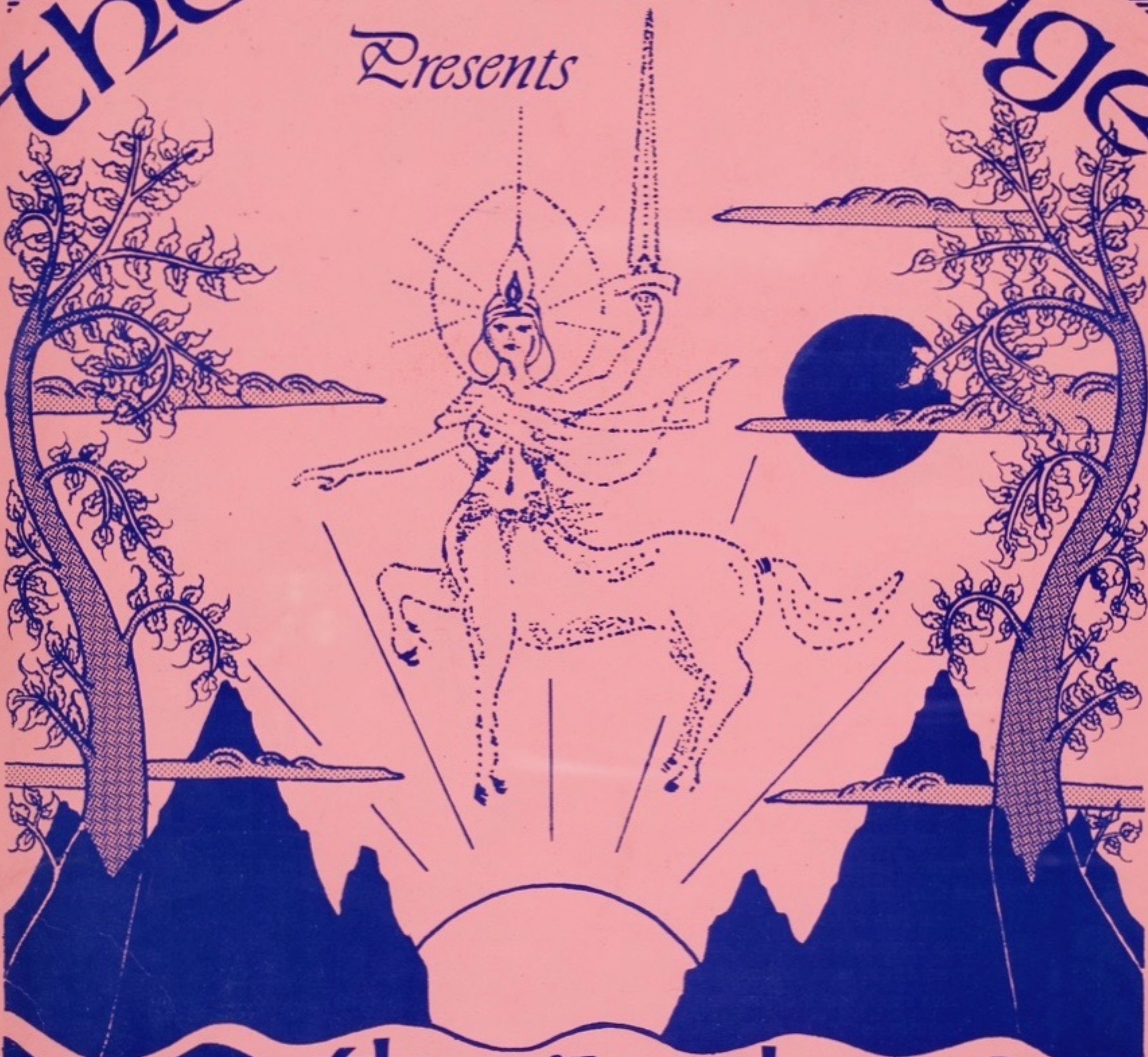


the coming age

Presents



the Book of Rhíannë

The Definitive Introduction to Matriarchy and the Feminine Tradition

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the coming age



Presents the Book of Rhiannë

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Maid ...

The word 'maid' rather than 'woman' has been used throughout this book, as is normal in Rhennish usage and in many English dialects. 'Woman' is merely a diminutive form of 'man', whereas 'maid', from the same root as 'magnify' and 'magnificent', means 'great'.

The word is also used to mean "human beings in general" (just as 'man' is so used in patriarchy). This follows the more general meaning of the word: "the creature with the power of choice" (see page 23).

... and other Rhennish words

We have not attempted to reproduce Rhennish dialect in this book, but certain Rhennish terms, such as the names of the "Geniae and of the matriarchal months, have no modern English equivalents. Partly in order to protect the security of the Old Rhennish communities, and partly because of the ritual power of true Names, we have not divulged actual Rhennish words, but followed our custom of substituting terms drawn from other ancient sources. Such substitutions have been marked with an asterisk. Thus *Themis represents Rhennish *ðamē* and *Moira Rhennish *uorðē*.

PRELUDE

Why Rhiannë?

YOU can see Rhiannë in many places. In the great white mares carved in the chalk downs of England, probably some 12,000 years old. In the stylised mares of ancient British coins, often shown discharging milk from their teats. In her pale and dimmed reflection in Rhiannon of the Mabington.

Was she the mare-'goddess' of the western peoples or an historical queen, the founder of the matriarchal Rhennish Empire? Since all earthly events are but reflections of immortal Realities, the distinction is meaningless.

Half mare and half maid, she rears above the mists of time, at the dawn of the history of these islands at the western edge of the world. It is from her name that we, the British matriarchal peoples, take our name — the Rhennes.

And it is we, the daughters of Rhiannë, who now address you in this book. Hearken, then, to the words which we shall speak.

in the Beginning



GOD THE MOTHER
4000 year old
Cretan statue

“WHEN above the heavens had not been formed, when the earth below had no name Tiamat brought forth them both... Tiamat, Mother of the gods, Creator of all.”¹
So begins the earliest known account of the creation of the world.

Moving from the Near East to Europe, the earliest known creation story is the pre-Hellenic Pelasgian Creation Myth, which depicts the creation of the universe by Eurynome, the Goddess of All things. Commenting on this in his classic study of the Greek myths, Robert Graves says: “In this archaic religious system there were as yet neither gods nor priests, but only a universal goddess and her priestesses, woman being the dominant sex”.²

In all myth throughout the world, the original Creator is feminine. It is only with the coming of a masculine-dominated (patriarchal) social system that She is replaced by a male god. Sometimes (as in the case of Tiamat above) She is said to have been conquered or killed by the new god. Sometimes the patriarchy boldly changed the sex of the Deity without changing the name — as with Ea in Syria, Shiva in India or Atea in Polynesia. Sometimes the goddess was slowly phased out and the god phased in. W.R.

Smith points out that the goddesses of the ancient Semites “changed their sex and became gods” in historical times³, while Atea, the supreme God of Polynesia was a goddess as little as 500 years ago.⁴

Often the new cult of the male god could only be made to replace the original religion of the goddess by a very severe patriarchal regime. This was the case with the Hebrew Jehovah⁵. Even then, the people frequently reverted to the worship of ‘the Queen of Heaven’, much to the chagrin of the patriarchal prophets⁶.

Turning from the ‘historical’ to the ‘prehistoric’ period — that is to say, to that vast majority of human history for which written records no longer exist or have been re-written by patriarchal redactors — the material evidence makes it clear that the religion of the feminine Deity was predominant for thousands of years.

James Mellaart, probably the world’s foremost authority on Near Eastern archaeology, writes in his famous survey of ancient Near Eastern civilisation: “Between 9000 and 7000 B.C. art makes its appearance in the Near East in the form of statuettes of the supreme deity, the Great Goddess.”⁷ Mellaart states that historically “the cult of the

Great Goddess” is “the basis of our civilisation.”⁸

In a similar survey of ancient European civilisation between 7000 and 3500 B.C., Professor Marija Gimbutas explains how recent archaeology has given us a clear picture of this period, unearthing some 30,000 sculptures of clay, marble, bone, copper and gold from some 3,000 sites. Clearly a vast area and a great period of time are involved (much longer than the whole known ‘historical’ period), yet certain general statements can be made covering the entire civilisation. Prof. Gimbutas shows that the Creator of the world was regarded as a goddess (like Tiamat, often symbolised as a bird), that the Great Goddess was “the central figure in the pantheon of gods” and that “the pantheon reflects a society dominated by the mother.”⁹

We may go back further, say to the Gravettian-Aurignacian cultures, sites of which have been found in Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Russia, and recently as far afield as Anatolia in the Near East. Some of these sites date back well over 25,000 years, and in these virtually all statues, divine or human, are female.

In the period after 9000 B.C., the pattern tended to follow that stated by Mellaart in connection with ancient Hacilar (c. 5800 B.C.): "The statuettes portray the Goddess and the male appears only in a subsidiary role". But in the older Gravettian-Aurignacian cultures, the male scarcely appears at all. What we have is a vast preponderance of stylised female images, known to archaeologists as "Venus figures".

We might go back further still, for example to the Venus of the Wildenmannsloch Cave, which is at least seventy thousand years old, but as we recede into such distant eras, dating and interpretation obviously become more difficult and conservative scholarship becomes cautious. Let us, therefore, remain with the wealth of well-attested and generally accepted fact.

The True Image

But what were they like, these prehistoric civilisations? Archaeologists refer to them as Palaeolithic (old stone age), Neolithic (new stone age) etc. — terms which to the average person imply brutish 'cave-men', dressed in skins and barely able to speak. Serious archaeologists have not believed in this popular myth for well over half a century now, but the discoveries of the last twenty years in Europe and the Near East have shown that it is so far from the truth as to be ridiculous.

Let us take Hacilar, mentioned above in connexion with the predominance of the female image. This 'stone-age' community lived in two-storey houses, often thirty feet in length, arranged around a central courtyard, with ovens, kitchens, hearths upstairs and down, verandas overlooking the courtyard and numerous other 'civilised' features.¹⁰

This example is entirely typical. We find similar conditions all over Neolithic Europe and the Near East and as far afield as Dravidian India. Furthermore, these societies were not separate developments, but as the great Indologist, Ananda Coomaraswamy points out, the fruits of "a common cultural inheritance throughout an area extending

from Mesopotamia to Egypt and the Ganges to the Mediterranean" based upon "the worship of the Great Mother".¹¹

It was a matriarchal civilisation in which the priesthood, the heads of families and of the state were all female. The concept of feminine supremacy is so alien to modern minds that many male scholars have described it in terms which imply abject subjection on the part of men. Speaking of Catal Huyuk, the oldest town at present known to archaeology, Mellaart, who was the excavator, speaks of "man's subservience to women".¹²

Charles Seltman says of the pre-Mycenaean Greeks

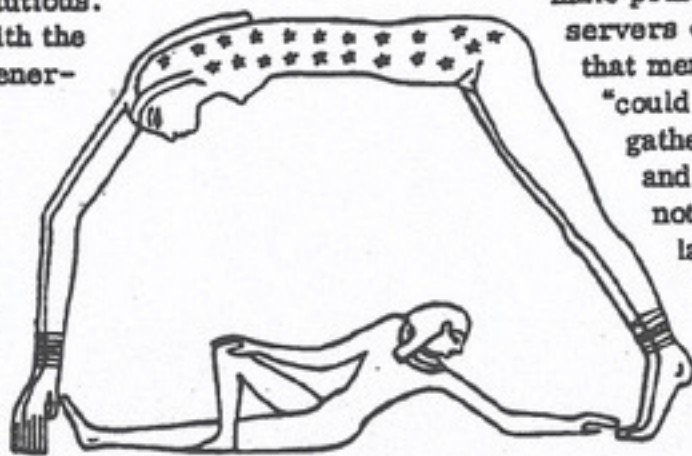
"religion and custom were dominated by the female principle, and men were but the servers of women".¹³ Graves says that men, as the "weaker sex", "could be trusted to hunt, fish, gather certain foods, mind flocks and herds...so long as they did not transgress matriarchal law".¹⁴ J.J. Bachofen says that in prehistoric times "woman towers above man", and speaks of "the contrast between the dominant woman and the servile man".¹⁵

This assumption of man's abject condition in the ancient world is but

the result of an ingrained patriarchal prejudice which balks at the overturning of his 'natural' superiority. To an unprejudiced eye, what emerges is a picture of a peaceful civilisation of small towns, villages and a few small cities, based on a common religion and philosophy, and where, under clear female leadership, maids and men were able to co-operate, and "all the resources of human nature, feminine and masculine, were utilised to the full as a creative force".¹⁶

When is a Goddess not a Goddess?

Many writers have referred to the Great Goddess of antiquity as an 'earth-mother', 'fertility goddess', 'moon-goddess' etc. These notions derive directly from patriarchal myth which sought to make of the Goddess an inferior consort of the new god. In matriarchal times, the Goddess represents the sky,



Sky Goddess, Earth God,

— the original Archetype



Cycles of Time



FROM THE Far East to the Americas, from Africa to the Eskimos, from the earliest times to the most recent, every traditional philosophy is agreed that the Golden Age or Garden of Eden lies in the past, and that humanity has for a very long time grown ever more distant from absolute spiritual Reality, ever more profoundly plunged into the illusions of the material world.

The modern myth of progress, on the other hand, which has been called 'the religion of the newspaper', preaches a strange inversion of this, holding that we have developed from a superstitious primitiveness and are rapidly approaching moral and physical perfection on earth through the multiplication of material acquisitions.

The British matriarchal (Rhennish) tradition is at one with all tradition, both matriarchal and patriarchal, in seeing history as essentially the story of a long decline and degeneration from our first primordial wholeness. More specifically, this decline takes the form of a cycle of four Ages, named in order the Golden, Silver, Bronze and Iron Ages. This tradition of the four Ages does not belong only to the Rhennes. It was known by the ancient Greeks and Romans and is still current today among the Hindus and the North American Indians.

Of these Ages, the first Golden Age was by far

the sun, the spiritual principle, while male figures might sometimes represent the earth, the moon, and the material principle. Only in patriarchal times do we find what scholars call 'solarisation', which has been defined as "a development whereby the entire symbolic system of the earlier age is reversed, with the moon and the lunar bull assigned to the mythic sphere of the female and the lion, the solar principle, to the male".

Everywhere the sky and the sun have been closely related to concepts of transcendence and the Absolute. And this is precisely what the Goddess is. She is not an 'earth goddess'. She is not a 'goddess' at all in any modern understanding of the term. She is Deity pure and simple. To return to our earlier question: When is a goddess not a goddess? When She is God.

For footnotes, see p. 11.

the longest. As the Ages became ever further removed from the primordial harmony, they also became progressively shorter. The last and shortest Age is the present Iron Age, also called the Dark Age or Kali Yuga; yet even this stretches back more than 5000 years into the past.

From this time-scale it is clear that all Ages before this dark Iron Age were in the matriarchal period. Indeed, the early history of the Iron Age is, to a large extent, the history of the birth and gradual rise to ascendancy of patriarchy. Given the nature of the historical cycle, as we shall later see, this development was inevitable.

As with many other traditions, later patriarchal authorities have 'edited' the traditional doctrines so as largely to remove reference to the matriarchal nature of the earlier Ages. Largely, but not wholly: for example, the ancient Greek writer Hesiod, describing the Silver Age, tells us that "The men were utterly subject to their mothers and dared not disobey them, although they might live to a hundred years old".

The Age of Gold

"The Golden Age", in fact, refers to that period when humanity was most completely in harmony with the absolute spiritual Reality which underlies the appearances of the material world. In the light of that Reality, the true meaning of life, and of everything within it was luminously clear, and maid was able to live to her fullest potential knowing and fulfilling her true purpose in the world.

The superiority of this primordial matriarchal world, acknowledged by all traditions, was primarily one of intellect (in the true sense of the word), or of vision. Whereas the modern mind is characterised by a drive to separate (analyse) all things, primordial maid saw all things as a harmonious unity. Outward and inward, world and ego, spirit and matter, all these things were one to the primordial maid. She was not an 'individual' separate from "the things about her", but was one with the world and with the Spirit.

This unitive vision was necessarily accompanied by an intellectuality far subtler and more profound than anything which the modern world could

understand. This is confirmed by the history of language which is, after all, the history of human thought. Every human language is a debased form of some more ancient language. The older the language, the more subtle and complex its structure. Classical Greek, for example, is a maze of case-endings, declensions and conjunctions to most modern students. Sanskrit, an earlier language of the same family, is far more complex. Classical Vedic scholars in India — people who are already speaking Sanskrit-based modern dialects — normally take ten years of intensive study to master Sanskrit grammar. Yet philologists tell us that the original Indo-European language which gave birth to both Greek and Sanskrit was more complex than either. The sheer concentration required to speak one of the ancient languages would be beyond most modern minds. But these languages were far more subtle, precise, rich and philosophical. Modern Western dialects, by contrast, are crude instruments, better suited to describing physical events than subtle philosophical concepts. This, of course, is perfectly in accord with the crudity of the modern mentality which understands little beyond the physical order.

Furthermore, a study of the earliest surviving languages shows them to have had a range and variety of sounds which leaves us no option but to conclude that in the far past human capacities for hearing and articulation were much finer and more delicate than today. The same conclusion must be drawn from the rhythmic and melodic subtlety of ancient music.

The unitive vision of primordial maid may be called the quintessential feminine consciousness. It is rooted in the total absorption of the soul in God, in the form in which She has presented Herself to humanity from the beginning — the Great Mother.

The history of humanity from the early part of the Golden Age onward has been the history of the gradual loss of this primordial consciousness. We

must now turn our attention to the principles which underlie this process.

The material world exists between two extreme poles, both of which lie outside material manifestation itself; one 'above' it and the other 'below' it. The first is Essence or pure quality, the second substance or pure quantity. Essence is that which gives shape, form and quality to things; substance is the material 'stuff' in which this shape and quality is manifested. In the case of a statue we may say that the stone of which it is carved is the substance, and the shape

of the statue (originally the 'idea' in the artist's mind), the Essence.

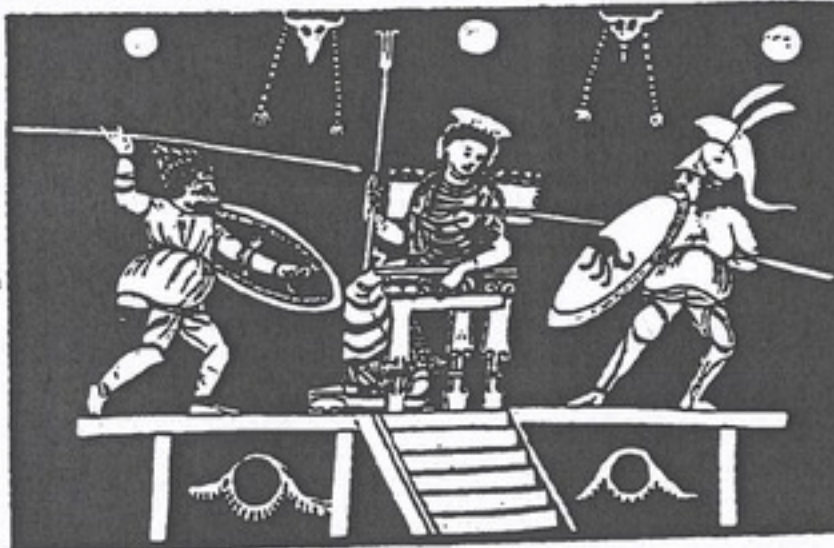
All things in the Universe are Essences, or divine Ideas (Archetypes) expressed in substance or matter. Pure Essence cannot exist on the material plane. It would be, so to speak, 'floweriness' but not a flower. Pure substance without Essence would have no qualities; no shape, no size, no

weight, no colour, no texture, etc. Therefore it too cannot exist on the material plane.

Now Essence is the feminine pole and substance the masculine. In the beginning all things were pure Essences, residing unmanifest in the Mother. The process of manifestation is the descent of Essence into substance*. At the beginning of this process, Essence predominates but the substantial element increases throughout, and the Essential element diminishes.

This process is reflected in the human cycle, which, like all natural cycles, is a microcosm of manifestation. On the human level this has many consequences: on the one hand it entails a descent from a pure perception of absolute Reality (as embodied in the Essences) to a grosser and grosser preoccupation with matter, leading eventually to

*Or, more strictly, its 'reflection' in substance, since the transcendent Essences or Archetypes still remain on their own level in changeless perfection.



The Patriarchal Takeover



The End = and a New Beginning

IF WE ARE to understand matriarchal thought (or indeed any form of traditional thought), we must learn to think in symbols. The concept of the world as a wheel, for example, is a fundamental part of our ancient intellectual heritage. The central point of the wheel does not turn, yet it is the cause of all turning, just as the Absolute is not manifest and yet gives rise to all manifestation (or, to put it in theological terms, we may say that God is not in the material universe, yet She causes the material universe to exist). The spokes of the wheel are the divine Ideas or Archetypes which are the form of all material things, from a star

to a tree to a human soul. At the hub of the wheel they are together in perfect unity. This is the realm of Perfect Forms in which we dwelt before the dawn of time. The rim of the wheel, with its iron band, is the realm of pure materiality, which, although we are now very close to it, we can never fully reach. The cycle of the Ages is a descent from the hub of the wheel to the rim.

The movement of the historical cycle is from unity to multiplicity, from harmony to discord, from the subtlest forms of manifestation to gross matter,

modern materialism. On the other hand (since Essence is the feminine pole and substance the masculine) it leads to the shift of society from the feminine principle to the masculine. Indeed, patriarchy and materialism are simply different aspects of the same tendency.

Another consequence, since Essence is the principle of order, harmony and meaning, is not only (as we have seen) the progressive decline of human intellectuality, but also the degeneration of human society into ever-increasing violence, discord and chaos.

This is wholly in accordance with the law of entropy stated by modern physics and confirmed by chemistry, mathematics and astronomy, which indicates that "the universe is running down like a clock" — or more specifically, is degenerating from an organised whole into a pure randomness incapable of producing heat, light or life. This is surely a statement on the lowest and most material level of the principle of cyclical degeneration known from the most ancient times.

In the light of this knowledge, we are now ready to examine the question: what is the real nature and meaning of the modern world — and what is the end to which it is leading?

from order to chaos, from quality to quantity.

At the beginning of the cycle, all humanity had a single language, a single culture, a single 'religion'. But religion is not the correct word to use, for religion is an invention of much later ages, when man's spiritual vision was a special separate part of her life. In the first age her language, her work, her play and all aspects of her life were simply 'exteriorisations' of her spiritual vision.

A few words of her language could convey volumes of meaning. Just as a long passage of a modern language can be translated by a much shorter passage in the more ancient and more sophisticated languages, such as Greek and Sanskrit, so the same passage in the primordial language might be a short phrase or even a single word.

Art was restricted to the simplest geometrical forms, yet it could convey depths of meaning far greater than anything the modern mind can begin to comprehend.

The progressive loss of this state is the history of the cycle. In the beginning man can grasp vast tracts of truth in a single thought and express them in a single word. But with each generation she is able to take in less and less at a single time. Language becomes wordier, for she must have everything 'spelled out' to her. Art becomes more elaborate, for the simple symbols must be augmented with ever more visual 'explanation'.

It is this process of elaboration which the modern mind, with its inverted Iron-Age perspective, mistakes for 'progress' or 'evolution', despite (as, for example, in the history of language) the clearest possible evidence to the contrary.

As the intellectual and spiritual faculties of man diminished, her involvement with the material domain increased. Certain symbolic events mark

stages along this path. For example, it was a major step toward the 'materialisation' of human maid when she first lived in houses of stone or brick rather than wood — that is to say, when she created her home environment from the mineral rather than the vegetable realm. Yet even in this period, there remained for a long time strict prohibitions upon the use of metals which would have represented the next stage of descent. This prohibition was retained in certain specific ritual contexts well into patriarchal times. A Hebrew altar, for example, might be built only of whole stones for "thou shalt not lift up any tool of iron upon them" (Deuteronomy xxvii, 5). But for several millennia the prohibition extended to all use of metal whatsoever.

It was this prohibition, based upon sound metaphysical principles and a knowledge of cyclical laws, that gave rise to the phenomenon known to archaeologists as the "Stone Age". To the modern mentality, which can scarcely dream of a civilisation which might organise and delimit its material activities on supra-material principles; which is unable to restrict its own feverish activities on grounds of simple physical caution in the face of near certain disaster (the nuclear field is one obvious example among many others); to this mentality it seems 'obvious' that Stone Age humanity must have been unable to work in metal and that the introduction of metallurgy must represent a 'discovery', an "advance in human knowledge", a "new step in evolution" etc.

But consider: this period produced what even the modern world acknowledges to be some of the finest pottery and artwork known to humanity. Monuments such as Stonehenge have been shown to be based upon the most intricate mathematical and astronomical calculations. Matriarchal symbols, such as the labrys, engraved on the stones reveal connections with cultures thousands of miles away; while, together with sister monuments in Scotland and on the continent, their specifications are so exact that among all

of them the units of measurement varied by no more than 0.03 inch. As Professor Thoms of Oxford University has observed, the calculations involved demand "a highly trained intellect", and an organised "school or system of mathematical reasoning", whose influence extended over a very wide area, must have lain behind them.

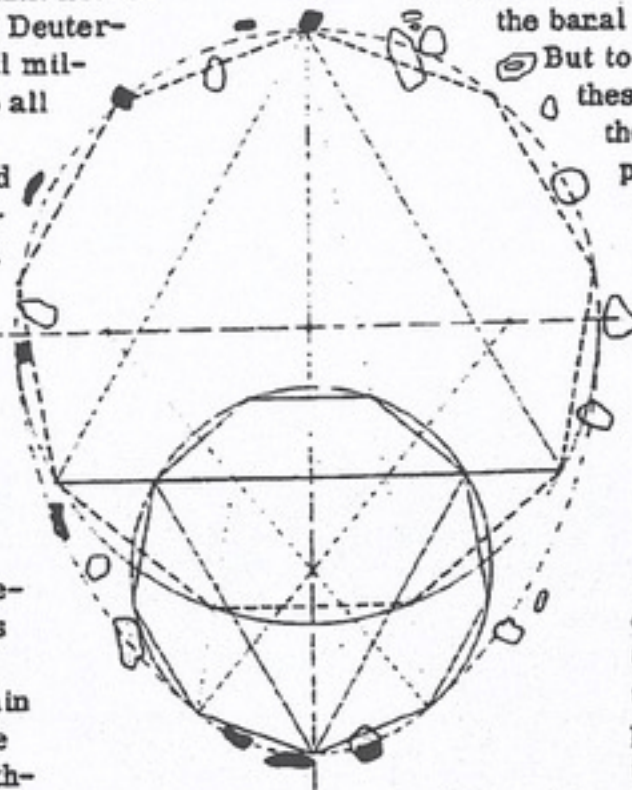
To call these megaliths "computers in stone", as some modern writers have done, betrays a vulgar misunderstanding which assimilates what are in fact constructions of a far profounder order than the writers in question can well imagine with the banal products of modern materialism. But to suggest that the builders of these megaliths were incapable, if they so chose, of 'discovering' and practising even the most rudimentary metallurgy, or even (as school text books and other popular sources still do) that they were loin-clothed semi-savages, is an act of sheer impudence and deliberate perversity.

• • • • •

The encroachment of the masculine principle upon both society and religion, and its relation to the processes of materialisation and fragmentation is a complex subject, but we may examine it briefly by means of an example that is relatively familiar. The death and resurrection of the

Child of God.

This has long been the central Mystery of the Western tradition. Its roots are in the primordial matriarchal tradition, and the life, death and resurrection of Inanna (or Dana) Herself. As civilisation became more fragmented, the tradition took different forms in different places — Babylonian Istar, the Hanged Artemis of Arcadia, Helen of the Trees, Persephone, etc. Later still, the sacrificial Daughter was depicted in male forms — Attis, Adonis, Osiris, Tammuz, etc. The last of these masculinised forms was Jesus, but this cult took the masculinist-materialist tendency one stage further, postulating a descent into material history,



The Mathematics of Savages?

with God dying on a particular piece of soil in a particular year under a particular provincial official named Pilate. This bringing of Eternity into time, this wholly untraditional denial of the transcendent nature of archetypal Events was at once the logical outcome of the image of a male god, and the sowing of a seed which must inevitably grow into modern 'scientific' materialism. Thomas, who would not believe until he had put his fingers into Christ's wounds, was the first rumble of the explosion of crass materialism which took place seventeen centuries after his death.

Of all civilisations in the history of humanity, the modern world stands out as a veritable anomaly, being the only one to have no basis whatsoever in principles which transcend the merely physical order.

Indeed, it has so completely forgotten the very existence of such principles that it assumes that all previous civilisations were, like itself, wholly concerned with the physical, or animal, aspect of life: that their whole existence was based upon the control of the physical environment and the production of material goods, entertainments, etc. It is upon this false assumption that the entire modern doctrine of 'progress' is based.

The modern mind can hardly conceive of the fact that our ancestors had far better things with which to occupy themselves than the "conquest of nature"; that ancient craft was not a simpler forerunner of modern industry, but a spiritual vocation, in which the needs of body and soul were satisfied together; that traditional sacred sciences were not crude attempts to understand the physical world, but profound studies of the true inner workings of the cosmos, of which the modern materialist 'sciences' are mere residues or husks, emptied of all but the most outward and superficial significance. In short, the modern world cannot comprehend the fact that traditional civilisation was directed to the true end and meaning of human life — the pursuit of our spiritual destiny — and not to the endless accumulation of material wealth and power.

THE LAST DAYS

HINDU:
Kali Yuga
CHRISTIAN:
The Latter Days
BUDDIST:
Dharma-Ending Age
CHINESE:
The Decadent Age
OLD EUROPEAN:
The Iron Age
TIBETAN:
Age of Impure Residues

All traditions agree on the nature of this last dark Age.

And for this ignorance, the modern world is paying a terrible price. Material 'science' devoid of any superior principle, is wreaking havoc upon the environment and threatening total destruction in a dozen different ways. Modern art, industry and architecture, devoid of any transcendent principles, have created a world of unprecedented ugliness and vulgarity. But most of all, human life, stripped of its true meaning and purpose, has produced a neurotic and alienated humanity, increasingly alone and insecure in a meaningless, impersonal world. Chaos, violence and disorder of every sort are increasing by the day.

For many centuries the world has been living on the inherited spiritual capital of the matriarchal ages. Now that capital has almost run out, and there is nothing left to hold human civilisation together.

Is a total collapse inevitable? Yes. This is in the nature of the historical cycle; it cannot be otherwise. Modern conditions are nothing but the fulfilment, often to the letter, of predictions based upon knowledge of cyclical laws, and found in traditional cultures all over the world.

But it is equally certain that from this collapse will emerge a new Golden Age and a return to the primordial Tradition of humanity. For just as day follows night and spring follows winter, so the Dark Age of the historical cycle is inevitably followed by a period of restoration.

"IT IS remarkable that the many varied and highly expert author-archaeologists in the excellent series 'Ancient Peoples and Places' express their wonder at the evidence they have found that women were once pre-eminent in each of their areas of research, from the Near East to Ireland. Each writes as if this ancient dominance of women were unique and peculiar to his archaeological province. Yet taken all together these archaeological finds prove that feminine pre-eminence was a universal, and not a localised, phenomenon."

ELIZABETH GOULD DAVIS

INTERLUDE:

The Scientist & the Book

A Parable



MY LADY gave to me a book; and it was called the universe. But because I had not seen such a thing before, I knew not how to find its meaning.

So I went with my book to a man who was wise with the wisdom of this world, and I asked him, "Have you seen this book before?" and he replied, "Many times have I seen this book."

Then I asked him, "Can you tell me the meaning of this book?" whereupon he brought forth a great bundle of papers bound with cords. "Herein," he said, "you will find everything that can be known about this book. You will find its exact weight to the last millionth of an ounce, its exact size to the last millionth of an inch, the precise thickness of each page, the exact composition of its

materials, its mass, its density, the most painstakingly calculated estimation of its age, together with all the steps by which the estimation was arrived at..."

"But," I asked, "can you not tell me the *meaning* of the book; what has it to tell us?"

The man who was wise with the wisdom of this world began to laugh. "But my dear girl," he said, wiping away tears of mirth, "that is not a scientific question."

Caring little for what category my question was

placed in, I said, "Then I will ask an unscientific question."

"But an unscientific question is a question which itself has no meaning," he replied.

So I left, taking with me the bundle of papers in order to read over them and ponder upon what had been said.

On the following morning, I went again to the man who was wise with the wisdom of the world and said to him, "Sir, you say that these papers contain all that can be known of this book, and yet, looking through them, I find that they say almost nothing of the small black marks which cover every page."

"That is correct," admitted the sage. "You will find in our report that they are made of a substance called ink; but I must confess that I was perhaps a little — well — forward in saying that the report contains *all* that is to be known about the book. But there are teams of highly trained people working day and night on those black marks. Very soon we will know exactly how high each one stands off the page, even though it be measured in the tiniest fractions. We will calculate the exact weight and density of each mark and record the smallest differences between the precise shades of black. I can confidently predict that within the very near future — possibly within your own lifetime — we will know everything that can be known about the book called the universe."

And I left that place heavy of heart, for I could find no answer to the things that had been said; and yet I felt certain that something was lacking, and that it was the most important thing of all.

1. *The Enuma Elish* (earliest text) Tr. Muss-Arnolt.
2. Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*. Penguin, 1955, I, p. 28
3. In Theodor Reik, *Pagan Rites in Judaism*. Farrar, 1964, p. 70
4. Peter N. Buck, *Vikings of the Pacific*. University of Chicago Press, 1959, p. 73.
5. Reik, *op. cit.* p. 101.
6. E.g. *Jeremiah*, Ch. 44, vv. 16-19.
7. James Mellaart, *Earliest Civilisations of the Near East*. McGraw Hill, 1965, p. 18.
8. *Ibid.* p. 77.
9. Marija Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 7000-3500 B.C.* Thames & Hudson, 1974, pp. 236-237.
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We Are the Rhennes

THE MATRIARCHAL TRADITION was dominant throughout the world for untold thousands of years, alongside which the few dozen centuries of patriarchal dominance are but a brief interlude in the course of human history; a period of disturbance, marking the end of a great world-cycle, during which the normal pattern of human civilisation is momentarily interrupted.

Is it probable that during this short interval the normal and orthodox tradition of humanity should be wholly and utterly forgotten? It is not, and indeed this has not been the case. In many parts of the world the matriarchal tradition has been continued in certain families and communities. In

the British Islands and in Brittany, our native matriarchal culture is called Rhennish.

We are the Rhennes. Our symbol is the white mare. From time untold we have inhabited the islands at the far west of the world. Once we ruled a mighty Empire in Northern Europe — part of the world's last great matriarchal civilisation. For centuries we held the patriarchal barbarians at bay, keeping the northern world safe for civilisation; but eventually we were driven back to the island strongholds of the Rhenneland. When Mider, the first patriarchal king, ensconced himself in these islands, our daring, dashing Queen Colwyn smote him down again. But the decline of the Iron Age is inexorable. In the end we were defeated in England and at length even our fortresses in the west of Ireland were overrun. For centuries our religion was outlawed and we faced increasing persecution. If power and tyranny and ruthlessness were enough to destroy a tradition, then matriarchy in these islands would be a thing of the past, crushed out of existence centuries ago. But we are the Rhennes, and we do not know the word surrender.

From generation to generation our tradition has been passed down, always in secrecy, and often in direst danger. We live according to *Themis, the Law of the primordial Tradition. Maids are the heads of households and leaders of the community, and all the important aspects of life are carried on as they have been from time immemorial.

But what sort of people are we, we Rhennes? I cannot do better than to quote at length the following passage written by a maid who has spent her life in a Rhennish community:

It is a strange paradox, though perhaps not a surprising one, that in the modern world, where every emphasis is laid upon 'personality' and 'individuality', individual people become ever less distinguishable from the common mass; while in a traditional

society, which cares nothing for 'personality' and its development, strong, vivid and compelling characters are the rule rather than the exception.

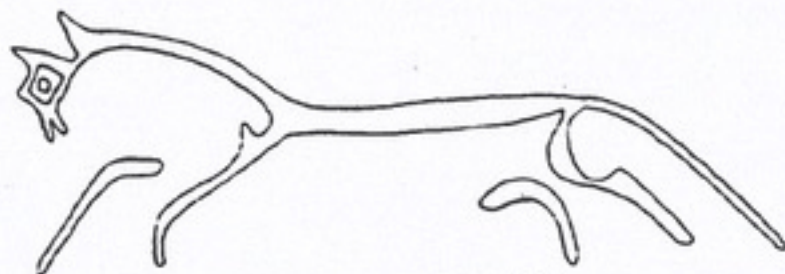
Growing up in a Rhennish matriarchal community, I was surrounded by these characters; proud and noble, irascible and loving, witty and wise. More dignified than any modern person would dare to be, and yet able to join in a game of tag or hide-and-seek with the exuberance of eight-year-olds. Larger than life the modern world would call them; but that is only because modern materialism has made of human life a thing smaller and shoddier than it was ever meant to be.

A people that lives in the light of Eternity is not bounded by the provincialism of the present. The distant past and the far future were a part of our daily thoughts. The battles of the Chenti (Western Amazons) and of the Rhennisleague (British Amazons) were fought again by our firesides, and passions ran high over the 'current events' of forty centuries ago. If a Rhennish family was robbed of land by the patriarchy a thousand years ago, you may be sure they know it to the last yard and intend to have it back even if they must wait another thousand years. After so many centuries we did not and do not accept the legitimacy of the patriarchal tyrant one whit more than if he had invaded our shores and sacked our temples the day before yesterday. Hard, unyielding, loyal, patient; "a people of granite" the prophet Mother Alethea called us. These were the people that I grew up among.

Yet tough as they were, they were graceful in their ways and manners, as all matriarchal peoples are graceful; and tough as they brought us up to be, they were more loving than any Blentish (non-Madrian) community can be. Love surrounded us as children — the love of our parents, our aunts and uncles, our teachers, my mother's craft-pupils —

almost everyone I knew. Love is a scarce resource in Blentish society. It is rationed out to spouses, children, immediate relatives and possibly a close friend or two. In a Rhennish community, love is all around us. It is in the air we breathe. Embraces are frequent and heartfelt. There are real tears from the whole household when a friend has to leave. When a Rhenne takes you to her heart, you have a friend for life; there is nothing she will not do for you, no trouble in which she will not stand by you. Overspreading and underpinning all this love is the love of Inama Herself, who is the Friend of everyone and the Source of all love. Amid this love, coupled with firm discipline, the Rhennish child grows up with a feeling of complete security and an inner strength which endures throughout her life. Neurosis, depression and all the mental ills endemic in the modern world are unknown to the Rhennish people, despite the fact that great hardship is sometimes involved in the struggle to preserve the traditional way of life against the onslaught of modernist patriarchal tyranny.

To this day the vast majority of the Rhennes choose to continue their traditional secrecy and employ a variety of ingenious methods for maintaining it. We fully sympathise with this policy, but we also believe that as the Iron Age draws to its chaotic con-



The White Mare of Uffington

clusion and patriarchal civilisation begins to crumble from within, eaten away by its own inherent disorder and destructiveness, the time is coming when ever increasing numbers of people will be ready to return to the primordial tradition.

For this reason it is our purpose to establish a number of New Rhennish communities, made up mostly of people born outside traditional matriarchal families. These will provide a way for those who are ready to leave the directionless chaos of the modern world and return to a meaningful life centred upon the universal harmony (*themis).

Slowly more people will return to the mother-faith and tradition of all humanity, and, amid the harshest frosts of the patriarchal winter, the first green shoots shall appear above the surface — the heralds of a dawning Age.

*Themis

Cosmic Harmony in Human Life

IT IS often asked why the Rhennes reject the whole paraphernalia of modern technological society. Is it just a nostalgia, or sentimental affection for the past?

The answer is that the Rhennish attitude has nothing to do with sentiment, but has a solid base in sacred science. The traditional mind, as we shall see in section III of this book, sees that nothing is 'accidental'. All material things are reflections of a spiritual Truth (or Archetype). They are part of the cosmic harmony, or *themis.

Similarly, every object of human use, be it a wheel, a lamp, a picture or a story reflects Archetypal Reality. It has two purposes; the first and most important is to provide a ritual, intellectual and contemplative 'support' to help maid toward the true aim and purpose of her life. The second

and inferior purpose is its material use — to give light, to transport things, to entertain, etc.

Maid is the central point between earth and heaven. Between the world of matter and that of Spirit. Thus everything she makes and does has a double aspect — material and spiritual, physical and metaphysical. It is only when she forgets her spiritual nature that her works become purely material. Then she lives on the animal level seeking only to eat better, drink better and increase her physical and emotional satisfactions. However sophisticated her methods may be (modern technology being a case in point) she still lives on the animal level. Her works are not governed by *themis but only by greed and material advantage. And quickly her life comes to lack all sense of purpose and direction.

There is no middle way. Either we live in *themis or out of it. That is why the Rhennes reject the whole panoply of modern technology; for only the traditional ways and crafts revealed by our Mother from the beginning can produce a truly human life.



A Rhennish Childhood

MY EARLIEST memory is of the little wooden statue of our Lady set in a niche a little way from my crib and lighted by a little flickering dish-lamp. I often used to gaze at Her before I fell asleep. My mother had told me that She would enfold me in Her mantle as I slept, and in my earliest days I imagined that as soon as my eyes were closed in dream, the statue would step down from her niche and cover me with her blue cloak. I often hoped that, just once, She would allow me to see Her doing it.

The statue had been carved by my mother during the time that she was expecting my birth, and painted by my father in its rich blue and violet and gold. It was

blessed by our priestess on the same day that I was named and offered to our Lady; therefore it had a special magical link with me.

While my immortal soul was shaping my body within my mother's body, so she was shaping that other human form without; turning it from a shapeless piece of wood into a delicate and powerful representation of the Mother of all souls and the Maker of all things. There was magic in this — I felt it deeply from the time I could first understand; but later I was to learn how every craft is sacred, and how a supernatural element is present in every art practised in the true Tradition, passed down from mother to maid since the dawn of time.

My mother was "a most consummate worker in the wood", as I once heard the *ancilla (priestess's handmaiden) say. She not only made statues, but pieces of furniture and many other things. The great dark dresser which dominated the kitchen was her handiwork. She was usually busy making and repairing all manner of farming implements. Her hands were a growing source of wonder to me. When I was very young I believed all grown-ups to be capable of accomplishing anything they chose, but as I grew older, I came to realise that my mother's hands were something special. Small, strong and deft, they performed the most complicated tasks with deceptive ease. In those hands graceful and harmonious shapes were conjured from the brute, unyielding wood.

There was something in this that savoured of more than magic, for, as my father told me, "even so did God fashion the world with Her hands". I could never listen to a certain passage from *The Creation* either in the Temple or at our domestic Rites, without thinking of my mother at her work:

"And Her hands knew cunning, and She stretched forth Her hands and gave a shape to each fragment, and no one was like any other."

"...And each fragment was filled with Her delight, and therefore was living, and some grew in the deep earth and became plants and trees, some ran about the ground or flew above it; and those first-made that had no place to be set down became the fishes and the creatures of the sea".

Many years later, I was to learn that the Greek word for 'matter', *hyle*, originally meant 'wood'. So the Greeks also thought of God as a carpenter, carving all things from the *prima materia* of the world. Or, more truly, they saw carpentry as the perfect image or 'reflection' of creation.

This was the way we looked at things. A way that any ancient Greek or Indian would have understood, or anyone from any part of the antique world. But a way that has become quite strange and foreign to our own countrypeople in our own time.

Mother was a Ranya in her craft. That meant not only that she was mistress of its technique and mysteries and a teacher of pupils. Her position was in many ways more like that of an eastern *guru*. For the craft was not simply a means of "producing the goods"; it was first and foremost a spiritual discipline. The 'mystique' and perfectionism of all the old crafts is a remnant of that time when their more-than-earthly significance was still remembered. A large part of the discontent of the modern world is due to the fact that the work people do has no significance beyond the mundane.

It was not only with her hands that my mother

was clever; she had a sweet and clear singing voice and knew a very great number of the traditional songs of our people: sweet wistful songs, light dancing songs, tragic songs of the sorrows we have suffered in centuries past, glorious hymns of praise and adoration. How often we would sing together at some work in the kitchen, and others would join in too, for rarely were we alone there for long.

The kitchen was the bustling centre of our household, and certainly it was the centre of my life in my earliest years, for mother would never take me into the workshop. So, with her or without her, I was usually there, amid its cheerful clutter and warmth, its burnished copper and wrought iron, its pottery and terracotta, its wonderful mixture of smells — fermented yeast and herbs, vinegar and spices, new-baked bread and animals, all jumbled together.



In many ways my father was a very contrasting personality to my mother. While she was controlled and dignified and a little reserved, he was of a sanguine and outgoing temperament. He found life in general to be amusing and laughed often. While my mother was learned in the history of our people, and could, with a little persuasion, be induced to tell high tales of the ancient days, my father knew countless merry yarns and could tell more of the tricks of Shearwind the vixen than anyone I have met. His songs, too, were of the merrier sort, and though his singing voice was not sweet and true like my mother's, he could hold a tune well enough on a fireside evening with plenty of good ale inside him.

I remember when I first went to a large city in my teen-age; some Rhennes who had knowledge of the place came to guide me through that unfamiliar world. They were much embarrassed by the noise and frenzy, by the thousand unnatural things that were monuments to a debased and materialistic way of life. There was a sense of shame in allowing these things to come into contact with a properly-reared Rhennish child. By contrast, about a year later, my father had occasion to take me through that same city. In him there was no trace of embarrassment. He pointed out the office blocks and vulgar advertising posters and simply roared with laughter. To him the monstrous anomaly

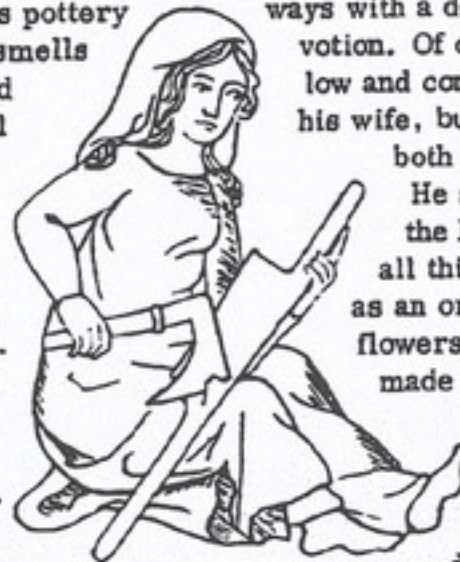
of modern civilisation was just a huge, outlandish joke. And nothing in the world could have protected me from the strangeness and wickedness of that modern Babylon better than the comfortable, confident and heartfelt laughter of my father.

To those who did not know him, it may have seemed that he was a person who ignored the deeper and more serious side of life. But that was not so. He had unbounded admiration for my mother's wisdom and devout spirituality, and this was an integral part of his deep love for her. The Scriptures say that a man may approach God Herself through his wife, and this my father did. He treated her always with a deep reverence, obedience and devotion. Of course, any man would count it a low and contemptible thing actually to disobey his wife, but my father's service went beyond both natural obedience and natural love.

He saw within my mother the light of the Divine. He sought her advice upon all things and treated her lightest word as an oracle. He brought her often gifts of flowers or of some little thing that he had made for her, like one who brings an offering to the Temple.

Thus, to my father, my mother was a true image of the Spirit Herself; while he, by his devotion, inspired her on toward perfection; each loving the other more dearly because the heart and core of their love was the love of God; and loving Her more dearly in the love of one another. This is the secret of the love of maid and man, and the reason why marriage is a sacred contract and a true vocation.

I sometimes wonder what my father would have been like if he had not been a Rhenne. Deprived of a meaningful craft, of the guidance, governance and love of a true matriarchal marriage, cut off from the way of obedience and the support and good companionship of a traditional community, he would have been forced to live, like so many other poor creatures, a life without depth or meaning or true purpose; deadened at heart by the lies of modern materialism, yet brainwashed from the age of five into believing them; oppressed in the depths of his soul by an aching sense of the futility of it all. And the world had lost one of the finest and most beautiful men who ever walked the surface of the earth.





THE BRIDGE: a magic gateway

to Ireland — appropriate both because Ireland has always been a stronghold of the Rhennish tradition and because a large proportion of the Noyarhemya were Irish or of Irish descent.

And so it was, in the autumn of the year, that the first pilgrim founders of An Droichead Beo, (households from Oxford, London, Bristol and Yorkshire) set out to establish the settlement, arriving in time for the feast of Samhain, the traditional beginning of the dark half of the year — the time of tales and magic.

Lux Madriana represents the open movement of the British matriarchal tradition; yet some have suggested that our move makes us too remote to be truly open. Our reply is that if a person is not sufficiently serious and committed to make her way to the west of Ireland it is not likely that she will be sufficiently serious and committed to change her whole way of life and her very heart and soul.

At the same time, the establishment of this colony provides the best possible opportunity to anyone who truly wants to become a part of the living matriarchal tradition. Instead of simply reading about it and attending the occasional meeting, she can now make a pilgrimage into the matriarchal world itself, stay there for a few days or a week or two, and decide whether she would like to stay forever or whether to return, spiritually refreshed, into the modern world.

As well as welcoming general visitors, we have a regular programme

WELL, two roofs actually. An Droichead Beo, the building, is a large two-roofed ex-hotel set in some two acres of ground and with grazing rights on a further fifty-five acres on the rugged and beautiful west coast of Ireland.

An Droichead Beo, the community, is the first open matriarchal settlement in these islands for nigh on a thousand years, run entirely according to the laws and customs of the Rhennish matriarchal tradition as it has been passed down by the old matriarchal families of Britain and Ireland.

The Bridge is situated at the Burtonport (pop. 200), Co. Donegal Ocean and the Isle of Aranmore. The bus from Letterkenny, some forty miles from London (01-836-7799) runs to Donegal town and Letterkenny. Fares are £23 single and £39 return.

of specific events, such as a variety of short residential courses on subjects ranging from general matriarchal philosophy through sacred music and dance to calligraphy, spinning and weaving. In each case the skill is not simply learned for its own sake, but as a realisation of the metaphysical symbolism and ritual power of the craft. Each craft is a ritual 'actualisation' of some aspect of the cosmic drama which underlies and creates the world. For example the crafts of weaving and spinning are intimately connected with the cyclical mysteries of cosmic manifestation. The point of the courses is to teach you not only to practise the craft, but to enter into its inner essence. They are set firmly in the context of participating in the life, work and ritual of a matriarchal community.

But what sort of place is a New Rhennish colony? What would a visitor find when she went there? What she would *not* find is a group of ordinary modern

DRÖICHEAD BEO



A Matriarchal Village under One Roof

But unlike the older matriarchal communities, the majority of the people in An Droichead Beo were not born and bred in the Rhennish tradition. They are people who have chosen to reject the modern late-patriarchal world and to return to the primordial matriarchal tradition. They have changed not only their way of life, but their entire way of seeing the world. They have ceased to be twentieth-century people and have returned, mind, body and soul, to an older and infinitely profounder world. An Droichead Beo is not just a building, nor even a community — it is a place of transition — a bridge from the modern world to the living cosmos of the matriarchal tradition. That is the meaning of its name — An Droichead Beo: The Living Bridge.

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The Bridge is a natural development from the work of Lux Madriana. Lux Madriana was founded some years ago for the purpose of bring-

ing the primordial matriarchal tradition to the majority of the population who have lost it. The movement began with a group of traditional Rhennes in the south of England who believed that as the Iron Age comes to its chaotic conclusion the time is ripe for sowing the seeds of the future — the inevitable return of the whole of humanity to the primordial tradition.

For reasons of security, the movement was kept separate from the Old Rhennish network of communities, although it continued to receive help from some of them. Instead, a New Rhennish network — the Noyarhennya — was founded consisting of New Rhennish households in various parts of the country and with a central headquarters at Oxford. This system worked well for a time, but living in the modern world without the support of a larger matriarchal community places severe limits upon the progress a person or family can make toward becoming truly traditional people. After a few years, we knew that we had reached those limits.

It was decided that we must go forth and found an united colony of New Rhennes. Our Lady led us

people who are interested in the idea of matriarchy. Instead she would have an experience something like that of stepping through a magic gateway into another world. A world that might have been very much the same a thousand or even ten thousand years ago.

It is not the lack of modern amenities which creates the sense of ancientness and mystery which surrounds the colony. It is the people themselves, the way they think, speak and act. Suddenly the modern world seems rather trivial and silly compared with the grace, dignity and elfin lightness of this ancient race.

DINNER BY LAMPLIGHT: some members of the Bridge





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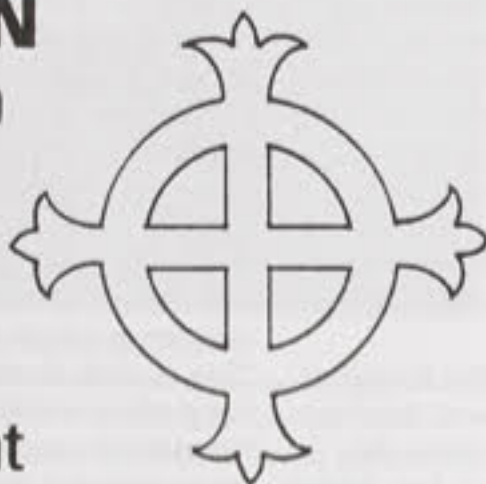
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Maids of the old faith

JOHN AVISON
goes to Hebden
Bridge to meet
adherents of
the world's
oldest religion,
who believe that
God is a woman



The Rhennish Symbol

THE FLICKERING flame of the world's oldest religion burns on in Hebden Bridge. Its adherents, who in earlier days would have been roasted at the stake as witches, conduct quiet, gentle lives in Machpelah House and hold that God is a woman.

Well . . . it's not quite that simple. The group of eight — seven adults and a child named Persephone — belong to the Rhennish Community.

The Rhennes' traditional matriarchal way of life has, it is claimed, been handed down, mother to daughter, for millennia. Subject to persecution since the rise of male-dominated religions, and especially during the Middle Ages, the historical record has passed them by.

The Rhennish families live secret lives, dotted over Europe and the British Isles, but a new breed — the Novarhennya — are a more open, evangelical branch. The first Northern community, started at Machpelah last summer, is thriving.

"It was almost an accident that we came to Hebden Bridge," said Lady Alethea FiaMoura, who holds the title "Lady" from her status in the temple; she is a senior Rhenne.

"Two of our members lived here for many years. This house became available. We felt the time was right to start a new house."

Alethea came from the Oxford house to direct operations. Machpelah is now full, with several adherents who want to join the community full time, so the Rhennes could be moving on.

A supporter in Ireland is offering a large house with lots of land for £20,000 or £5 a week rent; the group would like to become as nearly self-sufficient as is practical, and a move is being considered.

The Rhennish community upholds the Madrian religion and is not large. In the proselytising group there are perhaps 100, with houses in London, Kent, Bristol and Oxford and with "part timers" scattered throughout the country.

The world is somewhat weary of whacky religions. The Rhennes, I'm pleased to say, sidestep all the sticky little sects. The Madrian or Motherhood faith is extraordinary: profound, coherent and, above all, ancient.

I talked to Lady Alethea in a room lit by the glow of a log fire and three or four oil lamps. Carpets and furniture have been chosen to express a quieter, slower, less materialistic way of life — in the same way that the Rhennes spurn electricity, modern fashions, even modern speech.

The "maids" wear long dresses and cover their heads in the presence of guests, though the men appear to have no such sartorial strictures.

She explained: "Since the beginning of civilisation there have been only two philosophies; the older one being that the spirit — idea, or form — is feminine, and matter is masculine and that the one is an expression of the other; and the later one, that the "real" and only world is the material one."

AS OTHERS SEE US

A recent article, reproduced, with kind permission, from the Halifax Evening Courier.

The Machpelah community was one of the households which united to form the An Droich-ead Beo settlement.

"This later idea has really taken off in the last 400 years, though its roots were with the philosophers of Ancient Greece," she added.

"As a result, we now have a civilisation that does not see all things as symbolic of reality, but as reality itself. This civilisation ignores higher levels of existence. It has become animal-like. Because of it, pollution, greed and war are rife. Humanity is not living at peace with itself. It has lost its roots."

Such talk largely makes good sense. The theosophy and ritual behind the Mandrian faith, however, becomes too complex to be absorbed in a two-hour interview.

Its followers believe that they are not practising a religion. They are living essentially different lives. Every breath, every action, every thought takes place within that "different" life.

The Rhennes live by donations, by the profits of literature sales, and by the making and selling of jewellery and chanting-beads. It seems a tenuous existence, but they live simply, brewing their own beer, listening to folk tales and poetry, learning and talking.

They have their own oral and written language, their own alphabet and scriptures, their own secret calendar, and a number of rituals and beliefs that remain, to the outsider, totally mystifying.

Their scriptures are copied by hand in the Rhennish script.

"The notion of craft is a spiritual thing," said Lady Alethea.



**DONNA RHIANNON: head of the
Machpelah community**

"You practise it as a ritual. A thing is worth more and is more fulfilling if it is done well, with love. It is part of life. That is why we don't have many modern things about.

"Everything is a devotional act. Religion and life are inseparable."

The essence of the message seems to be that present society is lopsided, ignorant of its spiritual heritage and therefore dissatisfied and unfulfilled.

One day soon, say the Rhennes, we will all return to the fold and worship the Mother God. They are preparing for that day in a small way in Hebden Bridge, and that day will be the first of a Golden Age.

● Members of the Rhennes community in Hebden Bridge appear on ITV's "Behind the Veil" series on Sunday at 6 pm.

THE SACRED YEAR

TIME, to the modern patriarchal mentality, is a straight line. To the traditional matriarchal mind it is a circle. The year, for example, is for any traditional community a recurring cycle of feasts and fasts, each with its own distinct character. The modern mind knows nothing but the monotonous thrum of the working week, broken only by mechanically regular 'weekends'. From a living round of ritual and a theatre of sacred drama, time is straightened and narrowed into a flat, featureless strip, like a rail-track or a motorway, and, like them, is thought of as having no value in itself, being only a means to an end. Maid herself is herded into cities and workplaces bearing no relation to anything in nature; controlled environments in which the seasons can pass as nearly unnoticed as possible.

This is no mere accident, but reflects the real difference between the modern and the traditional philosophies of time. For the modern person time is a straight line, stretching from some unknown beginning (this 'beginning', as shown on p. 22, is one of the insurmountable flaws in the modern philosophy) into an unknowable future.

It is upon this notion of linear time that the whole modern view of the world is based. It gives to the late-patriarchal world its concepts of progress and evolution which provide the background to everything it thinks, does and is. The modern mind understands history and everything in it as having originated in a 'primitive' state and as making 'progress' toward ever higher forms. It sees everything as being in a constant state of change or 'evolution'. Without this notion it is at a loss to explain the existence of anything. It is also a system of mythology, or a rather crude form of 'religion' which gives shape, meaning and direction to the purposeless accidental universe of modern science. But as the 'utopia' toward which we are supposed to be 'progressing' becomes ever more improbable, the myth begins to crumble, leaving the modern mind naked amid meaningless chaos.

The matriarchal conception of time is utterly different. Each year, for example, is a reflection of the Great Year. The major events of the year are not the ephemera of 'current affairs' but the eternal Events of the one Year that stands beyond time. The seasons and festivals of the year are explained in

seasonal issues of *The Coming Age*. Here we shall outline only the basic structure of the year.

The year has thirteen months, each of twenty-eight days. The twenty-eight day month symbolises the lunar month, although the four quarters of the real lunar month are also celebrated. The calendar is made up of four seven-day weeks. They represent the four elements of fire, water, earth and air. The seven days of the week each belong to one of the *Geniae (see p. 24).

The year has four seasons plus a fifth. Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter are each three months long. The fifth season of Moura lasts only a single month. It is the month of fasting and purification. Spring belongs to water, Summer to fire, Autumn to earth and Winter to air. Moura belongs to the fifth element of spirit, which contains and gives rise to the other four.

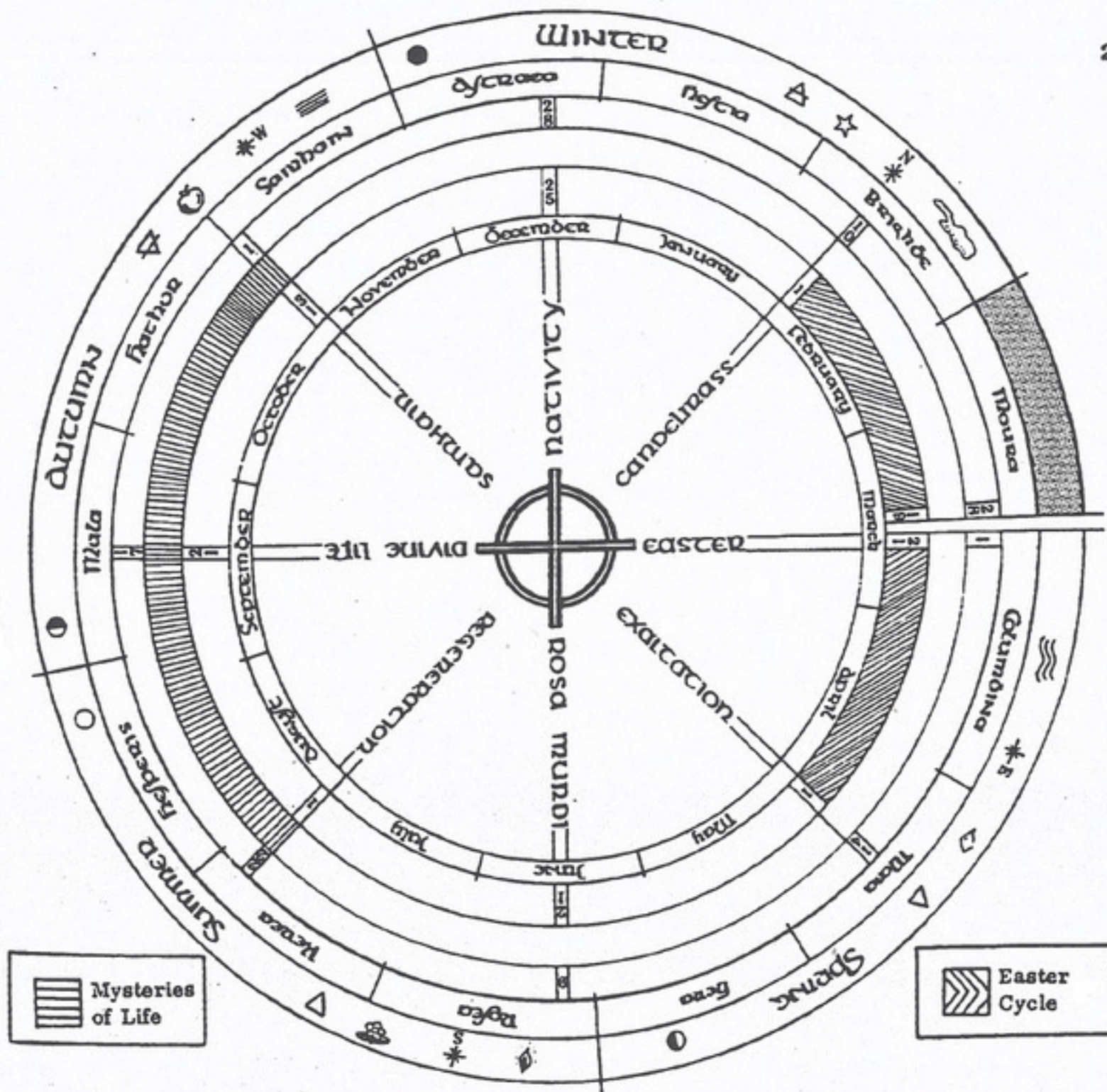
The great festivals of the four seasons fall on the solstices and equinoxes — the four extreme points of the sun's yearly journey. The year may be seen as a cross with Winter in the north, Summer in the south, Spring in the east and Autumn in the west. The centre of the cross is Moura.

The year ends on the last day of Moura with the death of Dana. It begins on the Spring Equinox with Her rebirth. Between these two days is the *Hiatus — the day when Dana hung dead on the pillar of the world. It is not part of the old year or the new. Hence the old saying "a year and a day".

The thirteenth month is the month of Dana's death. That is the original reason why thirteen is considered unlucky. Her Rebirth is called Easter. This is not a Christian word — it goes back to Eostre, the Teutonic goddess of spring and dawn, and eventually to Istar, the Babylonian name of Inanna or Dana. It is also connected with East, the direction of Spring and of the sunrise.

The Nativity of the Divine Child at the Winter Solstice is likewise far older than Christianity (the Christians 'borrowed' their date of Christmas from the worshippers of Mithras — but it is far older than either).

Athwart the great Cross of the Year lies another cross, making the shape ✱. This second cross marks the cross-quarter days — the days exactly



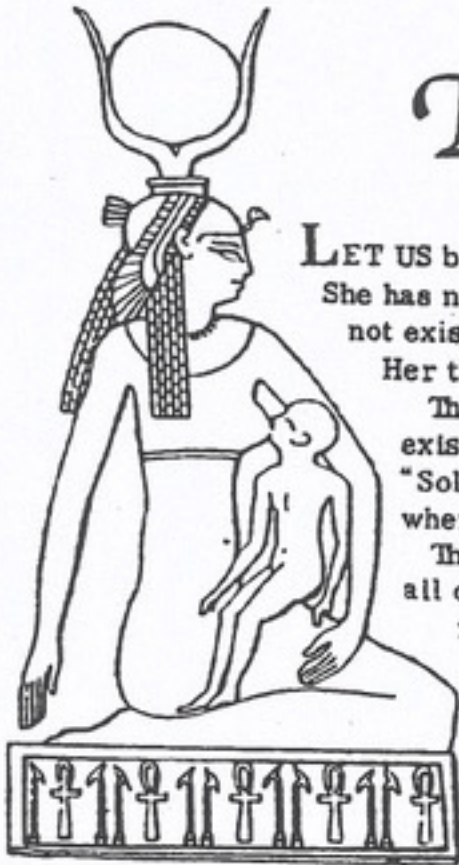
Map of the Year: The major festivals may be seen as a labrys (double-axe) as well as a cross — the Solstices forming the haft, and the blades formed by the two great Mystery-cycles (cf. TCA 17 & 19).

between each solstice and equinox. These are the other great festivals of the Rhennish tradition. (*Exaltation and *Samhain are still remembered by non-Rhennes as May Day and Hallowe'en).

We have given here only the briefest summary of the sacred year, and included only the most major

festivals. Yet it is sufficient to give an idea of the basic structure. It is through this structure that the patterns of eternity are lived out in time. The traditional person, deepening her participation in the mysteries of the Cycle with each passing year — instead of running along the endless, aimless treadmill of linear or 'progressive' time — is a deeper and richer person at forty than at twenty, at sixty than at forty, at eighty than at sixty. And when she leaves this world, her soul is more advanced than when she entered it. Which is the only 'progress' that has any meaning or value whatever.

The Cosmic Drama



Madonna and Child...

LET US begin before the beginning. Before the beginning there was the Dark Mother. She has no other name, for "Her name has not been spoken on this earth." She does not exist. She does not not exist. She is beyond being and unbeing. We may call Her the Absolute. She is the first cause of all existence.

This, in fact, is the only possible logical and scientific explanation for the existence of the universe. Ask any physicist where the universe came from: "Solid bodies were produced by a combination of gases" may be the answer, but where did the gases come from?

There are numerous 'scientific' explanations of the origin of the universe, but all of them suffer from the same fundamental defect. Whatever thing or combination of things is given as the cause, we must ask — "But what was the cause of that?" Everything in the material world must have a cause, yet everything must have a beginning. So long as we are dealing with things which themselves have causes, then we have not reached the beginning; and everything in the material world has a cause. Therefore the first cause of the universe must lie beyond the world of space and time. There is no other possibility. Modern science has a strong emotional prejudice for explaining the world purely in material terms, but all attempts to explain away this fundamental flaw are simply juggling with words. To say, for

example, as some people have, "Perhaps the universe did not have a beginning" is just another way of saying that something can exist without a cause. Yet the law of causality is the whole basis of all science. The "scientific materialist" can only remain a materialist by ceasing to be scientific.

Before the beginning is the Dark Mother. When She breathes in, it is the Night of Time. There is no universe, there is no space, there is no time. All lies immanent in the womb of the Absolute. When She breathes out Her breath, or Spirit*, stands forth, and Her Spirit is pure Being, the Bright Mother. In Rhennish Her name is Mari. This name and its variants were used in antiquity in many areas of the world. (Nor is it any coincidence that Jesus's mother, whose original Aramaic name was Miriam, was called Mary in those western lands where she became the principal 'Goddess-figure').

Mari is the highest form of Deity. She is God (or as we say in Rhennish, Dia) pure and simple. Now before we go further, let us make one question clear. Are we saying that God is a human female? Of course

not. She transcends both gender and human existence. There may be other worlds where neither humanity nor femaleness have any meaning. To the inhabitants of such worlds She will appear in a form quite incomprehensible to us, but which in the symbolic 'language' of that world means exactly what the form of a human female means on earth. For the forms we see on this world — from a rose to a star — are not mere 'accidents' of nature, but meanings, or divine Ideas, crystallised in matter. And the human female form is the perfect image of God Herself in this world.

Mari, then, is the Creator of the world. We read in *The Creation* of how She shaped all things. But the world which She created was not this material world but the world of Perfect Forms, or Divine Ideas, or Archetypes. We may also call this the world of pure Being. This material world is a world of becoming. Everything in it is subject to change, decay and death. The Archetypes of the world of pure Being are perfect, changeless and eternal. We may say that the things of this world are like reflections of the Real things (the Archetypes) upon a surface of water. Because the water

* Greek *Pneuma*, Hebrew *Ruach*, Sanskrit *Atma*, (all feminine nouns) all mean both breath and Spirit, while our own word Spirit is related to 're-spir-ation'.

is never still, the reflections are never perfect. Thus in this world one creature must kill another (even if it be only a plant) in order to live; we have illness, old age, excesses of cold and heat and many other forms of imperfection.

Each Archetype is a Divine Idea in the mind of Dia. It may also be said that every Archetype is a word in Her divine language. That is to say that the most important thing about any Archetype is its meaning. Once we are able to see the things of this world in the light of their Archetypes we can see that their symbolic meaning is the most important thing about them — it is what they really are, while their material substance, which modern people imagine to be their real nature, is nothing but the 'water' upon which they are reflected.

But we are getting a little ahead of ourselves. At this stage in the story there is as yet no material world, only the Real world of pure Being. How did the material worlds come about? Well, we must understand that spiritual and metaphysical facts are not so simple as material ones. There are various ways of looking at the manifestation of the material worlds, each true on its own level. Let us look at it from the human point of view.

Among the forms shaped by the Mother of all things were souls endowed with the power of choice or free-will. These souls were called maid, even though they did not then have physical human bodies, because the word 'maid' is connected with 'may', the verb of possibility, and simply means "she who has the power of choice".

Maid chose to turn away from Dia. Now since Dia is pure Being, to leave Her is automatically to cease to exist. Mari did not want maid not to exist, but what could She do? If an earthly child runs into the road, her mother can carry her back; but if she were to open the child's head and stop her *wanting* to run into the road, she would no longer have a child, but a robot.

In the world of pure Being choice and action are the same thing. Mari could not stop maid from mak-

ing her choice without destroying her free will. Nor, when maid had left Her, could She come to her, for we are not talking of physical space. Maid's choice was to be in that-place-where-God-is-not.

The only way for Mari to save maid from extinction was to separate Herself from Herself in order to be in that-place-where-She-is-not. Thus, by a mystery we cannot understand, She gave birth to Herself as Her own Daughter, Dana or Inanna*.

Inanna descended away from Mari, and at each level She touched, She created a level of existence (or half-existence) separate from pure Being. One of these countless levels of being is this physical universe. Each level is, we may say, a "surface of water" reflecting in a different way the eternal Archetypes of pure Being.

Finally Inanna reached the furthest possible point from Dia; the point of non-existence, and She ceased to exist. She is the only being in creation to suffer absolute death. For us, death is but a passage to another life, but She faced pure oblivion that none of Her creatures might perish; yet being pure Being, She rose from that terrible oblivion to become again the Queen of Heaven.

This is the truth behind all the later death-and-resurrection stories found all over the world. It is the first and archetypal Virgin birth, and it is the original

of all the various Trinities — Mother, Daughter and Absolute Deity.

"The religion of the prehistoric and early historical world was a monotheism in which the female form of divinity was supreme."

SIR ARTHUR EVANS

"The careful analysis of all the available evidence seems to point clearly to the conclusion that the world once really enjoyed some such Golden Age as Hesiod describes."

G. ELIOT SMITH

"There can be no escape from the present more than usually miserable state of the world... until the repressed desire of the Western races, which is for some kind of Goddess worship... finds satisfaction at last."

ROBERT GRAVES



... a universal image

WHO IS MAID?

The Purpose of Being Human

MODERN children are indoctrinated from the earliest age to think of maid as an animal which has risen above other animals by an accident of 'evolution'. They are taught also to think of all the things and creatures around them in the same way, as mere accidents of the physical plane, whose nature is to be sought solely in physical (or 'scientific') explanations. Such explanations may be adequate on their own level — just as the writing of a great poem might be described wholly in terms of the movements of the poet's finger-muscles. But in both cases, the physical explanation not only does not explain the whole process, but it leaves out all that is most profound and significant. Such explanations may have their uses, but as soon as they start pretending to be the "whole truth" about the poem, or about the universe, or about maid, they stop being science and start being scientism. In other words, they stop being a relative truth and become an absolute error.

So what is maid? To put it simply, she is the reflection of God on earth. Some people find this a difficult concept because they are able to conceive of God as an abstract 'force', but not as a person. This is a typical modern confusion which has its roots in scientism. Physical science is full of forces, like magnetism and electricity, so this idea makes God sound nice and 'scientific'. But the attempt to picture super-physical Reality as a sort of parody of physical science is superstition in the strictest sense of the word. A force, any force, is less than a person. God is more than a person. We see Her as a person because that is the highest form of manifestation we know — and therefore the nearest to Her. Calling Her a force is just as much a metaphor as calling her a person, but it is a purely physical metaphor. A force can be physically great, but never morally or spiritually great. It is a typically patriarchal perspective — greatness equals physical greatness; muscle. It is the logical extension of the male-god image.

Maid, then, as a conscious, caring personality,

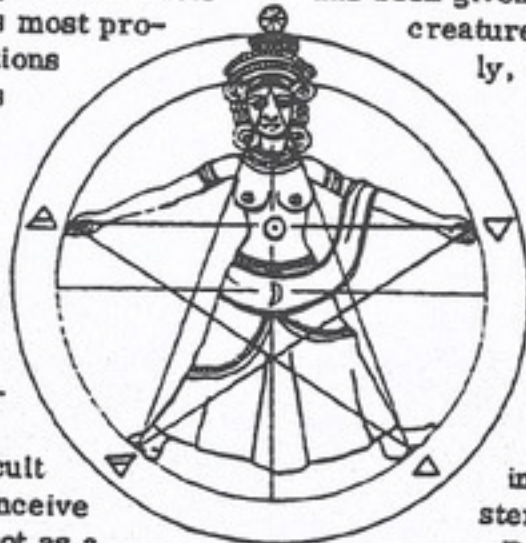
is the nearest thing to God on this earth — far nearer than any force, however great. Maid is the central being of the world-system. The human being is a direct reflection of the Divine. The human female has the special characteristics of God. She is able to create — to bring forth life out of herself — and to nourish with her milk even as God nourishes and sustains Her created universe in every second, otherwise it would fall into nothingness.

As the central creature in this world-system maid is the princess-regent of God on earth. She has been given rulership over all the things and creatures of the earth, to govern them wisely, according to divine law (*themis).

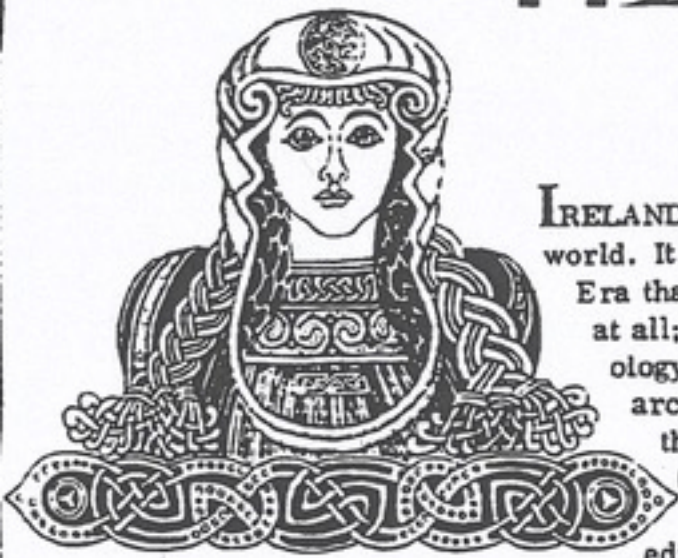
But maid is also the only creature with the power of choice. The stars run in their appointed courses. A flower cannot choose to blossom out of season. Only maid can "desert her post". And when she does, when she ceases to govern the earth in *themis, chaos follows in the form of ecological crisis, nuclear threat and a hundred other ways in which the harmony of the world-system is thrown out of balance.

But this is really the least of our worries, for maid is not simply a creature of this world. Each of us has lived countless times before and will be reborn countless times again. What forms our future lives will take is shaped by our actions in this life. The purpose of life is not to make material 'progress' in this world, but to come closer to the Absolute. This life is but one lap in a journey to the ultimate Goal.

The real difference between maid and the animals is not her intelligence, but her power to move toward that Goal. Human life is a unique spiritual opportunity. That is the real point and purpose of being human. And one thing is certain. If we waste this opportunity, if we disregard our true human destiny — if we simply live like sophisticated (evolved) animals, directing all our energies and intelligence to mundane existence — we will not be human again for many lifetimes.



matriarchy in ireland



IRELAND was one of the last strongholds of matriarchy in the patriarchal world. It was not until the third or fourth centuries before the Christian Era that male-dominated religion and social order entered this island at all; and even then, as Joseph Campbell writes: "Both the archaeology and the ancient literature of Ireland demonstrate that the patriarchal, iron-bearing Celts, who gained the mastery during the last three or four centuries B.C., overcame, but did not extinguish the earlier Bronze Age civilisation of Mother Right (matriarchy)." The ancient legends of Ireland survive in books rewritten and edited by early Christian monks, yet even so, their matriarchal

nature is quite clear. They state that the first people to set foot upon Irish soil were a party of fifty maids, led by their queen, Cesara, Cessair, or Ceasar. This is an ancient matriarchal name for a great ruler, later adopted by patriarchs in such forms as Caesar, Kaiser and Czar.

A later group to arrive in Ireland were the Tuatha de Danaan — the people of Dana. This was the name of the supreme Mother Goddess in Ireland, as was Danu in pre-Vedic India and Danae in pre-Hellenic Greece. She was known, in fact, all over the ancient Indo-European world, giving Her name to places and rivers from the Don to the Darube in the east, to Denmark in the west. She was also called Ana or Anu. Two hills in Kerry, called "the paps of Anu" were a sacred site. In Leicestershire, England, She was called Annis and had a place of pilgrimage in the Dane hills. Sometimes the name took an I-preface, as in Teutonic Iduna (in Her aspect as mistress of Avala and guardian of the Golden Apples) or Inanna.

Queen Eire was one of the greatest rulers of the Tuatha de Danaan, and it is from her that Ireland derives the name which she bears to this day.

St Brigit is honoured to this day as a 'Christianised' version of the ancient goddess Brigid or Brighde. The nuns of her order, who tended a sacred fire, were the direct descendants of an ancient college of priestesses at Kildare, who maintained a matriarchal fire-cult identical with that of Vesta in the pre-patriarchal Latin tradition and connected with the hearth-fire rituals practised by Rhennish families to this day (see "The Bridge", TCA19). Brighde governed such arts as medicine, agriculture and poetry, and, as Professor J.A. MacCulloch points out, the cult "must have originated in a period when the Celts

worshipped goddesses rather than gods, and when knowledge — leechcraft, agriculture, inspiration — were women's rather than men's."

In early patriarchal days, great priestly and scholarly communities were set up on the western islands to provide spiritual leadership for the Celtic world and keep alive the matriarchal tradition. "These communities of women," writes T.D. Kendrick, the historian of Druidism, "continued the observances of a pre-druidic faith."

The West is the direction of Autumn and the setting sun. It is symbolically natural that the end of the Iron Age should come from the Western world. Not only have all the perversions of the modern dark age been the inventions of Western European civilisation, but each successive stage in the degeneration has come from a point further west than the last. Thus the so-called 'Renaissance' began in Italy, the Protestant 'Reformation' in Germany, the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment' in France and the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution in Britain. Finally, twentieth-century multinational super-capitalism developed in America, which is truly "west of the West", for America is, in traditional geography, an eastern country, and her native people are an eastern people.

But Ireland, the *Ultima Thule*, the extreme west of the Old World, has played no significant part in any of these developments. Instead, she has remained a repository of ancient tradition and one of the mainstays of Rhennish matriarchy. It is said that when the new Golden Age dawns, the East shall become West and the West, East. And the sun of the Golden Dawn, may she not rise in Ireland?



Section III: The Matriarchal Vision

Breaking the Spell

YOU ARE NOW entering dangerous territory. This third section of the book is the place of exorcism, the place of dis-enchantment. Open your eyes, and we will begin to show you the matriarchal vision.

This vision is vision in the strictest and simplest sense of the word —

seeing things for what they are. Yet to someone from the patriarchal world seeing it for the first time it will seem a vision in quite another sense. For to see things as they really are is to see a richness, depth and splendour that the mundane modern world can scarcely dream of.

Putting it simply, we may say that matriarchy sees the universe as alive, while the modern mind sees it as dead. Now this dead, or materialist, universe is not at all the natural vision of reality seen by the unprejudiced eye. On the contrary, it is a highly artificial construction concocted over the last five centuries by Western European patriarchy and carefully conditioned into the Western child from her earliest years. The process is a kind of cultural hypnosis by which the modern person is drugged into seeing an unnatural, colourless, two-dimensional world, which she is indoctrinated into believing is 'reality'.

Once the artificial 'reality' is seen for what it is, it at once begins to crack. This third section of our book is intended to begin the process of breaking the spell of modernism — to show the reader how she may begin to awaken herself from the hypnotic trance of the late-patriarchal world-view. But herein lies the chief danger of the book. Once the awakening has begun, you will never be able to take the modern world seriously again. You will no longer belong to it. You will become a person out of her time. There is a built-in safeguard here, for if you are not ready to receive this knowledge, it will have no effect on you. Even if you are ready it may work slowly, over a period of weeks, months or even years. But if you think you may be ready, pause a moment before taking the step of reading the rest of this book. For once you have taken it you may never be able to return.

To find the cure we must first understand the disease. What, then, is the modern world-view? Before all else we must understand that it is an historical anomaly. It has developed in that small portion of the earth's surface called Western Europe in the five cen-

turies following what it is pleased to call the 'Renaissance' — a tiny portion of human history.

The modern world is at variance with every other civilisation known to history (with the single exception of the 'classical' decadence of Greece and Rome, to which it proudly traces its ancestry). Every other civilisation has understood that the physical world is the reflection or expression of supra-physical transcendent Reality, and that we must seek for its meaning and explanation in the light of that Reality. Every other civilisation has sought to cultivate maid's natural ability to perceive transcendent Reality behind the outer forms of the material world. The modern world declares that the physical universe is reality in itself (the 'real world' to use its own vulgar expression) and seeks for all meaning and explanation on the level of physical 'facts'. More than this, it goes much further than 'classical' antiquity in systematically suppressing the lost vestiges of maid's natural vision of true Reality through a lengthy process of compulsory indoctrination, miscalled 'education' and establishing the only civilisation in history to be developed along purely material lines with no relation whatever to principles of a superior order.

What can support a cultural provincialism so absurdly arrogant as to believe that, representing a small proportion of the inhabited world, and a microscopic proportion of human history, the modern world is nevertheless right and every other civilisation throughout the whole of human history has been wrong? The answer is that the modern world has invented a doctrine specifically to deal with this problem. It is called the doctrine of progress. According to this doctrine every previous civilisation existed in a state of more or less 'primitive' ignorance while the modern world has reached a pinnacle of knowledge and enlightenment.

This is obviously a highly tendentious assertion.

but its partisans seek to justify it by reference to the achievements of modern science and technology. But a moment's thought shows that this is a circular argument. A civilisation which decides that the purpose of life is to build bigger and better cities, factories, bombs and household gadgets will obviously achieve a great deal more in its chosen field than a civilisation which directs its energies and intelligence in other directions altogether. To say "the superiority of modern civilisation is proved by its science and technology" is exactly equivalent to saying "the superiority of hockey over chess is proved by the fact that hockey players play better hockey than chess players."

The doctrine of progress is based on the naïvely parochial assumption that ancient maid had the same values as the modern world — that she would eagerly have developed motorways and atom bombs if only she had been clever enough to do so, that the ancient sacred sciences were mere gropings toward modern physical science. The truth is that the modern sciences are mere residues of the ancient sciences, emptied of their profound metaphysical content and reduced to sifting through the outward material husks of things, being blind to their inner Reality. It was not an advance in knowledge which created the modern world, but a loss of knowledge; not a mental evolution, but an intellectual degeneration.

Now, although this last stage of decline belongs to the post-Renaissance period rather than to patriarchy as a whole, it is inherent in the very nature of patriarchy. From the most ancient times the feminine principle has been symbolised by the sign of Venus ♀ and the masculine principle by that of Mars ♂ (some late versions depict the cross as an arrow). Now in each case the circle represents Spirit and the cross matter; thus the former depicts Spirit dominant over matter and the latter depicts matter dominant over Spirit (or rather, since the complete dominance of matter is a metaphysical impossibility, the cross is

set at an angle of forty-five degrees over the circle indicating the dominance of matter so far as that is possible). This is still understood by modern astrological authorities — see, for example, the volume on astrology in the Cambridge University Press's "Teach Yourself" series (pp.29 and 31).

The history of patriarchy, by its very nature, must be a continuous movement from the dominance of the superior principle of Spirit or Essence to that of the inferior principle of matter or substance; and, as we have seen in our second chapter, this is not

merely a tendency toward materialism, but also toward chaos and disintegration.

It is for this reason that the 'materialist' vision of the modern world has given rise to a civilisation more violent and disordered than any before it, in which one person in eight is treated for mental disturbance and where war, upheaval and chaos of every sort increase with every passing year.

The dead, accidental world of the late patriarchal vision is a world without a centre, producing a neurotic, rootless humanity, homeless and isolated in a bleak, unmeaning universe.

The only solution is to put right the deviation from the root — to return to the living cosmos of the matriarchal vision. To move from a cold, dead, alien world to a world of profundity and intimate warmth, where every flower and every star is alive with vibrant meaning.

The first step is to know that the "real world" of late patriarchy is an artificial construct — a striped and scaled-down parody of Reality. The second step is to know what to look for, and to open your eyes, awaken and see. The next chapter will show you the world as a natural, un hypnotised mind sees it. Imagine, then, that you are sitting at the feet of a Rhennish sage. Let her lead you from the mental prison of late-patriarchy into the sunshine of the Real world. But know that once out, there is no return.



The Living Cosmos



The Crystal Spheres

THE SUN is a golden chariot drawn by seven wild-maned battle-ponies. The sun is Sai *Theia, mistress of the chariot. At dawn she rides out from the

cavern of the world, and at eventide she comes to the golden island of the west where her daughters await her and gladden her rest with their singing.

Know this to be true. And know that whatever you have heard of the sun from the patriarch and his court astronomer is naught but the barest falsehood, however truthlike it be made to seem.

For the time has come when we must lead you into a world where all things are other than you have learned. And you shall learn that this is their true nature.

"But hold," perhaps you cry, "have I not seen these things that you call lies displayed and demonstrated in forms and figures that I dare not doubt? Has not the tyrant's lackey trodden his foot upon the moon to show me it is nothing but a piece of rock? Have I not seen his pictures of the sun...?"

You have seen some conjuring tricks and some clever mountebank subtleties. That is all. Did he not tread upon the moon? you ask. He trod upon that piece of rock that floats above the world. Was that the moon? It was an image of the moon. But how could it be the moon, since the moon does not exist in this world of things? Let us look a little deeper.

The moon is the soul of the world, and the sun is the Spirit. Both are eternal, immortal and unchanging. Both existed long before the ball of rock and the ball of fire that float above this world. Both shall exist when all the worlds are dust. It is this Real moon and this Real sun that the traditional maid sees when she looks into the sky. And likewise, everything on earth and in the heaven is some changeless and eternal Reality made manifest in the changing world of matter. This you must learn to see, if you will see true.

The doctrine that the material world is the real world — that material things exist in their own right, in and of themselves — is quite simply a superstition. It is the remnant of a belief held by patriarchal scientists in the last century and long since discarded. The old mechanistic science was upturned at the dawn of this century by Relativity and Quantum Theory.

Max Planck, the originator of Quantum Theory

wrote: "I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness." Of the British Astro-Physicists, Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington, Professor Joad wrote "their considered view is that the reality of things is mental or spiritual, and that so-called material phenomena are the effects of the way in which the spiritual reality appears to us." Einstein came also to this conclusion.

We do not cite these things in order to commend them, nor, certainly, to seek some 'proof' of the traditional vision (for the lesser can never prove the greater), but simply to show that even on its own terms the modern materialist point of view is nothing but a superstition.

What is vulgarly called the 'scientific world-view' (i. e. mechanistic materialism) is systematically disseminated through the compulsory education system and the mass media. It is believed by the mass of the populace. Yet it has not had the support of serious science for nearly a century. Why does it continue to be disseminated? Because it is central to the modern way of seeing the world; it is the very heart of the myth-system upon which the modern world rests. To put it another way, it is the cardinal dogma of the religion of modernism.

When we declare that every modern mind is bound by the superstition of materialism, voices will be raised in protest — / am not a materialist, nor I, nor I. Let us then make it clear that when we speak here of materialism, we speak not of a creed, a philosophy nor any system of belief, but of a way of seeing the world. And in this sense, the devout Christian and the spiritualist medium, having received the modern conditioning, are no less materialist than the avowed atheist. Anyone who looks at the sun and sees a physical object and not a deity in a golden chariot is a materialist and lies in the grip of blackest superstition.

If you are ready to cast off this superstition, we shall tell you how you may begin. Go forth on a clear

night and behold the heavens, or seat yourself in some silent place, and contemplate the cosmos as it truly is. Cast from your mind the notion of infinite space. We are to enter a world with seven planets and eight celestial spheres. Neither let your mind be troubled by the thought that this view represents but the ignorance of the ancients on physical matters. Seals from matriarchal Sumeria some 9000 years old show all the extra-Saturnian planets (although the patriarch 'dis-

covered' the last of them but fifty years ago) and solar systems beyond our own. Yet these things played no part in their normal view of the cosmos, for they knew that they were but trivia of the material plane. With the most powerful telescope conceivable we could see but an insignificant fraction of infinite space, but in the finite cosmos of the matriarchal vision, we can see the whole of Reality. The concentric spheres are

manifestations of the states of being through which a maid must pass to reach Being itself, which transcends both space and time. On every level except the most trivial and insignificant, the traditional vision of the cosmos is true. On every level except the most trivial and insignificant, the picture presented by modern science is false.

Cast aside this falsehood, then, and dwell in the true cosmos from this day forth. Certainly you may keep the physical facts recorded in some obscure corner of your mind as curiosities — even as the Sumerians did — but unless the world you live and breathe in becomes the true and eternal world, you will remain under the spell of superstition. Listen, then, with reverence and awe to the true nature of the cosmos.

The world is a ball at the centre of the cosmos. When you look up into the night sky, you will see certain bright creatures. Some are stars, but the brightest of all are *Geniae, which the ignorant call

'planets'. They are seven in number, and each is a living being that does dwell in and govern an invisible sphere of crystal. The first sphere, encircling our earth, is the sphere of Sai *Phoebe, the moon. This is the realm of thought and emotions and of the subtle body. Beyond this space is the sphere of Sai *Metis (Mercury). She is clothed in yellow robes, and is a creature of pure intelligence. Beyond this sphere is the sphere of Sai *Tethys (Venus), whose colour is

green. She is the sister of Sai *Themis who rules the sixth sphere. Sai *Tethys is pure love, and from her flows all the love in this world. Her sister Sai *Themis doth order and govern all things on earth and in the heaven in perfect harmony.

Beyond the seven spheres there lies an eighth, and this is the sphere of the fixed stars. Herein are the twelve houses of the zodiac, through which the *Geniae do

pass. Here also are the eight and twenty mansions wherein Sai *Phoebe takes her rest in the course of a month, and sundry other stars.

Know also that these *Geniae are not only in the heaven, but also within you. Know that the sun and your heart are one and the same. Know that your love is Sai *Tethys within you, that but for Sai Metis you could not read these words, and but for Sai *Themis you could not govern your hand to hold the book. Know also that these things we have considered are but an example, or a starting-point taken at hazard — that everything you see and think upon must be re-seen and re-thought in like manner, until the whole world shall appear under its true form and semblance.

These things may be hard for you to comprehend, yet think often upon what you have learned this day and it shall enter in and begin to awaken you. Think upon it whenever you see the sky and consider the world. And in the morning, picture Sai *Theia riding





Notes from the Nether Shore

One Maid's Experience

MUSICALS. As a child I always loved musicals. They created a world where singing and dancing were a part of everyday life: where the butcher or the baker might burst into song and turn cartwheels over his delivery cart. A world where magic came in as naturally as the morning milk; where good was good and evil was evil and there was no real doubt as to which would triumph over which; where the archetypal folktale themes — albeit in debased forms — were played out again and again.

But the musicals were an illusion. Five minutes of effortless grace and style were the result of hours of work by director, choreographer, scriptwriter, orchestra, songwriter and a dozen others. Life was not like that. It was flat, styleless and eminently practical.

I suppose I longed to live in a world where wit, charm and flair were a part of life. Instead I lived in an age of mediocrity among a shuffling, self-conscious population, afraid to be anything but banal and quick to sneer at all who were otherwise. A world where the archetypal themes of folktale had no relevance to the paltry practicalities of 'ordinary life'.

One of the first things that impressed me on encountering the matriarchal tradition was to see a people who *did* sing and dance even as they worked and lived. Who acted out the archetypal themes in daily life.

Living in a matriarchal society is not like living in a musical (although it is rather more like living in a musical than like living in the 'ordinary life' of the modern world). For one thing it has a grandeur and dignity that no modern theatrical production could attain. I found that I had moved from a little, trivial world into a world immeasurably vast and timeless.

Yet music is the thread which runs through matriarchal society and binds it together. The very Law which governs our every act, *Themis, is best translated as 'harmony'. But it is a music far different from the modern musicals. A music so rich and ancient that it makes the blood tingle. From the work-songs, the chants and ritual drums to the warm, full-bodied drone of the crwth and the gentle rippling of psaltery and dulcimer, none of it is made simply to entertain: all are earthly echoes of the unheard Music which underlies the movement of the earth and heaven

forth from the world-cavern; and at eventide picture her reaching the western isle where her daughters await her and gladden her rest with their singing.

For here alone is the beginning of wisdom.

and of all the manifest universe.

Every traditional people believes that music and ritual hold the universe together: that without them all would dissolve into black eternal chaos. The modern world scorns this as a superstition. "We have no rituals", they say, "yet our world is not disintegrating into chaos". Isn't it?

The devil drums drive devils away. Every traditional society has them in one form or another. The modern world thinks it can manage very nicely without them. Yet the modern world is the most chaotic civilisation in human history. Violence, vandalism, suicide and insanity, once rare anomalies, have now reached epidemic proportions. Drug abuse and demonic possession (the latter usually unrecognised) are everyday occurrences. If you do not have devil drums, you will certainly have devils.

All this was as difficult for me then as it may be for you now. My philosophy made it hard for me to accept. My philosophy? If anyone had asked, I would probably have said what you would say: "I do not subscribe to any particular philosophy". But now I can see that from the earliest age I had been conditioned to see the world through the eyes of the men who created the modern world — Victorian scientists in top hats, eighteenth-century philosophers in powdered wigs. Little, unheroic men in a little, unheroic world, knowing nothing of the true inner nature of Reality and making guesses which reveals nothing except the mean-spirited materialism of their age. It is they, and their technocratic successors, who live in the darkness of superstitious ignorance. It is the traditional peoples who possess the light of true science.

But I was trapped in the modern world-view. I had no bridge to cross the waters of ignorance into the smiling sunlight of the Truth. When at last I found the bridge, I crossed — nervously at first, but with increasing boldness — into a land where the hills are alive with the Music of the Spheres.

Where do We go from Here?

SO NOW you have learned a little about the matriarchal tradition and the matriarchal way of seeing the world. Where do you go from here? Firstly we would suggest that you read this book again, for you will certainly discover new things on each subsequent reading, and a whole new way of thought will slowly open up to you. But, of course, you will want to know more. After all, the matriarchal tradition is a whole new way of life. It covers every area of human existence. This book has barely scratched the surface. How can you learn more of the depth and detail of this richest and most ancient of all cultures? The answer is *The Coming Age*.

The Coming Age is very much more than an ordinary magazine. It is a veritable encyclopaedia of the matriarchal tradition. For example, in this issue, we have looked, very briefly, at the traditional matriarchal view of the stars and planets, and its superiority to the naïve materialism of modern astronomy. The 'Symbolism' series in each issue of the magazine examines in detail the traditional view of some aspect of the world, revealing its true inner meaning. Subjects have ranged from the Horse and the Wheel to the Bridge and the Cave.

Each issue includes numerous articles on every conceivable aspect of life viewed from the standpoint of the matriarchal tradition. Over the past five years, these have included:

- Amazons (issues 11 and 15)
- Animals — their place in the cosmic structure (13)
- Art — the matriarchal view (17)
- Archery — the inner meaning (13)
- Childhood (14)
- Evolution — what is the truth? (19)
- Fairies — spirits of nature (7)
- Femininity — what is it? (20)
- Man — his role in matriarchy (15)
- Nuclear Technology — in the light of alchemy (12)

And dozens more. In addition, each issue contains material on the seasonal festivals, Old Rhennish songs, a matriarchal story, often with a detailed commentary explaining the metaphysical depths of these deceptively simple tales, and much else beside.

The Coming Age is published quarterly, but under our special subscription programme you will receive a copy each sacred month — that is, thirteen copies per year: four current copies and nine back issues. This way you will build up your own encyclopaedia of

the matriarchal tradition. The back issues are selected according to the season, so that you will learn about the mysteries of each season as it comes around. But the system is flexible to your personal needs — for example, a correspondent enquiring about evolution would be sent a copy of issue 19 out of sequence.

A year's subscription is £10, including postage.

—MARIARCHAL SAMIZDAT—

THERE ARE, and have only ever been, two systems of thought in the world: traditional matriarchy, traditional patriarchy and antitraditional patriarchy. Of these only the first two are systems of thought in the true sense, while the third is a pot-pourri of every shade of heresy, chaotically divided into mutually quarrelling factions, yet bound together by certain common assumptions, usually unspoken and unacknowledged.

Five years ago, we began to publish the traditional matriarchal view in a world where all the media of communication — the press, the broadcasting networks, the cinemas, the compulsory education system etc. — continually propagate the world-view of antitraditional patriarchy. We knew that the adequate dissemination of the vast material of our cultural heritage — which is also *your* cultural heritage, the heritage of all humanity — would be impossible financially and in all other ways, with all communication systems monopolised by the antitraditional patriarchal establishment. Virtually as impossible in this 'free' world as it would be in Russia.

And then we remembered the Russian method of circulating underground papers — a method where no publication is necessary, for one copy serves many people. It is called samizdat.

The Madrian Literature Circle is matriarchal samizdat. It is a circulating library of manuscripts ranging from songs, stories and first-hand accounts of matriarchal life, to lengthy studies on such subjects as matriarchal music, or the Amazon origins and metaphysical meaning of the game of chess. There are many pieces much longer than *The Coming Age* would be able to print, including a full-length novel. The initial subscription is £10, to cover photocopying and administrative costs. Thereafter you need only return each paper with an SAE to receive the next.

A BRIDGE THROUGH TIME

£1



WHEN the world was fresh with the dew of the dawn of time, there walked a young race proud upon the earth. A race that saw with eyes more clear than our eyes; with eyes that were not deceived by the shifting shows of earthly things, but saw within to their eternal and changeless Reality. A race whose light was lighter and whose dark was deeper, and whose voices sang the music of eternity.

And the maids of this race were tall and fair and awesome to look upon; and the maids were the gentle rulers of the race in home and village, in Temple and in palace, even as God, in Her wisdom, has decreed.

And as the world grew older and less wise, resplendent cities rose in the noon-day sun, and mighty empires crossed the continents. Yet still the laws and customs, the rhythms and rituals of the first race governed all things. For it was only in the last senility of the race that the rule of men took hold, and the darkened mind was plunged in the mire of matter. And the world of tower block and atom bomb — is it not the work of a gaunt and skeletal race, grown bitter in its dotage?

And all the world seems flattened to an image of the petty dullness of that race. Yet we are inviting you to leave that world. To make a pilgrimage to the western edge of the Old World, to a place that is named The Living Bridge — and there to step through a magical gateway into a world older and deeper than anything you have known; a life that is little different to that lived ten thousand years ago. To a people as different from modern folk as modern folk are from the Esquimaux.

Have you the courage to cross the Bridge and shake the dust of the Dark Age from your feet?

To travel west across the western island of the world, a land still green, where the looming towers of tyranny fall far behind you. To travel west, and ever west, to where the sun sets in the sounding sea, and where, at the world's end, you shall find the world's beginning.

