, and he took up the young woman's burden along with his own, and they set out. All day they climbed the mountain, through sun and mist and snow, and that night they slept in a *hafodty*, a

shepherd's summer hut, with one cloak over the two of them, and the child between them to keep him from the cold. And the next day at dusk they came down into the fair green valley of St. Melangell, and the first house they came to took them in. These folk were of the woman's kinship, and they were glad of her coming, and promised to see her safely to her father's home on the morrow. And Geraint had all the best that was in their house that night.

Next morning Geraint rose up, and took his harp and his cloak and his carry-sack, and made ready to be on his way. And as he was taking his leave of them, the fair young woman said, "Geraint, come with me now to my father's house, and he will reward you. For you gave me help when there was none to help me, and I am grateful." "Lady," said Geraint, with some regret, for she was indeed fair to look upon, "gladly would I come with you, but I cannot. I am on my way to the Eisteddfod in Deuheubarth, at my master's bidding, and I cannot stay." "Well," said the young woman, "if you will not come, then you will not. But I lay a fate on you. If you had come home with me now, you would have slept soft and warm tonight, and had sweet dreams. But when you come to the Eisteddfod, your bed will be hard and cold, and you will get no rest in it." "Well," said Geraint, for this seemed unfriendly to him, "if it must be, then let it be so." And he went on his way.

When he had been walking for three days, or it might have been more, he came upon a horse, bridled and saddled, and straying at graze beside a steep slope. And as he was looking at the horse – which was a fine chestnut mare, with rich gear all of worked leather – he thought he heard a voice, faint and distant, crying for help. Looking down the hillside, he saw something red, which might have been a cloak, caught in the bare branches of a tree. Geraint climbed down careful-

ly through the rocks and the thorns, and the slick, icy patches beyond the reach of the sun, and he found a man, barely alive, caught by his clothes in a tree and hanging over a steep drop. Geraint took off his belt and tied it to a branch, and wrapping it around his left hand, he leaned out over the drop, and caught the man's belt, and pulled him back out of the tree, and onto safe ground. Then taking the man on his shoulders, he climbed back up the hillside, through the rocks and the thorns that tore at his skin and his clothing, and over the steep, icy places where he went on his hands and knees for fear of the drop behind him. And all the time the injured man on his back moaned and clung to him, and seemed to grow heavier and heavier with every step, until Geraint must pause again and again for breath. His heart drummed in his ears, and the cold air burned in his throat, and still he climbed.

At last he reached the path. He tore strips from his own cloak, and bound up the man's wounds as best he might, and gave him to drink from a flask of wine he found hanging on the mare's saddle. "Man," he said then, "where is your home? For I will see you safe there." "I live on the far side of Penlimon, in Nant Ystwyth," said the man. "And if you will go with me and help me, my gratitude to you will be twice what it is now. And God be praised for your coming."

Now this reply gave Geraint pause, for Penlimon is a high mountain, and it was right out of his way. But he said to himself that he had yet time and to spare for his journey, and he could not leave a wounded man to make his way alone. So he helped the man into the saddle, where he clung weakly, and he himself took the mare's bridle, to lead her over Penlimon. They spent that night in a *hafody* in the mountains, and the next day at dusk came down into the broad green valley of the River Ystwyth, and the first house they came to took them in. Now the injured man was lord of this valley, and the people in the house were glad indeed to see him, and set to work to tend his hurts and make him welcome. And Geraint had all the best that was in that house that night.

So the next morning Geraint rose up, and took his harp and his cloak and his carry-sack, and made ready to be on his way. And as he was taking his leave of them, the injured man said to him, "Geraint, come with me now to my manor, that I may repay you. For I was a night and a day in that tree, and I would have died there, had it not been for you." "Lord," said Geraint with some regret, for his purse was empty, "gladly would I come with you, but I am on my way to the Eisteddfod in Deuheubarth, and I may not stay." "Well," said the man, "if you will not stay, then you will not. But I lay a fate on you. If you had come home with me now, you would have had all the best from my table, and mead and wine a-plenty. But when you come to the Eisteddfod, your mouth will be dry as the dust, and your belly will be empty." "Well," said Geraint, "if it must be, then let it be so." And he went on his way.

When he had been walking for three days, or it might have been more, he came to a house at twilight, meaning to ask lodging there for the night. But when he came into the yard, he saw the place was in confusion, and all the women weeping. He might have gone away again, but a young man coming out of the doorway, seeing him a stranger, spoke to him and bade him enter. Then seeing the small harp that Geraint carried, he asked him if he was a bard. "I am," said Geraint. "Then come with me now," said the young man, "for my father, who is lord of this place, is dying, and he is asking for music and song to ease his end, and we have no bard here now to aid him." Then Geraint went with the young man, who led him into a chamber, and in it a bed, and an old man on it, who lay twisting in pain. "Father," said the young man, "God in his mercy has sent us a bard, to give you ease." And Geraint sat down by the bed, and took out his harp from its case, and began to play and to sing. And as he played, the old man grew quieter, and lay listening in peace. But if Geraint ceased to play, the pain came upon him again. And Geraint could not bear to see him so, and so he sat, playing and singing, all that night, and the next day, and the night that followed, until his arms and shoulders ached with the playing, and his fingers were raw from the touch of the strings,

and his voice was a whisper. And that night, just before dawn, the old man died.

Then Geraint would gladly have rested, for he was weary, but he knew that he had now little time to complete his journey; and so he rose up, and took his harp and his cloak and his carry-sack, and made ready to be on his way. And as he was taking his leave of them, the young lord said, “Geraint, much do I owe you for the great gift that you made to my father, to ease his dying. Stay here with me now, and be my bard, and you shall have your seat in my hall, and my harp in your hand, as long as we both do live.” “Lord,” said Geraint, “gladly would I bide with you, and gladly be your bard, but I am on my way to the Eisteddfod in Deuheubarth, and I may not stay.” “Well,” said the young lord, “if you will not stay, then you will not. But I lay a fate on you. If you had stayed here with me now, you would have lived among friends, and had joy and mirth every day. But when you come to the Eisteddfod, you will weep, and all who see it will smile, and none will give you comfort.” “Well,” said Geraint, “if it must be, then let it be so.” And he went on his way.

Geraint walked now from the first grey light of dawn, until night came down upon him, for the days were short and dark, and the winter feast was at hand. And at last one evening at twilight he came to the Lord Rhys’ castle at Carreg Cennin: and this was on Christmas Eve. And when he came into the hall, he found the place full of bards and harpers, and he heard then that the competition was to be held the next day, and that it was to be, not for some old song – of which he knew full many – but for a new song upon a set topic. And the topic set was *cw/wm*, which means, a knot. And all the other bards had been there for some days, making and polishing their songs. But Geraint had only the one night in which to prepare, and he was weary.

When the evening’s feasting was over, they went to their beds, and Geraint, being of no account, lay down in the rushes in the lord’s hall, with many another poor man. And hard and cold though that bed was, he would have slept, but that

his mind was wakeful. He thought of the time he had lost, by turning aside on his journey, and the thought was bitter to him. Then he thought of *cw/wm*, the knot, and the things that bind men and women together. And lastly he thought of the people he had met on his journey, and the things he had done and seen. And he knew then what his song was to be; and all night long he lay awake, making and polishing the song; and in the morning, he was ready.

When the time for the competition arrived, Geraint’s belly was empty, for though there was food and drink in plenty that morning, he was too nervous to eat, and his mouth was dry as dust with the fear that was on him. But he stood up boldly enough when his turn came, and struck a note upon his harp, and he began to sing. He sang of the knot of love between the young mother and her child, carried on her shoulders over the mountain; and he sang of the knot of trust, stronger than a leather belt, that holds men in peril together. And lastly he sang of the knot of blood, of shared experience and language, which binds a land or a kinship into one. And no voice but his spoke in the hall until he was done.

Then he sat down, and ate and drank, and listened to the other bards singing. And he learned where he could, and he gave praise where he might, and he took pleasure in all he heard. Great and wonderful was that singing, and he smiled a little wryly to himself, thinking how foolish he had been to come and compete against such masters, and he no more than an apprentice. But for all that, he was glad he had come.

In the evening the winner of the competition was announced – and it was Geraint. The Lord Rhys gave him a seat at his own high table, and mead to drink from his great golden cup, and he praised him. And as Geraint sat there smiling, his heart overflowed, and he wept with joy. And all who saw it smiled back at him; and he needed no comfort.

Rev. G. R. Grove is a Senior Priest of ADF.

Faith and Works in Pagan Theology

By Rev. Ian Corrigan

Discussions in the comments sections here [in his blog] have led me to want to think a bit about what I mean when I say that ‘Faith’ doesn’t play much of a role in my understanding of Pagan religion. I guess the primary thing is that one doesn’t have to ‘have faith’ in the Gods and Spirits in order to begin work in a Pagan system, or to get results from it. To me, Paganism is about technique and method, much more than it is about doctrine and faith.

Paganism doesn’t require us to believe anything specific about the deities and spirits (such as that they are objective beings, or human mental constructs, or masks of impersonal forces), nor does it ask us to believe in strictly defined forms, names and attributes of the Deities. Dagda in Munster may well be different from Dagda in Leinster, but either would be recognizable by your average Gael. Likewise, Paganism does not teach (or need) fixed opinions about things like why sacrifice is useful, or what the fate of the soul may be. Students can decide as they please, or decide not to have any ‘beliefs’ (fixed opinions) at all about things like the afterlife, simply waiting to see what happens. Success in Pagan spirituality does not depend on ‘orthodoxy’, i.e. correct opinion.

That being the case, we have to ask why a new Pagan would take up the work at all. If we don’t expect newcomers to begin by ‘believing in’ the Gods and Spirits, why would anyone take up the work of ritual and meditation that is the heart of Pagan practice? I think the answer is one that Pagans won’t like very much, but which remains true – we must begin by having faith in authority.

Much of what we call ‘knowledge’ is actually just our faith in authority. For instance, how many of us have seen an electron? Our belief that electrons exist is based on our faith in the scientific



Photographer unknown.

system that instructs us. Even if we have used some piece of equipment to ‘see’ one, we must have faith in the people who built and operate the device.

To some extent this is the basis for Pagan practice. We read or hear of folks who have gotten some good from the practices of ritual and meditation, and we find an affinity for the style and flavor of Pagan myth and symbolism. We begin to practice, and we begin to see results from the practices, whether subtle personal results or the occasional special effects of healings, visions, etc. In this way the faith that is based on trust in authority is replaced over time with faith based on trust in the methods one uses. I trust that a sacrifice will bring blessing for the same reason I have faith that turning the key of my car will produce an engine start – it has done so reliably. To me, this is rational faith – faith based on history and experience – and rational faith is the sort needed by Pagans.

Of course, some Pagans arrive by more direct means – they are called by a specific deity or cultural complex, and over time learn the patterns of worship. In this case the call itself becomes both the authority and the experience on which trust is built. Once again, it does not include what some skeptics like to call ‘blind faith’.

It does require a certain sort of conditional faith,

though. When we pour whiskey to Morrigan we cannot be *certain* of the nature of the being we honor. We know we can make an idol of Her in our shrine. We know we can make an interior totem – a vision, a presence – of Her in our Inner landscape, and we know that with proper skill the Inner Idol will move and speak. We have trust (faith) that somehow we are making contact with what we call ‘the divine’ and we find ourselves experiencing the divine as the person we call Morrigan, but we are as uncertain about what’s really going on as Ben Franklin was about electrons. We could choose to accept some explanation that someone tells us is ‘traditional’, but there’s nothing in Pagan ways that requires us to do so.

Now, how is this different from the sort of faith that is more commonly spoken of? Maybe not by so much... For those who follow the so-called revealed religions, the scripture of their faith is the source of authority. The thing is, for that to work, the authority of the scripture has to remain unquestioned. It’s impossible to believe in the literal and inerrant truth of scripture based on any rational position – it must become an ‘article of faith’, with all events interpreted to support the theorem. Now *that’s* the sort of blind faith I think has no place in Paganism.

I’m confident that at no time in Celtic history did the Druids teach that there was One True Way to tell the old stories, or One True Way to interpret the symbols. That just isn’t the way with polytheist cultures – we have zero examples of a polytheistic culture in which doctrine was reduced to a single True interpretation. Homer and Hesiod weren’t ‘scripture’, there are four Vedas with many variations, and even the stories of Finn and the Cu vary from version to version.

So when I say we don’t need ‘faith’, what I mean is that we needn’t have complete trust in any source of information or claimed authority about what Irish Paganism might be. We don’t need to agree on what the Gods are; we don’t even have to agree on the details of their stories. Not only do



we not need to have social agreement on such matters, we don’t have to have inward certainty. We needn’t feel certain about the nature of the Gods, we only need to trust that the work we do will bring the results we seek. Even in mortal life, we have meaningful, productive relationships with other people – do we know what those people ‘really’ are?

To me, a Druid’s wisdom demands a skeptical eye, to see past appearances, and past culture. It may be that in old times the Druid had to keep such critical observation to himself, lest he confuse the farmers and warriors, but in our time I think it’s good for us all to cultivate that perspective, just as we cultivate the warrior’s strength and the farmer’s diligence. Faith can be a valuable emotional response in some cases, but it does best when partnered with skepticism and a rational analysis.

Rev. Ian Corrigan is a Senior Priest and Archdruid Emeritus of ADF. He blogs at <https://intothemound.blogspot.com/>.

Book Review: War, Women, and Druids by Philip Freeman

Reviewed by Kelli Hayward (Aelyn)

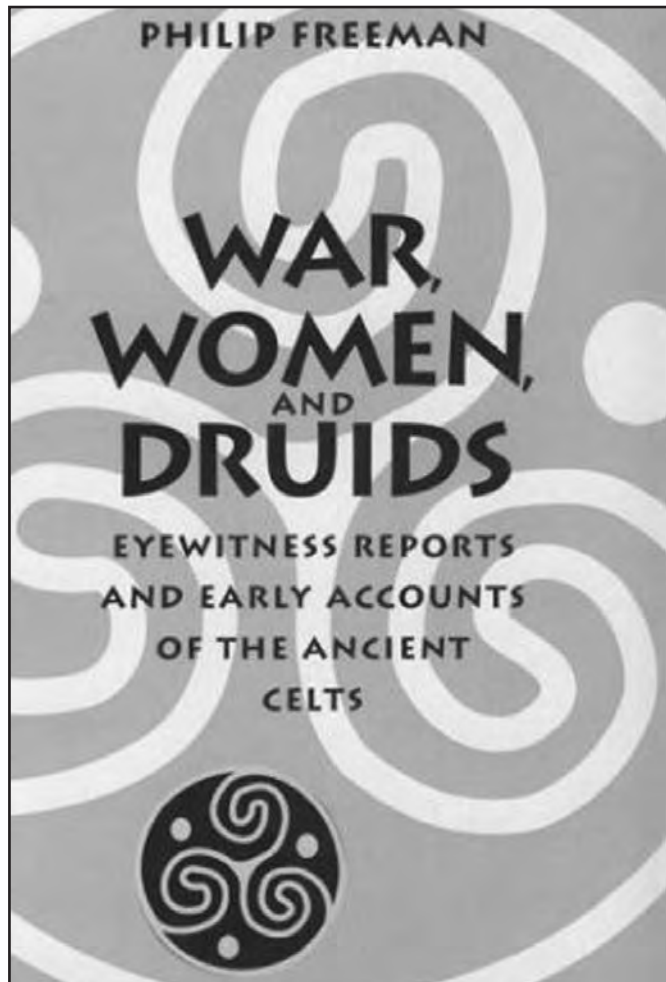
War, Women, and Druids: Eyewitness Reports and Early Accounts of the Ancient Celts
Publisher: University of Texas Press;
1st edition (2002)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0-292-72545-0
Hardback: 100 pages

Philip Freeman's 'about' on Goodreads says "I teach Classics and Celtic studies at Luther College in the beautiful little town of Decorah, Iowa. I did my doctoral work at Harvard and taught at Boston University and Washington University in St. Louis before coming to Luther to help run the Classics department. I love teaching and see my writing as an extension of my work in the classroom. I hope you enjoy the books as much as I enjoyed writing them."

The author explains in the Preface that while the Celts themselves wrote very little if anything down, we have some fairly reliable (if slanted) sources coming primarily from the Greeks and Romans of the time. He thanks many experts in the field of Classical and Celtic Studies for their assistance, including Patrick Ford and Pamela Hopkins. He also promises to keep his own introductory comments to a minimum "in order to let the Greeks and Romans speak for themselves". It's fair to say that he held himself to that. In fact so much so, that I would be interested in hearing more about his own thoughts on the subject matter.

Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of 'Celtic' culture as seen through the eyes of neighbors, allies, and enemies. These chapters are headed as follows:

- War
- Feasting
- Poetry



- Religion
- Women
- The Western Isles
- The Ancient Celts Speak

The chapters themselves flow smoothly and are easy to read, giving enough detail to paint a vivid picture of the topic on hand. The bits of poetry sprinkled throughout are especially interesting. The Chapter "The Ancient Celts Speak" although very short (only six and a half pages long) was a look at some of the inscriptions left by the actual Celts who were, in fact, *not* illiterate, they just didn't do much writing. Much of it involves the labeling on casks of wine, and the occasional "here lies so-and-so". I greatly appreciated that a point was made that some of what was found

included the equivalent of some rather vulgar graffiti, which goes to show that humans are human no matter the time or culture.

Overall, this was an excellent and informative book and would be well suited for anyone interested in learning a bit more about the Celts outside of the mythology. Even a more advanced student is likely to find something “new” within the pages or at least a wider perspective. As

someone at an intermediate level, I had several moments where things ‘clicked’ together in my head. Within the context of ADF, I would strongly recommend this as a supplement to anyone working on the Dedicant Program and interested in a Celtic Hearth.

Kelli has been a member of ADF since 2017 and is working slowly through the Initiate Program.



One Deity at a Time: One Pagan’s Path to Working the 12 Steps

By Spiral O’Neil

My name is Spiral, and I am Codependent. Most of the Anonymous programs – Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous and the like – focus on recovery from addiction. Codependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a little different. The Preamble of CoDA states it is “a fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships.” Codependency is a disease of emotional state, based on traumatic events which occurred in early childhood. It creates compulsions that, if left unaddressed, destroy any chances at healthy and normal relationships. In fact, some argue it is the very core of any behaviors we exhibit, and if addictions are peeled away, the reasons for them are all born from these same behaviors. Therefore, this CoDA program makes it necessary to go very deep into the mechanics of emotion.

Dr. Donna Bevan-Lee, a premier psychotherapist, defined codependence as “emotional immaturity”. That means recovery from codependent behaviors depends on identifying emotionally immature behaviors, and then “growing yourself up” to work out what an adult emotionally mature response is. While this concept sounds simple, in practice it is very deep work. It requires mindfulness, attention to what actions I am doing and why I am doing them. It requires honesty, because it is easy to bury the truth and hide behind the lies because why I’m doing something isn’t always pretty. Doesn’t that sound like an addict rationale? It is. Recovery from those behaviors requires a lot of work.

So, how am I recovering? One of the central tenants of working a 12 Step program is to have a Sponsor. Basically, that’s someone with enough

“experience, strength and hope” that they can act as an advisor in recovery. Well, in CoDA there are different forms of Sponsorship available. Emotional recovery isn’t like recovery from addiction. I can’t “remove the drug of choice” from my life because the drug of choice is behavior. It can be exhausting. As a result, Sponsorship in CoDA takes a lot of emotional bandwidth, both for the Sponsor and Sponsee. That means that getting a Sponsor can be really tough in CoDA. Thankfully, CoDA has found a way out of this sticky problem. CoDA offers Step Study groups that use a tool called The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook of Co-Dependents Anonymous. This tool provides questions as prompts to each step and then the step study group meets to discuss the answers we wrote. That way, the group as a whole co-sponsors each other. It is through this process where I get in touch with Divinity and have a good long talk.

In working the Steps, one of the biggest pieces of recovery is working with Higher Power, or as CoDA says, “God as I understand God”. Well, my Higher Power is definitely from a Pagan perspective, so when I prepped to do the steps, I asked for The Goddess to aid me in my path. And I had an immediate response.

The first time I worked through the steps, Quan Yin showed up for me. I view her as Quan Yin of Infinite Mercy, the lady who cries the oceans with tears of pain for all who suffer on earth. She revealed herself to me as a caring and loving Goddess, giving me the gifts of Forgiveness and Mercy in a time when I was going through a very confusing and upsetting time of my life. I found and worked with the Kuan Yin Oracle almost immediately, and the channeled messages and artwork helped me as I worked through my step work. Since I was in such a dark place in my life, I believe all I could do then was work with healing and water energy. I only got through the first three steps because I didn’t have the strength to do anything else. I wasn’t yet ready to face

down my demons.

The second time I worked on the steps I was in horrible physical pain and found out I needed a surgery. I was going to have to undergo an operation to remove part of my reproductive system. Since I was going to need that kind of help, I asked Bridget to guide me. I expected that Bridget of the Wells would assist; instead, I got Bridget of the Forge. She told me to get my butt in gear, and told me that since I was getting well physically, I needed to get better emotionally too. Not only did I come through the surgery with remarkable recovery time, I also was able to get through all the steps. They weren’t perfect, but they were done to completion, and Bridget’s no-nonsense approach was just what I needed to finally get through them.

Just before I would work through the steps for the third time, I received a message. I attended a class on Water and Fire Breath work by Taylor Ellwood at Willamette Valley Pagan Pride. I did the Water and the Fire breath, but just as I completed the Fire breath, I heard Lilith’s laughter. I asked Taylor why I might have heard her – because the Fire breath wasn’t about that aspect. He explained that the next phase of Breath work was connecting to the Underworld, and then the Overworld, and that I must have



heard her at the Gates. He also went on to say that is something that must only be done once Water and Fire breath have been mastered, and that a single class was not enough to address it. I wondered why Lilith would reach out, only to tell me she was Watching if I wouldn't get the chance to connect with her. Well, I was soon to find out. I was on the verge of a bitter divorce, and Lilith had reached out to tell me that this time, She would be working with me.

During the divorce process, a lot of painful revelations occurred both in regards to myself and to my husband. These revelations triggered me. All the codependent behaviors started up again, so I returned to CoDA for help. Emotions ran high, and Lilith helped me to sever the ties that went along with that phase of my life. It was very painful, but gratifying. Unlike the time that Bridget marched me through the steps, Lilith took her time. She would speak to me in riddles and they only made sense later. In this way, the Shadow Work of my pagan path intersected with the CoDA steps I was doing. For the first time, I was able to feel the feelings while doing my CoDA work, and really got in touch with the painful emotions of my past. It allowed me to process through them, and let them go. I don't know how I would have managed to get out of that divorce and get my life back to normal if it

hadn't been for Her guidance and support.

Working so deeply and so diligently with Lilith during my third round of step work really made a world of difference. I was able to heal and become my whole true authentic self. I lost weight, I truly became Clean and Sober in my dealings with others, and I even returned to college to work on my second degree. For many moons, all was well. Then last year, a traumatic event again brought back those emotional behaviors. Even though I wasn't prepared for the event and was blindsided by the emotional backlash, I knew what I had to do. I returned again to CoDA.

I wasn't ready to dive in right away, so I just came to the meetings, got my serenity back, and waited until the time was right. Once things settled down again, I joined another Step Study group. I knew the time was right when I heard Hecate's call. It makes sense that She is the next to reach out to me. She is the Queen of Witches, and I am working on Initiation with Spiral Grove Coven. I am midway through my Degree in Business, my life is back to being balanced again, and I am ready to accept Hecate's keys. As of this writing I am working on Step Five, and I even became a Sponsor myself.

I'm wise enough now in my program to know that I will never be completely mended from my codependence. I know that despite the healing I have received, I must stay vigilant with my recovery, continuing to place principles before personalities. I also know that I have The Goddess on my side, and as long as I stay vulnerable and walk the Shadow Work with her in my daily life, I will continue to receive Her blessings and revelations. I know that the same holds true for others, for I have seen it happen. I am blessed, I am part of the Great Spirit, and I am part of the Great Spirit Unfolding.

Blessed Be.



Word Search Puzzle: The Iliad

By Rev. G. R. Grove

A	G	A	M	E	M	N	O	N	E	R	O
C	H	U	N	E	S	T	O	R	H	T	D
H	E	C	T	O	R	P	I	O	E	P	Y
I	C	A	P	A	T	R	O	C	L	U	S
L	U	S	D	M	H	I	L	R	E	C	S
L	B	B	N	E	M	A	E	Y	N	R	E
E	A	T	U	N	I	M	O	S	P	A	U
S	A	R	P	E	D	O	N	E	S	D	S
D	J	H	A	L	B	R	I	S	E	I	S
L	A	C	R	A	S	T	Y	A	N	A	X
B	X	N	I	U	M	A	E	N	E	A	S
A	C	A	S	S	A	N	D	R	A	E	S

AGAMEMNON
ACHILLES
AJAX
PATROCLUS
NESTOR
ODYSSEUS

HECTOR
PRIAM
AENEAS
PARIS
SARPEDON
HECUBA

ASTYANAX
CASSANDRA
BRISEIS
CHRYSES

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.

Gaarik Hamr lives in Cleveland, Ohio. Gaarik is Grove Organizer for Spirit Valley Protogrove in North Olmsted, and focuses on the Norse, Welsh, and Proto-Indo-European hearth cultures. In the future, Gaarik hopes to finish the CTP and begin study in the Brewer's and Seer's Guilds.

Julia Brown Julia is an empathic cultivator and pre-Hellenistic wise woman. She currently resides in Ottawa. She chooses to dedicate her spare time researching pre-historical goddess culture, and can be found by the water.

Rev. Amber Doty is an Initiate and a Consecrated Priest from Omaha, Nebraska. She wears several hats within ADF including Solitary SIG Coordinator and Central Regional Druid. She is a life-long mythology enthusiast, mother of two, book collector, gamer, all-around geek, and ADF's current Vice Archdruid.

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.

Wayne Keysor is a member of Cedar Light Grove. He has completed his Dedicants Path as well as the Generalist Study Program. He is also active in the Bardic Guild, having earned the rank of ADF Journeyman Bard. He is a circled member of ADF

News and Announcements

Program & Path Completions

Patrick Bladow #1467099 (Zenwolf)

Dedicant Path

2 May, 2020

Brandon Elliot (Breenhin Elwold)

Dedicant Path

11 June, 2020

William Graham #1195733 (Eonan Feliciano)

Dedicant Path

16 June, 2020

Richelle Stephens (Skylark)

Dedicant Path

2 May, 2020

Good Fire Award - Hearthkeepers Way Committee

Nature Awareness Award - Prairie Sky Grove

Excellence in Service Award - Red Maple Grove

Volunteer of the Year - Jeffrey Keefer

~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

Awards at Annual Meeting

Appreciation Award - Victoria S.

Word Search Puzzle : Gaulish Deities - Answers from Issue #89

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

Epona
 Taranis
 Rosmerta
 Lugus
 Cathubodua
 Camulus
 Nantosuelta

Sucellus
 Cernunnos
 Brigantia
 Ogmios
 Sirona
 Grannus
 Maponus

Sulus
 Nodens
 (From Ancient Fire by
 Segomarus Widugeni)



ADF Directory



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Non-Officer Director	Julie Desrosiers	poledrasdaughter@gmail.com

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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
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Clergy Council	Chair: Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano	adf-archdruid@adf.org
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Grove Coordinating Committee	Chair: Rev. Caryn Laney-MacLuan	adf-gcc-chair@adf.org
Grove Organizing Committee	Chair: Nancy McAndrew	adf-goc-chair@adf.org
Prisoner Relations Committee	Chair: Rev. Kirk Thomas	adf-prison-ministry@adf.org

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

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

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

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

Ár nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

Oak Leaves Subscriptions:

ADF and Oak Leaves Membership Rates:

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Subscription to Oak Leaves: Non-Members: \$25/year

If you are already an ADF member but not an Oak Leaves subscriber, you can add a subscription either through our webpage (preferred) at <http://www.adf.org/joining/join.html>, or by contacting our Business Office at the following address:

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

adf-office@adf.org

If you would like to subscribe to Oak Leaves without joining ADF, please contact the Business Office at the address above.

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

Sky Devotional

I call out to the sky:

That which stretches forever upwards and onwards.

I offer you water and sweet-smelling scents,

That as they move upwards they mingle with your breezes

And your currents that move through the places in my life.

Without air, Without sky, there is no life,

And I honour the life in us both.

I will make these offerings to you with regularity

And devotion. And love.

Offerings drifting into the skies,

Like clouds rising from the land.

Thank you for the blessings that you bring to my life.

So be it!

Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano

