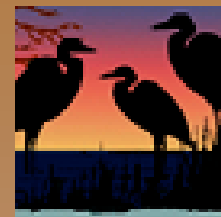


Crane Chatter

Beltaine Edition



A publication by Three Cranes Grove, ADF

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTER- EST:

- IP Classes with Rev. Michael J. Dangler begin this summer
- ComFest Booth
- Dublin Irish Festival
- Icelandic Talks
- Meditation Classes continue

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Around the Fire with the Senior Druid	1
Beltaine	2
Lupercal—The Wolf Mother Goddess	3
Poetry a la Crane	8
In the Kitchen with Skarlett	9
Nature Spirit Meditation	10
A Mayan Experience	11
Review of Ostara 2011	15
Bardic Inspiration by the Grove Bard	17
Freyja's Frozen Heart	19
Review of Hermetic Magic	20
Survey of My Little Ponies	22
Future Events	26

Around the Fire with the Senior Druid

Last night (as I'm writing this) we had our monthly Dedicant Program meeting. It was a small group and we got started a little late, and so the conversation started rather informally, even though there was a set curriculum. I am working through Ian Corrigan's *Nine Moons* program, and mentioned a contradiction I saw, or thought I saw, between his concept of the Gatekeeper and my own. A couple of people saw no contradiction, explained it, and I actually came to understand it in a different way. This led to a discussion of when to invoke and work with a gatekeeper and when not to, with some of us doing it all the time, but others not if we are at an established shrine. The conversation then turned to Outdwellers with the same conversation of when you include that in your personal workings and when you don't. The conversation

flowed easily in an atmosphere of trust and support. We gave ideas to one member who was having difficulty making contact with housewights in her residence. I was struck as I left the meeting, that THIS is what a spiritual community is all about.

There are lots of types of pagan organization. Some are networking only. Some are spiritual, and some are a combination of both. Some see each other once a month at the full moon and on high days and that's it. Some see each other at every moon phase. And then some are like Three Cranes, with a full schedule of activities, rituals, service, and meetings. Even within that, there are different levels of involvement. Some people are good with once a month. Others get twitchy if they go a week without a crane fix.

The important point is that the type of organization doesn't matter. The

level of involvement doesn't either. What matters is that there is a safe place for people to go to get questions answered and support for their spiritual path.

As the weather warms up, I encourage everyone to take advantage of that and get out there. This was a time when our ancestors would have been faring forth, so we should consider doing the same. Go to a workshop, meeting, or ritual. Meet with fellow pagans, learn from them, teach them, and continue to grow a community that supports its members no matter what spiritual path they are on. As Beltane is the time for fertility and growth, apply that energy to your own spiritual path so you can share it with others.

Nine blessings!

Beltane 2011 by Irisa MacKenzie

Beltane will be celebrated by honoring the Hellenic deities of Aphrodite and Pan. While Beltane is not a traditional Hellenic High day, it is one of the eight High Day's celebrated by Ar nDraiocht Fein: A Druid Fellowship (ADF). In modern neopaganism this High Day is regarded as a fire festival that marks the blossoming of hope, love and fertility. Many people celebrate this day with May Pole dances, community celebration and feasting.

In keeping with these modern traditions we have chosen to honor the Hellenic deities of Aphrodite and Pan. Aphrodite is an Olympian Goddess whose is primarily known for love, beauty and passion. Pan is a rustic God whose passion is music, revelry and love. These are not the only aspects of Aphrodite and Pan; however they are the aspects we will be calling to on Beltane.

This ritual will include an honoring to Hestia, the Goddess of our Hearth and sacrificial flame. Hestia's hand in marriage was sought after by both Apollon and Poseidon. Having no desire to marry, she asked Zeus to remain an eternal virgin. Zeus granted her wish and a place at his hearth, tending the sacred fire of all the Olympians. Hestia is honored both first and last in Hellenic rituals. This reflects her being twice born. First she was born from Kronos and Rhea, to be swallowed by her father Kronos. Then Zeus forced the Titan to disgorge his children, and Hestia was reborn last as she was the first swallowed. This birthing and rebirthing is why she is honored first and last.

Divine Inspiration will be prayed for to the Muses. The Muses are nine Greek Goddesses of music, song, dance, poetry and inspiration. Each Muse has a particular talent and musical instrument. Through the ages, the divine grace of the Muses has been sought by diplomats, politicians and artists alike.

The aspect of Earth Mother that we will honor is Gaia. Gaia is the protogenos of Earth. She is one of the first to emerge at the dawn of creation, along with Land, Sea and Sky. From her mating with each of the elements, all the Gods were born.

When we create the sacred center, we will place the Omphalos and hallow the Well and Fire. In Greek Mythology, and Hellenic neopaganism, the Omphalos is a stone that is considered to be the naval of the world and sacred center of all the cosmos. The original Omphalos was found at Delphi and was the place where Zeus' eagles did meet to mark the center of the world. It also marked the grave of the Python serpent slain by Apollon. Through this sacred center ADF Hellenes call for the World Tree to grow, plunging deep within the earth to touch the Sacred Waters below and reaching into the Skies above for the Sacred Fire of the Heavens.

Our gatekeeper will be Iris, messenger of the Gods and Goddess of the Rainbow. She creates the rainbow bridge as needed to travel, carrying messages between the Gods and from the Gods to men. Beltane we will call on Iris to create her rainbow bridge and carry our words and love to the Gods.

The working portions of our rite will first be a traditional Maypole dance. We will then take the energies we have raised and send healing to Japan.

Lastly, I enclose a devotion to Aphrodite and Pan to help you become familiar with them.

*Aphrodite, teach me to ride the tides of passion in my life
Guide me through love, heartbreak and my own sexuality.
Teach me to love deeply and whole-heartedly.
Walk with me as I deepen my relationships with the Gods and Men.*

*Pan, teach me to find my soul's music
Guide me to dance, sing and love the rhythm of my life
Teach me to embrace life's passion
Walk with me as I go to that deep part of the forest and myself.*

*Lady Aphrodite and Lord Pan, Teachers of Passion and Joy
In reverence and love, I call to your wisdom and light-heartedness
You who embody Love, Lust and Sexuality
Walk with me on the path into my own heart and soul.*

By Jan Krueger and Irisa
MacKenzie (4.19.2011)

Lupercal - The Wolf-Mother Goddess

Also known as: Lupa; The She-Wolf;

Culture: Roman

Iconography: Lupercal is usually depicted as a she wolf and often with obvious breasts. Often twins are near by or being suckled by her.

Some Favored People: Children & others in distress, strong independent women, prostitutes & sex workers, shepherds and farmers, canine related people.

Sacred Dates: February 15: Lupercalia; February 21: Feralia.

Sacred Site: The Lupercal Cave at the foot of Palatine Hill in Rome, Italy.

Lupercal is a rather obscure goddess – most know little of her or are all together unaware of her, so I hope this project does a little to rectify that issue.

My first exposure to her was a reproduction statue of the Capitoline wolf in Eden Park of Cincinnati, Ohio. The statue was a gift from the city of Rome since Cincinnati was named after the Roman hero Cincinnatus in part due to the similarity of the climate and geography to Rome with a river and seven hills.

I took Latin class in High School where we celebrated various important Roman holidays with little games and food. For some reason Lupercalia left an impression on me and I found a way to celebrate it in some fashion each year. When I formally became a Pagan I began giving honors every year to the she-wolf. In the past couple of years she showed up in a few journeys and seems to have taken on a motherly role towards me. When I was at one

of my lowest points and in some personal danger last year I had a vivid reassuring dream. For this I owe her greatly.

The Capitoline Statue:

The Capitoline Wolf is statue of Lupercal with twins underneath and has become a symbol of both the city of Rome and her ancient empire. Her distended teats and gnarling expression show her as a mother ready to defend her young. The famous statue itself is currently under debate since recent tests seem to indicate that it only dates to the 1200s CE and it seems to possibly be a replacement for the lost or destroyed original statue which is referenced prior to this date (at least the 10th century) as being on display at the Pope's Lateran Palace where trials were held 'at the wolf' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitoline_Wolf). The statue remained there until it was transferred over to the Palazzo dei Conservatori Museum on Capitoline Hill by Pope Sixtus IV in 1471. The twins under her were probably added at this point. In 1586 she was then mounted on a pedestal and moved to her current location at the Stanza Della Lupa.

Origins:

This is a highly debated topic and there are various origins debated for Lupercal from Etruscan, Latin, Greek and other cultures. One hypothesis current among the Romans holds that she and the Lupercalia may have come from Greek settlers from around Mt. Lykaion who held a version of the Lykaia and Lupercal was derived from the wolf deities / wolf-forms of several different deities (such as Pan, Zeus,



and Apollo).

Mythology:

"Sometimes I remember it one way, sometimes another... if I'm going to have a past, I prefer it to be multiple choice! Ha ha ha!"

-The Joker, The Killing Joke

On the banks of the flowing Tiber two twins are nursed by a she-wolf under a sacred fig tree near her cave home. This is the image that is most connected to Lupercal – however the exact details of this scene such as the identity of the twins and parentage of the twins varies from tale to tale.

In what seems to be the oldest mythology featuring Lupercal the set of twins underneath her were not Romulus and Remus – that particular myth seems to have come later and acquired elements from an earlier myth. The She-wolf's first adopted children seem to be the offspring of Mercury and a Nymph variously called Larunda, Lara, Lala, Tacita, or the Silent Goddess (she was also considered to be the same as Etruscan goddess of death: Mania).

Lara was the daughter of the river god Almo, and was very talkative, this attribute got her into trouble when she reported on Jupiter's desire

Lupercal - The Wolf-Mother Goddess—(cont from page 2)

for and attempted seduction of her sister Juturna to Juno. In a rage, Jupiter tore out her tongue so she could no longer talk and sent her away to become a nymph of infernal marshes. Mercury took her to the underworld and on the way in a sacred grove (probably of ether Hecate or Bona Dea (Wiseman 2004, 80)) she was raped by Mercury (although some variants of the myths say it was consensual). She gave birth to twins who became the first two twin Lares (guardians of the crossroads, fields, household spirits, and often considered to be ancestral spirits), specifically the Lares Praestites (guardians of the state).

Lara could not take care of the twins herself in the world of the living as she was confined to the underworld and so she sent them to the world above where they were cared for by a she-wolf, Lupercal. This seems to be in part commemorated by the Feralia on February 21st which honors the dead as it was believed that they could visit the world of the living on that date.

Over time the foster-mothership of the she-wolf was added to the story of the founding of Rome and the twins overtime received more royal and less scandalous parentage. T.P. Wiseman opines that happened due to a desire for national symbols with a more dignified and relevant origin (Wiseman 2004, 117). The twins became the founders of Rome symbolizing the cooperation of the Plebeian and Patrician classes and their names related to the virtues of the classes: Remus (from *remorari*) – to hold back and be cautious & Romulus (from *romos*) – forcefulness and strength.

In a version told by Plutarch, a phallus arose from a hearth in the home of King Tarchetios of Alba Longa and remained there for many days. A prophecy was given that if a virgin had intercourse with it she would then conceive a hero of great fame and strength. Tarchetios sent one of his daughters to do the deed, but she thought it was beneath her and so had a slave girl use the magic phallus instead. Tarchetios was furious and tried to have the twins who were born of the slave girl killed through exposure by casting them adrift in a box on the Tiber river. They washed ashore near Lupercal's cave and Lupercal adopted and raised the twins.

A more familiar story that was popular in the second century BCE had a vestal virgin that was named Ilia who was raped by Mars and then sentenced to death by drowning by King Amulius of Alba Longa as a disgraced

Vestal Virgin. Ilia then became the wife of the river god Anio or the Tiber depending on the variant. The twins were set adrift on the Tiber and washed ashore at a fig tree (the *Ficus Ruminalis*) near the Lupercal cave where they were found by Lupercal and they were raised in the Lupercal cave. Later they were adopted and raised by Faustulus and his wife Acca Larenta.

The more familiar story that is cited most often today is that of Mars and Rhea Silvia. The story goes that there were two princes of Alba Longa: Numitor and Amulius. Numitor was the elder but he was cheated out of the throne by his younger brother Amulius who became king. Amulius had Numitor's son killed and his daughter

Rhea Silvia made into a Vestal Virgin. She had twins fathered by Mars who were raised by at first Lupercal and then Faustulus and his wife Acca Larenta. When they grew up they killed Amulius and gave the throne to Numitor before heading off to found Rome around the area of the Lupercal cave. Later on a story developed where Remus was killed by Celer, a guard whose name meant fast, (or in other versions by a guard named Fabius) after he rashly jumped over a wall (or a ditch) instead of heading through the gate (in some versions Celer flees to Etruria after the murder). Other versions say that Remus was killed in a clash between supporters of the two twins.

Others stories say that Remus outlived Romulus. Later on after 15 years of bloody civil war a version emerged where Remus' was killed by Romulus himself and this is the most common version of the myth we see today – in part due to the influence of writers like St. Augustine and other Christian writers who used the the story of fratricide (and other more negative variants of the myths) to argue that Rome, the city of man, was “inaugurated in envy and bloodshed” (Wiseman 1995, 15).

Lupercal has often been identified with Acca Larenta, who has many different accounts about herself, from being an earth goddess, to a sacred prostitute, to a human shepherdess, to a wife of Hercules, to being the mother of the lares and a form of Larunda/Lara. This connection to Acca Larenta seems have happened as a site identified as Acca Larenta's 'grave' was near the Lupercal cave and when searching for a historical version of the myth it was thought that she may have been the 'real' Lupa and a historical personage (Wiseman 2004, 140)

Lupercia - The Wolf-Mother Goddess—(cont from page 3)

In various attempts to historicize the myth numerous variations appeared. Lupercia may have been a prostitute alleged some Roman historians noting that prostitutes are called Lupa – she-wolves. Other stories said that she was a kind girl named Lykaina (she-wolf). Some un-sourced and possibly historically dubious accounts on the Internet allege that she may have been a priestess of a fox goddess which were called 'lupa' – some accounts identify Lupercia as being a fox goddess as well (Ex: <http://fletcher-west.blogspot.com/2009/11/lupine-adventures-in-etymology.html>)

Lupercia has also been occasionally identified with deities such as Diana, Hecate, Juno, Bona Dea, and Artemis.

During the reign of Augustus she was given a consort Lupercus – the wolf god. He was variously identified with Pan, Silvanus, Inuus, and Faunus.

Lupercalia:

Lupercalia is the festival that is most heavily connected with Lupercia. The Romans themselves debated the meaning of the rites and who they really honored. The rites were about purification and fertility of the city, the fields, and the people – females seem to have begun to be especially targeted for purification and fertility following an epidemic of human and animal miscarriages in 276 BCE, but anyone and anything were still whipped for purification purposes. (Wiseman 1995, 84)

The rites went like this: Within the dark Lupercal cave two nobleman's sons stand silently as two goats and a dog are sacrificed. Their faces were smeared with blood and then the blood was wiped away with a wool rag soaked in milk. They then laughed. Later on they were dressed in garments made from the sacrificed goats and were armed with whips, which were also made from the skins of the sacrificed goats. They then ran around whipping anyone and anything they met bringing them purification and fertility.

While there are many interpretations of these rites both ancient and modern it seems to me that it may be a death and rebirth ritual. The two noble men may represent the two Lares Praestites. They are born from a goddess of death which is why they stand silently, they have just been brought from the underworld, and so are 'dead'. The blood of new life and a mother's milk from Lupercia animates them so they are brought to life and laugh. Now the Lares Praestites perform their functions driving away evil spirits with their whips to bring purification and fertility to the people and the land.

The so called 'Lupercalia lottery' where eligible bachelors and bachelorettes were paired up through random drawing is not attested in any ancient source and seems to have only appeared relatively recently – as are any other connections with love. It is a festival of purification and it was replaced by a festival of the 'Purification of the Virgin Mary' on February 15th by Pope Gelasius I in 494 CE. It is often connected with St. Valentine's day but historically or re-

placement wise there is little or no connection – St. Valentine's Day itself, for that matter, does not seem to develop its connection to Romantic Love until the late middle ages.

Lupercalia was also only celebrated in ancient times within the city of Rome itself as it was a civic festival and particular to the city of Rome itself.

All that said I, personally, have no problems with neo-traditions that somewhat fit (although I do have problems with the misinformation) beliefs, holidays, and rites have always changed over time and have adapted to changes in culture – true, some traditions have been preserved much more conservatively than others but traditions that don't adapt tend to be abandoned. 'Romantic Love' is an important part of modern western culture and the end of winter/beginning of spring is an appropriate seasonal time to celebrate it. Just because the love aspect isn't truly tradition to the original Lupercalia or St. Valentine's Day doesn't make the new 'traditions' any less important.

Reflections on Lupercia:

Lupercia's nature seems multi-fold she is first and foremost a protective mother who furiously defends her children against all obstacles. She is connected with the fields and fertility of crops and animals making her an earth mother as well. This is shown by perhaps the sacred fig tree (the Ficus Ruminalis – perhaps derived from Ruma the word for teat) and that she is credited with bringing prosperity and fertility to the fields and animals. With the lares she is the foster

Lupercia - The Wolf-Mother Goddess—(cont from page 4)

mother of the spirits of the land. The ritual of Lupercalia may also be connected to the 'rebirth' of the fields after they were laying 'dead' in winter.

Through connections with the lares and Lara, Lupercia is also connected to death, the ancestors, and it seems rebirth. Lupercia, it seems, holds the power of life and death in her paws and can function as a liminal figure between the worlds (such as between life and death and human/civilization and animal/nature). She is also formidable and furious in defense and can bring death to her enemies or protection to those she cares about.

She is also an expression of the strong and independent 'wild woman' archetype. She is independent through her own means, is powerful and forceful of her own will – uncontrolled by any males, and is sexually liberated. She has connections to Bona Dea whose rites were celebrated exclusively by women (and even mentions or pictures of men were forbidden in the rites). To the Etruscans and Pre-Roman Latins the she-wolf was a symbol of defiance. (Wiseman 1995, 76)

It is perhaps do to this that Lupercus appears during the age of Augustus. Augustus enacted a number of moral reforms (many reforms targeted the powers and actions of upper-class women) and he was concerned with the moral dangers of the Lupercalia among his changes were the dress of the runners which changed from thongs to substantial aprons. (Wiseman 1995, 82-

83)

Such a symbol of independent feminine power as Lupercia being symbol of the state was probably fairly in amicable to Augustus' moral reforms. Lupercus begins to appear during the reign of Augustus (Adkins & Adkins 1996, 136) as a 'husband' for Lupercia, it seems that this was an attempt to domesticate the wild she-wolf and bring her symbolically under the control of a dominate male thus doing symbolically what Augustus was doing legally. If the sanctuary found in 2007 proves to be the Lupercal cave then Augustus built his personal residence directly above her sanctuary as well.

Lupercia is a goddess heavily associated with canidae of all types – Her primary form is of a wolf after all – In Ancient Rome she was connected with wolves and dogs and modern sources add foxes as well. Perhaps Roman culture found its virtue of hierarchy reflected in wolves (or were inspired by the wolves) and so this helped to first bring a wolf to become a symbol of the state.

Lupercia also has strong connections to sexuality (and to somewhat to love). Prostitutes were called 'Lupae', she-wolves, and brothels were called Lupanaria or wolf dens. Lupercia herself was often seen as amorous in her own mythology.

Lupercia also represents compassion as she took pity on strange children that were not her own and adopted them – feeding them with milk produced from her own body. It was only through her act of kindness that the twins survived.

Pop Culture Tidbits:

Lupercia and the twins have become the symbol of the modern city of Rome and were used as the symbol/mascot of the 1960 summer Olympics in Rome.

Roman Metal group Ex Deo's 'Romulus' (from the album of the same name) is a recounting of the story of Romulus and Remus in metal form. Lupercia is referenced in the song and featured prominently in [the music video](#). Colombian singer-songwriter Shakira's '[She-wolf](#)' expresses many themes and symbols related to Lupercia and according to Shakira:

"'She Wolf' came to me very mysteriously," she says. "I was in the studio in a bad mood that day, then I got inspired and went to a corner and I wrote the lyrics and the melody in 10 minutes. The image of the she wolf just came to my head, and when I least expected it I was howling and panting." (<http://www.rollingstone.com/rockdaily/index.php/2009/07/15/behind-shakiras-hot-electro-groove-the-making-of-she-wolf/>)

Lupercalia has been growing in popularity as a pagan alternative to St. Valentine's Day.

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Titans Daily Prayer

~ Traci Niklas

I call to the divine cycle of the day. Bearers each of your own shining light.
I call to the Titans that journey through the heavens: illuminating dawn, day and night.
I call you each by name. To be with us this day.

Eos, red-handed bringer of dawn,
whose tears appear as the morning dew.
Come to us this morn and let the chariot of the sun
be announced with your shining rays from Okeanos and prepare us for the coming day.

Helios, head crowned with the sun,
guardian of oaths and the giver of sight.
Come to us this day and let the shining rays of the sun
illuminate and reveal all that is needed of us and guide us through this day.

Selene, soft eye of night,
bringing us providence and insight.
Come to us this night and let your silver lamp of night
shine on us and bring peacefulness to us as we see the end of the day.

Titans three: Eos, Helios and Selene! Your cycle through the heavens is never-ending: be with us this day and reveal our path until the cycle begins anew!

Beyond the Farthest Wave (lyrics and chords)

~ words and music by Aeryn Musick

C-F-Am-G

C
I dreamed

F
Stood in between the space

Am
The mists of time hung thick and still,

G
Reflecting in their lace

C (repeat chords)

What I had long assumed,
But couldn't quite embrace.
A hope for those who linger still
In fear, and doubt, and grace,

C
Beyond the farthest wave...

G Em
So I'll wear a smile on my face.

Dm C Dsus4
Float within the tides, relax and dodge fatigue and strain.

G Em
And wait for that solemn day

Dm C Dsus4
When my soul will leave its shell and all I know will fall away.

One Seed
That blooms to fullest grace
Is magnified and infinite
Its form extrapolates.
Turns inward and anew
And falling in its place
Lends fuel to what shall come again,
Rebirth rejuvenates
Beyond the farthest wave...

So I'll wear a smile on my face.
Float within the tides, relax and dodge fatigue
and strain.

And wait for that solemn day
When my soul will leave its shell and all I
know will fall away.

In the Kitchen with Skarlett

Peach Tree Salsa

3 firm peaches (about 1 pound)
 4 ripe roma tomatoes
 1 Tablespoon canned jalapeno peppers, chopped
 1/4 Cup extra virgin olive oil
 spoon Raspberry vinegar
 2 Tablespoon honey

The juice of half a large lime
 3 shallots well chopped
 1 Tablespoon fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
 6 Table-

Dip peaches into boiling water and then peel the skins. Cut peaches into thin strips, discarding pits. Toss with lime juice. Dip tomatoes into boiling water, then peel and seed them. Cut into medium julienne strips. Combine peaches and tomatoes. Add shallots, peppers and cilantro. Mix well.

Whisk together oil, vinegar and honey. Pour over other ingredients and blend well. If using within several hours, no need to refrigerate; otherwise cover and refrigerate.



Parsley Bread

1 cup warm water
 2 tablespoons of softened salted butter
 1 1/2 teaspoons coarse sea salt
 1/2 cup dried cranberries
 1 cup fresh chopped parsley
 2 teaspoons dried basil
 nonstick spray

3 eggs
 4 cups unbleached flour plus extra for the counter
 2 1/2 teaspoons apple pie spice
 4 tablepoons honey
 2 teaspoons dried rosemary
 3 teaspoons active-dry yeast

Combine water eggs and butter in a large bowl with a low speed hand mixer till well mixed. Add everything else (save nonstick spray) and combines with large spoon till dough is nicely formed. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for one minute, Spray down the inside of a large bowl with nonstick spray, form dough into a ball and place dough in bowl, turning it once to coat the top, Cover and let rise for 2 hours.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.



Turn dough back onto floured surface and punch dough back down to regular size and then form into two loaves. Spray the insides of two 9 x 5 inch loaf pans Put loaves in pans, cover and let rise an hour.

Bake on middle rack in the oven for 20 to 30 minutes. Allow loaves to cool in pan for five minutes before turning out onto a cooling rack. Serve warm. Cut into one inch slices, buttered then toasted in a skillet till golden brown.

Nature Spirit Meditation with Paul Wasson

This is the time of the awakening of nature. This meditation is designed to establish a connection to nature, to request a partner for your continuing journey. This is just a start. After you start to work on your connection, visit the field, forest, or creek near you to continue and expand on this connection.

I would recommend recording yourself reading this into your phone or recorder and then playing it so that you can focus only on the meditation.

Start by getting comfortable either sitting or lying down.

Take 3 deep breaths.

After the first breath, close your eyes.

On the second breath, feel your body relax.

After the third breath, picture yourself getting up and leaving your body.

Walk to the door.

Open the door. It is now night. Ahead of you, you see a tree line.

As you walk along the tree line, you see an entrance to a path.

You enter the break in the trees, and the lights and sounds from the world fade.

The path is like a tunnel, the branches from the trees on either side meeting above you.

The moon makes the bare dirt of the path seem to glow. Even in the dark, the path is easy to follow.

The sounds of the world fade even more. The only light is the moon.

Up ahead, there seems to be a soft light at the end of the path; you cannot see the source.

You get to the end of the path and see that the light is the light of the moon shining on a grassy meadow.

On all three sides of the meadow is the water of a large lake. You are on a small finger of land that extends into the lake. In the center of this meadow, there are three trees growing together: a large oak, a young maple and a bushy dogwood. They are the Guardians of the Meadow.

You sit on the grass and open all of your senses to the wild world around you.

You see with your eyes the bats flying, the lightning bugs flashing.

You feel with your skin the breeze off the lake, the soil under you.

You hear with your ears the deer in the woods, the ducks swimming.

You sense the fish in the water knowing where they are without seeing them.

You feel the beavers in their den to one side even though they are in the dark and sleeping.

You send out an invitation to the wild nature around you for a nature spirit that can be a partner, a protector, a teacher and a friend.

You sit and observe waiting for a response, whether it comes from the woods, the lake or the air. Welcome what responds with friendship and equality. Spend some time sharing, playing and feeling emotions from each other.

*****give 3 minutes of silence*****

You feel that it is time that you must return to your world.

You say farewell to your new friend, knowing that they will be there when you return; they may even visit you in your world. There is a bond between you now.

You stand up and turn to enter the path, thanking the Oak, Maple and Dogwood that protect this land as you pass.

You enter the tunnel formed by the trees and leave behind the brightness of the moon.

As you walk, you start to hear the sounds of this world again, the cars, the sirens in the distance. You start to see the light at the end of the path, this time, from the light on the side of your home.

You exit the path and see your home.

Nature Spirit Meditation (cont. from page 9)

You walk in the door and find your body again. Sit or lay back into your body. Feel your body, taking a deep breath.

After the second breath, open your eyes. You return knowing that you now have a connection with nature that will always be there.

After the third breath, you have completely returned to the present.

You may want to stand, stretch your body and move your arms to re-anchor yourself.

Next time that you visit your favorite field, forest or stream, call on your new connection. Welcome them into your meditations. Keep your connection alive, and you will feel more of a connection with the natural world around you. You have started on your path.

A Mayan Experience

by Tiogar aka Lisa Lea Allshouse

My mother (Carla), daughter (Elizabeth), and I went to Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo, Mexico during my daughter's Spring Break from high school this year. We made arrangements for a Tuesday excursion for one of the two 'big things' we wanted to do on our Riviera Maya vacation: visit the Mayan archaeological site at Chichen Itza. I wondered what it would feel like being in a place where the religious observances had included human sacrifice...

Our tour bus was staffed with our guide (Raymundo), his assistant (Gustavo), and our driver (Armando). They were very pleasant and helpful, which was a good thing since it was a 2-1/2 hour drive to the site from our resort. We finally arrived at the Great Plaza site after a stop for a swim in a freshwater sinkhole, and a lunch buffet at a hotel in the old Mexico town of Valladolid. Raymundo was to be the guide for most of us as he spoke the best English; Gustavo took the Spanish speakers; Armando stayed with the bus to prepare for the return trip.

We made our way into the Great Plaza area, walking a gauntlet of local craftspeople and vendors, who all want to sell you something, "cheap, almost free!" These purveyors of almost exclusively locally produced craft and souvenir items lined every available space along the walkways surrounding the Plaza. Raymundo explained that for some of the families, this was their biggest source of income, but they still expected you to bargain down the prices. I took it that it is kind of insulting to just ask how much something is and pay the price. They genuinely seem to enjoy the "game" of bargaining, and talking to all the visitors to the site.

In the 90-something degree heat, our group moved between what shady spots were available while Raymundo recited the information acquired over 39 years of acting as a guide here. He related basic facts about the area - there are more than 700 archaeological sites included in the place called Chichen Itza, an area covering approximately 5 square kilometers. The name means "at the mouth of the well of the Itza." The Mayan word "Itza" is most accurately translated through Spanish as "Magicians of Water." It was explained that in the Yucatan there are no surface flowing rivers or streams, only underground waterways that frequently create sinkholes in the limestone plateau, like the Cenote Sagrada (Sacred Cenote or "holy well") located in the vicinity of the Plaza. There have been a great variety of offering and sacrifice items recovered from this cenote and others like it, including shell, gold, carvings, and human bones.

A Mayan Experience—(cont. from page 10)

There are a variety of stone buildings and platforms in the Great Plaza, including El Caracol (The Observatory) that provides the observance of no less than 29 mathematical, astronomical, and geometrical correspondences built into the structure. All the buildings of the Plaza were constructed to serve very specific purposes: as a place to honor the Warriors, to conduct ritual observances, to provide a place for the king to make announcements and watch the rituals, to make sacrifice, to give priests and seers (translated to English as “wizards”) a public venue to share their messages from the gods.

Two of the most visited structures on the Plaza are El Castillo (the Castle) aka The Temple of Kukulcan [voted on 07/07/2007 as one of the Modern Seven Wonders of the World] and The Great Ball Court. El Castillo is 24 meters tall including the covered altar structure situated on top. It is a very tangible manifestation of the Mayan time keeping system, with its 91 steps up the center of each face of the 9-layered step pyramid and the top altar platform as the final step, it represents the 365 days of the Haab Calendar (the civil calendar). [There is also the Long Count, the Venus Cycle, and the Tzolkin (the divine calendar).] Its construction also becomes significant at the Vernal and Autumnal Equinoxes when the corners of the 9 layers create shadows in the form of isosceles triangles that make it appear as if the great feathered serpent god is descending (Spring) or ascending (Fall) the western balustrade of the main staircase.

There is much debate about the actual activities during and following events in The Great Ball Court. Raymundo said that of course we would never know some things for certain because it was not written down anywhere, not even a culturally biased description from the invading Spaniards. But, what we do know is that the rituals conducted the ball court were religious in nature, and that they were re-enactments of the stories of their gods.

The rules of the “game” played at different locations probably varied according to the size and orientation of the venue, but at Chichen Itza there were usually 7 men on a team. They played one side of the ball court or the other depending on where in the calendar they were (i.e. which side was better displayed in the angle of the sun at that time of year). The players came from the elite in society, and were chosen or volunteered because of their prowess on the court and desire to honor the gods.

The ritual re-enactments on the ball court played out the battles and other story lines of the Mayan myths and legends. Sometimes there was a sacrifice (human or otherwise), sometimes none at all; sometimes the sacrifice was a team leader, sometimes a team member, sometimes a winner, sometimes a loser. It was the seers’ job to interpret the signs to determine what was the necessary right action to take to maintain or restore the balance and harmony in the world.



The Mayans already had a feathered serpent god named Kukulcan, but recent changes in dating results make it unclear whether the Toltec people brought their version (Quetzalcoatl) with them when they came and integrated themselves into the Chichen Itza community, or if it happened the other way around. What is known is that nearly every group of indigenous people

A Mayan Experience—(cont. from page 11)

throughout the Mexican timeline - Inca, Aztec, Toltec, Olmec, Mixtec, and many others - had this same god as a significant figure in their pantheons. Each of them resembled the others so closely (and frequently bore the same name in the local dialect), they are treated as one and the same, though it may never be known exactly how the order of transmission from one group to another occurred. I might venture to say that this outside verification of the god's existence may be partially responsible for its elevation in status to one of the most powerful of the some 160+ gods worshipped by the Mayans.



Our guide described Kukulcan as the creator and protector of humankind - a god in three parts depicted with the physical characteristics of the eagle (though many of the representations use the quetzal bird for the feathered portion), the jaguar, and the serpent. The eagle aspect reflected his power in the light, the daytime and the fiery sun, and the upper world of the sky and the gods; the jaguar aspect reflected his power in the dark, the nighttime and changing moon (and its effects on water), and the underworld of the supernatural creatures and the dead; and the serpent aspect reflected his power as the connection between the upper and lower worlds and as the creator of humans who are tied to the middle world of the Earth. So it is that Kukulcan is depicted with the strong sinuous body of a serpent, covered in the feathers of the majestic eagle, and possessing the sharp eyes and fangs of the stealthy jaguar.

It was commonly believed that snake young were born fully formed from the mother's mouth, so the creation of humans is sometimes seen depicted in this manner, but most often the emergence of a regally clad male from the god Kukulcan's mouth signifies the direct descendence of the king from the god, and the sovereignty that conveys. The most often noted creation of humans involves the god's banishment to the underworld where he collects bones of the dead (humans from a previous era), and using his own blood he brings them to life.

As the brain is a pattern seeking device, it is not rocket science to pick out some details that correspond with aspects of Our Druidry, though some of them will be entirely coincidental, or at least have no way of proving any real connection. I found it very validating, though, to see some of the same beliefs and practices as our IE ancestors, as well as of modern neo-pagan Druids. It was cool to find 3s and 9s showing up, and the very obvious references to the upper, middle, and lower worlds. I can see the fire, well, and tree (as well as the two powers meditation) in the three aspects of Kukulcan - the eagle associated with the fiery sun, the jaguar with the underground water supply, and the serpent with the connection between the worlds. Kukulcan, or by the name of Quetzalcoatl, is a deity that I have had a relationship with for q time, having been interested in any dragon-like entities from way back.

I also had the not-really-secret mission to leave an offering to Kukulcan for my dear friend, Shawneen Bear. He had been a devotee of Kukulcan/Quetzalcoatl for a very long time, even considering the God a Patron. Shawneen had, sometime in the past, carved a small token of wood, modeled on some of the temple art showing (possibly) a partial profile view of the feathered serpent god, and he sent it with me on my trip. My mother agreed to help me with this sacred duty by photographing the offering process as a memento for both Shawneen and me.

A Mayan Experience—(cont. from page 12)

We waited until the roped-off area at the base of El Castillo's main staircase cleared of other tourists (mainly so we might go unnoticed in this endeavor as tourists are no longer allowed in or on the buildings, and I had hopes that I would not have to witness the token's immediate removal). I softly said some pretty words to indicate my purpose of bringing this offering on behalf of one who remembered and honored his relationship with the god, and hoped that the offering would be found acceptable. I added my own fond remembrances to the god, and tossed the token into the mouth of the carved stone feathered serpent. It bounced off the serpent's "tongue" and landed in an inconspicuous spot beside the base of the staircase. I took the smooth and uneventful completion of our task as a good sign, and we took our leave of the temple.

The entire experience was very positive, and I found particular resonance with the concept of keeping balance and harmony in the world through right action. I felt honored and blessed to have made the offering, and felt it really renewed that relationship. I had thought it would be an eerie feeling to be in a place of blood sacrifice, but I got nothing of the sort. It is a beautiful place, full of awe inspiring structures and purposeful, sacred spaces. I'm certainly glad I went.



Review of Ostara 2011

Three Cranes Grove, ADF Ostara Ritual – Turning the Wheel of the Year

by Thorne
AKA Michael Dorn

Ostara was held at Highbanks Northern Shelter on March 21st 2011. Priests of the occasion were Michael J. Dangler and James “Seamus” Dillard. DIC was Thorne (myself) and much of the ritual was written by Three Cranes Grove's font of Norse lore - Anna Sowell. Music by our Grove Bard – Missy Burchfield. Drumming during the ritual was by Traci, Shawneen and MoonWolf as well as others whom I regret not remembering their names. Various parts were taken by Lisa Lea Allshouse, Nick Englehoff, Jan Kruger, April Ford and our foursome of valkries – Tammi, Jay, and I forget who else.

This ritual was focused on welcoming Spring and honoring the goddesses Eostre and Idunna. But first the ritual space was established by a poetic retelling of the Volsung Saga to ward against Outdwellers, followed by a Hammer Rite by Thorne. Worshipers were purified by fire and water before entering sacred space as delineated by a pair of spears.

Ritual purpose was stated - “Today, we gather to celebrate – The Turning of the Wheel of the Year into Spring. We honor the Earth as she awakens from her winter sleep. The Goddesses Idunna and Eostre stir the seeds of life. We see the proof of this as the first blooms of life spring forth and so bless us with their abundance. As our ancestors once did, so we do today, and so our children will do in the future.”

Before we could begin to move toward Spring and the Goddesses Idunna and Eostre, we gave acknowledgement to Winter and the Goddess Skadhi:

Lisa Lea gave her words to send Skadhi on her way -

“Hail to thee Skadhi! Lady of Winter's whites,
Your call have we heard across our homes on these many cold days and dark nights.

Hail to thee Skadhi! Wolf-maid and Goddess of Bow,
Your touch have we felt all these long weeks, our lives filled with your snow.

Hail to Skadhi! Mistress of Winter's fun,
Thrymheim beckons your loving hand, your duty here now is done.

Well have we rested,
Well have we paused,
Well have we met those we hold dear.”

Grove Attunement was followed by Nick's inspiring Call to Bragi and Kvasir for Inspiration -
“Let us now call out to Inspiration, may Bragi/Kvasir give us the words to inspire us.”

April Ford gave us Nerthus in her role of Earth Mother and once the Grove had given Her due, ritual moved on. Our Ritual Center was established during the familiar “The Portal Song” as led by Missy and supported by the Grove members. This prepared sacred space for the Opening of the Gates and a calling out to the Norns – our gatekeepers of the occasion – Urd, Verdandi and Skuld. Anna rendered a Nine Gates Opening to clear the ways to all Nine Worlds of the Multi-Verse.

Review of Ostara 2011—(cont. from page 14)



The Kindreds were invoked by our Senior Druid Leesa Kern (Ancestors), our Initiate Nick (Nature Spirits) and our Priest Seamus (Shining Ones).

Praise Offerings were given during the initial public signing of “Bess' Song” an inspirational tune written by Anna's daughter. A reminder of the purpose of this ritual was read and honor given by stories which were read by Missy “Idunna's Apples” and Anna “Story of Eostre”. These stories complement each other and the children in attendance were asked to come to the center of the grove to hear the telling of these tales. Idunna was invoked by Rodney Cox from Shining Lakes Grove, ADF and Jan gave us the invocation to Eostre. Further Praise Offerings were given to Idunna and Eostre at this time.

All this work cumulated into the declaration that the Wheel has Turned into Spring and that the Omens should be read to see if our efforts have been rewarded.

For our ritual the Omens were -

Anna Gail pulled a rune to see if our offerings were accepted and drew Mannaz, yes.

Leesa asked for Wisdom from the Ancestors: Algiz, the Elk. Protection and Guidance.

Nick asked for Words of comfort from the Nature Spirits: Isa, Contemplation and Rest after a hard winter.

Seamus asked for Guidance from the Shining Ones: Sowilo, the Sun, Success

The runes pulled for the Omens accepted by the Grove and were then charged into the Waters of Life and shared with everyone in attendance. Workings were done and then a final reading -

“Well have thought,
Well have we learned,
Well do we know what Season is here.

Hail to thee Eostre! Lady of first blooms,
Your touch do we crave across the land, the stirring of Nerthus' womb.

Hail to thee Eostre! Maiden and Goddess of Youth,
Your smile is needed to lure the Sun, to give a promise it's truth.

Hail to thee Eostre! Warder of Spring,
Your love now shines to warm the Earth, we give Hail for all that you bring.”

The Nine Gates of the Multiverse were closed as were the Gate of the Fire, the Well and the Tree.

Thanks was given to the Kindreds, to Idunna, Eostre, Braggi, and Nerthus as EarthMother.

Our rite is ended with “Walk With Wisdom” (with extra pirate)



BARDIC INSPIRATION BY THE GROVE BARD

~ MELISSA S. BURCHFIELD

A Lithuanian Tale of Night and Day

Golden-haired Saule sat alone, spinning her amber wheel, weaving the very thread of life when the Moon first laid eyes upon her. Fiery Saule, richly dressed in golden silk raiment and crowned with shining jewels, was a vision of sparkling loveliness that Menulis could not resist. Menulis, silver-dressed Guardian of Night and Time, won the heart of his *Balta Saulite*, his Darling Little Sun, after much courting, and they were wed in the Primeval Spring. First born to the Sun and Moon was Žeme, the Earth, followed by Vakarine, the evening star, and most beautiful Aušrine, the morning star.

The family fell quickly into routine. Aušrine burned the morning fire and made Saule ready for her journey across the sky, for every morning Saule drove her Chariot of Fire into the sky, leading her white mares on to the Baltic Sea where she was met by her companion, Perkunele, who bathed the weary Sun Maiden at the end of her journey. Saule's chariot was transformed into a gilded boat when it reached the sea, and guided by Perkunele, she sailed home to where Vakarine had prepared her bed that she may rise, rested and prepared for the next day's journey.

Each day's journey was shared with the bearded Sky God, Perkunas the Thunder, who rode alongside Saule in his own chariot, carrying his lightning-bolt sword and stone axe. Needless to say, Perkunas and Saule were close as brother and sister, and it was with great sadness in his heart that Perkunas noted the roving of Menulis. Saule, who rose very early, retired for the evening shortly after Menulis ascended to rule the night, and he was easily and often led astray by the shimmer of a nearby star while Saule slept. Perkunas was keenly aware when Menulis became overly interested in Aušrine, the Morning Star, even more beautiful than her mother with her mother's golden hair, adorned with a sun crown and a starry mantle closed with a moon-shaped brooch. One fatal morning, as he was returning from a night alone in the sky, Menulis gave in to his obsessive desires and took Aušrine as she prepared the fires for her mother, tearing her starry mantle and flippantly tossing aside her crown. Perkunas became so enraged at the sight that he slashed at Menulis with his lightning sword, leaving the scars on his face that may be seen in the night sky even still.

Saule was so angry with Menulis for his infidelity that she declared an end to their marriage, banishing him to dwell in the night sky alone. With her head held high and her daughters by her side, Saule continued her work on her own, the Matriarch of the Sky who watches all the Children of the Earth herself and still finds time to dance upon the hills in silver shoes with joy in her heart, Saule, the Golden Apple of the Sun.

Eos and Tithonos

Long ago, as the first Gods ordered the universe, it fell to Eos, the beautiful daughter of Hyperion and Theia, to bring forth the dawn from the East. Each morning, at the close of night's time, Eos would rise up in her chariot from the river Okeanus, ascending to herald in the light of day to Gods and mortals alike. Eos was often found spending much of the day with her brother, Helios, as he rode across the sky, bringing the light of the sun to the worlds.

During one such ride, Eos' eye fell upon a young warrior god in training, Ares, the brilliant God of War. He was magnificent in form and breath-taking to behold. Eos drove her chariot down to get a closer look, sending her rays of rosy light to shimmer and shine on his skin and blade. Ares, being of the strong masculine sort, was moved by her grace and beauty as she shone on before him in ethereal wonder. It was no time before the two found themselves spent between lover's sheets.

Ares, unfortunately, had already pledged his heart to Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love and Desire, and when she heard of their coupling, her wrath filled her with a passionate thirst for revenge. With a simple spell, Aphrodite cursed Eos to be forever enthralled beyond measure with young and attractive men.

After a string of lovers that Eos stole away to the ends of the Earth, Orion whom she bore away to Delos, Cleitus whom she bore to the immortals very realm, her heart fell upon the Trojan Prince Tithonos who freely reciprocated her love. Eos and Tithonos existed in happy union, bearing two children, Emathion and Memnon.

As time passed and she watched him age, Eos became distraught at the thought of losing him. She went to Zeus, Mightiest of the Olympians, who had his share of unquenchable passion for mortals, and petitioned him to grant her Tithonos immortality. Zeus, being moved by love, granted her this wish.

As further time passed, Eos noted that Tithonos was continuing to age. He grew older with the years, and she returned to Zeus in confusion. Zeus revealed to Eos her folly: Eos had not asked for eternal youth for her love, only immortality. With great sadness, Eos watched her love grow weaker, older and miserable. One day, when even his voice had disappeared into the void and Tithonos was nothing more than a shadow of a man, Eos used her love and her magic to turn him into a grasshopper. In this form, Tithonos

BARDIC INSPIRATION BY THE GROVE BARD (cont. from page 16)

maintained his most shining qualities, a carefree wit, a graceful gait and a lilting song that even still elicits peace, patience, and solidarity in reflection of his patient and eternal love for Eos, Goddess of the Dawn.

Aine

Aine of the fair hair, a beauty to behold, easily swept away the hearts of those who dared to draw near her. Daughter of King Egobagal of the Tuatha de Danann, Aine was a goddess concerned with love and fertility, but beware! Her wrath was known to be terrible when love was used for harm. Aine held dominion over fertility of the land. Crops were said to spring up and prosper at her whim, and the animals set to breed at her command alone. Such was the power of Aine. She loved nothing more than to see people to happy. Aine was free with her gifts, and there was peace and joy in the lands she called her home.

One bright day whilst dancing among the flowers, Aine was enchanted and taken away by the Fae folk of Munster. She spent some time with them at party, ate of their food, and, while not a typical fate of one who supped with the Otherkin, Aine was sent back to the mortal realm, though not entirely mortal herself as a result. As a parting gift, she was given a magical ring by which she could reveal fairies in the mortal realm with a quick rub.

Aine was even more enthralling when she returned. So much so that she caught the greedy eye of the grey-haired King of Munster, Aillil Olom, whom she killed with magic when he tried to rape her. At that moment, Aine made a magical vow to never bed a man with grey hair.

Aine mated with mortal men over the years, producing several fairy children, but her heart was finally won by the mortal Fionnis. The two were madly in love and set to be wed when Aine's jealous sister, Miluchrach, turned Fionnis' hair to grey, preventing the lovers from ever consummating their marriage. Still, Aine stayed by his side for the rest of his mortal days for love is more than mere physical attraction.

One warm spring day, Aine was singing quietly to herself while bathing in a river, when Gerald, the Earl of Desmond came upon her and fell in love at first sight. He stole the fair maiden's cloak and refused to return it to her lest she agreed to give him her hand in marriage, to which she consented.

Aine and Gerald had a son, Geroid Iarla, Earl Fitzgerald, and it became apparent immediately that Geroid was of magical blood. Aine, in her foresight, cast a spell on Gerald that he never be surprised by anything Geroid did. One day, when Geroid jumped out of a bottle, Gerald broke the taboo with a bellow, causing Geroid to turn into a wild goose and fly away. Aine was so disgusted at her mortal husband's display that she retreated in the realm of fairy at Knock Aine, where she is still said to dwell today.

Across the Ninth Wave

Many references have been heard describing items of magic and mystery as coming from Across the Ninth Wave, but what does this mean? "The Ninth Wave" is an old seafarer's expression. It has long been believed that waves at sea become successively larger and larger, reaching higher into the sky and plunging deeper into the dark waters until the most powerful possible force is created: The Ninth Wave. The Ninth Wave is colossal, larger than any wave seen by a man who lived to tell the tale, and unexpected, for there is no way to predict which waves will join forces and merge to become one more powerful than the sum of its parts. In our age, such waves have been referred to as "rogue waves" for their tendency to appear as though the Gods themselves have blown across the waters with a mighty breath that stirs the very depths of the sea. In terms of Our Druidry, the gifts from the Gods are often sent to us from a place of power so great as to be unreachable and unimaginable without the aid of one powerful enough to master this phenomenal strength. Those of us on the path as seekers, searching for evidence of the Ancient Ways in our Modern Times have felt the call of power from Across the Ninth Wave to a place where the Gods freely roam, where myths are more real than we are and where the roots of magic have plunged into the Earth to mingle with the very waters with which we connect around our fires.

Rees, Alwyn and Rees, Brinley. *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales*. New York, NY: Thames & Hudson, 1998:39.

Freyja's Frozen Heart

—Nick Englehoff

In Olden Days, of song and deeds
 When gods and giants roamed,
 There was a woman wise and skilled
 In matters of love and magic.
 "Gertrude" her name; match-making her trade,
 Seeress and seiðkona her roles.
 Her heart, however, hungered for a man,
 A lively lad, called Klaus.

To the tavern she would travel
 Every evening without fail.
 Despite her wisdom and her wiles
 Her flirtation always faltered.
 Klaus was none the wiser, oblivious every eve',
 Bewitched by beer and frivolity.
 So, her prayers ascended on pyres of sweetened
 smoke
 Focused on Freyja's ears.

The Lady of Love did hear those pleas
 And intended to answer the call
 But when she observed the woman's love
 Her heart was taken, too.
 Seduce she did Gertrude's desire
 Naming him hers for the night.
 The seiðkona did see this treacherous act,
 And despair filled her form.

In her hurt and her anger, vengeance did she vow
 Upon she who had shattered her heart.
 A talisman, Gertrude crafted; charms did she lay.
 A vessel to fulfill her vow.
 Returning to the tavern, she saw Freyja flirting more,
 Upon her belt the talisman would hang.
 The galdr spoken, the vengeance given
 Gertrude fled that great hall.

Freyja flirted and fawned over Klaus,
 But confusingly her heart went cold.
 Perplexed and concerned, her passion had fled
 And Freyja despaired its demise.
 Wand'ring she traveled, worried for her heart;
 Passion's panacea was not found.
 Finally, to a forest she fled in dismay
 Seeking loneliness' succor.

Many years passed and youth did she keep
 As she was swallowed by love's cold silence.

Into the woods a man came wand'ring,
 Searching the land for a livelihood.
 "Óttar" was his name, and work he did seek
 A trade to build his life upon.
 Near sunset he rested by a cool, clear stream
 Seeking to soothe his aches.

A young lady he did see doing her laundry in the wa-
 ter
 And his heart was instantly hers.
 Cautiously he approached taking care not to frighten
 For fear that she would flee from his sight.
 Richly dressed she was, adorned in gold and amber,
 A merchant's daughter she must be.
 Óttar spoke, Óttar flirted; she did not warm to him.
 But, this did not daunt the man.

Her laundry finished, she stood to leave;
 Óttar was sad to see her go.
 He pleaded that she stay, he prayed to see her more.
 "Perhaps," she said, "if you pass this way again."
 On the morrow, Óttar moved on
 Traveling to a town nearby.
 There he found work and earned a good wage,
 Saving for a gift for the girl.

He would return to the forest, with his gifts for her
 Hoping to win her affections.
 He brought her flowers, he brought her gold,
 He brought her beautiful jewels and amber.
 To all of these, though, she seemed apathetic,
 No more moved than before.
 The seasons came and went, the Great Wheel turned,
 But, still Óttar's passion burned.

In the forest there were others who would see his fre-
 quent visits
 Spirits of wood, air, stone, and water.
 One among their number, by the name of "Hölderlin"
 Felt pity for their plight.
 During their many meetings he'd spy a marv'lous
 bauble
 Hanging from the fair maid's belt.
 When next Óttar entered the deep and dark woods
 He manifested before the man.

Freyja's Frozen Heart (cont. from page 18)

“Make her dinner, play some music melt her heart with
A delirious dance ‘round a fire!” he advised
Óttar thanked the spirit and continued on his way
Collecting firewood and a brace of coney.
Arriving at the maiden’s home he announced he would
make dinner
A request she could not refuse.
The fire high and their bellies filled,
Óttar regaled her with songs and stories.

‘Round the fire the young maid frolicked
As Óttar serenaded her steps.
She bid him join, and blend their dance together
Jumping the fire in jubilation.
The talisman burned and her passion took flame
Warming her wintry heart.
Óttar and Freyja embraced each other fully
Their love over-flowing their reason.

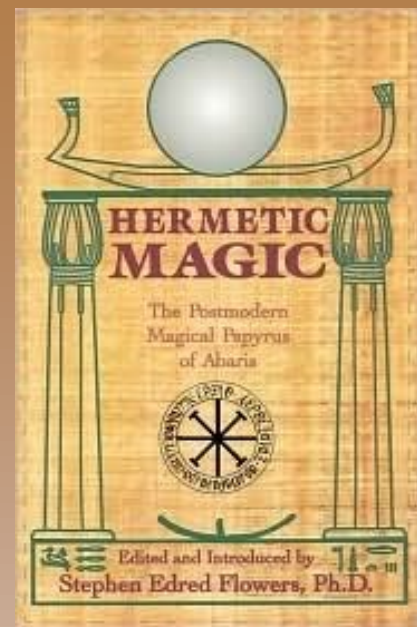
It was Óttar’s loyalty and persistent love
That broke the spell on Freyja’s soul.
A heart once frozen burned freely again
And her passion poured forth into the World.

an example of authentic pagan magical practices of the Roman Imperial Era and Flower's book promised to provide a guide to them and the milieu of ancient Hermeticism.

Every review I found online was utterly unhelpful as they tended to center on the author, Stephen Edred Flowers, who is controversial due to his membership in the Temple of Set and being a founder of several Ásatrú groups ([See his Wiki Page for more information](#)). A good portion of the reviews of this book are more or less rants & character assassinations while another good portion exists to defend/praise Flowers. Very few reviews actually discussed the book in any detail (just take a look at [the Amazon reviews if you don't believe me](#)).

Taking my chances, I decided to get the book and I was presently surprised as it seems to be an excellent introduction to the Greek Magical Papyri from a practical standpoint and provides a good background and jumping off point for further exploration. It however has some distracting features such as Flower's Setian background showing through in parts along with controversial opinions bleeding through and treated as fact - which I will point out later in my review.

The book is presented in several sections: History - which takes a quick look at the cultural streams present in the Papyri (Flowers identifies Hellenic, Egyptian, Iranian, Gnostic, Semitic, and Christian streams). In the 'Theory' section Flowers takes a look at the Cultural beliefs and practices of all the identified cultural streams and provides among other things an excellent look at Egyptian & Greek views of the parts of the Body (both physical and metaphysical), various cosmologies, the writing systems (which includes a short lessons on Hieroglyphics, Hieratic, Demotic, Coptic, Greek, and Semitic systems - an appendix also includes a pronunciation guide to the Greek of the Era), Greek Gematria, Iamblichus' Numerology, and a lot of really good nuggets of information intended as a jumping off points for deeper study - which Flowers heavily encourages.



Hermetic Magic: The Postmodern Magical Papyrus of Abaris by Stephen Edred Flowers

A review by Kitsula Tsulakala

Flower's Hermetic Magic was something I took a chance on. I was somewhat interested in the Greek Magical Papyri (some [examples can be found here](#)) as

Review of *Hermetic Magic* (cont. from page 19)

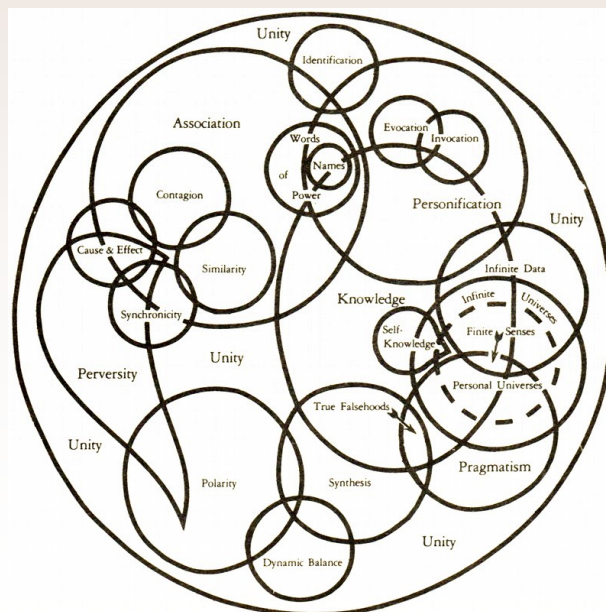
The Praxis section is composed of a description of the most common tools used in the Papyri, a suggestion of frame rituals, and a collection of some of the more accessible workings from the Magical Papyri - Flowers strongly recommends getting Betz's [The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation](#) (I have a copy).

Throughout the text Flowers promotes a post-modern approach to Magic that is very similar in some respects to Chaos Magic but Flowers tends to stress a more syncretistic approach over eclecticism. He urges the reader to experiment and incorporate more streams into their practice (with the ancient material as a guide) based upon what works. He also has a great call for rationalism in Magic which I have reproduced below:

"Rationality in magic must be rehabilitated. It must be restored to its rightful place as the foundation of magical development, but not as its essence. Modernism has split would-be magicians into two impotent camps - those who have rejected rationality all together (and have become so disorientated as to be virtually insane) and those who have embraced rationality totally (and have become virtually paralyzed as magicians)" (pp. 140-141)

Flower's book is not all wonderful however as in some instances his Setian background barges through and may alienate some readers such as his dislike of the 'decadent' Osirian Cult due to its increasing demonization of Set over time in later eras Ancient Egyptian civilization or his view of the historical Jesus being a libertine gnostic - granted that you can really say anything about Jesus given that the [only non-religious source we have amounts to a mention](#) but most of the earlier texts depict him as very faithful to the *spirit and principles* of the Torah and I tend to see the very late gnostic libertine view as an extreme long shot as a guide to the historical Jesus' character. In addition Flower's 'Left Hand' views (which are mostly centered on individualism and self-reliance) are evident in a couple of instances (where he clearly stating an opinion) that may alienate some readers but they are not really large obstacles.

Overall, it still it has more than enough good information about Greco-Roman-Egyptian Magic and the syncretistic world of late antiquity to make it well worth reading and an excellent springboard into further study and understanding (which is the intention of the book in the first place).



Once upon a time in the Magical Land of Equestria... A survey of the mythology of My Little Ponies: Friendship is Magic

Of Aztec Mares and Indian Hares

The new animated series My Little Ponies: Friendship is Magic (MLP:FiM) starts out (as depicted in S01:E01-02 'The Mare in the Moon' & 'The Elements of Harmony') with a myth involving two divine Sisters: one who became known as Princess Celestia, who controls the Sun, and Princess Luna, who controls the Moon. At first there is balance but over time Luna becomes resentful and jealous of her solar sister and is transformed into the demonic Nightmare Moon. Nightmare Moon then refuses to let night pass and the sun to rise thus engulfing Equestria in eternal night. Reluctantly, Celestia uses the magic of the Elements of Harmony in battle against her sister defeating her and banishing her into the moon itself where she became the Mare in the Moon (which explains the features on the moon that looked like a horse). Celestia then became the sole ruler of the heavens controlling the entire sky returning harmony to the land of Equestria... At least until the Summer Solstice 1,000 years later when the stars are right to aid her escape...

While this central myth in MLP:FiM is a compound of many myths involving quarrels between the Sun & the Moon it seems to bear the closest relation to the myth of the birth of the Aztec Sun God Huitzilopochtli:

The Myth of Huitzilopochtli recorded in the Florentine Codex describes the birth of sun god Huitzilopochtli from the goddess Coatlicue. Fearing the child, the moon goddess Coyolxauhqui and the four hundred gods of the stars prepare for war to destroy Coatlicue and the young sun god. Preparing for battle Huitzilopochtli arms himself with a magical serpent staff made of candlewood. Setting it alight he enters battle against Coyolxauhqui and the Stellar Gods. Using the power of the flaming serpent staff Huitzilopochtli defeats Coyolxauhqui and the Stellar Gods. Huitzilopochtli then dismembers Coyolxauhqui and takes the emblems and powers of Coyolxauhqui and the Stellar Gods which Huitzilopochtli fixes into his own destiny to become the sole ruler and controller of the celestial sky.

One can see the obvious parallels between Aztec and Pony Mythology such as the battle between the Sun and Moon due to jealousy, the use of a magic object to defeat the moon, and the Sun's ascent to sole ruler and controller of the celestial sphere. But what of the Mare in the Moon? The Mare in the Moon seems deprived from and to be a pun of the Indian Myth of The Hare in the Moon:

In this story Indra, the king of the gods, descends to the earth disguised as a staving beggar. The beggar who had been turned away by others finally asks for hospitality from a hare. The hare having nothing decides to offer himself to the staving beggar. The hare jumps into a pot intending to cook himself but the fire under the pot freezes as the fire god Agni will not allow it to burn the hare. Indra is so impressed with the hare's extreme hospitality that he reveals himself as Indra, king of the gods, and honors his host by painting the figure of the hare onto the moon as a testament for all time of the hare's hospitality.

But what of the stars which must be right to aid the escape of Nightmare Moon? This element seems to be taken from classic horror writer H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. In Lovecraft's stories the Great Old One Cthulhu waits in dreamless sleep imprisoned in his sunken city of R'lyeh. When the stars are right however Cthulhu has an opportunity to escape so he can rain destruction and insanity upon the earth and take it over along with the rest of the the Great Old Ones.

Getting back to Pony Mythology: on the day of the Summer Solstice Celebration – the longest day of the year – Nightmare Moon escapes and kidnaps Princess Celestia again bringing darkness to Equestria.

This bit of the mythology seems to stem from a couple of sources: First the Modern Wiccan Myth of the Holly and Oak Kings who battle each solstice for domination. During the Summer Solstice the Oak King, who represents the light half of the year where the heat and the light of the sun reigns supreme, is vanquished by the Holly King, who represents the dark half of the year where the cold and darkness of night reigns supreme.

Another parallel to Pony Mythology comes from the Scottish myth of Brighde and Cailleach Bheur. The fire goddess Brighde rules the warm half of the year from Bealltainn (May 1) to Samhainn (November 1) however on Samhainn the winter queen Cailleach Bheur kidnaps and imprisons Brighde during the cold half of the year much like Nightmare Moon's imprisonment of Princess Celestia.

The Classical Elements of Harmony

Continuing the Pony narrative: Twilight Sparkle, the unicorn and student of magic under Princess Celestia, must use all her knowledge of myth and magic to harness to the power of the Elements of Harmony to defeat Nightmare Moon and free Princess Celestia to restore harmony to Equestria. The five elements of Harmony are Honesty, Kindness, Laughter, Generosity, and Loyalty. There is also a sixth element which appears when all five are present – Magic or Friendship. These elements are matched up to the main characters of the series who discover their elemental powers and harness them to defeat Nightmare Moon and free Princess Celestia. The main ponies are matched up with the following elements:

Applejack – Honesty
 Fluttershy – Kindness
 Pinky Pie – Laughter
 Rarity – Generosity
 Rainbow Dash – Loyalty
 Twilight Sparkle – Magic or Friendship

Following this Nightmare Moon transforms back into Princess Luna and returns with Princess Celestia to the mountaintop city of Canterlot where they return to rule Equestria although Princess Celestia maintains her role as the supreme ruler of the land and sky.

The Elements of Harmony bear a resemblance to Classical Elements of Greece and India. The Classical Four Elements are Water, Fire, Earth, and Air. Along with these elements there is a fifth 'element': the quintessence which is also variously called aether, akasha, spirit, heaven, space, or void. This Element is the source from which the other four elements spring. The quintessence also permeates and sustains the other elements. Thus when all four elements are combined one can return again to the primal element which is identified with the quintessence.

The Classical Elements can even somewhat be matched up to the Elements of Harmony with one repetition:

Earth – Applejack – Honesty
 Water – Fluttershy – Kindness
 Air – Pinky Pie – Laughter
 Water – Rarity – Generosity
 Fire – Rainbow Dash – Loyalty
 Quintessence – Twilight Sparkle – Magic or Friendship

Earth matches up with Applejack and Honesty as this Earth Pony grounds the rest of group through honesty, works as a farmer, and as a flaw she has a stubborn streak (which she displays in episode S01:E04 'Applebuck Season') which are all earthy traits.

Water matches up with Fluttershy and Rarity who are the most emotional of the group which marks their watery nature with their emotional compassion. Both Kindness and Generosity are watery compassionate traits. The main difference between the two is that Fluttershy is introverted while Rarity is extroverted.

Pinky Pie and Laughter match up with Air as Pinky Pie is an air head who has problems focusing. While Pinky Pie is an air head she also has glimmers in which she shows her knowledge such being able to quickly use logic to locate books (as seen in episode S01:E02 'Elements of Harmony') or as having the foresight to see the danger of the Parasprites and figuring out how to stop them (as seen in S01:E10 'Swarm of the Century'). She also lightens up the group with her laughter – an airy operation.

Rainbow Dash matches up with Fire quite easily as she is a very quick, temperamental, passionate, and boastful pony which all mark her very fiery nature. Loyalty is less of a match for fire itself, but it is displayed by her courage (a fiery trait) in that she consistently puts her friends' safety before herself when they are in danger.

Twilight Sparkle is the Quintessence of the group as she is the leader and glue of the main group of ponies, it is she who helps to sustain and enrich the entire group through her friendship. It is only through their friendship that Twilight Sparkle herself is complete and can work her magic to the the full extent of her power. Friendship is equated to the Quintessence as it permeates and sustains the group, while Magic equates to its powerful and mystical qualities.

As a further observation on the central myth like Zeus ruling from atop Mt. Olympus and Indra ruling from atop Mt. Meru, Princess Celestia is seen ruling the land and the skies from the mountaintop celestial city of Canterlot.

The Twilight Mithra

Looking again Twilight Sparkle's form and name: Twilight's name and coloration places her between the light and the dark. Additionally she functions as the emissary of Princess Celestia to promote harmony and friendship.

Interestingly this links Twilight with a Persian form of Mithra. In the Zurvanist thought of the Sassanian era, Mithra functioned as a emissary of the god of light, Ahura Mazda, and was responsible for mediating between Ahura Mazda and the god of darkness, Angra Mainyu, in order to create harmony.

In another linkage the modern form of Mithra in Farsi, Mehr, has three meanings: Love, Sun, and Friend. All of which relate to Twilight Sparkle.

Cutie Dharman

Another important part of Pony Mythology is the 'Cutie Mark' (as highlighted in Episodes S01:E12 'Call of the Cutie' & Episodes S01:E18 'The Show Stoppers'): As ponies grow up they must discover their unique talent and place in pony society. When they discover this an emblem related to their talent/role appears on their flank as a 'Cutie Mark'. This is similar to the Indian concept of Dharman/Dharma which is one's role in the cosmic order or Rta. This is illustrated in the later Indian story of the Ascetic and the Scorpion:

One day an old ascetic saw a scorpion drowning in the water of a river. The ascetic retrieved the scorpion which promptly stung him. The ascetic smiled and released the scorpion onto the shore. When asked why he did not get angry at the scorpion for harming him, the ascetic replied that just as it was his dharma to come to the aid of all creatures, it was the scorpion's dharma to sting – all functioning according to the cosmic order.

This can also be related to Aleister Crowley's religious philosophy of Thelema in his concept of the 'True Will'. The 'True Will' is one's purpose or function in life and the path of action that maintains harmony in the cosmos.

This is the Will meant in Crowley's (in)famous phrase 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law' as when one is acting out one's true function in the cosmic order harmony prevails.

As an aside Twilight Sparkle's Cutie Mark resembles the unicursal hexagram symbol which frequently appears and is used in the Thelemic system.

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Beltaine—May 1st at Blendon Woods Sycamore Shelter

OSU RenFaire- May 7th from 11am until 8? Come get readings from the Cranes.

Meditation with Irisa: May 24th

Iceland Discussion Meeting/pot luck/fundraiser—May 13th 6:30 pm at the Clintonville Community Center. Topic is funny stories of Norse Lore including Gods in Drag.

Komen Walk for the Cure—May 14th. Meet at the statue of Columbus at 8 am.

Wellspring—May 26th thru 30th. Brushwood Campground

Iceland Discussion Meeting/pot luck/fundraiser—June 17th, location tbd. Topic tbd.

Wisteria—June 21st the Cranes will be performing the main ritual to Belanos.

Comfest—June 24th thru 26th. Cranes have a Booth.

Summer Solstice—June 26th at the ComFest Site.

All donations collected at High Day rituals and where otherwise noted are made to Three Cranes Grove, ADF, and go toward ritual space rental, ritual supplies, or **community service** initiatives. All of these initiatives are very important to us, and they benefit a wide variety of individuals and groups within Central Ohio and beyond. Thank you in advance for supporting public ritual and service in Central Ohio!

We also accept donations via check at our events, or at our PO
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