





## Ogham Divination

# **Ogham Divination**

**A Study in Recreating and Discovering  
the Ancient Ways of the Druids**

## **If you like the book, you'll love the classes!**

Twice a year, Searles O'Dubhain teaches an eight week class on Ogham Divination based upon the material found in his book Ogham Divination: A Study in Recreating and Discovering the Ways of the Ancient Druids. These classes are eight weeks in duration and are taught on the Internet via IRC real-time lecture and discussion, 24 hour password protected message boards, and online download of weekly homework assignments and written materials. For more information on registering for the next Ogham Divination class, please contact [deborah@summerlands.com](mailto:deborah@summerlands.com) via email.

For those not familiar with The Summerlands, please visit our website at <http://www.summerlands.com>. The Summerlands is a non-profit, Online Celtic Pagan Community dedicated to the sharing of knowledge and tradition of both ancient and modern Celtic ways. The goal of The Summerlands is to create a safe, warm place where Celtic Pagans and others of good heart, mind and spirit and compatible beliefs can come to enliven their spirits and revive the old ways through knowledge and interaction with one another.

Some of the ongoing goals that The Summerlands has engaged to manifest are:

- A Druidic Seminary where clergy in our faith may be trained, ordained and legally registered with credentials that are equivalent to any other religions' clergy members.
- A land based Celtic Pagan community and Druidic enclave/seminary.
- A Celtic Pagan Publishing house, where the hard to find ancient texts can be typeset, printed, and distributed to those people who do not currently have access to a major teaching library in their area.
- The Brehon Project. The goal here is not to merely research the old Brehon Laws, but to truly understand them: bringing the old ways forward and merging the best of them with the laws and ways of our country in hopes of creating something that honors the past, serves the present, and lays the groundwork for the future.

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ANCIENT BOOK INFORMATION GOES HERE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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the Ancient Ways of the Druids**

**Searles O'Dubhain**



**The Summerlands Press**  
**<http://www.summerlands.com/press>**

Ogham Divination

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Published in the United States of America  
in 2000 C.E. by  
The Summerlands Press  
<http://www.summerlands.com/press>

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Illustrated by Searles O'Dubhain  
Cover Design by Searles O'Dubhain  
Cover Illustration and Jacket Design by Cari Buziak,  
Aon Celtic Art & Illumination <http://www.aon-celtic.com>

Typeset and Design by The Summer Set  
Printed and bound in the USA by \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, TN

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data available

ISBN X-XXXXXX-XXX-X

Printing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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## **Forward**

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## Preface

If we are seeking the knowledge of Druids, then we should seek such knowledge in the way that a Druid would seek it. We should do as they did when they took counsel before a quest or a battle. We should seek the best information that can be found in the tradition. We should observe and experiment with the ways that we actively experience the worlds. We should make inquiries into the extended nature of reality through metaphysical insight, meditation and spiritual discipline. If we take this threefold approach to understanding then we will be embracing the ancient Draíocht of the three Druids of Partholan. Their names: Fios, Eolas, and Focmart, mean Knowledge of Tradition, Knowledge of Experience, and Knowledge of Inquiry. All three forms of knowledge are necessary for completing our understanding of the ways of Druids. Even the gods sought this trinity of knowledge, these Three Gods of Danu, to guide them in their own undertakings. Can we expect to do any less in our quest for the teachings of the Druids? Triadic knowledge is the source of wisdom. Within the triadic kennings, we will find the secrets of the Ogham.

Before we begin our walk along the Druid Way to discover the realms of Tree Wisdom and the Circles of Song, I'd like to introduce myself to you more completely by recounting some of my personal history:

This book represents the imbas that illuminated the darkness of my threefold ignorance, to borrow a phrase from the life of Angus Mac ind Oic. This imbas had three parents in much the same way that knowledge is the offspring of the three Druids of Partholan. Its first parent in knowledge was the child of my youthful dreams, which I struggled long and hard to master. With ever increasing control, I was able to direct the activities of my dream-time and to create worlds in which to play and learn. It was during this time of dreaming that I first became aware of Otherworldly consciousness. At times, during my dreams, I found myself being instructed and taught to the vast amusement of my "instructors." Dreams became a struggle between my always rebellious spirit and the guidance of these other beings. It was also during this time that I experienced several accidents and illnesses which were themselves coupled with Otherworldly experiences and periods of "second sight." During these times of sickness and travail, I would sometimes be in a separate reality, foreseeing the events of the near and distant future. **A Druid must see all of reality: the dreams, the visions, and the perceptions.**

My adventures in the Dreamtime soon found themselves competing with my more formal education in the public schools. I dived into my secular studies with the excitement of a kid in a candy shop. Knowledge of the world and society was very fulfilling and rewarding, yet something was missing from the hallways of secular education. This lack of completeness within secular education caused me to seek beyond the ordinary for knowledge of a more esoteric nature. It was during my research into other forms of knowledge that I discovered the rudimentary techniques of shamanism and meditation. Shamanism described the more formal ways of the Dreamtime and the Otherworld of my youthful experiences. It also showed me a way to overcome social conditioning to more fully perceive all of reality. Until then, I had resisted having conscious visions as

something that was perhaps abnormal. Transcendental meditation introduced me to Yoga and ways to control the breath, the heartbeat and the mind. As I gained control of my body, mind and spirit, through meditation, I began to experiment with ways of changing reality. At the same time I was questioning the teachings of traditional religion. I was seeking truth. **A Druid must know the inner self and must reconcile tradition, perception and contradiction.**

No matter how strongly I reasoned, and no matter what the initial assumptions and conditions were, all attempts at deducing a purpose to reality and a central control of it were doomed to becoming circular arguments. I despaired of ever finding a true solution to this matter. My only successes were in making my circles larger and larger before they turned back upon themselves in endless loops. It was within the quietness of meditation that I encountered the second parent of this work on Ogham divination. As I lay calling out into the darkness of my mind, I folded my perceptions back, one upon one another. I collapsed my reality until it was no longer around me. It became a black sphere of being and existed completely within my mind's eye, until I could see all parts of it simultaneously. It was then that I met my guide. A being of shining golden flecks of light came to me out of the darkness and pulled me into its center. This center of darkness is the 'Not-World' that is sometimes called An t-Saoil Uile or Annwn in Celtic tradition. It is the dark womb of creation that connects to all parts of external reality in every place, though it is sometimes more strongly felt in some places than others. When one is within the Not-World, creation can occur and journeys can be accomplished to anywhere that the mind can conceive. Awareness is no longer limited by neural capacity and information is no longer limited to memory alone. The mind is re-united with its greater self and communication is a series of "knowings" rather than word sequences or symbols. Knowing replaces thinking and answers outnumber questions. The "Not-World" is the second parent of the knowledge found within this book. It taught me about the flows of imbas and connected me across time and space to the knowledge that creates. **A Druid stands at the crossroads of the worlds.**

The third parent of this work is the silence of the Druids themselves. They did not write their knowledge in words, nor did they trust to books for education. A Druidic student attained wisdom through verbal exchange and repetition, observation and experience; discipline and mind expansion. The existence of even one Druid was a guarantee that all Druidic knowledge was still retained and available to be taught and learned. Some think, that no Druids or Druidic teachings survived the twofold onslaught of Roman legions and the later legions of well-meaning Roman Christian priests. In the case of the legions, Druids were slaughtered without quarter at Mona in 61 CE. Only those who were elsewhere survived within isolated pockets, as resistance continued in the hills of Western Britain and Scotland. Fortunately for us and for Draíocht, the Romans never invaded Ireland in force. It is there that we find the best preserved information about Druidic practices within the traditions of the Filidh. In the centuries that followed, the new wave of Christianity swept into the British Isles promising a fulfillment of spirit in this life and the next to those who would convert. The Celtic people, as a continuation of their existing spirituality embraced the spiritual message of Christianity. It was woven into their tales and traditions to the point that stories such as the "Quest for the Holy

Grail” were developed and the ancient Celtic deities were granted sainthood, while Brigid was said to have fostered Christ himself into the family of the Gael. Worship and honoring of the Old Gods continued in many Celtic lands even after the conversion to Christianity was said to have succeeded. The Tuatha Dé Danann became known as fallen angels who stood apart from those of Heaven or Hell. Many of the priests who ministered to the people recognized these dual ways. Priests who could provide spiritual aid and comfort in both the new and the old ways became known as 'Crane Clerics.' These Crane Clerics were a continuation of Druidic ways within the body of the Church. In a sense, some of these clerics became the new Druids though they also had to serve both the Church and the ways of the people, as well as the spirit of the land. **A Druid is a creature of spirit, inhabiting a physical body, with a mind that has achieved clarity of insight.**

As I traced my genealogy through several wars of independence and through hundreds, then thousands, of years of antiquity, I encountered the origins of my people within their burial mounds on the Plain of Brega, and within the chambered cairns of Cnogba. It was here that I discovered the roots of the darkness that became O'Dubhain. I found the dark well of our origins along the pathway of the Equinoctial Sun as it passed from the eastern entrance to the west within the hill of my ancestors. I beheld its many folded nature in the basin of the Nine Dúile and within the dark waters of their baptism. Considering these ancient origins my reality began to shift and I began to see the past unfold within my mind's eye. In one of these visions, I was taken to the Battle at the Ford between my ancestor Ferdia and his foster brother Cú Chulainn. That was where the stone breastplate of Ferdia was shattered by his bright brother's three-pronged spear, the Gae Bolga. It was also within these visions and traditions that I discovered the symbolic language of the stones, from old to new. In a sense, I discovered stones that can speak, as well as stones that can cry out, and stones that can bear witness. Each of these stones is shaped by its purpose and covered with symbols. It was within these stone symbols that I once again beheld the gateways to the knowledge of bright stars and dark groves. The symbols upon the stones marched forward through the years until the first of the Celtic Wise recognized their speech. These symbols and marks became known as Fionn's wisdom and were recorded upon stone and wood. In the Ogham, one such structure of wisdom and symbols is known as Fionn's Ladder. It was upon such a ladder that I discovered the progressions to wisdom of the Druids and it is under the ridgepole of their house that I will attempt to define it within this book. There are many doorways to knowledge that travel beyond our ignorance. It is to these doorways that we will apply the keys of the Ogham. **A Druid dares to explore beyond darkness and ignorance.**

I have opened each of these doorways to knowledge with its own key and its sacred song. I have discovered new knowledge and new doorways to knowledge beyond knowledge, as well as wisdom upon wisdom. Each step has provided access to a family of steps, as each leap brings understanding to another side of knowledge. The courage to open each door must be gained from the need to seek the truth that is hidden from the world. Such work is not suited for the timid or the shy. One must be on fire with the search for truth. The most fearsome adversary that will be met within this darkness is oneself and one's shadow. Death's dark eyes see truly, yet life's warmth awaits us beyond the edge of



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darkness. If you are one who seeks truth beyond fear and Life beyond Death, then come step into my darkness, a world beyond fears, a Not Place of Making, an unmaking of worlds, a creation of others. The fire that lights your way must become a Seeking of Truth. Without that light, there is only darkness and fear. I am O'Dubhain. I have met myself within the outer darkness of the unknown and I have found myself within the inner light of Imbas. Come into the Ogham and journey beyond Fear. **A Druid travels the ways of creation using the truth of knowledge as a guide to wisdom.**

## How to use this Book

This book was written as a practical, hands-on explanation of the wisdom and techniques of the Druids in performing Ogham Divination. It uses scholarly references where those are available, but it makes no attempt to limit itself to only the left-hand side of the brain, as reality is much more than the framework provided therein. The approach to the ways of the Druids that I have selected uses both sides of the brain, as well as the expanded mind that goes beyond limitation into worlds of action and creation. One must enter and become immersed in the waters of knowledge in order to learn how to swim toward wisdom. This book is divided into five major sections (as is fitting for any work dealing with Ogham). It attempts to address the five streams of the Well of Segos in the way that the flows of wisdom are created. These five parts of knowledge are:

**Opening the Pathways**- a section that deals with how we perceive reality and how it has traditionally been expressed in symbols by our ancestors, as well as identifying the Celtic elements of the self and the Cosmos as represented by the Directions, the Dúile, the Cauldrons and the Worlds. An extensive discussion is provided concerning the three parts of being contained in the Cauldron of Poesy materials.

**The Song of the Forest Trees** - a discussion of the ways in which Druids taught, learned and expressed themselves using Ogham as tools for constructing chants, memory groves, and a correlation of their storehouse of knowledge. The use of the Ogham as a form of musical notation for the harp is presented. The Ogham diagram Fionn's Wheel is used to better orient the qualities of the Land as provided by Fintan and Trefuilngid Tre-eochair.

**The Ogham Correspondences** - a presentation of the major uses and meanings of each Ogham in terms of its overall meaning, its two basic meanings, its three fold images and its nine-fold correspondences to the dúile. Additional tree lore is detailed and tied to the Ogham as well as a list of Celtic that are relative to each.

**The Wisdom of the Ancients** – a discussion of Celtic Otherworldly cosmologies, deities and realms, as well as how these can be used in developing models for a casting cloth to be used during Ogham divinations. The cosmologies of the Sky and Sea are detailed using the Ogham diagrams of the Stream Strand of Ferchertne and the Wheel Ogham of Roigne Roscanach as well as traditions, such as, “The Voyage of Mael Duin's Boat” and the *Leabhar Gabála*.

**Casting the Woods** - interpretations of traditional Ogham readings and ciphers as well as kennings. The use of Ogham by Dalan and Cú Chulainn is presented and discussed. The techniques of crannchur, frith and geasa are presented for use in divination. A sampling of readings is given that demonstrates the methods, charts, and techniques presented in the book.

This work is used as a textbook in a course in Ogham divination that is taught at The Summerlands, an online, Pagan, cyber community (<http://www.summerlands.com>). It is also used as a textbook in a larger Druidic training program. This program includes a discussion of the many Celtic tales and traditions that are linked to each Ogham. Such a system of correspondences was included in the curricula of the schools of the Druids and the Filidh. It is

## Ogham Divination

my opinion that the Ogham were used to instruct Druidic students in all aspects of the common knowledge or Coimgne. This book may also be independently used by those already familiar with techniques of divination (and the tales) as a sourcebook for interpreting and validating their own readings.

Within the following pages are discussions of musical theory, symbolic language, magical pathworking, as well as several types of meditations and traditional ancient memory techniques. Any of these disciplines can be studied on its own as a guide in developing a greater level of personal skill and a deeper understanding of life in general. It is my recommendation that the greatest strength of the Druids is embraced when all of their techniques and knowledge are studied together within an integrated learning experience. This combination of separate studies is a confluence of knowledge that becomes a symbiotic tool of transformation for the willing student. A Druid is many skilled and capable, a fabric of interlocking threads and strong connections. A Druid's cloak contains as many colors as the knowledge that it encompasses. A Druid's quest is a strand of many pathways and passages within and beyond life, a second awakening within life itself. **A Druid is the truth at the crossroads of the Worlds.**

## **Dedication**

**To the Gods  
To the Ancestors  
To the People**

**To Luna and Julia Butterfly  
To All Those Who Fight  
For the Life of the Forests**

**To the Oaks of My Childhood  
To My Parents  
To Druids Everywhere**

## Ogham Divination

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my entire family for supporting me in a multitude of ways that are even now becoming known. I especially thank my parents Zeke and Dorothy DeVane for their patience and love. Without them I would be undone in many ways. I would also like to thank my second set of parents O.B and Eloise Cleveland for showing me that magic lives in the hearts and lives of everyone. I especially thank my wife Deborah O'Dubhain for manifesting me into her life through the guiding star of manifestation. In many ways she has been one of my greatest teachers. In a similar manner, my daughters Corinne and Lauren have shown me that youth can be the Cauldron of Age, as each of them shows me things about myself and themselves that span many lifetimes. In those lifetimes, I thank the beings who can walk between the worlds, bringing their golden light into the darkness. I thank my brothers and their families and the families that have existed these countless centuries to bring me to this point in existence. I thank those forbears who warded their own tribes and were inspired by the ancestors at Cnogba. I understand the dedication of the Red Hand and its sacrifice. I am proud of those who sought to unify the land of my ancestors and also those who fought to free the land of my birth.

There are others beyond family to thank for their examples and their inspirations. I thank Rilla Mouldin and Jehana Silverwing who insisted that I pursue a study and teaching of Celtic tradition and Ogham Divination. I also thank many a Bard and a Druid that I have met along the way in this study of learning. Some of them follow hawks within shadows, others are the Moon's shadow on horned wings, swiftly gliding across the night. One might see through the eyes of a Bard upon a Tor, beyond illusion into spiritual realities, while others seek the gray steel of the wolf in truth and with relentless cunning. There is one who stands between the worlds and whose religious teachings span many pathways. There is another who is an Oak above kings. I especially want to thank all the Druids of the Henge of Keltria for their support and their pursuit of truth and harmony. I hope to someday teach as each of you teach, in subtle ways, as a strong upholder of the truth that stands clearly among the world's many illusions

## Ogham Divination

## **Introduction**

This book came into being because my teachers would not permit me to do otherwise. I was required to seek out and to develop the knowledge of the Druids so that Draíocht would once again be a gift of the living from the never dying. If I'd had a choice in the matter, I would have remained safely at the knee of one of my teachers to learn this wisdom the easy way. I would not have done the work and research that's been required to learn by experimentation and investigation. Ease in learning was wishful thinking on my part. A great truth is that one part of wisdom is the experience that is gained by being immersed in a subject up to the elbows. Many times it is this hard work that pays the greatest rewards, if we will only go the extra mile in our efforts. The hard lesson is the lesson that is not forgotten. Although I have relied on the best scholarship available, I have not limited my efforts to only its narrow constraints. I have utilized the best knowledge available from tradition, from experience and through inquiry. I have also sought divine knowledge through the Ogham themselves as well as through meditation and imbas. The results have always been verified through experimentation and use. I wish to thank those who have corrected my mistakes and acknowledge that the success of this work is the effort of many. All mistakes, any misimpression, misrepresentation or errors are my own. As this book is used in classroom as a guide to practical work, and as I receive notifications of needed corrections to the material, I will be updating and including such changes in all future editions. It is time to begin our journey to discover truth by learning from the teachings of Druids.



## Ogham Divination

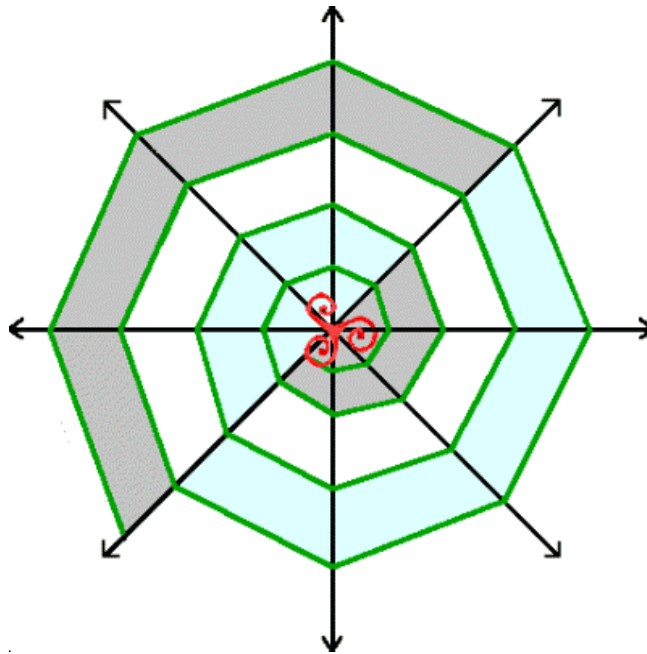
## PART ONE

# Opening the Pathways

Good is the wellspring of measured speech.  
Good is the home of the well of inspiration.  
Good is the joining of their powers:  
Strength is made durable.

It endures longer than any fortress.  
It is better than any tradition.  
It is our guide to wisdom,  
As we free ourselves from ignorance.

*Amergin White Knee in the Cauldron of Poesy Materials (circa 13<sup>th</sup> Century BCE)*



## Ogham Divination



## Chapter 1 In the Beginning

### **Caidi aimser ocus log ocus perso ocus tugait scribind in lebor? Ni ansa:**

What are the time, place, person, and the cause of the writing of this book? Not hard to say:

The time of the writing of this book is the fifth decade of the author's life, in the later part of the twentieth century, and during the 1935<sup>th</sup> year, after the Druids of Mona were attacked by Sueltonius Paulinius, according to the reckoning of the years of the Common Era (CE).

The places of its writing are the states of Virginia, Florida, Texas, Mississippi and Alabama within the geographical United States of America and also The Summerlands (<http://www.summerlands.com>), a Celtic, Pagan, cyber community on the Internet.

The author of this work is Searles O'Dubhain, a student of Draíocht; a descendent of the chiefs of Cnogba and Barra; out of the lines of Daman and Niall; a free man of a free people.

The reason for the writing of this treatise is to recover and explain what can be known about the ways of the Druids. This writing will be accomplished from a study of what was written about the Druids, from the tales told within folk memory, and using the information that can be discovered through the use of discerning inquiry and the techniques of Imbas.

It is a common misconception within some parts of the academic community that the knowledge of the ancient Druids has been lost to us. Many authorities think that the oral nature of the Druidic teachings prevented their knowledge from being preserved in writing; in books and letters. It is also commonly accepted as a fact by these skeptics that the Druids ceased to be an organized group in the fifth century CE. If any of these perceptions and misconceptions were true, then the writing of this book would not have been possible and the words that you are about to read would still be hidden. It is very fortunate that the knowledge of the three worlds is not dependent on the recording efforts of histories alone. There are many sciences that retain the deeds of the past: biology, linguistics, geography, archaeology, and physics, being only some of them. It is also a godsend that wisdom is not restricted to what can be rationally quantified according to the rigid precepts of science or logic alone. Wisdom has been said by the ancient sages to be available to those who seek it spiritually as well. "When the student is ready, the teacher will come," is a saying that applies equally to the physical sciences, the mental disciplines and spiritual questing. Knowledge comes to us through tradition, through science and through inquiry. In the matter of divination, our inquiries are made of the gods. We will not be disappointed in our seeking of truth if we listen truly with our body, mind and spirit. These three approaches to investigating the subject of Druidic knowledge are essential to producing a

complete understanding of information, knowledge and wisdom, but they are not the only sources for discovery available to us.

I have used the Ogham to perform divinations for many years, since I first discovered them while pursuing my Celtic roots. I was fascinated by the secret writings of the Druids. Since that time, I have read every book on Ogham that I could find. I have a set of Ogham (made from 6000 year old bog oak or 'faerie wood') that I use regularly. In addition to my studies, I have used the Ogham to interpret dreams as well as to determine the future (for myself, as well as others). If I really need to know the truth of a situation and it is beyond conscious knowing, I turn to the ancient wood wisdom of the Druids to show me the way. This work presents what I have discovered about the Ogham, the Self, the Cosmos and the Druid Way.

In our pursuit of the wisdom and secret knowledge of the Druids, we are faced with many obstacles. Having incomplete accounts of their knowledge in what they left behind created most of these obstacles. The ancient Druids did not write their teachings into books or upon paper. They considered the mind to be stronger and more powerful than books, as they also considered the tongue to be sharper than the pen or the sword. If we are to recover their ancient knowledge and wisdom from the remnants that were recorded during the Middle Ages, we must become as the Druids of old, and relentlessly devote ourselves to a pursuit of truth and the attainment of a total awareness of the reality that surrounds us. The attitude of the Druids was best summed up by these words:

**“The Truth Against the World.”**  
**“An Fhirinne in Aghaid an t-Saoil.”**  
**“Y Gwir Yn Erbyn Byd”**

*What is sweeter than mead? - Intimate conversation (Ifin, Pine).*

*What is blacker than the raven? - Death (Idad).*

*What is whiter than the snow? - Truth (Luis).*

*What is hotter than fire? - Inspiration (Tinne)*

*What is more valuable than gold? - Strength (Duir)*

*What is swifter than the wind? - Thought (Saile).*

*What is sharper than a sword? - Understanding (Coll).*

*What is deeper than the sea? - Eternity (Quert).*

*What is longer than life? - Rebirth (Nuin)*

Come share a cup of mead with me from the Well of Wisdom. We shall go into the darkness of death, seeking truth upon the swift wings of the wind, and trusting in the silver splendor of our sharp, singing swords! May the mead of our speech become a spell of truth. Let us become new creatures of thought. Let our knowing become understanding. Let our understanding lead us to wisdom! An Fhirinne in Aghaid an t-Saoil! Let us become as Druids! We shall read the Ogham and foresee the future.



## Stepping Onto the Path

Is there anyone that has not wished they could predict the future? The need to have foreknowledge of coming events seems to be a basic part of our psyches as human beings. Many different esoteric disciplines have attempted to fill this need; everything from reading tea leaves to computer generated astrological charts. Some of these disciplines are more successful than others; giving us hints concerning the relative merits of the many different predictive techniques. At the roots of all of these disciplines is the art/science of divination. Divination is a discipline in which the Druids were considered to be masters. How does divination work? Who can do it? How can we hope to attain the level of mastery of the Druids in this esoteric art? Before addressing what we know about Druidic divination techniques, let's look at the basics of divination in general.

Many people have performed a successful divination during the course of their own lives, although they may well be unaware that this is what they have actually done. Have you ever opened a telephone book to exactly the right page? Have you ever “known” that the phone was going to ring or even exactly who was going to be on the other end of the line? Have you ever gone to exactly the right place in a strange town without having any directions? Have you ever known that the “fish were biting?” If you've done any of these things or something akin to them, then you have performed an act of foretelling. You have performed a divination. Perceiving the future is something we humans seem to do everyday. The real key to divination is not whether we can do it but how efficient we can make it. Mastery of divination is achieved by developing a reliable means for using this ability, without having to await those rare and random moments of heightened sensitivity. In order to quantify how we can actually perform such “esoteric” acts, we must first understand the basis of the act of divination itself. Understanding this ability is grounded within our many connections to the surrounding reality as well as our own awareness of how we are tied to it. These ties lead us into realms of consciousness.

It is well known that we humans use but a fraction of our minds on a conscious basis. What is it that we are doing with the rest of our awareness? since our consciousness is only a fraction of our mind's activities, the rest of our mind is characterized as the sub-conscious and the super-conscious. These two levels of consciousness are thought to connect with parts of reality that we do not normally perceive. These two types of consciousness are our best allies in the quest to predict the behavior of events. It is the super-conscious and the sub-conscious that allow us to do those mundane acts of “divination” that were previously mentioned. In order to perform a successful divination we must become more aware of our many layers of consciousness and how they are connected to the greater reality of the Cosmos that surrounds us. The connections of the Total self to Reality hold the keys to our ability to foretell the future and to fully understand the past, as well as the present. Divination centers around the use of our total consciousness to access the hidden answers within the greater Reality.



## **A Relaxed, Aware and Meditative State**

In order for us to open the pathways that exist between the various levels of consciousness, we must first achieve a relaxed, yet aware, meditative state. There exist a variety of techniques for achieving this state. The method that works best for me is a form of meditation that I call the 'Cauldron Meditation.'. I try to individually relax each part of my Total self, starting with the body. To achieve this relaxation of the body I start at the extremities (the feet, hands, arms, and legs) and work towards my center of consciousness. When I am completely, physically relaxed and my mind is 'quieted' (without those constant 'hi there!', 'what if?' types of thoughts), I float within a void which then allows the many streams of my consciousness to touch the Cosmos. This is the connecting phase of the divination. It is absolutely necessary to establish such a baseline of calmness before beginning the actual divination itself. The steps that follow this relaxation are the integration phase of the divination. These steps are the most crucial part of the entire process. During this phase, the total consciousness is allowed to seek information and touch the Cosmos. Afterwards, it can translate what it discovers using the symbols of divination. These symbols are one of the many tools that our higher consciousness uses to communicate divined knowledge to the deductive consciousness. Words are sometimes not powerful or universal enough to convey the knowledge of the divine. That is why divination uses symbols. The revelations of the esoteric consciousness are interpreted through the use of symbols, archetypes and a previously defined knowledge base. The divination techniques of Tarot, Astrology, Runes, Ogham, Casting Lots, all rely on such archetypal systems. The patterns and relationships revealed and defined within such archetypal systems are the means that are used by the conscious mind to interpret the revelations of the sub-Conscious and the super-Conscious. Since three levels of consciousness are involved in the acquisition of divine knowledge, three separate sets of symbols are required to efficiently complete the connection between the three levels of the mind. Let's look at how the Celts viewed these matters of consciousness and Cosmos, as well as addressing the threefold nature of existence.



## **The Memory of Druids**

To the Celts, the Cosmos was divided into the Three Worlds of Earth, Sky and Sea. This is not to say that they did not further subdivide each of these worlds into many different realms, assigning unique characteristics to each corresponding part. Celtic society itself had many levels of structure and organization. It should be no surprise to discover that their three worlds were also many leveled and multi-structured. This structuring within their society also extended to the family, the individual and the Self or 'Fein.' The Druids were keen observers of Nature and the world around them. They amassed tremendous amounts of knowledge as they traveled the world with the migrating Celts. This information was memorized by the Druids (and not written down) so that it could be instantly accessed when needed. Druids did not require writing to store their

knowledge. In fact, they avoided writing their knowledge within books because such book knowledge was considered to be inert knowledge and not directly available for use. Being used out of context could easily corrupt such knowledge. Book knowledge was not as fully integrated as the knowledge that a Druid's memory contained. Book knowledge could be easily changed by the uneducated and unenlightened. Book knowledge was not instantly available. It had first to be read, then digested and finally understood. Words in books were considered to be static representations of dynamic ideas; not the fully fleshed wisdom of a Druid. Books were not suitable for containing the Druidic Wisdom for the simple reason that Wisdom (and its application within Reality) is imminent, dynamic and alive; not dead, static or remote. Each Druidic memory was filled with living, breathing wisdom from across time. They were a rainbow of colors and melodies, harmonizing and surrounding the perceptions of the senses. Druidic memory was the cornerstone of Celtic Wisdom. The Druids did not require books to maintain this Library of Knowledge. What they did require were efficient keys to accessing their own memories. Such efficient access could only have been achieved within a structured, organized and categorized mind, the product of long study and disciplined mental training. The Ogham are the keys to Druidic memory. They are the *eochna éocsi* or 'keys of divination.' The very nature of the Ogham is structure, shape, tone and color. They are the grove of knowledge and the memory theater of the mind. The Druids in their systematic cataloging of knowledge used these characteristics. The Celtic divination system centered on the use of the Ogham keys. Ogham were used to unlock the massive amounts of knowledge required to become a Druid.

Much that was once known has long been lost. What was once held sacred within these great Druidic minds is gone, yet fortunately, there is much that still remains for us to consider. Our own knowledge base can itself be increased and expanded to include the realities and relationships of the Three Worlds. This knowledge includes: the ancient lore from the *dindsenchas* and the *immrama*; the stone symbols carved upon the Brughs of the Gods; the speech of the stars and the planets as they wander across the skies; the nature of the trees, the spirit of the beasts; the elements of the human self or the 'Dúile.' We will discuss the techniques of Druidic memory in a later chapter. We must first consider how perception is formed.



## The Paintbrush of Perception

Intuition and Deduction are two schools of thought, just as Impressionism and Realism are two schools of painting. Both can be used to paint a picture or to capture a thought. As each approach is taken to its limit, the differences between the two forms disappear. They approach the same image, the object of art or thought. They each become more and more like the very thing that they are describing. The effect of discrete thoughts becoming more interconnected and detailed is the same effect given when the flowing hints of intuition become more focused. Both approaches are attempts at creating reality in the mind of the beholder. This marriage of logic and intuition is the fundamental basis of all occult knowledge. It is one of the guiding principles of divination. It is possible to 'see' the complete picture, even when only 'splashes' of color are present upon the canvas (this is why we can watch TV or look at a picture in a newspaper). The human mind and its many levels of consciousness are able to integrate a wide variety of images and thoughts into



concepts and pictures that are much greater than their individual parts. If we want to become artists of divination, we must also become the scientists of divination. Not only do we need the 'gift' of seeing the future, we also must learn to study, organize and remember so that we may interpret and use our foresight.

When preparing to paint a picture there are many steps that must be followed. One must select the appropriate size, type and shape of the canvas as well as the frame. The color scheme must be considered. The techniques and style of the paints must be considered. What types of brushes and how many are required to get 'just the right effect' are major considerations. Lighting considerations and other factors such as artist's mood, space to move around, noise and other distractions, quality of the environment, cleanliness, etc..., all of these must be considered as well. In preparing to perform a divination, we must take an approach that is similar to the artist's approach. The canvas of our work is defined by our Cosmology. The preparation of that canvas must include the selection of qualities for the various factors within our Cosmology, such as: Ruling Deities, Hallows, Directions, Magical Attributes and Characteristics. The brushes of our divination are the Ogham fídh themselves. Each of them adds a unique descriptive capability to our foretelling. The Winds, the Sun, the Moon and the Stars all affect the environment that surrounds us while working. Their effects will appear in the picture that the Magic paints before us as we search for answers. In selecting the tools for our trade we must exercise great care in our choices. Only the best and truest will suffice. That is why we base our divination systems upon the teachings and writings of the ancients. They have gone before us to provide us with the wisdom of their experience. It is within the ancient texts that the form and manner of this Ogham divination system was first conceived. Our divinations and pictures will only be as good as the facts we have started with and the way in which we have swirled the colors. Let's take a look at the sources for the basic concepts of Ogham Divination before we approach the canvas of our 'castings.'

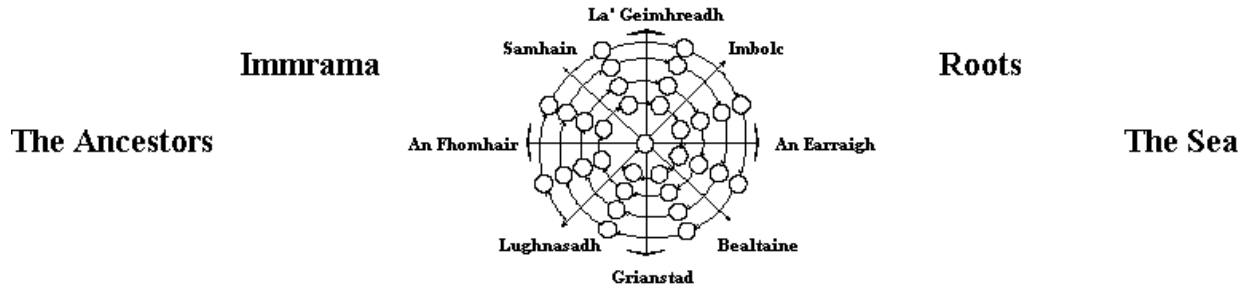
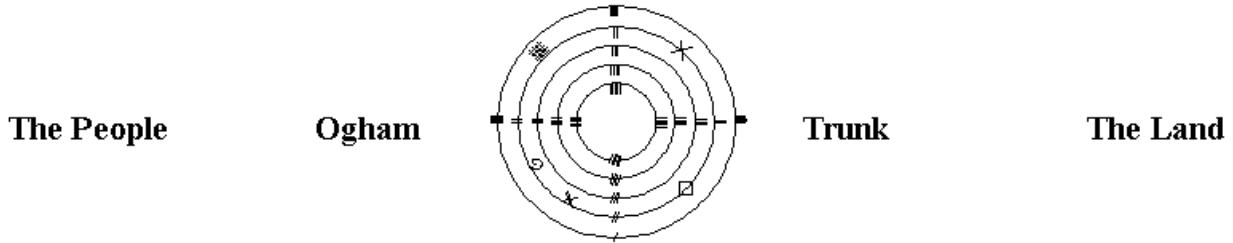
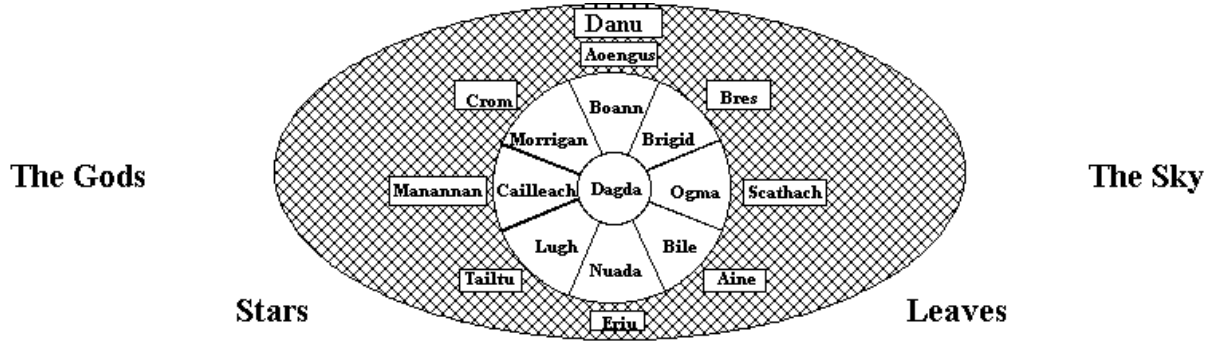
The divination system described within this paper is based on the descriptions of the Three Worlds as described in several ancient Irish writings. The Underworld (Depths/ sea) aspects of the Otherworld are modeled after the imram, "The Voyage of Maelduin's Boat." The Middleworld or 'Land/Earth' aspects of the system use the Tree Ogham as arranged around the diagram known as Fionn's Wheel (from the *Book of Ballymote*). The directional aspects and qualities for the various divisions of the Land are those assigned to it by Trefuilngid Tre-eochair within the tale of the "Settling of the Manor of Tara." The Skyworld (Future/Deity) aspects are based upon the characteristics and practices of the Tuatha Dé Danann as described in the ancient tale, "Cath Maige Tuired," as well as, within the stories surrounding the Brugh na Bóinne and its many resident deities/owners. Any symbols that I have used are derived from these ancient tales and books, the Ogham themselves, as well as, the actual symbols found carved and chiseled upon the stones of the Brugh itself.



## **The Three Worlds of Land, Sea and Sky**

To the Celts (and the Druids), the Cosmos consisted of the Three Worlds. These worlds are the Skyworld of the Gods, The Middleworld of the Earth and the Underworld of the spirits and Ancestors. The Crann Beithadh ('Tree of Life') or the Sacred Bile interconnected these Three Worlds. Flows of Spirit, Fire and Water, moved through the many levels of this Cosmos, constantly going from one realm to another in cycles of birth, death and rebirth. The secrets of the Tree of Life are contained within the Ogham (which represent the Wood Wisdom of the Forest) and its many 'keys of knowledge.'

Ogham Divination



**The Sacred Bile**  
A Tree of Life



## Chapter 2 The Stones Speak

“Of all European lands I venture to say that Ireland is the most mystical, and, in the eyes of true Irishmen, as much the Magic Island of Gods and Initiates now as it was when the Sacred Fires flashed from its purple, heather-covered mountain-tops and mysterious round towers, and the Greater Mysteries drew to its hallowed shrines neophytes from the West as well as from the East, ... [and the Otherworld]... seeing sons still watch and wait for the re-lighting of the Fires and the restoration of the old Druidic Mysteries. Herein I but imperfectly echo the mystic message Ireland’s seers gave me, a pilgrim to their Sacred Isle. And until this mystic message is interpreted, men cannot discover the secret of Gaelic myth and song in olden or modern times, they cannot drink at the ever-flowing fountain of Gaelic genius...”

*The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries by W. Y. Evans Wentz*



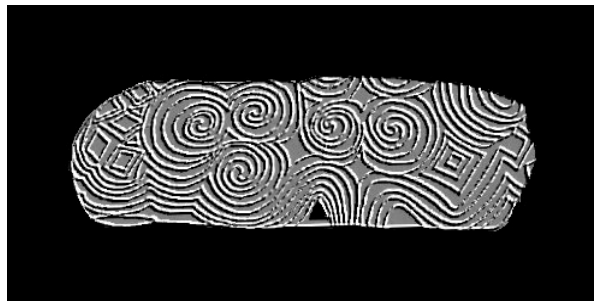
### **The Brugh na Bóinne**

“O nobles of Breg, a might that is not deceitful,  
with featful points (royal is the road):  
know ye the story of every lord  
that is here in the Brugh of the Mac ind Oic?”

“Behold the fairy mound before your eyes:  
it is plain for you to see, it is a king’s dwelling,  
it was built by the harsh Dagda :  
it was shelter, it was a keep renowned for strength.”

*(Metrical Dindshenchas, Edward Gwynn)*

To start our search into the mysteries of the Tree of Life, we must first enter into the House of the Dead (for wisdom is the gift of the Ancestors). In some Celtic teachings, this is known as Tech Duinn ('The House of Donn'). Others call this land, Tir Andomain. In still other teachings, its doorway is known as the Brugh of Oenghus mac n'Og, the Brugh na Bóinne. The Brugh of Oenghus is also known as the Sun Brugh and the House of the Dead. It is the wellspring for the Knowledge of Segos and the collecting pool for the Way of the White Cow. It is only fitting that we should seek the answers to Life, Death and the Cosmos within the holy mound that was home to Danu (as Bóann the White Cow Herself). It was also a home to The Dagda (as the Father of the Gods); to Nechtan, (keeper of the Well of Segais); and to Oenghus (who is the young God of Life and Love). The First People of Ireland constructed this 'Wonder Hill,' before the dawn of modern times. Within it and upon it and in its very structure, they imbedded the Wisdom of the Cosmos. For over 5000 years, the stones of the Brugh have held the writings of the Gods. To understand the secrets of the Three Worlds of Sky, Land and sea, we have only to observe the speech of the stones themselves.



## The Stones of the Brugh

The stones of the Brugh are carved with a variety of Cosmic symbols: the Sun, the Moon, the sea, the Winds, Dreams, Life, Creation, sacrifice and Transition. These symbols can be shown to represent the elements of the duine, (body or self). They are collectively called the 'Dúile' and represent both the components of the body, the mind and the spirit, while also having correspondences to the very elements of the Cosmos. In the following discussion, the relationship of the nine Celtic Dúile to the five traditional Magical elements is described (Earth, Air, Fire, Water and spirit, along with other elements). Overlaying all of these elements upon the Ogham of Fionn's Wheel produces a uniquely Druidic system of divination. This system includes the knowledge from each of the Worlds of Sky, Earth and sea. This multi-layered Cosmic structure reveals the secrets of the Wheel of the Gods.

Before the divination system itself can be discussed, its many parts must first be defined and presented. Each part of the divine Cosmos has a list of correspondences and a unique structure

that will ultimately reveal the secrets of Past, Present and Future. The following tables and discussions give the element names, associated deities and sources, as well as their meanings and correspondences. The derivation of this information is beyond the scope of this article, but will be completely detailed in a separate work.

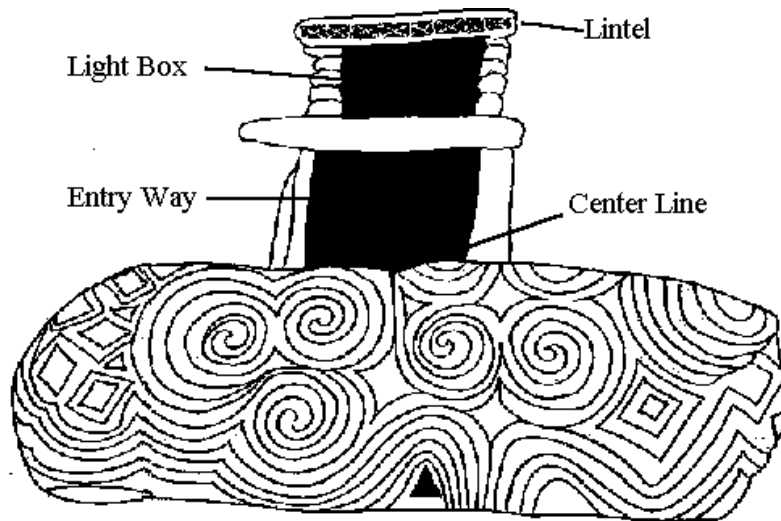
**The Symbolic Correspondences**  
**(From the Brugh na Bóinne)**

<b>The Brugh</b>	<b>The Symbols</b>	<b>The Dúile</b>	<b>Magical Elements</b>	<b>Deities</b>
Destiny	Square fields	Bones	Stone	Morrigan-Crom
Life	Lozenges	Body	Earth	Dagda-Anu-Bel-Áine
Transition	Spirals	Hair-skin	Ogham	Donn-Ogma-Fodla
Sea	Waves	Blood	Water	Manannán-Cailleach
Spirit	Zigzags	Breath	Air-Stars	Danu-Ogma-Scathach
Moon	Crescents	Mind	Well of Segáis	Bóann-Danu-Banba
Creation	Crossed lines	Brain	Clouds-Smoke	Brigid-Nemed-Bres
Sun	Solar disk	Face	Fire	Ériu-Bel-Oenghus
Sacrifice	Crossed lines	Head	Torc	Lugh-Nuada-Crom



## The Symbols of Brugh na Bóinne

Let us look at the symbolic way in which the stones of the Brugh communicate wisdom to us. Perhaps our levels of perception can be enhanced so that we may better listen to the message of the stones; sent to us across time and 5000 years? Let us listen to the speech of the stones!



### The Doorway to the Gods

According to modern physics, all of reality is composed of three things: expanding waveforms of energy, contracting waveforms of energy, and their interactions with one another as they flow through the same regions of space. Matter itself is just a description of the behavior of these waveforms as they interact, change direction or combine. Any slice or time bite we take of this situation will eventually resolve itself into circles within circles intersecting with circles. The extremes of these three aspects of reality are the Point, Infinity and The Void.



### The Point, Infinity and The Void

It is within the connection that exists between the point source and the Infinite that Creation occurs and Reality itself begins. It is in the leap across the Void that countless waveforms interact to form matter and thought. The Void becomes the center of reality's existence and creation. The Point and the Infinite are its boundaries.

Other terms and symbols can also be used to describe such abstract terms as 'The Point,' 'Infinity' and 'The Void.' The ancients were well aware of this need for symbols and symbolism. This need is the reason why we have numbers and alphabets today. The specific symbols (as defined by the

ancient peoples of Ireland as well as by the Druids, their inheritors) are:

### Symbols of Meaning

Symbol	Meaning
The Sun	A Radiant Circle of Being
The Moon	A Cycling of Arcs
The Cosmos	The Elliptic Egg
The Gate of Light	The Cross
The Zig Zag of Lightning	The Sharp Cut of Knowledge
The Portal of Fire	The Diamond
Making	Intersecting Crosses
Becoming	The Spiral of Transition
The Snake of Nine Waves	The Journey into the Unknown
Destiny of Life	A Hatched Field

All of these symbols can be found chiseled upon the stones of the Brughs of the Ancient Gods of Ireland. They can also be found surrounding the shield of Fionn. A third place that they are found is within the 'Crane Bag' of Manannán Mac Lir. These symbols are perhaps better illustrated and remembered by seeing them as they appear in the following diagram and list:

Here is a list of the most frequently occurring symbols among the brughs along the Boyne river (as found in the book, *The Stones of Time* by Martin Brennan):

### Frequency of Occurrence

Symbol	Frequency
The Circle	53%
The Arc	39%
The Cross	34%
The Snake	28%
The Spiral	27%
The ZigZag	25%
The Diamond	22%
The Dot	20%
The Ellipse	17%

These symbols are the elements of the megalithic alphabet. They are the languages of the Earth, Sky, Sun, Moon, Planets and the Stars. They are the expression of the First People's connection between the self, the Gods and the Cosmos. Let's look at what each of the symbols represents. I'll give their modern meanings first, next I will give their Ogham/Druidic meaning (if any) and then their astronomical connections (if possible). Once we have a broad based understanding and



knowledge of the symbolic meanings, we will have a better chance of determining the message they are sending to us.

## The Stone Symbols

Symbol	Name and Description
	<b>The Circle</b> - Sacred Space - (The Great Serpent) - the Zodiac. The Circle is also a symbol of the Sun, Moon and the planets, as well as the self.
	<b>The Arc</b> - The Yoni - (The Entrance of the Temple)- the Milky Way. This is also a symbol of the cycles of the Moon as well as the receptive nature of the Divine Feminine.
	<b>The Cross</b> - Creative Power - (Eadha-Life from Death) - The Sun. Since ancient times a wheel, a circle surrounding a cross, has represented the Sun. The goddess Brigid is also symbolized by a cross (due to her associations with fire, the sacred Center and new beginnings).
	<b>The Snake</b> - Power Flows - (The Dragon, the Power within the Land) - The Path of the Moon as it affects the Earth (cycles/waves). The 'ley lines' that cross the grids. The ocean itself was said to be surrounded by the star serpent, (named Serpens or Sir). Is it not the Goddess of Wisdom, Brigid, that charms the snakes and is the 'daughter of Ibor?'
	<b>The Spiral</b> - Sacred Dance - (Uileand - Ancient Wisdom - Samhain - The Galaxies). The spiral is a symbol of connection between sacred spaces. It is a whirlpool when in the sea. It describes the pathways of the Sun, Moon, Planets and Stars when they travel the Sky. It is the symbol most often associated with transition.
	<b>The ZigZag</b> - Lightning - (The Mark of the Oak) - Dawning - Days - Months - Years (cycles). The zigzag is a symbol of decisive change, such as the stroke of a sword or the rays of the Sun above the horizon at sunrise. I sometimes wonder if the sword of Light was first used to separate the day from the night lair of the star serpent.
	<b>The Diamond</b> - Earth Mother/ Sky Father (Eye of Fire) - (Oir – Spindle - Bealtaine) -Gaps in space (Dark spots, the Void). The Diamond is formed from the combination of two triangles, one pointing down and the other pointing upwards. This symbol is sometimes called the 'Eye of Bel' or the 'Mouth of Fire.'





## **The Star Speech Revealed**

We have discovered the many layers of understanding and wisdom that are hidden within symbolic language. A basis has been established for the use of Ogham in divination. The fundamental concepts of the self and the Cosmos have been identified and described. The symbolic 'star speech' of the Brughs has been introduced and presented.

In the following pages, we will consider the elements of the Dúile, the Three Worlds, the Three Cauldrons and the Magick of the Four Cities of the Tuatha Dé Danann. All of these concepts will be interwoven upon the mystery of Fionn's Wheel. This interweaving of concept and mystery will produce a casting cloth for our use in divinations. This cloth will become the 'Brat Uaine' of Life, the Fidchell Board of the Gods, our pathway to inner knowledge and revelation.

Following the discussion of the Dúile and the Cosmos, the individual meanings of each Ogham will be developed and expanded. In particular, the knowledge of the Ogham that is contained within the Book of Ballymote will be covered. Using this knowledge as a foundation, methods will be introduced that allow us to connect and interpret the 'Knowledge of the Trees.'

To conclude our development and understanding of the casting cloth, the nature of the Celtic Otherworld will be presented, discussed and quantified for our divining purposes. The realms of the Underworld and the Sea will be discussed in the context of the tale, "An Imram Curaig Maelduin Inso" (the Voyage of Maelduin's Boat). The realm of the Gods, the Skyworld and the Future will be defined using information that is known from the 'star speech' of the stones at Brugh na Bóinne and the Wheel of the Year (from the Coligny Calendar and a wide variety of Celtic traditions). A brief description of each Deity that is honored on the Wheel will also be given, along with their connections to its usage in divination.

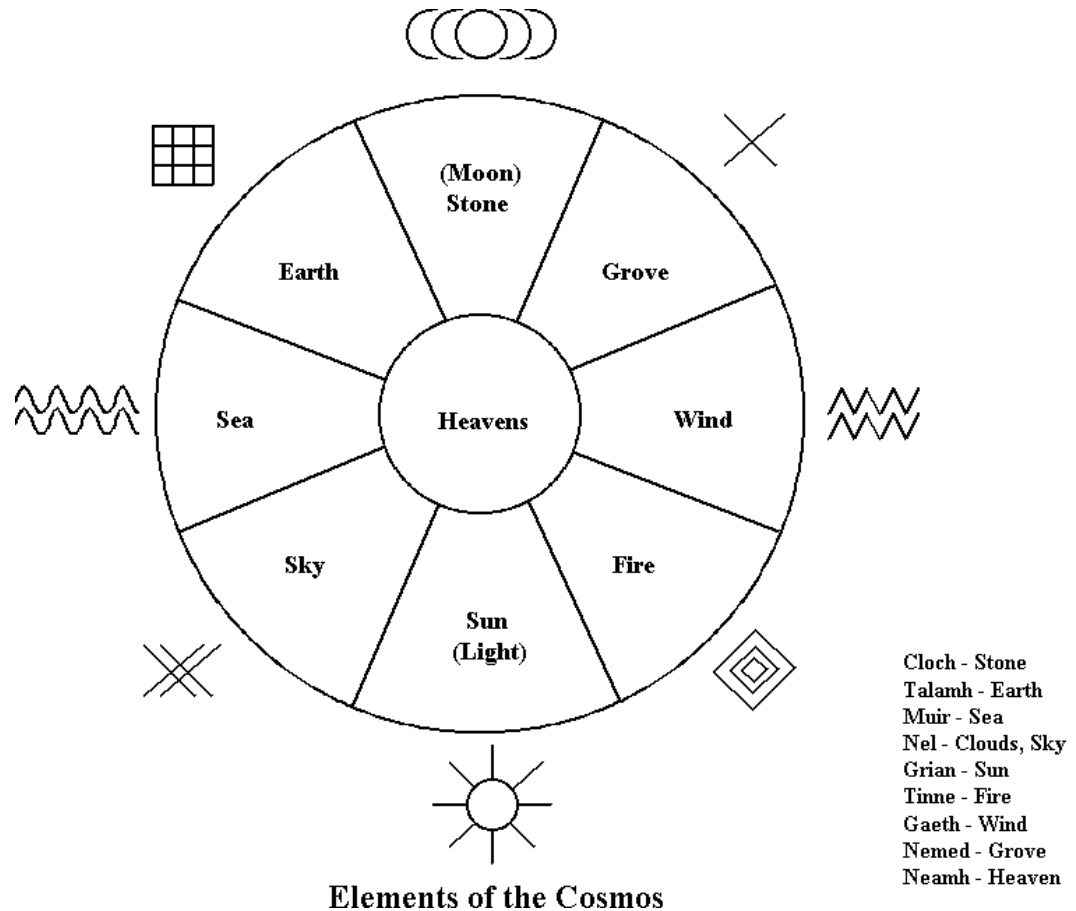
After laying the necessary groundwork, in the last part of this book, we will perform a variety of divinations using Ogham: Casting the Fidh, Dream Interpretation, Constructing spells, Determining geasa and the use of Ogham in Ritual. The Bibliography and Appendices at the end of this book are included to assist you in expanding your knowledge of the Ogham and to aid you in construction readings.



## Chapter 3 The Elements of the Dúile

In our quest to understand the Cosmos or the self and their correspondences, directions, elements and/or their use in ancient Celtic, modern Celtic and Druidic divination, there is only one place to start: the Center of the World. Come journey with me from the House of the Dead to quite a different sort of a house.

### The Dúile





## **The Center of the World**

### **The Cauldron Of Caer Sidi**

*(By Searles O'Dubhain)*

What is Thought but a spark that leaps into our consciousness?  
What is Consciousness without the distinction of knowledge?  
What is Knowledge but a flood that sweeps through our mind?  
What is Mind unless we are individual beings?  
What is Being but the hard ground of reality?  
What is Reality without the connection of spirit?  
What is Spirit but the wind's music sparkling upon the face of life?  
What is Life without the primal fire of Awareness?  
What is Awareness without the first thought of creation?  
Spark of Thought, Consciousness leaping.  
Consciousness, distinction of Knowledge.  
Flood of Knowledge, sweeping of Mind.  
Mind, individuality of Being.  
Being, hard ground of Reality.  
Reality, connection of Spirit.  
Spiritual music, sparkling of Life.  
Primal Life! fire of Awareness!  
Awareness, first thought of Creation.

To a Celt the answer to the question, "Where is the Center of the World?," had three answers. As an individual, his/her answer would have been, "It is where I stand.." This referred to the "gorm a cli" or the center of the self, the "bosom or heart." As a member of a household it would have been, "It is the cleithe, the center pole of my home." As a member of a tuatha or clan it would have been the Bile or sacred tree of the Gods. Each of these centers was connected together through the Goddess Brigid. She was the Goddess of Fire: fire in the head and heart, fire in the home and hearth, the fires of smiths and poets. She controlled the serpents of the "need-fire" and the feis. Brigid was the "daughter of fire" of The Dagda. She was the Magical element that connected the Three Worlds. If the elemental aspect of each of these Three Worlds was Land, Sea and Sky (Earth, Water and Air), then she was the Fire that transformed all three. It was Fire that opened the ways into the Otherworld at the Feis. It was Fire that gave inspiration to poets. It was Fire that warmed the anam as well as the Cauldrons of Wisdom, Warmth and Knowledge. To a Celt, the Center of the World was the interconnection of self, family and cosmos. It was fire that illuminated them all. Fire was at the center of Celtic and Druidic ritual.



## Nine Elements

The quest for establishing the number, quality and form of the Celtic elements or dúile will take us on a wide ranging search into many realms of information. We will hear conversations between seekers. We shall encounter the imbas of the mind and the spirit. We shall hear the words of Vedic Seers and Celtic Filidh. We will listen to the wisdom of Saints and the workings of Druids. We shall travel between worlds in threes of creation and we shall suffer triple deaths of misconception and limitation. We shall attempt to better define the self and the center through the nine elements of creation.

To further define the self, our first center, I am presenting a list of nine elements. Just as the hatha yoga define the human body as a “house with one column and nine doorways,” the Celts defined the body as composed of many elements or “dúile.” The neach (“living being”) or duine (“person”) was composed of nine dúile (“elements”). This idea of existence being composed of nine elements is also indicated in the *Book of Ballymote* where the parts of the Ogham alphabet are said to be:

“Now in the alphabet there is a required origin from one, and its invention from two, it’s placing by three, its confirmation by four, and its binding together with five, its amplifying with six, its division with seven, its rule with eight, its demonstration with nine, its establishment with ten. The one is above, to wit, Fenius Farsaidh; the two, Macetheoir with him; the third Mac Aingin; the fourth Cae; the fifth Amirgen son of Naende son of Nenual; the sixth Ferchertne; the seventh his pupil; the eighth Ceandfaelad; the ninth his pupil; the tenth its establishment in one, to wit, the Trefocal.”

Each of these elements had its corresponding cosmic element in the “Bith” (Cosmos). It was this interconnection and association of the dúile that gave truth to the saying, “As Above, So Below.” When the corresponding elements of the self and Cosmos were in harmony with one another, that was the time when the greatest Magicks could be worked. A Celt’s spirit was centered within the house of his body. Her home was focused upon where the hearth fires were “smoored.” Their life was contained and centered around the clan or tuatha. Magick was everywhere and Life was only “real” within the boundaries of the Land. Everywhere else was considered to be “other.”

In Vedic teaching and believe we find an echo of the Celtic beliefs as given in Bruce Lincoln’s *Death, War, and Sacrifice, Studies in Ideology and Practice*. The idea that humans, the First Human and the Cosmos were all interconnected is a Pan Indo-European belief:

I shall begin with excerpts from two classic texts drawn from different points in the Indo-European world: the celebrated ‘Purusasukta (“Son on Man,” RV 10.90), a hymn of the Rg Veda dating roughly to 900 B.C., and the “Poem on the Dove King,” (Stic o golubinoj knigb). An Old Russian folk poem, collected from oral tradition early in the nineteenth century, but mentioned already in texts dating to the thirteenth.

## Ogham Divination

When they divided Purusa ["Man"], how many pieces did they prepare? ...  
The Moon was born of his mind; of his eye, the sun was born;  
From his mouth, Indra and fire; from his breath, wind was born.  
From his navel, there was the atmosphere; from his head, heaven was rolled together.  
From his feet, the earth, from his ear, the cardinal points.  
Thus the gods caused the worlds to be created.  
Seven-mouthed were the sacrificial enclosures; thrice seven bundles of wood were made  
When the gods, performing sacrifice, bound Purusa ["Man"] as the sacrificial animal. Our  
bright light comes from the Lord,  
The red sun from the face of God,  
The young shining moon from his breast,  
The bright dawn from the eyes of God,  
The sparkling stars from his vestments,  
The wild winds from the Holy Spirit . . . .  
Strong bones come from stones,  
Our bodies from the damp earth.

This belief found its way into Europe and evidence of it is provided in this Medieval Folk sayings (albeit Christian ones at that). Here is an insertion to the fifteenth-century Old Frisian Code of Emsig:

God made the first man – that was Adam – from eight transformations: the bone from stone, the flesh from earth, the blood from water, the heart from wind, the thoughts from clouds, the sweat from the dew, the locks of hair from grass, the eyes from the sun, and then he blew in the Holy Spirit. Then he made Eve, Adam's love, from his rib.

The early Celts (and probably even the Neolithic peoples) conceived of their deities in the abstract. This was why Brenius, the Celtic leader during the attack on the Greek Temple at Delphii was seen to laugh when confronted by all of the statuary! Celts believed the Gods to exist on a different plane of existence than that which we humans occupied. The visits of these deities to humans could be in any form that the Gods so chose. This could be as a horse, a spring, a well, a flame, an eagle, a seed and even as a tree or a giant. The deities were masters of Draiocht and manifestation.

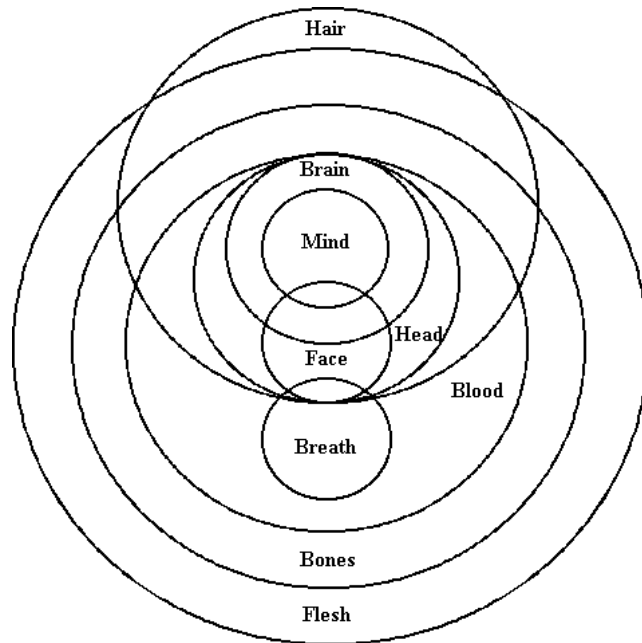
A very important concept to be considered here is something called "dúile". I understand the concept of "Dúile" to represent the manifestation of the individual human spirit and its interaction with the surrounding environment. This means that a dúile can be considered a part of our body that transcends the physical. It can be the effects that physical, mental or spiritual events have upon our "Being". The deities themselves were thought to be perceptible as dúile. One could "feel" the presence of Divinity when in a sacred place, such as a well, a lake or a cave. Megalithic structures must have had this same sort of a "feel" to them, since they were said to be the "homes of the gods". In this interconnection of spirit to Deity and Deity to spirit, I find the ancient Celts to be remarkably advanced in their philosophies. The outward simplicity of many of their tales (dindshenchas and immrama among them), belies the complexity of their "hidden" inner meanings. I maintain that these "inner meanings" were covered in the many years of intensive study and the lessons learned by an aspiring Druid.

## Ogham Divination

According to the bards, the nature of human beings can be understood by studying the relationship between the elements that compose the body and soul. ‘There are eight parts in man,’ *The Book of Llanrwst* (as found in *Celtic Sacred Landscapes* by Nigel Pennick) tells us:

The first is the earth, which is inert and heavy, and from it proceeds the flesh; the second are the stones, which are hard, and the substance of the bones; the third is water, which is moist and cold, and is the substance of the blood; the fourth is the salt, which is briny and sharp, and from it are the nerves, and the temperament of feeling, as regards bodily sense and faculty; the fifth is the firmament or wind, out of which proceeds the breathing; the sixth is the sun, which is clear and fair, and from it proceed the fire, or bodily heat, the light and colour; the seventh is the Holy Ghost, from whom issues the soul and life; and the eighth is Christ, that is, the intellect, wisdom and the light of soul and life.

This description of the elements of the self is said to be the work of Taliesin. It displays its Pagan origins in the ways that the parts of the soul and spirit are tied to the elements of the Cosmos. This connection of body, soul, spirit and Cosmos carried over into early Christianity with such scholars as Vitruvius remarking, ‘Man has been made in both the image of God and the image of the universe,’ Similarly Zanchius declared that ‘the body of man is the image of the world, and called therefore microcosmus.’ Gregory Nazianzene also confirms this concept by stating, ‘Every creature, both of heaven and earth, is in man.’ The microcosm of humans is a reflection of the workings of the Macrocosm of the universe. These reflections are demonstrated within the framework of the Celtic traditional tales and stories with the actions and qualities of the heroes and deities reflecting Cosmic principles in a way that can be both simple and complex at the same time



**The Celtic Elements of the Self**

Gruaigh - Hair  
Menma - Brain  
Imradud - Mind  
Ceann - Head  
Drech - Face  
Anail - Breath  
Fuil - Blood  
Cnaimh - Bones  
Coliand - Flesh  
Fein - Self

## The Celtic Elements of the Self



The simple/complex format of the ancient Celtic tales has a direct parallel in the mysteries of the Hebrew Cabala. In this correspondingly ancient science/art, at least three levels of meaning was encoded. An outward meaning was provided for the masses to consume on the surface level. There is a deeper, inner, philosophical meaning available to the theologians and there was also an additional “magical inner meaning” hidden within, for the eyes of the Magician alone! The method for achieving these many levels and tiers of meaning are quite complex and beyond the scope of this discussion. I am not a Cabalist, I am a Celt, so, I shall not dwell upon the Cabalistic intricacies of the Tree of Life. We Celts have our own Tree Mysteries to consider. Within the growth rings of our own Sacred Bile, we will find our heritage and our own answers.

If one is to study the religion of the Celts, one must be prepared to interact with this history on many levels. Exoteric history is certainly one such level. Linguistics and legends are another. I maintain that the most rewarding level of the ancient Celtic and Druidic religions is to be found in the esoteric and spiritual levels! We must look at the Mysteries within the tales. We need to see with eyes that have the “Sight”. We must involve and resonate our dúile to touch the Gods! We must look beyond the mundane and reach into the realms of the Otherworld to discover the “secret language” of the Filidh! The elements of the body in Celtic tradition are found in the poetical writings of both Amergin and Taliesin. I will be discussing those after presenting the following table, which attempts to define how the windows and doors of the body connected to the Land, the center and the Cosmos for the Celts.

### Correspondences of the Dúile

<b>Fein (The Self)</b>	<b>Bith (Cosmos)</b>	<b>Directions</b>	<b>Magical Tools</b>
1. Cnaimh (Bones)	Cloch (Stone)	Thuaidh (North)	Stone of Destiny
2. Colaind (Flesh)	Talamh (Earth)	Faoi (Under, About)	Nemeton
3. Gruaigh (Hair)	Uaine (Plant Life)	Amach (Outwards)	Ogham and Herbs
4. Fuil (Blood)	Muir (Sea)	Ior, Siar (West)	Undry Cauldron
5. Anal (Breath)	Gaeth (Wind)	Air, Oithear (East)	Sword of Light
6. Imradud (Mind)	Gealach (Moon)	Isteach (Inwards)	Well of Knowledge
7. Menma (Brain)	Nel (Cloud)	Thrid (Through)	Fire of Imbas
8. Drech (Face)	Grian (Sun)	Deas, Deis (South)	Spear of Victory
9. Ceann (Head)	Neamh (Heaven)	Os Cionn (Above)	Torque/Halo

These elements of the self can be equated to the chakras, the visible (and invisible) planets, the senses and the colors, but that is another story. During this discussion of divination, we will use the nine dúile and we will reference the Three Cauldrons of Warming, Vocation and Knowledge rather than the chakras.

Before we discuss the elements and the Three Cauldrons further, let's see what an Ollamh had to say concerning their Mysteries as he attempted to harmonize his own Dúile with the Cosmos. This "look behind the scenes" is contained within a great and ancient invocation called, "The Mystery" and is attributed to Amergin, son of Mile, Ollamh of the Milesians (circa 1000 BCE. This translation is by R.A. S. Macalister from the Book of Invasions or the "Leabhar Gabála")



## The Mystery, The Song of Amergin

I am Wind on Sea,  
I am Ocean-wave,  
I am Roar of Sea,  
I am Bull of seven Fights,  
I am Vulture on Cliff,  
I am Dewdrop,  
I am Fairest of Flowers,  
I am Boar for Boldness,  
I am salmon in Pool,  
I am Lake on Plain...  
I am Word of Skill,  
I am the Point of a Weapon (that poureth forth combats),  
I am God who fashioned Fire for a Head.  
Who smootheth the ruggedness of a mountain?  
Who is He who announceth the ages of the Moon?  
And who, the place where falleth the Sunset?  
Who calleth the cattle from the House of Tethra?  
On whom do the cattle of Tethra smile?  
Who is the troop, who the god who fashioneth edges...?  
Enchantments about a Spear? Enchantments of Wind?"

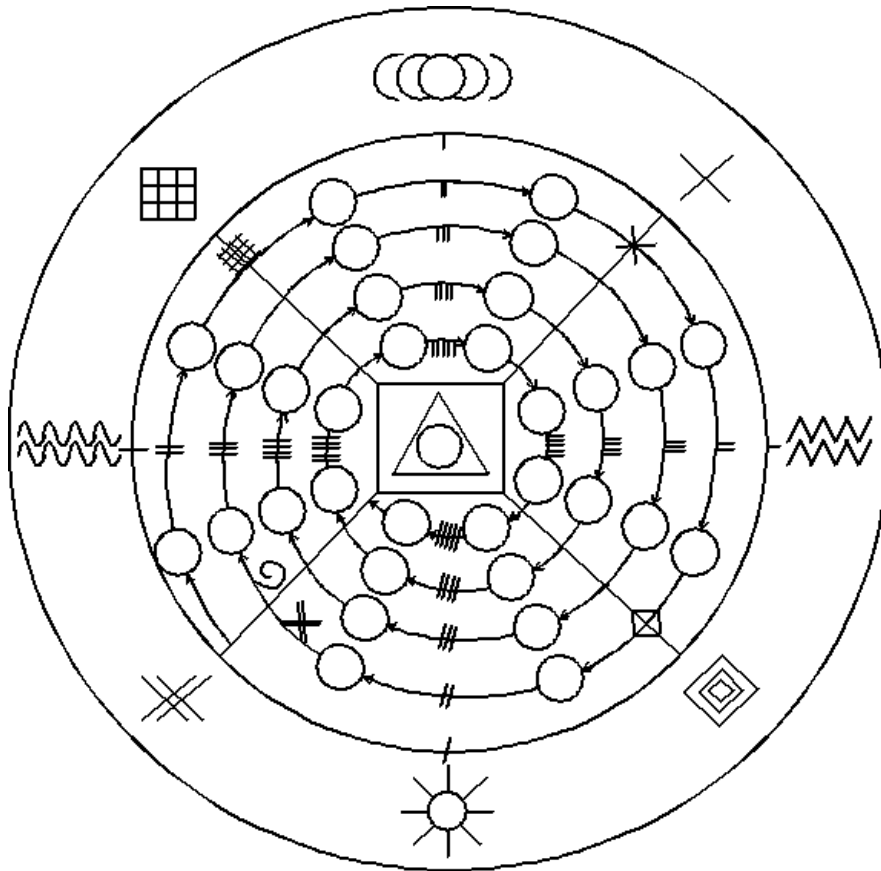
Amergin was able to "become" one with his Cosmos and by this act of "becoming" he was able to summon the Power of Making as well. It is clear that we must ourselves understand the relationships of the body and the Cosmos before we attempt acts of Celtic Magick such as Ogham Divination. We must identify with each of the elements of our selves and our surrounding world. We've previously identified this need to connect the many levels of self and Consciousness. Taliesin, Chief Bard of the Britons (circa 600 CE) remarks about elemental creation as found in the Cad Goddeu and translated by Caitlin Matthews):

I was made from the ninefold elements -  
From fruit trees,  
From paradisiacal fruit,  
From primroses and hill flowers,  
From the blossoms of trees and bushes,  
From the roots of the earth was I made,  
From the broom and the nettle,

## Ogham Divination

From the water of the ninth wave.  
Math enchanted me before I was made immortal,  
Gwydion created me with his magic wand.  
From Emrys and Euryon,  
From Mabon and Modron,  
From five fifties of magicians like Math was I made -  
Made by the master in his highest ecstasy -  
By the wisest druids was I made before the world began,  
And I know the star-knowledge from the beginning of Time.”

In the next segment, we will describe each of the Dúile and discuss the derived information (directions, elements, etc.) to clarify the assignments that have been made and establish how each can be used for divination. The following discussion covers the Cosmos, the self, directionality and space.



## **A Casting Cloth of the Celtic Cosmos** **A Map of the Worlds**



## Chapter 4

### The Cosmos and the Self

The Cosmos and the self contain elements that are interrelated in terms of their essential natures, their relationship to the whole and their relationships to one another. Each element of the self and the Cosmos will be discussed individually and together.

**The Bones** are the structure that supports the body. Bones formed the shape of the Cauldron of Vocation. It is the bones that “give us backbone.” To the Celts, and the Neolithic peoples of the British Isles, bones contained the Magick of a person. Bones were used to produce Magical implements and were carved with symbols and even Ogham were carved upon bones to enhance their effect. It was on stone that Ogham was also written, and it was by the “cries” of stone that the king was chosen. Stone is the foundation of a house just as the bones are the foundation of the body. It is no mistake that the most powerful Magicks in Ireland were carved and contained within the stones of the Brughs and the “centers of life.” Meteorites were accorded a very high and mystical position, as the bones of the stars, “stones that burn.”

**The Flesh** is the part of the body that connects to the structure of the bones and provides us with a shape or form. This shape was known in Ireland as the “delb.” The flesh is what moves us and empowers us. It is the substance that we consume, burn and sacrifice (along with blood) when we are making offerings to the Gods. The flesh of a bull was offered and consumed to facilitate the visions of the Tarbh Feis. Sometimes the blood or the flesh of an enemy was eaten during after-battle rituals (according to some authors...this matter is by no means certain, though I wouldn't be surprised). Earth is the Cosmic analog of flesh. It is the Land that supports our being and it is upon Her surface that we labor. Flesh is the main laborer of the Cauldron of Vocation.

**The Hair and the Skin** are the sensors and “feelers” of our bodies. The skin is the largest sensory organ that we possess. It is reactive to touch, heat, cold, pain and pleasure. The skin is one way in which we become aware of ourselves, our boundaries and our surroundings. The hair, extending beyond the skin, is an additional way we can sense our surroundings without actually touching anything. We can perceive the winds and even electricity caused by nearby objects. The hair also reflects our general well being (as does the skin). When we feel good our hair is shining and sleek. When we are depressed, the hair droops and is drab. The behavior of the skin closely parallels the behavior of the hair as an indicator of our body's condition and even its state of health. The Trees, shrubs and grasses of the earth are the Cosmic analog of the skin and hair of the human body. A healthy environment is reflected in the presence of green and growing trees, shrubs and plants. Our skin and hair provide coverings for the Cauldron of Vocation.

**The Blood** is the river of life within the body. It is what sustains the flesh (along with the breath). It also warms us and reflects our emotional state. The blood is one of the three fires of

the Cauldron of Warming. Are we warm or hot blooded? Is our blood up? Do we have blood in our eyes? Is our blood racing? All of these expressions characterize the flowing, sustaining and reactive nature of blood. As Blood is the life spring of the Body, so the sea is the Cauldron of Plenty for the World. The Sea reflects Her moods and tempers, just as the Blood does. The Sea is in a constant state of change. It is the Blood of the World.

**The Breath** is the constant renewal of the spirit. It provides cleansing for the feelings as well as relief for tension. Our breath is also used to ignite the nutritional processes that invigorate the blood. The breath is one of the three fires of the Cauldron of Warming. The winds (and “breath of change”) are what affect our moods and our perceptions. Our first act of awareness is to take in the “breath of life.” It is no coincidence that the words for breath, soul and name all have the same root in the Irish language (anail, anam, ainm). The breath and the wind are body/natural correspondences. The Celts viewed the “airts” or winds as the breath of the heavens. Celtic sailors to predict the weather and to foretell their catches also used the airts.

**The Mind**, on the other hand, was a much deeper consideration for the Celts. Wisdom was said to flow from wells and cauldrons. It is an amazing coincidence that this “flowing of wisdom” from a well of knowledge directly parallels the nature of the mind’s alpha waves that our modern science has discovered. Perhaps the Druids discovered this wavelike nature of thought when they were performing brain surgeries? (Examples have been discovered in the remains of Celtic burials). The Moon is the natural phenomenon that controls the waves of the earth and sea. The Moon is the symbol given by the Celts for inner thoughts and the wavelike cycling of Nature Herself. The mind is one of the three fires of the Cauldron of Warming.

**The Brain** serves as the platform for supporting our thoughts and memories. It is like the paper of books or the silicon of modern computers. It is the media that sustains our minds and contains our thoughts. The brain is the organizer and the architect of our mental abilities. Being a “brain” implies a very strong deductive capability. It is a sign of our mental powers. The brain is the “stew” that is contained within the Cauldron of Knowledge, just as the clouds and stars are the Cosmic stew of the Gods. The Druids read the stars and clouds to obtain the Wisdom of the Gods. Druidic Astrology was called “Neladoracht,” literally “cloud watching.”

**The Face** was thought to be the window on the personality. How one appeared in public and how one were perceived was very important. The reputation and personal prowess were both extolled in the praise poems of the poets and the bards. A man’s word and honor (or a woman’s) were considered to be as important as life itself. This importance of face and appearance might account for the emphasis placed upon satire by the Filidh and may well account for their ability to “blemish” or even kill the object of their scorn (using only words). In the world around them, face was represented by the Sun. It was the Sun that illuminated the world for all to see and to be seen. It was in turning with the Sun or against the Sun that praise or insult were communicated. The Sun was the epitome of face to the Celts. The face was the opening to the Cauldron of Knowledge.

**The Head** was so venerated among the Celts that they took the heads of their most prominent enemies and adversaries as trophies of war. It was thought that a person’s soul could be controlled if his head was possessed. The head was thought to contain the essence of personality and personal power. This is the reason that they were preserved in cedar oil and displayed in a place of honor within the Celtic banqueting hall and home (as well as on the war chariots and horses). The head ruled the self, just as the Heavens ruled over the Earth. The sacred King

governed the sovereignty of the Land (as head of the Tuatha and husband of the Goddess). The head was the container for the Cauldron of Knowledge.



## The Three Cauldrons

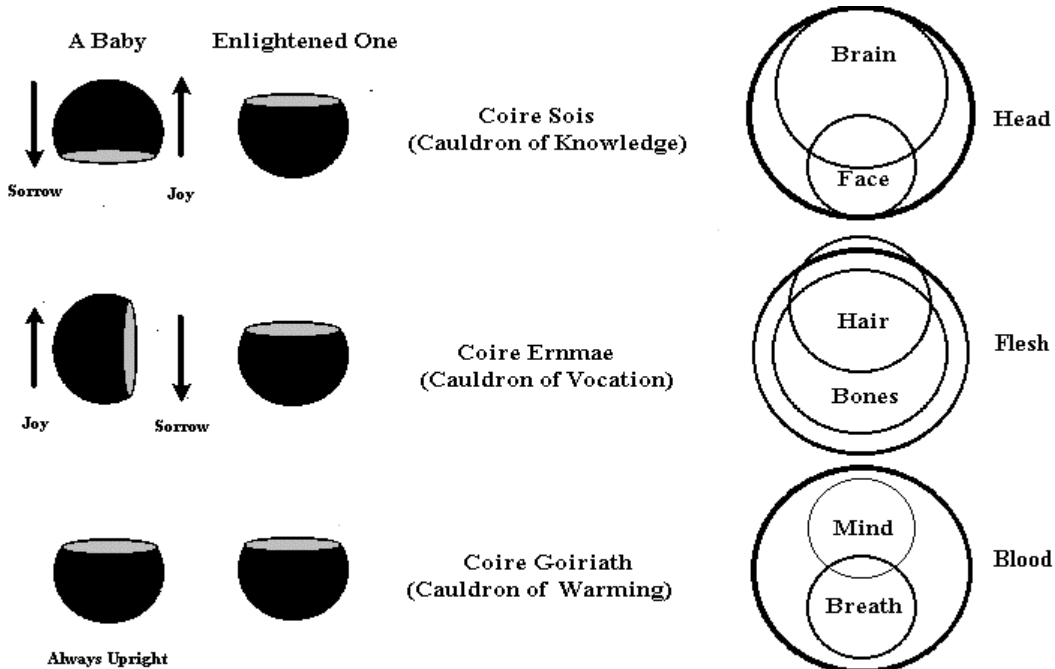
“My true Cauldron of Vocation

It has been taken by the Gods from the mysteries of the elemental abyss  
 A fitting decision that ennobles one from one’s center  
 that pours forth a terrifying stream of speech from the mouth.”

- the words of Amergin White Knee, Ollamh

(From a translation by Erynn Laurie of the “Cauldron of Poesy”)

There is a fifteenth century poetic tract (found within an ancient Irish legal manuscript) that describes the body as containing Three Cauldrons rather than Nine Dúile. These Three Cauldrons are known as the Coire Goiriath (Cauldron of Warmth), the Coire Ernma (Cauldron of Vocation), and the Coire Sois (Cauldron of Knowledge). The authorship of this metaphysical treatise is attributed to Amergin, the Milesian Ollamh and to Nede Mac Adne, Chief Ollamh for Conchobhar Mac Nessa. The relative positions of these cauldrons within each person was thought to determine the overall health of a person as well as the state of their mind and psyche.



## The Three Cauldrons

### Positioning the Elements

Three translations of the text have been done (to my knowledge): one by Anne Power, another by Caitlin Matthews and a third by Erynn Laurie. I have studied materials from these translations and am offering a version of them and their meanings in my own words:

### **The Cauldron of Poesy**

My own existence springs forth from the Cauldron of Poesy,  
Which was created by the gods from the dúile;  
Enlightened is each inspiration  
That streams forth in my speech and from my center of being.  
I am Amergin White Knee,  
Ancient in years and gray of hair.  
My inspirations are found within  
The many forms of poetry  
That are born within my Cauldron of Warming.  
The Gods do not orient each person's Cauldrons equally  
Or fill them with the same talents and abilities:  
Some are formed upside down, some tilted or upright.  
Some are empty, while others are half full,  
Some are filled with knowledge like Eber and Donn,  
Capable of creating chants of life and death,  
Through a skillful combination of words  
In the power of three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter,  
And possessing the strength of three measures: double letters,  
Long vowels and short vowels.  
My Cauldron of Vocation is trained  
Through a study of the arts of poetry  
And sustains me through proper composition.  
I sing also of the Cauldron of Knowledge  
That allocates the gifts of wisdom  
According to the laws of each art  
And the work of each artist in general.

**Question: Is the root of poetical art found in a person's body or within their soul?**

Some say that it is found in the soul, since the body is brought to life by the soul. Others say that it is through the body that the skills of our ancestors are passed down to us, hence it is true to say that the source of poetical arts is within a person's body; though in every second person it is not to be found at all.

**Question: What is the root of poetical art and all knowledge?**

*Not hard to say.* Every person is born with three cauldrons existing within them: The Cauldron of Warming, the Cauldron of Vocation and the Cauldron of Knowledge.

All people are born with their Cauldron of Warming upright, which promotes growth in the body and the learning of childhood. Secondly, the Cauldron of Vocation is properly filled and oriented after each person has done the work of turning it from its original position on its side. Finally, the Cauldron of Knowledge is originally upside down in all people, and it distributes the first gifts and aptitudes of art.

In unenlightened people, the Cauldron of Vocation is completely upside down; while it is on its side in people who practice the arts of Poetry and Bardism; for the skilled it is completely upright as is the case with the Ollúnaidh and the Draoithe. The position of the Cauldron of Vocation determines a person's level of skill, and does not yield proficiency until it is turned by either an awareness of sorrow or the thrill of ecstasy.

**Question: How many forms of sorrow will turn the Cauldron of Vocation?**

*Not hard to say.* There are four forms of sorrow that occur within a person: longing, grief, jealousy, and a questing for the Gods; though the causes of each of these is sorrows is found in the world.

There are two forms of ecstasy that can turn the Cauldrons upright in a wise person: divine joy and human joy. Human joy has four forms: the union of marriage, the excellence of good health, the joy of graduation after long study in the poetical arts; joy in the experience of imbas granted by the nine hazels of wisdom of the Well of Segais, which flows in its excellence against mundane streams along the Boyne with the relentless determination like a wild boar in valor, or like a racehorse in the Sun's splendor, at the Solstice during the most perfect year of its endeavors.

When the Cauldron of Knowledge is turned by divine ecstasy, rather than by human joy alone, its special grace is a gift that transforms a person, who become both sacred and knowledgeable, so that their works include miracles, prophecies, judgements and precedents. It is these people who establish the wisdom that guides our knowledge and regulates the forms of our speech. Though this knowledge comes from within a person, its truth and its power is from the Gods and originates from outside of a person.



## **The Cauldron of Vocation**

My Chants are from the Cauldron of Vocation

Graceful inspiration,  
Ever-growing experience,  
Streams of imbas from the milk of learning.  
It is the wave of knowledge,  
The gathering of the wise,  
The truth of kingship,  
The elevation of the unlearned,  
The skillful use of Ogham,  
Imbas Forosnai,  
Blemishing satire,  
Synchronization of tradition,  
Vine of learning,  
Garden of law,  
Grammar of measured speech,  
Rhythmic chanting,  
Dissemination of wisdom,  
Gifts of the nobility,  
Elevation of the ordinary,  
Honoring of names,  
Poetry of praise,  
By application of the laws,  
Evaluating of the many,  
Acknowledgement of the highest ranks,  
Bright words for the wise,  
With streams of wisdom,  
Which is excellently brewed,  
From the roots of the tree of knowledge,  
And bestows its gifts following effort,  
And the persistence of effort,  
Which the ecstasy of poetry creates,  
And the joys of life orient,  
And the great sorrows of life turn.  
It is an eternity of creation and mastery,  
The shield of the wise.  
My chants are of the Cauldron of Vocation.

**Question: What is this Vocation?**

*Not hard to say*; a skillful turning or a wise contemplation or a pilgrimage of great discipline, i.e., these efforts grant one wisdom and nobility and honor after the work of vocation properly orients the Cauldron of Vocation.

**The Gifts of the Cauldron**

The Cauldron of Vocation  
Fills and is filled,  
Grants gifts and is enriched,  
Nourishes and is enlivened,  
Sings praises and is praised,  
Chants invocations and is enchanted,  
Creates harmonies and is harmoniously created,  
Defends and is strongly defended,  
Orients and is aligned,  
Upholds and is upheld.

Good is the wellspring of measured speech.  
Good is the home of the well of inspiration.  
Good is the joining of their powers:  
Strength is made durable.

It endures longer than any fortress.  
It is better than any tradition.  
It is our guide to wisdom,  
As we free ourselves from ignorance.

**Turning the Cauldrons**

**Coire Éрма** - movement, vocation, aptitude

**Coire Goriath** - warming, incubation

**Coire Áged, Soís** - spiritual knowledge

**Coire Goriath**

According to this tract, the Cauldron of Warming is the wellspring of Life for each of us. It is placed upright at birth and remains that way throughout our lives. This cauldron represents the fires of emotion, vitality and power that sustain all of our activity within the Three Worlds. The breath of our spirits enables the Cauldron of Warming at birth. It is empowered by the vitality of our blood. The mind is the well from which spiritual focus flows to regulate and control the nature of our inner fires. These three fundamental characteristics of the Cauldron of Warming are

also Dúile of the body: the breath, the blood, and the mind. Within the threefold Cauldrons we see a threefold division of the self. It can be shown that each Cauldron contains three Dúile.

### **Coire Éрма**

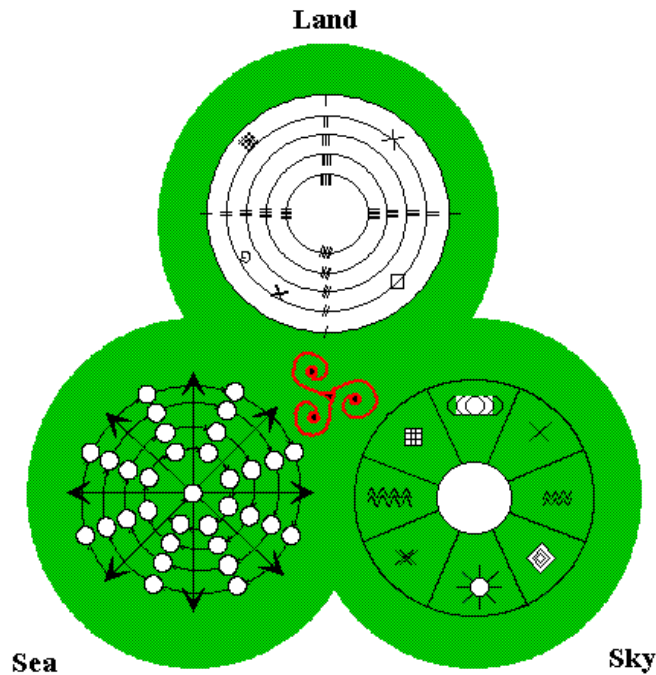
The Cauldron of Vocation seems to be inverted in unskilled people, though it too can be turned by joy or sorrow. A person need only become aware of their “gifts” to turn this cauldron on its side. Within such people, there is a giving and receiving of vocation. These people are very active within the physical world. One might say that the evidence of their gifts is very fluid. The Cauldron of Vocation represents the connection between the self and the Middleworld of Land. Before we can fill the Cauldron of Wisdom, we must train ourselves in a Vocation. We must experience the many flows of the world around us. I equate the following elements of the self to the Cauldron of Vocation: The hair/skin, the flesh, and the bones. Our physical bodies must be made healthy to support the higher aspects of the self and to allow us to be able to exist as both creatures of thought and spirit.

### **Coire Soís**

The Cauldron of Knowledge was said to be upside down in a person at birth. This is understandable, since we normally forget our previous lives from the shock of passing through the Otherworld. A person could spend an entire lifetime refilling and changing the position of this particular cauldron. It was thought that the cauldron would become upright after a strong major emotional event, such as, extreme sorrow or extreme joy. In such an “upright” person/position, the Cauldron of Knowledge was capable of holding much more knowledge and wisdom. I personally equate the Cauldron of Knowledge to the dúile of the Head, the Brain and the Face. The Head is the container of knowledge; the Brain is where Wisdom is held; the Face is where we gather, perceive and present information about the world around us. The Cauldron of Knowledge represents the connection between the Skyworld of the Gods and the mental/spiritual/physical aspects of the self.

The Three Cauldrons text represents the Druid’s approach to the concept of “chakras,” in my opinion. They seem to have an almost direct correspondence to the three gunas of Vedic tradition as well: Tamas - Éрма, Rajas - Goriath, Sattva - Sois. These three sets of qualities represent experience, existence and consciousness in the Vedic culture and are considered to be the three parts of Wisdom in Celtic culture. The state of one’s being and the emphasis that we each place upon the individual Cauldrons, determines just who we are, and just how deeply we are involved within the activities of each of the Three Worlds.

## Ogham Divination



### The Three Worlds

#### The World of the Sky - Consciousness

Creation, Knowledge, Inspiration

#### The World of the Sea - Existence

Warming, Life, Health

#### The World of the Land - Experience

Motion, Tradition, Vocation

### The Qualities of the Dúile

Consciousness of Consciousness - Head - Sky

Existence of Consciousness - Brain - Stars

Experience of Consciousness - Face - Sun

Consciousness of Existence - Mind - Moon

Existence of Existence - Breath - Wind

Experience of Existence - Blood - Sea

Consciousness of Experience - Skin - Nature

Existence of Experience - Flesh - Land

Experience of Experience - Bone - Stone

**Consciousness has four parts:** Awareness, Association, Focus, Clarity

**Existence has four parts:** Will, Activity, Interaction, Continuity.

**Experience has four parts:** Opposition, Opportunity, Attempt, Accomplishment.

The Three Cauldrons are centers of being within each of us that were identified by Nede mac Adne and Amergin White Knee. Evidence for the concept and the functions of the three

cauldrons within each of us is based upon text found within a 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript that was transcribed by Annie Power into “Anecdota from Irish MS, vol. 5.” It is commonly called “The Cauldron of Poesy.” Erynn Rowan Laurie has done an excellent translation and discussion of the poems in this work which can be found on the Nemeton website and at Obsidian magazine’s website. Caitlin Matthews also translated this text in a section of *An Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom*, which is widely available through bookstores and book clubs.

**The basics of the Three Cauldron texts are these:**

Everyone is born into this world containing three centers: a center of existence (The Cauldron of Warming), a center of experience (The Cauldron of Vocation) and a center of consciousness (The Cauldron of Knowledge). The Cauldron of Warming is that which is necessary for life. The Cauldrons of Vocation and Knowledge are those areas of ourselves that can be changed by our own efforts. The texts state the relationships of these three centers by describing the Cauldron of Warming as being upright at birth, while the Cauldron of Vocation is on its side and the Cauldron of Knowledge is inverted.

The work of the Poet is said to be the turning of the Cauldrons of Vocation and Knowledge to achieve imbas and to be filled with the ecstasy of poetical composition. These acts can be accomplished by several things. The first of these is a pursuit of knowledge and learning which can be accomplished by those who have been blessed with an aptitude for the task. This course of action can lead to great sorrow or great joy, either of which can turn the Cauldron of Vocation upright. Once it is activated, this center of being can be filled throughout the course of life. The Cauldron of Knowledge is said to be turned by great joy alone. This is the result of a triggering experience of ecstasy which is likened in the manuscripts to the feelings of exaltation that one receives when experiencing sex, excellent health, the thrill of graduation after long study or the excitement of an athletic competition (such as a horse race) or of an inspiration (such as an enlightenment or mystical experience). What the text clearly describes IMO is a period of intensive training and meditation which can be followed by an ecstatic experience in some people which leads them to greater wisdom and knowledge. I know that this has been the case in my own life regarding study, meditation, sex, health, athletic competition and ecstatic spiritual quests.



## The Wisdom of the Vedas

I recently purchased and read *The Rig Veda* by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty to investigate other Indo-European ways. Her *Laws of Manu* is also an excellent reference. What I read in both books reminds me of the ancient Celtic tales and Laws. Each society is different, as it should be, but there are also many similarities. These similarities were noted by Myles Dillon in his work, *Celts and Aryans*. The Vedas and Celtic ways (especially among the Irish) share a wealth of common practices. These two societies on the eastern and western fringes of the Indo-European periphery demonstrate in their similarities a common ancient heritage. They also maintained a conservative oral tradition through the cultural intelligentsia and priesthoods (the Brahmins and Druids respectively). That is why I am studying the Vedic texts (as well as others), which brings me to my point.

When I read the incantations, poetry, and wisdom of the Vedas, they strike a chord within me that sings to my spirit. This common spirituality between the Vedic Indians and the Celtic and pre-Celtic peoples cannot and should not be denied. Each culture has its own unique features and characteristics (as it should). We do not read the Vedas to become Vedic, nor we read them to make them Celtic. We read them to hear the song of spirit within and around us. It is this spirit that is neither here nor there, which is neither being nor non-being, that connects us all as a river. We can call such spirit Danu or we can name it Brahman. It is the source of everything, Gods and not-Gods. Of such are the Tuatha Dé Danann. Of such is Creation as well as non-Creation.

We have no need to "Celticize" the Vedas. They already contain the threads of our own spirit within them. All we have to do is recognize truth when we see it. Are Druids not philosophers as well as historians? As Poets, we also have the inner fire to bring the song to the people. Should we not listen to the music from the Sidhe mounds and play it within the assembly? If it is "fonsheen", then it is true music, and being true, may be found within any part of Creation (or even at the entry hall itself). Never was a harp string played with a stone.

I have long held the opinion that truth was paramount to the Druids, as I trust it is to every one of us today, especially if we would say that we follow their ways. What do I mean by following their ways and the truth? It is my belief that the Druids of old gained a considerable storehouse of truth in their quest for it. I believe that they investigated every phenomena brought to them through the travels of the Celts, and that they questioned every tradition that they encountered. In this ceaseless quest they found answers and they established traditions. As the lorekeepers, philosophers and priesthood of the Celtic people, the Druids safeguarded the truth and the tradition. It is my belief from thought, personal experience, and the personal recollections of others, that the ancient Druids also found truth within the spirit. When I say spirit, I also mean self, imbas, awen, deity, and godhood. It is my firmly re-inforced belief that the ancients travelled the astral pathways, as well as the more mundane avenues, in their quest for knowledge and the sharing/preserving of it. This knowledge, these answers, and the many traditions they developed, are what we seek today.

The native Celtic tradition, as we find it, is not complete, so we shall have to seek in many likely and unlikely places to fill the gaps. In this process of discovery, it is my recommendation that we be like the Druids of old in our own search for truth:

- **We should preserve the ancient lore when we find the truth of it**
- **We should question and investigate the traditions that are available to us.**
- **We should discover the clear inner vision which some call “Inner Truth” so that we can also access the spiritual storehouse of records.**

The Vedas and the Laws of Manu clearly assist us in finding the truth. They are mirrors of the poetry of the Filidh and the Brehon Law. Their contents were both discovered by Seers, developed by Poets and preserved among their Wise. As I’ve already said, their study is a noble pursuit, worthy of any Druid (modern or ancient). May we find all the truth that is contained within their ways. I look forward to many enlightening experiences for us in our pursuit of the ways of Druids as we also sometimes follow the Vedic ways for assistance. As a Wise Woman once so clearly indicated to me in her own ways and words, we are each capable of walking the pathway to truth through discrimination and intellect. I know that I myself will make many mistakes and misinterpretations as I search and consider, but I will not be daunted in the search, nor would I discourage the quest of others. There are those who are quick to point to errors they perceive in our perceptions, our data, our interpretations and our conclusions. We do not have to go very far to find those willing to uncover mistakes. Such criticism is welcome, especially when it also contains a pathway to the truth, which is the only useful purpose of criticism. I want to know why some consider oral evidence not to be reliable data, but I also want to hear how such data can be studied and filtered to extract the maximum of useful information. I also want to study how the ancients included techniques in their own memory practices to improve their memories and to improve the accuracy of their oral recitals. I want to know that a negative criticism has considered all sides of an issue, rather than just one or two. We are not the debating society, we are modern Druids, seeking our own way. We are seeking a way that is a pathway for other Druids. In the case of oral traditions, I want to know that the researchers have looked at the many aspects of preservation that existed within the sophisticated practices of the ancient scholars and priests, such as the Brahman and the Draoi, and not just among those found among primitive tribal storytellers and folk practitioners. I want to know that the researchers have considered the use of Ogham, historical tapestry, woven tradition, knots, sand paintings and symbolic landscape, when they tell me that the stories change over the years. I want to think that they have also considered the memory techniques employed in the schools of the Filidh for thousands of years. If they have considered these possibilities, and many that I have not listed or overlooked, only then would their conclusions and their viewpoints regarding verbal traditions have some truthful merit. Otherwise, such criticism should be viewed with a grain of salt and considered to be biased and incomplete. The ancient Draoi and Filidh would have been horrified to think that their tellings were considered inaccurate or incomplete, or even changed to suit the purposes of the storyteller’s art. My own belief is that they worked mightily to prevent any of the ancient knowledge from being changed by corruption or omission. They valued truth and tradition above life. The three legs of knowledge were tradition, experience and inquiry. As the saying was preserved among the Filidh, “Ní fili nad chomgne comathar nad scéla uile” (He is no poet who does not synchronize and preserve the ancient knowledge). Knowledge of tradition should be preserved until inquiry and experience clearly demonstrate otherwise. Only then

should it be changed and not through carelessness or corruption. If we “do not synchronize and preserve the ancient knowledge,” we will not be the new Druids. I wonder if a Filidh could have been a Fili if the coimnge (ancient knowledge) had been corrupted by them? I wonder if a Brehon could have remained a judge if they had told a single lie? What do the answers to these questions tell us about the accuracy of oral memory and its preservation among the Celts and the Druids?

Preservation of the tradition is nice but we must also synchronize ‘all of the ancient knowledge’ to the truth we find today, as well as be able to create and see within the light of inspiration. Let us not spin the truth through an unbalanced approach. Rather, let us seek harmony, by providing a positive for every negative and an insight for every ignorance. The similarity between the song of the Vedas and the Music of the Sidhe, should not be lost in our need to be strictly objective. If we would not cease our battles for the sound of a harpstring or the tinkling of three silver bells, may our honor demand payment of a ninefold eraic to the offended party.

We should read and accept the Vedas for what they are: a description of the Indo-European Deities that created worlds, who empowered Nature, and who also connected their people to the ways of spirit. Their teachings are not exactly the teachings of Druids, but they are memories of teachings from which Druids may well have learned their own traditions and teachings. May we do the same in our own efforts at learning and teaching.

In my contemplation on the matter of the Three Cauldrons I have developed a relationship between them and the dúile of the self and the elements of being (since both sets of concepts seem to address relationships between qualities within ourselves and in the universe). As a guide in this development, I followed the lead of the ancient Vedic seers in seeing the actions and interactions of the Three Cauldrons upon one another. In the development of the three gunas (sattva, rajas and tamas, the qualities of life), the Vedic Seers discovered and expressed these relationships in the following manner:

### **The Three Gunas**

<b>Sattva</b> (The Concentrating Tendency) Consciousness, Light, Interlinking and Cohesion
<b>Rajas</b> (The Revolving Tendency) Existence, Periodic Motion, Rhythmic Activity, Creative Thought
<b>Tamas</b> (The Dispersing Tendency) Experience, Disintegration, Darkness, Dissolution



## The Nine Qualities

Consciousness of Consciousness	the Self or Atman
Existence of Consciousness	Divinity or Is/vara
Experience of Consciousness	Human Nature or Ji/va
Consciousness of Existence	the inner faculties or Antahkarana
Existence of Existence	life energies or Pra/na
Experience of Existence	the feelings and emotions or Rasa
Consciousness of Experience	the senses or Indriya
Existence of Experience	principals of the elements or Maha/bhu/ta
Experience of Experience	the inanimate world

I extended these concepts to the nine dúile and the Three Cauldrons in the following lists:

### For The Cauldrons

<p><b>Coire Sois</b> (Cauldron of Knowledge)                  Consciousness - Future                  Creation, Knowledge, Inspiration</p>
<p><b>Coire Goriath</b> (Cauldron of Warming)                  Existence - Present                  Warming, Life, Health</p>
<p><b>Coire Ernma</b> (Cauldron of Vocation)                  Experience - Past                  Motion, Tradition, Incubation</p>

### For The Dúile

Consciousness of Consciousness	Head, Self, Sky
Existence of Consciousness	Brain, Spirit, Stars
Experience of Consciousness	Face, Image, Sun
Consciousness of Existence	Mind, Intuition, Moon
Existence of Existence	Breath, Creativity, Wind
Experience of Existence	Blood, Actions, Sea
Consciousness of Experience	Skin, Interaction, Nature
Experience of Experience	Flesh, Form, Earth
Existence of Experience	Bone, Structure, Stone

## Ogham Divination

The Three Cauldrons (from the Cauldron of Poesy materials attributed to Amergin) almost directly correspond to the Three Gunas from Ayurvedic teachings. I'm not surprised that such commonality exists between the Vedic traditions and the Celtic practices, since both were very conservative, orally preserved traditions with a class/cast responsible for their integrity and preservation. Both groupings were derived from a common Indo-European traditional/cultural source and the vision seers, poets and holy teachers interpreted each.

### **The Three Gunas are known as Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas.**

IMO they correspond to the Cauldrons of Poesy as: Sattva - Sois (Wisdom), Rajas - Goriath (Warming), and Tamas - Érma (Vocation)

This relationship becomes more apparent when one considers a table detailing the properties of the Three Gunas (from *Ayurveda and the Mind, the Healing of Consciousness*, by Dr. David Frawley) and its corresponding cauldron:

### **Properties of the Three Gunas**

<b>Quality</b>	<b>SOIS - SATTVA</b>	<b>GORIATH - RAJAS</b>	<b>ÉRMA - TAMAS</b>
Cauldron	Wisdom	Warming	Vocation
Color	White purity, harmony	Red action, passion	Black darkness
Time	Day, clarity	Sunrise, Sunset, transition	Night, darkness
Energy	Neutral Balanced	Positive Sets things in motion	Negative Retards motion
World	Sky - Heaven or Space home of the gods region of peace	Sea - Atmosphere realm of the Fomorii region of storms	Land - Earth lands of the people realm of inertia
Cosmic Levels	Spiritual - Causal Or Ideal	Mental - Subtle Astral	Physical - Gross or Physical
Beings	Deities and Sages	Humans	Ancestors - Minerals, Plants, Animals
States	Waking	Dreaming	Deep Sleep

The relationship between Tamas and Érma appears to be inverted from what one would expect, since it is associated with Vocation. Some of the differences become similarities when the cauldron's other meaning of "incubation" is considered. Incubation occurs within darkness and inertia is only another way of describing the effects of cultural tradition and teachings on a society. Among the Druids, knowledge was learned through repetition and incubation of newly acquired knowledge within the darkness of the student's bed or room. Among the Filidh, this place of learning was known as the "Bed of the Poets."

To further clarify the concepts of the three gunas and the elemental Vedic qualities of existence, I'd like to present an excerpt from the seminal work on religion in India by Alain Daniélou, *The Myths and Gods of India*:



## **The Origins and the Ends of Manifestation**

The silence which is at the origins and the ends of manifestation is found at both ends of consciousness, in the supraconscious and the subconscious states. Thus 'tamas', the disintegrating tendency, is said to be the nature of the transcendent faculties, beyond thought, as well as the nature of the unconscious inertia of matter. While dealing with the relative action of the three qualities within the manifest universe, we shall meet mainly the inert, subconscious form of 'tamas', since its transcendent aspect is the Unmanifest.

The hierarchy of the three qualities therefore varies according to the standpoint from which they are envisaged. From the point of view of worldly action 'tamas' is the lower aspect, 'sattva' the higher one. 'Tamas' is associated with death, evil, inaction where action alone seems to bring results. Yet from the point of view of spiritual achievement, where action is the main obstacle, 'sattva' is the lower state, that which binds with the bonds of merit and virtue, 'tamas' is the higher state, that of liberation through nonaction. Thus there are two main paths through which man can escape from the bonds of Nature (prakṛti). The lower path, which is the way of merit and its fruits, leads toward concentrated power, toward union of manifest divinity, that is, toward the concepts of Heaven and salvation. On the other hand, the higher path is the path of liberation and nonaction, through which man becomes free from the bonds of individual existence and dissolves into the immensity of Infinite Bliss.

In the process of manifestation more and more complex relations between the three qualities appear. These give rise to different types of existence, different beings, different entities.

“Among the energies of each universe, those energies in which the disintegrating tendency predominates are the source of the world of physical-forms (bhūatika prapaṇ/ca). In these lower aspects of existence, some elements of the cohesive and of the revolving tendencies are, however, found. From the cohesive element are formed the inner faculties (9) and the senses of perception; (10) from the revolving element arise the life breath and the forces of action; from the disintegrating element physical-bodies (sthū/la bhū/ta) are formed. Hence, from the mainly descending aspect of the universal power the perceptible world springs forth.” (Karapa/tri/, “S/ri? Vis/n/u tattva,” Siddha/nta, V, 1844-45, 73.)

*The various stages of existence are differentiated by the relative proportions of the three qualities.*

## The Stages of Existence

'Sattva' in 'sattva', consciousness within consciousness, is the nature of the Self, the A/tman.
'Rajas' in 'sattva', existence within consciousness, is Divinity, Is/vara.
'Tamas' in 'sattva', experience within consciousness, is the nature of the living-being (ji/va).
'Sattva' in 'rajas', consciousness with existence, forms the inner-faculties (antahkarana).
'Rajas' in 'rajas', existence within existence, forms the life-energies (pra/na).
'Tamas' in 'rajas, experience with existence, forms the senses (indriya).
'Sattva' in 'tamas', consciousness within experience, gives rise to the principles-of-the-elements (maha/bhu/ta).
['Rajas' in 'tamas', existence within experience, gives rise to form...this was added by me, since it appears that Danie/lou left it out....Searles]
'Tamas' in 'tamas, experience within experience, forms the inanimate world.

One or the other of the three tendencies predominates in each sort of thing, in each kind of being. In angels, ever attracted by the divine light, consciousness predominates. Experience-enjoyment is the main constituent of the spirits of darkness; existence, being activity, predominates in the rulers of creation and in men, whose nature is action.

Hence from the sattva part of the Cosmic Being are born the hosts of the gods (deva); from the rajas part spring forth the lords-or-progeny (Praja/patis); from the tamas part arise the lords-of-destruction (Rudras).

Human beings, according to their nature and their stage of development, are inclined toward these different aspects of the Cosmic Being. Those in whom consciousness is predominant worship the gods (deva); those in whom action or existence predominates worship genii (yaksa) and antigods (asura); and those in whom enjoyment or sensation predominates worship ghosts and spirits (bhu/ta and preta).

***In the microcosm, that is, in man, the three qualities are more particularly localized in certain subtle centers.*** Hence Brahma/ (existence) dwells in the heart, the physical center, Visnu (consciousness) in the navel, the subtle center, S/iva (experience) in the forehead, the abstract center, and in the sex center, the center of enjoyment. In the 'daily meditation' (sandhya/) the three gods are worshiped through mental concentration on their respective centers.

***In plants, the physical center is in the root; hence the formula of veneration of the sacred fig tree:***

"I bow to the sacred fig tree, to Brahma/ in the root, to Visnu in the trunk, and to S/iva in the foliage." (As/vattha Stotra 16. {35})

All moral, mental, and physical impulses in living beings belong to the sphere of Nature, and are the effect of the relative combinations of the three basic tendencies. Thus we can understand that moral values are essentially relative, true only on a certain plane, at a particular moment of our development. All that goes against the preservation of life, that is, all pleasure (self-destruction), passion, cruelty, but also all renunciation and detachment, is of the nature of disintegration (tamas). All that goes toward preservation, maintenance, devotion, purity has cohesion (sattva) for its nature. All creative qualities, those virtues which take us toward one form of realization, take us away from another. Every virtue or vice gets its reward, every good or bad action brings a result, (11) but these results, these rewards, are themselves within the limits of the three qualities. They chain us further within the prison of existence. It is only in nonaction, in the liberation from virtue as well as vice, from good as well as evil, from pleasure as well as pain, that we may be freed from the bondage that carries us endlessly from one world to another, from earth to heavens or hells and again to earth once the fruit of our action has been enjoyed.

"Having enjoyed these immense heavens, once their [accumulated] merits have been spent, they come back to the world of death and, following the triple path of merit, those seekers of enjoyment keep on coming and going [endlessly]." (Bhagavadgi/ta/ 9.21. "37")

9 The inner faculties are four: a. Mind (manas), the nature of which is discussion, deliberation. b. Intellect (buddhi), the nature of which is choice or decision. c. The mental-substance (citta), upon which is imprinted memory. d. I-ness or notion-of-individual-existence (aham/ka/ra).

10 There are five senses of perception and five forces of action corresponding to the five elements (ether, air, fire, water, and earth), which are but the spheres of action of the senses. The senses of perception have as their organs "ear, skin, eye, tongue, and the fifth, the nostril." while the corresponding forces of action have as organs "voice, hands, feet, genitals, and anus."

11 For the average human being, "the fruit of good action is pure and of sattva, that of rajas is pain, that of tamas is ignorance." (Bhagavadga/ta/ 14.16 [36])"

**The qualities of the Three Cauldrons can also be used in a similar fashion to derive a set of nine elements.**

I suggest using the following table as a guideline for establishing your own connection to the Three Cauldrons and the Nine Dúile. The effects of these correspondences of the self to the Cosmos, can be enhanced through chanting and by the use of their related god names during both ritual and meditation:

### The Elements of the Cauldrons

Cauldron	Quality	Dúile
Coire Sois	Knowledge of Knowledge	Sky – Head
	Knowledge of Incubation	Stars – Brain
	Knowledge of Vocation	Sun – Face
Coire Goriath	Incubation of Knowledge	Moon – Mind
	Incubation of Incubation	Wind – Breath
	Incubation of Vocation	Sea – Blood
Coire Éirna	Vocation of Knowledge	Nature – Skin
	Vocation of Incubation	Earth – Flesh
	Vocation of Vocation	Stone - Bone

Each cauldron contains three dúile that are uniquely defined within it, while some of the dúile also serve as connections to other cauldrons (and the worlds themselves). Each element has its associated deity. These are the gods and goddesses of your people by whom you swear, hold faith and maintain power. I have a list of deities with whom I have established contact (some more than others), though my list might be very different from your own. I suggest meditating and journeying using each element and each cauldron to discover the rulers for your own cauldrons.

Each of us comes into being through the waters of the Coire Goriath which sustains the flows of life: Breath, Blood and Mind. To achieve success in our endeavors (or vocations) we must seek for ourselves in the three foundations of: Instinct, Experience and sensation. To be uplifted in the spirit we must obtain a heightened awareness of mystery, perception and inspiration. We can use these concepts to guide ourselves in the search for self and the quest for the keys to power.

In ourselves and our meditations (and to achieve synchronization of the dúile - elements with the cauldrons), I use the following equivalencies as a starting point for quieting, focusing and empowering myself:

## The Deities of the Cauldrons

Cauldron	Dúile	Deity
<b>Coire Sois</b>	Sky /Head	The Father God – The Dagda
	Stars/ Brain	The Guardian – Manannán
	Sun /Face	The Champion – Ogma
<b>Coire Goriath</b>	Moon /Mind	The Cow Goddess – Bóann
	Wind /Breath	The Wisdom Goddess – Brighid
	Sea /Blood	The Battle Goddess – The Morrígan
<b>Coire Éirna</b>	Nature /Skin	The Stag God - Donn
	Earth /Flesh	The Mother Goddess – Anu
	Stone/Bones	The Hag – The Cailleach

Ruling above these all is the synchronized experience of “All That Is,” which I call Danu. Below these, is the “Power of Chaos,” which I call Domnu. The flow and connection between them throughout self and life is the fire of the sacred Tree, whose name is Bile.

You might have different names for these aspects of yourself and your existence, but these are the gods of my people. They are experienced and assisted by many other deities in the life of the tribe.

To meditate on them, one must quiet the cauldrons, starting first with the Cauldron of our Vocation (the body, our foundation in existence): the bones, the flesh and the skin. This is a matter of relaxing in a comfortable place and position without outside threats or distractions. The next cauldron to be addressed is the actions and flows of life found within the Cauldron of Warming: the blood, the breath and the mind. To do this I slow my breathing to the breathing of sleep and the newborn (that is to say: I let it become natural and automatic). Next I use my heartbeat as a drum for journeying (slowing it to the point of silence, which is the edge of journeying). The mind is last and with it I must use the blackness of the void as a repository of thoughts and actions that would distract me. When the Cauldrons of Vocation and Warming are well positioned and aligned, then we can turn the Cauldron of Knowledge for fulfillment and elevation. One way I do this is by letting myself vibrate with expectation and outreach. This is accompanied by similar vibrations from my body (a kind of “goose bumps” electricity) and my center of flow (the heart opens as if it is being filled by emotion). It is at that time of total darkness within the ordered nothingness of the void, which an aligned being can connect as a manifestation of Bile between the Void and Cosmic Order (Not-Being and Being). This is when the fire of inspiration comes to the darkness and offers oneself into the Otherworld of Knowing. You will see a golden pathway before you, not unlike that of death and it will take you to your place in the spirit web of all creation. From there you may drink of the waters of Segais and eat of the Hazelnuts of Wisdom. Beyond this, I may not say for there, there is only Truth, while here, each word only contains the seeds of Truth, thinking falling far short of knowing.

## Ogham Divination

Using the deity names of your gods, the elements of the self and of existence, should suffice to allow you to create your own amrún for meditation, journeying and empowerment. Soon, I will attempt to reconstruct and more fully describe such a meditation, when we discuss Amrún in the following chapters.

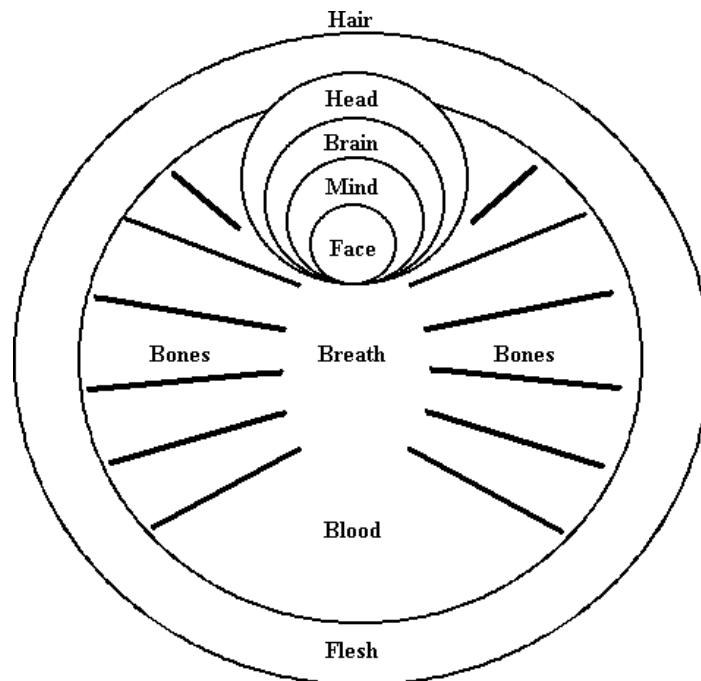


## Ogham Divination



## Chapter 5 The Circles of Being

Within the inner recesses of the passage mound at Knowth, there is a stone basin that is decorated with circular markings. I have included a line drawing of its design below. No one is certain what ritual use this basin had but to me it is suggestive of a person in symbolic form. That is why I have used its design as a basis for a diagram of the self and its many parts or dúile. This diagram of the self is used to show the relationships of the dúile and the three cauldrons. It is also my opinion that each cauldron has its own correspondence with one of the three worlds of Land, Sea and Sky. To better understand the relationships of worlds, cauldrons and dúile, I have provided three additional diagrams that highlight the appropriate parts and circles, their elements, and the cauldrons with which each is best associated.



Gruaigh - Hair  
Menma - Brain  
Imradud - Mind  
Ceann - Head  
Drech - Face  
Anail - Breath  
Fuil - Blood  
Cnaimh - Bones  
Coliand - Flesh  
Fein - Self

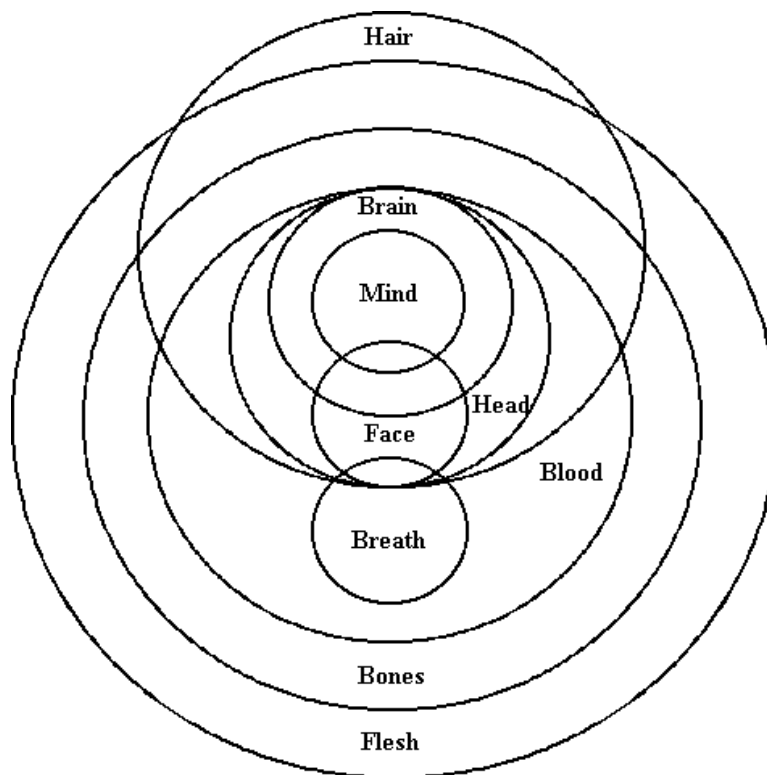
**The Celtic Elements of the Self**  
(Diagram modeled after stone basin found at Knowth)



## The Stone Basin of Knowth

The first diagram shows the dúile of the self as circles that are concentric and/or overlapping. Some of the circles are contained within other circles, while others only have intersections with one another. The diagram attempts to show the relative and associated dependencies of each element to the other elements. The self is seen as a cauldron of sorts that is the container of all that makes us what we are. Some of these parts form our structure, while others animate or guide us. It is these functions that are used to classify each element as being a part of the Cauldron of Warming, Cauldron of Vocation or the Cauldron of Wisdom. I have made the following correspondences between the dúile and the cauldrons:

### The Dúile, Elements of the Self



Gruaigh - Hair  
Menma - Brain  
Imradud - Mind  
Ceann - Head  
Drech - Face  
Anail - Breath  
Fuil - Blood  
Cnaimh - Bones  
Coliand - Flesh  
Fein - Self

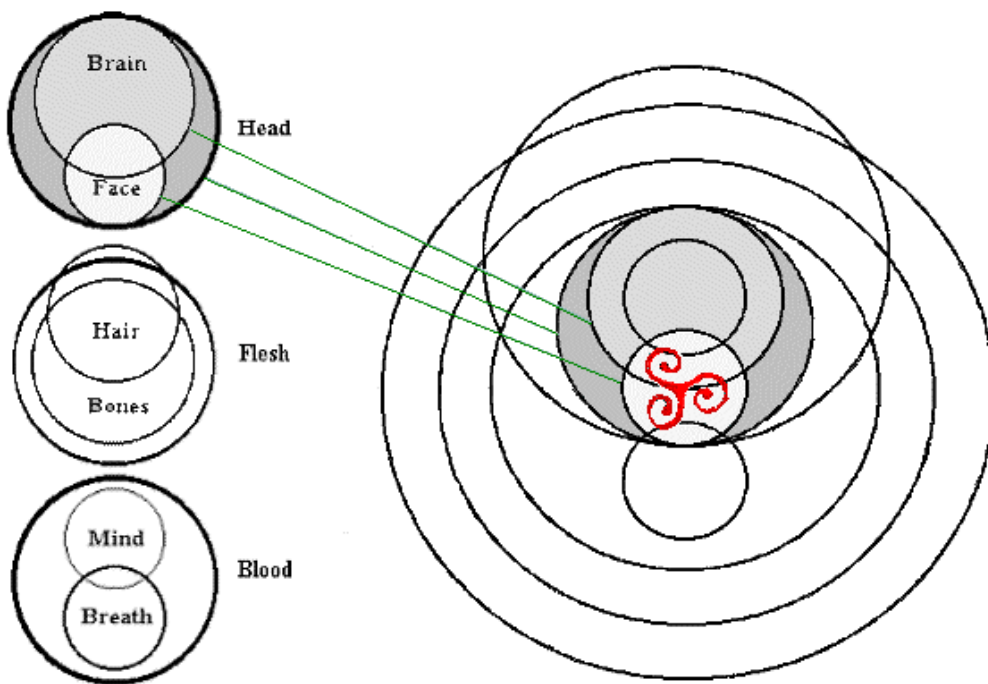
This diagram is better understood if one considers that each of the three cauldrons is superimposed onto one another in the original diagram. Isn't this the way that all of the parts of the world interact and influence one another? We, as well as the worlds around us, are a confluence of many flows, parts and currents.



## The Cauldron of Wisdom

The head is the center of the Soul in Celtic tradition. As such it also contains the brain and the face as component parts. In my perceptions, the head is the most appropriate container for the Cauldron of Wisdom in a person, while the brain is the stew that is contained within it. Our face is the opening into this cauldron as well as the seasoning that we attempt to place on our self-concept for the world's conception.

### The Dúile of the Cauldron of Wisdom



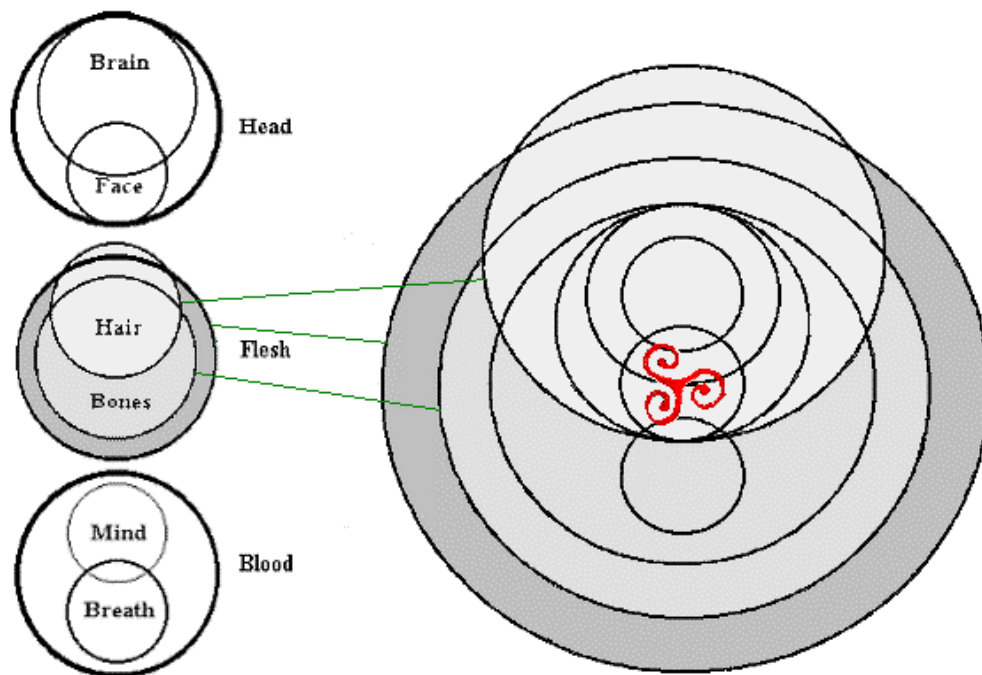


## The Cauldron of Vocation

Our Cauldron of Vocation is the home of our skills and our presence in the world. It is our body as it appears to other people and to our own perceptions. Our ability to create, to do work, and to establish a presence within society, is determined by how well we maintain our appearance and how we present ourselves. In many ways, our lives are tied into our work, our skills, and our professions, based upon how well we perform, create and achieve. All of these factors are marks of our vocation.

In our bodies, the arrangement and placement of our bones determine our natural structure. Our flesh further determines the shape that these bones determine: the muscles, fat and connecting tissues. Skin and hair cover our bodies, the two most apparent parts of us within the physical world. Because the skin and hair cover us completely, they are together considered as the container for the bones and flesh within our Cauldron of Vocation.

### The Dúile of the Cauldron of Vocation



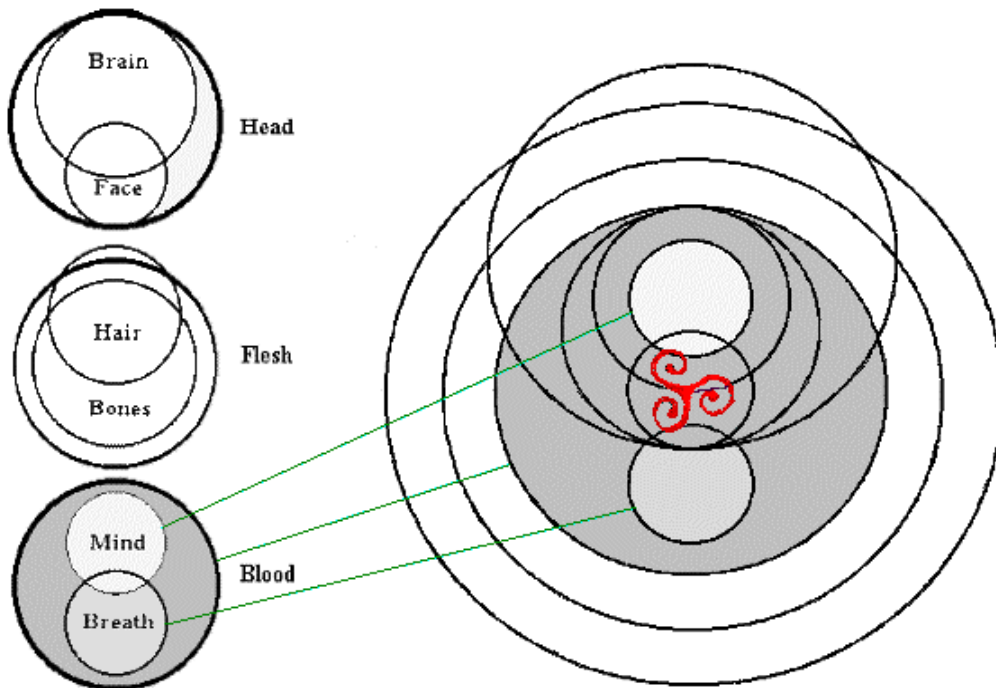


## The Cauldron of Warming

The last cauldron is the Cauldron of Warming. It consists of the dúile of the blood, the breath and the mind within our bodies. The activation of our selves is contained within the flows of the body. These flows are the blood that feeds us, the breath that gives us air and the mind that controls our movements. Each of these three flows are proof that we are alive and absolutely necessary to sustain our life. Without the signals through the nerves, air through the lungs and blood through the vessels and arteries, we would suffer certain death. The loss of all of them would be a triple death and a complete emptying of our Cauldron of Warming.

Both thought and breath affect blood. It is within the blood that these have been located on our diagram of the Cauldron of warming. The mind controls the racing of our hearts and our breath, so these three have been overlapped to indicate their dependencies. Because these three factors in sustaining life are themselves contained within the body proper, they are placed beneath it in the presentation of the cauldrons. This placement of fire/warming beneath a cauldron is natural to the ways in which cauldrons are normally used, even when one cauldron warms another.

### The Dúile of the Cauldron of Warming





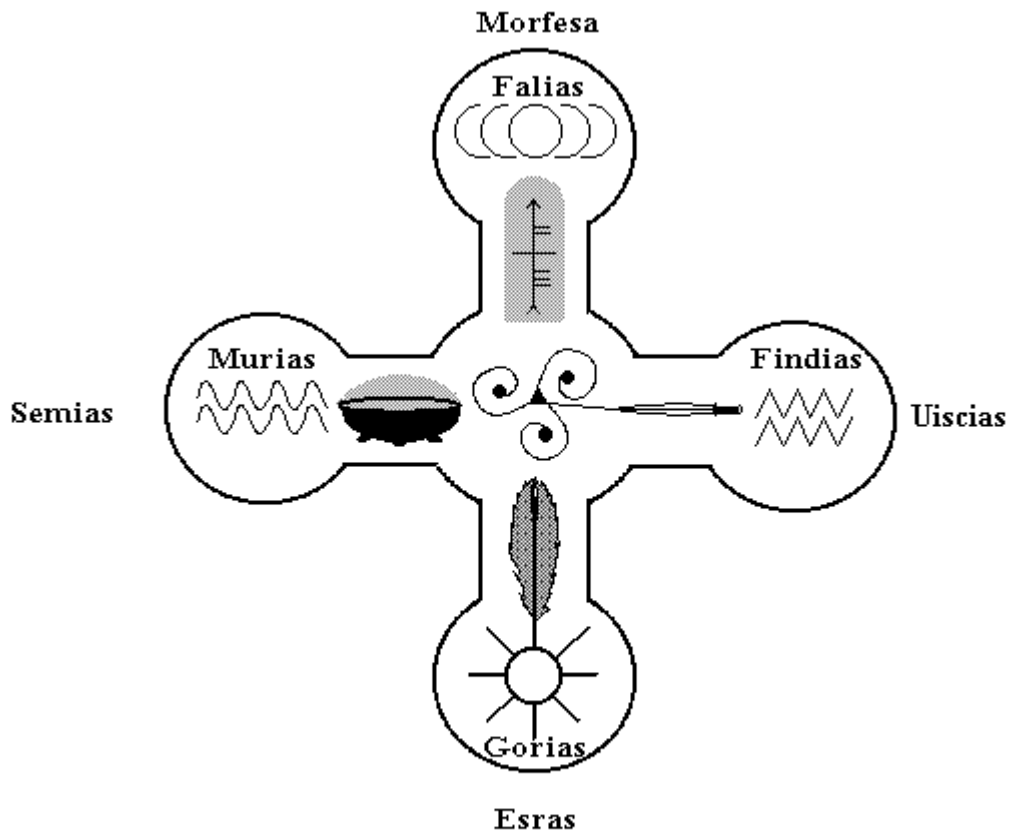
## **Circles within Circles**

Each of the elements of the self belongs to one of the three cauldrons of being. Each element is a Dúile that manifests its effects on our cauldrons and our being in like the ripples on the surface of a pond. The effects of each of these circles of being overlap and interact to make us who we are within the greater circles of the Cosmos. The presence of such interactions creates a song of our selves and the worlds. It is this song that the Seer attempts to hear when seeking your destiny. It is this pattern that the Ogham casting forms on the surface of the cloth, scoring the harmonies of the Great Song.

Space does not permit a more complete discussion of this concept within the present work. There are other writings that address this idea in greater detail. Please refer to the Bibliography at the end of this work for further references. Entire books could be written to characterize the interconnection between the self, the Cauldrons and the Three Worlds. The threefold nature of the Worlds characterizes the state of our selves and the Cosmos. To more completely describe our connection and interaction with the cosmos, other factors must be considered. Where we exist and where we are trying to go are matters of direction rather than state. Those aspects of the self and the Three worlds are best related by a discussion about the four Otherworldly cities of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Magick is what lies just under the surface of life. To master divination, we must also become masters of Magick.



## Chapter 6 The World



### The Gifts of the Four Cities

#### The Gifts of the Four Cities





## The Cities of Magick and The Four Directions

In the tale, “Cath Maige Tuireadh,” The Tuatha Dé Danann became masters of Magick by studying the occult arts as taught by four Wizards in the four Otherworldly cities of the islands of the “North.” North here means the Otherworld and could just as easily be in the Sky or under the sea. The names of the four Otherworldly cities are: Findias, Gorias, Murias and Falias, and their wizards are: Uiscias, Esras, Semias and Morfesa. If one looks at the meanings of each city and wizard name along with the gift that each wizard gave to the Tuatha Dé Danann, a secret is revealed:

These are my translations, please feel free to provide your own/any corrections you may feel appropriate to your own practice:

### Four Gifts and Four Wizards

<b>Wizard /City</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Hallow</b>
Uiscias of Findias	Waters of Light	Air, dawn, rain	The Sword of Nuada
Esras of Gorias	Gateway to Warmth	Fire, warmth, passion	The Spear of Lugh
Semias of Murias	The Mists of the Sea	Water, evening, evaporation	The Dagda’s Cauldron
Morfesa of Falias	Great Knowledge of Destiny	Earth, stone, fate	Lia Fail

These four gifts, wizards and cities appear to indicate the four traditional Magical elements of Air, Fire, Water and Earth as well as others (more about them later). The directions that are indicated are: East, South, West and North. Each direction has a corresponding Hallow, Wizard, Elemental Power, Otherworldly City and a number of distinguishing characteristics. In the discussion that follows, the relationships between the Hallows and the directions will be further developed.

When Magick is in the air and the lights of the night are not quite natural, that is the time we should stand in the Center and guard ourselves by the Powers of the Four Cities. Mark the ground with an “X” (an Ogham of Centering and gathering as well as protection), and surround yourselves with the Four Hallows, the gifts of Wizards to the Gods.



## **The Four Hallows**

These are the gifts of Uiscias, Esras, Semias and Morfesa to the People of Danu. Each has a unique Power and each is wisely used in the appropriate direction, at the proper time and by the hand and head that have studied and achieved the secret of each.

### **I am a Word of Skill**

**The Sword of Nuada**, from which no one ever escaped once it was drawn from its deadly sheath. This hallow was the gift of Uiscias and was brought from the city of Findias. Some say that it is this sword that separates the day from the night at morning. Its edge is the thin silver line in the East that separates Sky from sea at the coming of the Dawn each day. As the king's champion, it is Ogma of the Sunface that wields his mighty sword. It is only fitting that the blade that cuts the horizon, can also plough the furrows or carve the Ogham. Words along an edge. Words of Power. Beginnings of Thought!

### **I am the Point of a Weapon (that poureth forth combats)**

**The Fiery Spear of Lugh**. The holder of this spear would always be victorious, since no battle could ever be sustained against it. This spear was sometimes represented as being the Sun's rays at Mid-summer. As such, none should look directly at it, as it rules the southern sky. It has the same destructive power as the eye of Balor. When Lugh was victorious over his grandfather Balor, the power of the Fiery spear ceased to destroy. Its power was contained and used to sustain life. Another name for the spear of Lugh is the grain and corn of the Harvest itself (which also safely harnesses the power of the Sun). The Sun is the source of energy and power, yet it can only be used by those that are many-skilled. When not in use, the spear of Lugh was kept in a vat of cooling water (just as the Sun was thought to journey through the waters of the Land under the Waves).

### **I am a Boar for Boldness, I am a Salmon in a Pool I am a Lake on a Plain**

**The Cauldron of the Dagda**, which satisfied every need. The Cauldron is many things within Celtic traditions. As a Cauldron of plenty it is the mighty sea which has a bounty that sustains the world. Not only, is there an endless supply of fish, but also there is an endless replenishment of the moisture of the clouds as water is transformed into its fogs and mists. Though they may not have known this, the Sea also contains the phyto-plankton that replenish the world's oxygen supply as well. The Sea is also a Cauldron of Knowledge in the way that its calm surface hides and contains the secrets of its depths. It is no small matter that the House of Donn, the Land of

the Blessed Ancestors is within the Sea as are the islands of the immrama. It is fitting that The Dagda's Cauldron should provide Life from the Lands of the Dead.

**Who is He who announceth the ages of the Moon?  
And who, the place where falleth the Sunset?**

**The Stone of Fal**, which would cry out beneath every king. Stone endures. Symbols in stone speak to us across many generations. Stone is eternal. The enigmatic brughs and stone circles contain a great secret. Within their structure is contained the secrets of the rising and falling of the Sun and the Moon. Upon the swirls within the rocks are the pathways to the stars themselves. Not only can a stone acknowledge a king, it can also contain the wisdom and the spirits of the Mighty Ones. The Lia Fail was located on the Northern end of the Mound of Tara. A Black Raven upon a Stone of Destiny. Words of a Goddess. Words of Prophecy. Triple Morrighu!



**The Four (Five) Directions,  
Masters, and Qualities**

Celts started the day looking to the East to greet the rise Sun and also to determine directions. Celtic sanctuaries were oriented on this eastern direction to the point that the east is the symbol of new beginnings: new days, spring, prosperity and perhaps even new ideas? Later we will investigate the directional qualities of Sun, Moon and even the winds or "airts" as they were called.

**I am the Bull of Seven Fights  
I am a Vulture on a Cliff**

**The East**, where arises the Sun and the Dawn. It is this quarter that symbolizes the "clearing of the mists" and "the plowing of the fields." In this Magical direction is Findias (City of Light) wherein rules Uiscias, Master of Awakening Knowledge. It is within the new beginnings of the day and year that we begin to Prosper. We must harness the oxen of our team to the plough and begin our labors. We will receive that which we have planted. We will see only that which has been made clear by the Light. Always when we begin, there is the potential of failure. We must work hard and be diligent and then we can hope for success. The end of our journey can be no better than its beginning.

**I am a Dewdrop,  
I am the Fairest of Flowers**

**The South**, where the Sun's full glory brings us warmth for growth. This is the quarter that warms the heart of Nature. It is the realm of Harmony and Fire. It sustains the passions of poets as well as the growth of Life. Esras is the Gatekeeper of the Heart's Warmth. His realm is Gorias (City of Warmth). We must listen to the Music of our soul's song. It is within the rhythms of life that we can find the keys to opening the ways.

**I am the Wind on the Sea,  
I am an Ocean-wave  
I am the Roar of the Sea**

**The West**, Islands of the Otherworld. Semias is the guardian of the veil between the worlds. When we stretch our spirits beyond the walls of Ego, we can drink of the Well of Segais and be renewed by its many streams. Knowledge is the gift of Murias (City of the Sea). Bounty is its blessing. There is a thin line to its source, yet five broad streams that flow forth. Within the Cauldron of the Dagda awaits the Deeper Mystery.

**Who smootheth the ruggedness of a mountain?  
Who is the troop, who the god who fashioneth edges...?**

**The North** is our fortress of Fate. It is here that we must face the conflicts of Destiny. Morfesa, Master of Great Knowledge will judge us. Within Fal's stone foundations are carved the works of our life, our death and our onward journey. If we have awakened our awareness with the Sun's dawning; if we have nurtured its growth as the seasons spin past; if we have walked the thin line between worlds to the Cauldron of Rebirth; only then can we face our Destiny within the cold stone of Fal (City of Destiny). Only then are we prepared to gain the center of Bith.

**I am God who fashioned Fire for a Head**

**The Center** is the realm of the spirit. It is the interconnection of all time and space. It is an infinity of Circles within Circles, connected by threefold spirals of Creation. Here is the land of the Bile, sacred tree of the tribe. When we are within the sacred Center, we are home. It is the land of the Old Ones and the Gods. The spiraling Tree of Life connects us to all things, all directions and all Draíocht.

**Enchantments about a Spear? Enchantments of Wind?**

The idea of a separation of space into fours and fives also suggest that time and the seasons is also divided in a similar fashion. From the Magick of the morning Sun we receive the

brightening rays of light across the skies. In the Spring we receive the falling of the rains. We use the sword of the fields, the ploughshare to divide the Earth into furrows for the seeds of Imbolc's promise. In the Silver Dawn we see the hand of Nuada bringing us out of the Darkness of Winter into the Time of the Greater Sun.

The noonday Sun brings us the heat of Gor. The sacred fires leap as we dance around the flaming spear of Lugh beneath the fertile Moon of Taurus. The Bealtaine fires mark Summer's coming. This is the time of life, lust and lushness. This is the time of the Greater Sun. This is when our future is all ahead of us to be had. Nature smiles on the flames of Summer and the light of Love.

Into the twilight, we gather the harvest by the light of Danu, Moon Goddess, Star Mother. It is a time of plenty, full cauldrons and feasting. It is also a time for selecting that which will be saved to plant and breed anew, as well as, that which will be consumed and that which will be sacrificed.

The night sweeps down upon us on wings of darkness. It is a time of tales, a time of fires and Magicks flickering off the shadows of awareness. It is the inner time of the Spirit and the time the ghosts walk the Earth. As each shiver passes within us and charges our skins, raising our hair, we touch the ancestors (or do they touch us?). Dreams come upon us and our faery lovers caress our secret hearts. We are stolen away to the Sidhe, hopefully to return again. The Sun's greeting must be sung to herald the new dawn.

**Life begins anew...each day and everyday.  
Each day and everyday.**

### **A Summary of Irish - Celtic Folk Beliefs and Spellcraft**

“Air” means East in Old Irish and “airtherach” means the front of the head or the “perceiving intelligence.” The Celts determined directions by facing East in the morning. South was to the Right and North was to the left. West was then behind. Sacred space was entered from the West to the East, so that one was facing the direction wherein new beginnings occurred.

Positive Magicks were worked “sunwise,” called “deasal” (to the righthand side). Banishing Magicks were worked to the lefthand side or “tuathal.” This motion was “against the Sun.” All of this is relative motion. To bring power from the Sky one would “honor” the Sun and travel its path. To invoke Power from below, one would travel the way of the Land which is where I think the word “tuathal” gets used. The right side was considered “good, strong, positive, projective and Light.” The left side was considered “not good, weak, banishing, receptive and Dark.” The Wheel Ogham of Roigne Roscanach, a symbol from *The Book of Ballymote*, clearly demonstrates this idea of righthanded and lefthandedness in the way that it contains clockwise groupings of Ogham on its southern half and counter-clockwise groupings on its northern half. We will discuss this Ogham symbolic mandala, as well as its companions, The Stream Strand of Ferchertne and Fionn’s Wheel, in greater detail in later chapters.

Just about every Magical system I've ever seen is based on the seven directions. Almost all of them have a medicine/spirit/seasonal wheel. The Celts were especially enamored of wheels and circles. The area in which they lived was filled with stone circles and astronomically aligned stone/ritual sites. One of the primary Celtic Gods was a God of the Wheel (Taranis). Mogh Roith (the name means the Devotee of the Wheel) was possibly a God of the Wheel and not just a Druid. The Sun itself was said to be "roth fail" or a "wheel of circling light." There are many other references to wheels, the Sun and the zodiac within Celtic writings.

The Three Worlds are Above, Here and Below; Sky, Land and sea; Future, Present and Past. This arrangement agrees with many indigenous as well as shamanic cosmologies.

Magicks were best conducted at places that were "in-between." This means that they were best done on the edge of a lake, river or stream; at the top of a hill or a mountain or within a cave; at the dawning or the dusk or within a mist or a fog; upon a threshold, beside a well or in front of a fire. Places where roads crossed were considered to be good for Magick (since they were neither one road or the other). Bruidhean were located at such places to provide hospitality for all. This "not quite in this world" characteristic is one reason why a pooka or a faerie will vanish if you look straight at them (one should always gaze upon such beings from the corner of the eye). It is also a major reason why folks lose their focus during meditations and out of the body experiences.

The Summerlands were always in the Great Sea to the West.

The Tuatha Dé Danann were said to have come from the Sky/ the North/ the islands at the top of the world.

People were considered to be spirits inhabiting bodies and not Bodies that also happened to have spirits within them.

No spell had any Power without having risk to the person casting the spell. It is for this reason that oaths were taken to the three Worlds of Sky, Sea and Land. No curse could be given if the sender of the curse was not willing to take an equally horrible curse in return (however, if their own cause was just...if they were "true," then they had nothing to fear). This is why many incantations were done across the edge of a spear or a knife. Magick cut both ways. Only the Truth would protect you. Let's see how the "Truth Against the World" is itself divided.



## **The Center of the Worlds**

In my opinion, the Four Treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann are the markers for the four quarters of the world. The North of the world itself is actually its center. This is because the North Pole (as well as the South Pole) points at the one place in the visible sky that does not move. This is the Pole Star, the symbol of the world column that connects the Land to the Sky and the Sea. . The pathway between the centers of the Three Worlds is also at the center (one above, one herein and one below...for starters). The Four Treasures stand around this center. When we stand within the center of our ritual world, the four treasures should surround us just as every other part

of the world surrounds us. The Three Worlds represent three separate worlds. Each of them also has a center that connects one to another

What we have been told about the Tuatha Dé Danann (in the Lebor Gabála) is that they spent time in the "northern islands of the world" studying the occult sciences and arts. These islands have been identified as Lochlann by some (Denmark and Scandinavia). They were said to have been a tribe that originally came from "Greece" while the Milesians were said to have come from "Spain." In Celtic terms, Spain, Greece, the North, and Lochlann were all beyond nine waves and are considered to be "Other." To the Celts, this was also true for such places as India, Italy, Persia and Egypt. They were all in the "Other place." That is why a dindshenchas can be written about the river Boyne, saying that it is the river that flows through all the parts of the world. That is how the Well of Segais can be a source for all the rivers of Ireland. In the Celtic mental / spiritual outlook, all places are connected, once they are within the province of the Otherworld. This also occurs for us when our sacred center connects us to the Otherworld or any other sacred center. That is how the center of the world can be connected to the center of Ireland and the center of the hearthfire. The spiritual connection of these centers comes through the gods and the Otherworld.

The center of Munster and the center of Connacht are the same spiritual centers if they have any truth or value to them. The same can be said for the centers of Ulster, Leinster, and Meath; the same for Ireland; the same for the world, the family and the self. This idea is one that I believe many Indo-European cultures also embraced in the more hidden, esoteric aspects of their theologies.

It is known that Uisneach was one of the sacred centers of Ireland and it is there that Aill na Mireann (the Stone of Divisions) was located (which represents the five provinces of Ireland). It has been said that Tara, Tailtenn, and Tlachtga, were the other centers of Ireland. All of these centers were located within the central province, which was Meath. Irish cosmology has long been four quarters and a fifth within the center. The fifth treasure has always been the Sovereignty of the Land, which all four other treasures protect, nurture, secure or foretell. Most certainly there are three worlds, in Irish Celtic cosmology, but there are also four treasures to secure the land for the people.

Crúachain was the sacred center of the province of Connaught, while Emain Macha was the sacred center of Ulster in ancient times. Tara has traditionally always been a center of Ireland as a whole (as were the three previously mentioned locations in Meath).

### **The Sovereignty of the Mound**

As far as I know, there are three items in Celtic ritual that represent Sovereignty: the mound (or the seat of honor), the lighting of the ritual fire, and the possession of the white wand. Beyond this, there is the wearing of colors, as well as gold and silver ornamentation to distinguish rank. IMO, the mound (as in sacred site) represents Sovereignty. This was always located at the center of a gathering or even a province. If one looks at ritual seating arrangements among the Irish, the king is usually placed in the center, with the provincial kings arranged about him to the quarters. This is also the arrangement of both the Bran Dubh and the Fidchell boards (which are games based upon this cosmology). Sometimes, the sacred center itself contains nine

compartments surrounded by four divisions.

## Symbols of the Center

As an interesting comparative Indo-European feature, the Indian Yantra (magical diagram) known as Yantra-rāja (The King of Yantras) seems to represent a similar cosmology to what we are describing for the Celts. I quote from *The Myths and Gods of India* by Alain Daniélou:

"The King of Yantras is described in the Mahánirvána Tantra. 'Draw a triangle with the Seed of Illusion (the character hrím) within. Around it draw two concentric circles. Draw in pairs the sixteen filaments and, besides, the eight petals of a lotus. Around them is the Earthly City, which should be made of straight lines with four entrances and should be of pleasing appearance. 'In either order to cause pleasure to the deity the worshiper should draw the yantra with a gold needle or with the thorn of a bel tree on a piece of gold, or silver, or copper which has been smeared with either the svayambhú, kunda, or gola flowers, or with a sandal, fragrant aloe, kunkuma or red-sandal paste' (Mahánirvána Tantra 5.172-176.)"

"The purpose of this yantra is to create contacts with supranatural worlds. With its help, the worshiper can gain all worldly and supranatural powers."

"In the center of the yantra, the character hrím stands for the divinity of fortune, Laksmí."

"Around her is the fiery triangle which draws into its ascending movement the coiled-energy (kundaliní), the circle surrounding it. The sixteen filament of the lotus represent the attainment of perfection (sixteen is the perfect number); the eight petals represent the all-pervading ascending tendency, that is Visnu."

"The outer circle is creation, the circular movement of which all things are born. The power over the manifest world is shown by the square, symbol of the earth. On the four sides are the four gates leading from the earth to the worlds beyond."

"To the north (i.e. on the left) is the gate to the way-of-the-gods (devayána). To the south (i.e. on the right) is the gate to the way-of-Ancestors (pitr-yána). To the east (upward) is the gate to the priestly solar way, and to the west (downward) is the gate to the royal way, the way of the lord-of-the-waters (Varuna). The four gates lead to these four directions, forming the cross, symbol of universality. This cross further develops into a double svastika which indicates the return to the principle through both the left-hand and the right-hand path."

In this yantra, we see that an Indo-European people have described the cosmos in terms that match well with what is presented for the Irish. The seed at the beginning (in the center) is either the sacred tree or its potential (this is also the marriage of the king to the Land). The triangle represents the tripartite way in which creation can manifest. The central circle is the mound of kingship which is surrounded by eight other compartments, each containing a manifestation of



deity (or in the case of Lugh: his foster-fathers). The outer circle is the area of the people and their circumnavigation of the sacred center. The square is the world or the plain around the people. The four gates are symbolized by four treasures which are the gateways to the esoteric knowledge of each of the four cities where wizards reside. The north is the gate of Destiny, the Lia Fail. the south is the gateway of fertility, the Spear of Lugh. The east is the gate of Light, the Sword of Nuada. The west is the gateway of Renewal, The Dagda's Cauldron. The four treasures are arrayed around the sacred center to the four directions forming the cross of Brighid, symbol of all that is. There are two ways to approach Her, though the left-hand path or the righthand path.

It is clear to me, that our own cosmology must honor and use both the tripartite and cardinal aspects of the worship of the ancestors. This is what the Indian Yantras does for that people. How much better for us would be a similar ordering of our own ancestral knowledge? Shall we ignore one part of their wisdom for another? I think not.

I'd also like to say that these yantras are drawn as flat objects but they represent multiple dimensions. They are considered to be the visual equivalent of the mantra or thought-form. Every symbol on a yantra represents a deity or an element of creation. Each yantra is itself a symbolic representation of creation. Our ritual space should also be such a representative of creation. We already know that the Sword represents Nuada, the Spear represents Lugh, the Cauldron represents the Dagda and the Lia Fail represents Fate. I think that we can also see that the cross represents Brighid, the square is the Land, the circle is a world or realm. Each city of the Otherworldly North is representative of a gateway to esoteric knowledge and each wizard is a description of the form of that knowledge. The Triscele is representative of the power of becoming. In one direction, it is the ascension of fire. In the other direction it is the well of wisdom. To this day Celtic myth and practice supports these assertions in the use of the words deiseal and tuathal.

### **Laying the Groundwork**

I have been laying the groundwork for a tie-in and a discussion of the four treasures though much of that information is still to come. Such associations are sometimes not obvious (though true), so I am attempting to be as thorough as possible in my investigations. It is my belief, that if we seek the truth hard enough, with an open and evaluating mind, we will eventually find it, no matter how many wrong turns are made before our arrival. If there is no truth in any of the matters that I have been discussing and presenting, then I will be the first to admit it. I am not quick to discard anything, however, until it has been completely analyzed and digested.

There is much more to consider, as well as many more ideas and concepts to present, before we can finish with our investigations of the use of the four treasures in rituals. Not the least of these ideas, is a description of the properties of each treasure within Celtic myth, legend, and tradition, as well as their mundane use in Celtic life. We will need to more fully understand the everyday role of the sword, the spear, the cauldron and the stone to the Celts, before we can fully appreciate how they may have been used in ritual. That is yet another topic to be fully presented. There are also instances where each treasure was used in Celtic ritual and those should be investigated and discussed as well.

### **More on the Four Cities**

Whether the four cities and their associated rituals, are later introductions to Celtic myth or not (as some would say), the Four Treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann have been an inherent part of the Irish Celtic tradition from the earliest of times. The tale of "The Sons of Tuirenn" makes reference to other treasures, as well as the original four. The names of the cities and the wizards do indeed point us to the information that the author of *Cath Maige Tuired* is attempting to convey. Whether these symbols are Medieval or Ancient, they represent much older ideas that resonated with the Celtic psyche. That is one reason that they are presented in that work IMO. There are many other reasons why they are mentioned, but I will provide those when I continue my presentation on their role in Celtic myth and ritual. One other point that I will be presenting is the place of these treasures (or any treasures) in Celtic cosmology. They are definitely a part of Celtic tradition and I am encouraged to see that Erynn Laurie chose to place them on the altar in the rituals she included in *A Circle of Stones*. This may well be the appropriate place for them when an individual is performing solitary rituals. I don't personally think it is the place for them in group rituals and suggest that they be placed at the quarters of sacred space..

### **The Powers of the Center**

Sovereignty has always been present within the Land, but the marriage and relationship to it that exists through the king requires a true king and a marriage of that king to the land in order to be present for the people. When Sovereignty has a connection through the king to the People, then all of the characteristics of the Land as described in "The Settling of the Manor of Tara" are available to the People. Sovereignty is the fifth treasure that is provided by a proper use and relationship to the other four parts of the Land. That is why it is a characteristic of the center. What I will be attempting to do in the weeks ahead is identify and characterize the central concept that is established by the use of the four treasures during ritual. A proper use, orientation and melding of these four gifts may well reveal to us a fifth treasure was hidden from our awareness until the proper time. Much that is sacred is contained within the geometry of such concepts and qualities, as it is also contained within the shape and Magick of the Land Herself. I think most of us respond to the power of such Draíocht on a primal level. How much better could we sing the song if we had already established the melodies of the four voices and their proper orientation to the ear of the spirit? The Dagda's song to his harp sings in four voices:

"Tair Daur Dá Bláo,  
Tair Cóir Cethairchuir,  
Tair sam, tair gam,  
Béola crot ocus bolg ocus buinne!"

"Come, Oak of the Two Meadows,  
Come Four-sided Harp of Truth,  
Come summer, come winter,  
Mouths of harps and bags and pipes!"

If we can find for ourselves a Four-sided Harp of Truth (Proper ritual space) then we may also be able to play the three strains (Journey to the Three Worlds) during our passage between the two

meadows (Life and Death). If the nine woods of our sacred fire also represent the powers of the Fomoiré between us and the music, so much the better. It is my hope that we will each be able to journey across the nine waves of unknowing that currently separates many us from the fonsheen (true music) that lives within the sacred center. There was never a wall made by man or god that could prevent the four-angled music of the Dagda's harp from playing within any part of the three worlds.



## Celtic Ritual Space

"Ogma Sun-Face raised four pillars of equal length"

*The Book of Ballymote,  
written in 14th Century CE*

I base my own beliefs and practices on three things: the wisdom of tradition, my own personal experience with the three worlds and the imbas that flows through me from the gods. What follows in this paper are the facts, experiences and imbas that I have been given regarding Celtic ritual, ritual space, treasures, hallows, and cosmology.

Celtic ritual is very much about sacred centers, whether these are the center of the self, the center of the home, the center of the tribe, the center of the land, or the center of the world. The first task in performing a Celtic ritual IMO is to determine which center is to be used and where that center is located. This was historically done relative to two things: the pathway of the sun from east to west and the location of the Pole Star in the night sky. We need look no further than the many stone circles, ritual mounds and oppidum (containing their sacred centers; called Mediolanum or Nemetons), that are found within areas once (or still) inhabited by Celts to verify these alignments.

### Gournay-sur-Aronde

The best explored of such Celtic ritual centers is probably Gournay-sur-Aronde in northern France (ancient Gaul). The sanctuary there was a rectangular enclosure of about 45 x 38 meters (about 150 x 125 feet). It was surrounded by a ditch and a wall with an opening in the eastern wall about 3 meters (10 feet) wide. Inside the enclosure at its center was a series of nine pits (three pits to the west, three to the north, and three to the south). These nine pits surrounded a 10th larger, oval, central pit. These pits were used in ritual with evidence of the deposit of weapons and other objects being found in the surrounding pits and the remains of cattle sacrifice in the central pit. The sanctuary dates from around 400 to 300 BCE. The pit arrangement was itself set within a much larger structure (about 10 meters per side) whose postholes aligned on the four cardinal points. A central post marked the center of this larger enclosure and it is thought that sacrifices occurred at the base of this post. No evidence exists that any representations of deities were ever placed within this enclosure or used in the rituals that were performed there. It appears that the function of the ritual space was to conduct sacrifice.

The sanctuary at Gournay-sur-Aronde is not the only such example of a Celtic sacred enclosure and/or ritual space to be found or excavated. Many other examples exist throughout the Celtic world, with many being found throughout Europe and the British Isles. Another significant observation about sacred enclosures in this area is that many were originally circular, but were changed to square or rectangular at the time that Celtic culture predominated in the region. Most of these enclosures were also oriented on the four cardinal points and contained central posts and votive, sacrificial pits. It has been suggested by authorities in the field (notably Jean Louis Brunaux in *The Celtic Gauls*) that the change from the solar oriented circular, Bronze Age enclosure to a quadrangular shape is evidence that the Celts continued the solar and circumambulatory nature of the earlier rituals while also including \*astronomical\* practices oriented on the cardinal directions. Warrior offerings were hung upon the outsides of these enclosures which could have been shields, spears, axes and swords. The eastern entryway was most likely adorned with the heads of noted enemies (as evidenced by the remains found in this area of the sanctuaries).

### **Orientation to the Four Directions**

What this archaeological evidence for Celtic ritual and sacred locations suggests to me is that their ritual was definitely oriented to the four directions and began from the east. Offerings were made to nine votive pits (suggestive of one for each dúile). Sacrificial offerings were conducted on an altar at the base of the central pillar or post, with the remains being deposited within the larger central pit. The entire structure would have been approached from the east and circumnavigated a number of times (probably nine, if present Irish practice is considered a guide). I would further suggest that the orientation or focus of the ritual was probably to a direction that was propitious to the ritual working. I would also be so bold as to suggest that symbols were carved on the four cardinal posts and the central posts to further enhance their power and ritual significance. My final musing on the nature of such a structure is that it was also probably skillfully crafted, built to last and painted in the appropriate variety of Celtic colors for its functions.

A Celtic ritual space would contain many of the same cosmological and astrological significance also associated with their gaming boards, and would definitely have been characterized by both geometric and religious symmetry about the sacred center. This would have been particularly true for the decoration of the sanctuary, as well as the person, but that is perhaps a matter to be better understood after we've investigated the nature of their ritual space in more detail and variety.

### **Rituals and Workings**

Sites other than Nemetons and Mediolanums, were associated with Celtic ritual. Specifically, I am referring to the sacred wells, springs, bile, stones, and the central fires of the home and the festival. People could also be the center of ritual, whether in personal prayer and working, sacrifice, healing or initiation. Some specific rituals that included people as their central focus for workings were: the Banis Righ (the king), the Tarbh Feis (the dreamer), healings (as in the "Sickbed of Cú Chulainn"), and the Spell of Truth. In most of these rituals involving people, the subject was placed in the center and surrounded by four chanting Druids. Rituals involving trees

included the Glam Dicenn, treaty signings, arbitrations and possibly initiatory and or sacrificial rites. Wells were mainly used for divination, votive offerings and healings. The use of the Well of Sláne by the family of Dian Cécht comes to mind as this is located on my family's ancestral property near Cnogba. The healing ritual was accomplished by four chanting healers oriented about the well with the well serving as a healing bath for the sick and injured. The Well of Segais is an excellent example of a ritual involving divination and knowledge. It was also controlled by four operatives: Nectain and his three cupbearers. The Glam Dicenn involved seven Filidh and a Hawthorn tree as a central anchor to amplify and direct the curse that was being cast. In the case of all of these rituals, the center was the focus of the working and the ritual participants were oriented around that center in an appropriate formation.

### **The Four Cardinal Directions**

As I have previously stated, the Celtic sacred sites that have been explored by modern archaeology clearly show such space was delimited by quadrangular enclosures surrounding votive, sacrificial pits, also having a central post and possibly an altar. These enclosures were open and oriented to the east and approached in a (generally) righthand-wise circumambulatory manner. They were aligned with the four cardinal directions for the specific purpose of emphasizing the astrological significance of each direction in the religious workings that occurred within them. All this talk about physical orientation to the cardinal directions, and the correspondences respectively assigned to each, does not mean that I believe the Celts did not also practice a belief in the existence of the three worlds. Their belief in the three worlds and their observance of them is apparent in the many references we have to them in Celtic myths, oaths and ritual forms.

The entire purpose of Celtic ritual was to establish a sacred center so that the people could more closely connect with the deities. This was done to make offerings, conduct sacrifices, perform workings and healings, or to include them in joint ceremonies such as baptisms, marriages and funerals (much as we do today). The entire idea and purpose of the sacred center was to make a connection between the three worlds, as well as the people and the gods/ancestors. Though individual can make such a connection for herself through the temple of the body, she would have also recognized that certain sites on the land have been blessed or established by deities/druids as sacred. This was especially true of wells, springs, rivers, mountains, special trees, caves and certain stones. At each of these sites a special connection could be made to the deities of the three worlds.

### **Threes and Fours**

Without getting into too great a detail about this idea of connection, I'd like to say that it is my impression that the idea of four directions and their correspondences work with the idea of a sacred center to facilitate a connection to the three worlds. The directions are all about how we find the sacred center (whether that be physically, spiritually or mentally) as defined by the qualities we assign to those directions. The connections to the worlds of the gods and ancestors more strongly exist at such places by virtue of the will of creation. This is not to say that gateways and portals to the other worlds cannot and do not exist at other spots. They do, but the act of locating these spots requires a coordinate system that includes not only physical coordinates and orientation, but also spiritual qualities and mental characteristics. Finding sacred

space is as much about getting into the "right space" as it is about a map to its coordinates. That is one reason that Fintan assigned qualities to the directions in "The Settling of the Manor of Tara." He wanted to show how Ireland was made of a series of qualities possessing a definite relationship to one another. The spiritual center of Ireland was the sum of its parts. The center of Ireland as found in its kingship was the combination and synchronization of all of its properties. Fintan defined the center based upon its directional correspondences. That is what we do for ourselves when we meditate or pray. That is what we do when we conduct ritual. We stand within the center of ourselves and all that is. We are the center of the world and the way to the gods comes through us.



## **Other Indo-European Ways**

We have already seen that the use of four directions as a definition of ritual space was not limited only to Celtic practice. This was also a practice of other Indo-European people. Without specifically checking other references, it is my recollection that the Greeks, the Romans, the Germans, the Norse and the Indians (as we saw in the previous discussion of Yantras), all established sacred space using four directions/qualities/assignments. They also had multiple worlds; sometimes three and sometimes more. The idea of four directions establishing ritual space is as old as humankind's attempt to establish a sacred center. The ancient Shaman of the plains of Asia used such coordinates and correspondences. The natives of North and South America used such a system. The use of directions in ritual space appears to be inherent in the human spiritual processes associated with establishing a sacred center and a connection to deity. That is why most Magical rituals address themselves to the quarters/directions/qualities. The Golden Dawn did not invent the need for such a marking of ritual space, they only discovered it for themselves, just as Magically inclined people have done throughout the ages. Such techniques are as old as spirit and as true as Magick. We should not be surprised that our ancestors used these techniques themselves, nor should we neglect to use similar techniques for orienting and synchronizing ourselves to the gods and the three worlds of creation. Without direction and order we cast ourselves into the pit of chaos or the abyss itself. How else could a druid maintain two sets of consciousness, than to be able to clearly define the boundaries between worlds? How else could one go to the Otherworld and return without a center to anchor the return? How else could a tree grow from the land beneath our feet to the skies above our heads without a space within which to locate its own center? Four directions determine a center as surely as the three worlds. Each is a connection to the others.

## **Across Time and Space**

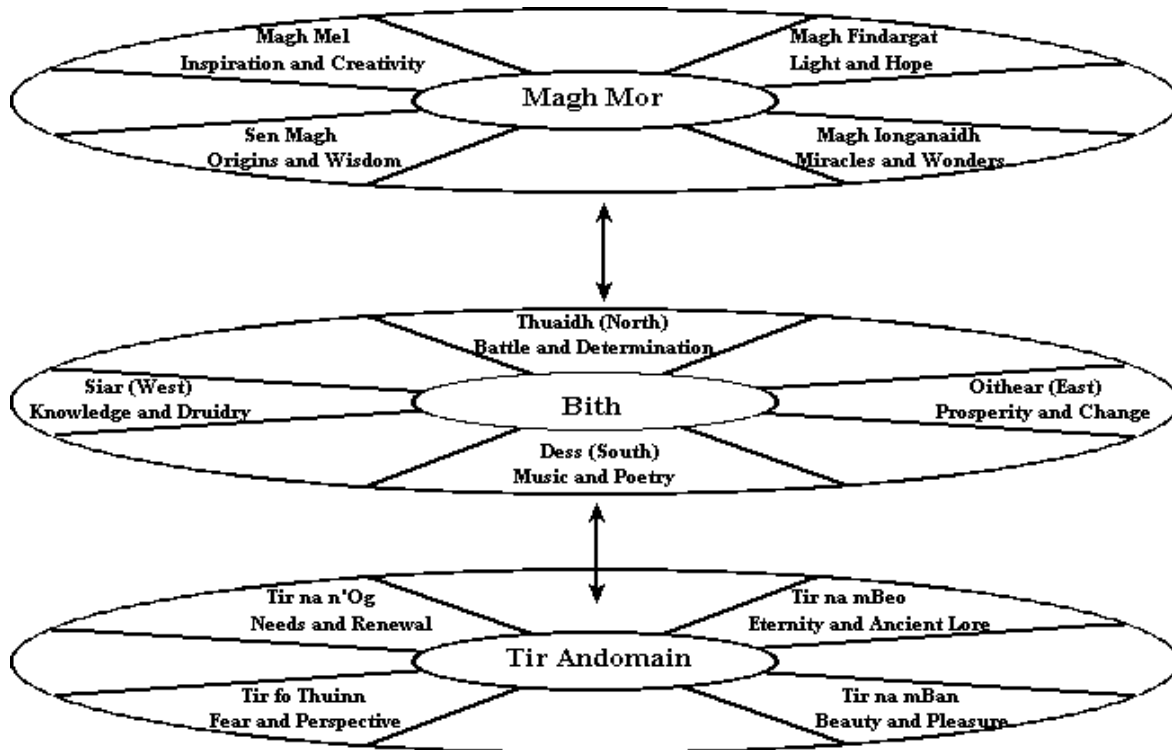
This belief is not only substantiated by the traditional writings, it is also my direct personal experience of the Otherworld and the gods. In my own practice and ritual, I associate specific qualities with the four (and five) directions and their respective deities. These directional correspondences and their associated deities are uniquely Celtic and are only incidentally related to similar practices among Native American, Hermetic, Ceremonial or Wiccan traditions.. What I've been trying to say about sacred centers is that they all connect to one another. Any one of

these centers is only a thought away, especially when we are journeying within the Otherworld. The same spirit flows through each of them; through each heart; and through each hearth and tribe. I think that the Old Irish word, “sét,” best describes how reality is connected for Celts. It is a "path or a way" (even as far as a way of life), while another definition shows it to mean a "treasure." We find our centers within the treasures of the tribe and the self. We connect, one to another, across worlds; across time; on the banks of the river and beneath the sacred tree.

## **The Division of the World**

In the tale, the “Settling of the Manor of Tara,” Fintan, the oldest living Seanchai, divided the Land of Ireland into five parts (East, West, North, South and Center). The navel of Ireland was placed at Uisneach as marked by the Stone of Divisions. This marked the center of the plane of the surface. Trefuilingidh Tre-eochair (the Magical being who came from out of the West, seeking the Sun’s rising) further defined these divisions into a series of qualities associated with each province and direction. The Great Plane of the Sky, Magh Mor and the Islands of the Otherworldly Sea, Tir Andomain, can also have their surfaces defined in a corresponding manner. These divisions allow us to define their centers so that we can understand their interconnection with the Bile or World/ sacred Tree. The Celts and Neolithic peoples defined a circle (as well as a world) by using an equal armed cross. This symbol evolved into the “Celtic Cross.” The Sunwheel is a symbol of Lugh as well as the cross (being a symbol of Brigid as well). This act of crossing is exactly what a Celt does to determine his “center” at sunrise of each day as he/she welcomes the first rays of the morning sun.

## Ogham Divination



## The Plains of the Three Worlds

### The Plains of the Three Worlds

I have compiled a table of the divisions into which I think the Three Worlds should be divided to assist us in developing a “casting cloth” for our Ogham Divination system. These divisions are based upon the wisdom of Fintan and Trefuilingidh Tre-eochair and many other ancient and modern sources (please accept these assignments as a guide only.... they seem to work for me, but you may have others that work better for you). These divisions are the sharp edges that I use to test the “truth” of my Ogham divinations. Please use these general assignments of characteristics to further guide your own divination efforts when casting upon a “cloth” or a “circle” (more specific meanings will be given in "The Ogham Correspondences" section of this book for each Ogham, as well as the Realms of the Otherworld/ subconsciousness/ superconsciousness). The basic qualities and attributes of the Three Worlds are described here so that we may have a better “feel” for the form, shape and color of the Celtic Cosmological canvas. The information that is specific to each Realm, Deity, Hallow, Direction or Quarter have already been provided. If you look closely, the patterns and weaves that exist between the Three Worlds and their distinguishing qualities may appear to you and guide your own steps. The Three Worlds of Sky, Land and Sea (Upper, Middle, Under)/(Past, Present, Future) are divided as follows:



**Magh Mor (Great Plain or Skyworld)**  
**Spirit of Creation (Future)**

Sen Magh (Old Plain)	Origins and Wisdom
Magh Findargat (Plain of White Silver)	Light and Hope
Magh Imchiunn (Plain of Gentleness)	
Magh Argetnel (Plain of Silver Clouds)	
Magh Mel (Plain of Delight)	Inspiration and Creativity
Magh Airthech (Plain of Bounty)	
Magh Ildathach (Plain of Many Colors)	
Magh Ionganaidh (Plain of Wonders)	Miracles and Wonders

**Bith or Mide (Middleworld)**  
**Spirit of Being (Present)**

Oithear (East)/ Sword of Nuada	Prosperity and Change
Dess ( south)/ Spear of Lugh	Music and Poetry
Siar (West)/ Cauldron of The Dagda	Knowledge and Druidry
Thuaidh (North)/ Lia Fail	Battle and Determination

**Tir Andomain (Underworld)**  
**Spirit of the Ancestors (Past)**

Tir na mBeo (Land of Eternal Life)	Eternity and Ancient Lore
Tir na mBan (Land of Women)	Beauty and Pleasure
Tir fo Thuinn (Land Under the Waves)	Fear and Perspective
Tech Duinn (House of Donn)	
Tir na n'Og (Land of Youth)	Needs and Renewal

These are the plains that we must travel in our quest for foreknowledge and divination. These are the worlds of our consciousness. Within each Land, the Hallows and the hazards have been defined as well as the rewards and the opportunities. In our next segment, we will describe the

## Ogham Divination

warriors that will assist us in our quest. Hopefully, they will guard our thoughts and insure our victories while we attempt our Ogham divinations. Following that, we will describe the attributes and the qualities of the Ogham Fidh themselves. Perhaps we will soon be able to answer the remaining questions:

**Who calleth the cattle from the House of Tethra?  
On whom do the cattle of Tethra smile?**

## Ogham Divination

## PART TWO

### The Song of the Forest Trees

Are not the trees the source of music?  
The fruit of their increase  
Is a draught of inspiration,  
That fills five cauldrons,  
And the River of Bright Poetry,  
And an excellence of weather,  
And honey and clover,  
And the mead of the intoxicating cup,  
Pleasing to the rightful king,  
A gift of the Druids.

*Taliesin in "The Chair of Taliesin"*



## Ogham Divination



## Chapter 7 Wood Wisdom



### The Knowledge of the Trees

“The father of Ogham is Ogma,  
the mother of Ogham is the hand or knife of Ogma.”

*The Book of Ballymote - 14<sup>th</sup> Century, Ireland*

The Ogham Alphabet consists of symbols chosen to represent different types of trees, sounds, ideas and images from ancient Druidic lore. The Irish God of Eloquence, Ogma, was said to have invented Ogham as a “proof of his ingenuity....” The Irish God Manannán Mac Lir was said to have provided the additional symbols representing the Sea and other abstractions, called the “Crane Bag” (this group is also known as the Forfedha).. Each tree or abstraction in the Ogham Alphabet has special Magical properties, as does its corresponding symbol. Before I get into the esoteric uses of Ogham, let’s see how it is written.

On the most basic level, Ogham is a form of writing developed by the Druids. It consists of a series of lines (from 1 to 5) that are carved across a stemline called a “druim.” The druim is usually found on the edge of a stave of wood (called a “flesc”) or on the edge of a standing stone. The characters are written from the bottom to the top of the druim and, if more room is needed, the druim is extended to another edge of the stave or stone, until the entire message is finished. In some cases, this can include up to four edges of a stave or a stone. If the Ogham is written on paper or a flat surface, then the druim is usually drawn as a line from left to right (parallel with the paper’s edge). The Ogham symbols are grouped into sets of five symbols each called an “aicme.” The name of each of the first four aicme is taken from the Ogham name for the first character of that grouping. These characters correspond to the normal letters of “B,” “H,” “M” and “A.”

These characters have the Ogham names of “Beith,” “Huath,” “Muin” and “Ailm” (they are also the Ogham formed by a single stroke of the knife or the pen in reference to the druim). The consonants in this alphabet comprise the first three aicme and are formed by longer parallel strokes, usually called “scores.” Parallel lines to the right of the druim form Aicme Beith, while Aicme Huath is formed by strokes to the left of the druim. Aicme Muin is formed using oblique

lines that usually flow from the top left to the bottom right across the druid. Some authors believe that the early Ogham alphabet consisted only of the consonants and refer to this form of Ogham as Consaine Ogham (this would make the writing practices of the Druids similar to those of early Hebrew, which also uses only consonants). The vowels that are found in the fourth Ogham group, Aicme Ailm, are usually made with a shortened scoring which is referenced as “notching.” These notches or lines are usually horizontal. The fifth group of Ogham characters are called the “Forfedha” (“extra characters”), and are thought by some authors to have been a Medieval introduction, even though tradition says that these characters were provided from Manannán’s “Crane Bag.” These five Ogham are much more complex in their formation than are the others and are also very similar to the Norse Runes in their appearance. The Ogham characters themselves can also be called “fidh” or “fedha” (which are the Old Irish words for “wood” and “woods”). The primary names of the Ogham characters are given as Irish tree names. Another name for the Ogham alphabet is the Bethluisninn (named after three letters of the first aicme, B, L, N). Ogham were also assigned to other names and classifications: colors, pigs, fortresses, kings, cattle, etc... These names were correlated to the Ogham symbols based upon the similarity of their initial sounds. It was in this manner that the Ogham were originally used to establish correspondences for most of the information that was available to the early Celts and the Druids.

Many debates occur over the validity of the more esoteric Ogham meanings and the many available tables of correspondences that have been linked to them. Some of these correspondences were found within documents from early medieval Irish monastic writings. Other lists of correspondences have come from the more traditional assignments used by the Irish family Bards of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After this time, they ceased to exist as an established order, following the oppression of the English and the atrocities of Cromwell. Some of the more recent correspondence tables that are in circulation have been intuited (as in the case of those provided by Robert Graves and Iolo Morganwg). Finally; some of these lists have been produced by modern writers using whatever sources were available (tree lore, musical toning, Cabala, Tarot, Runes, Imagination, Imbas, Awen, etc.). I shall endeavor in this study to develop a set of Ogham correspondences that are based upon their Old Irish names, their mundane and esoteric associations, and the kennings from the ancient lore.



## **The Nine Hazels of Wisdom**

Senbecc was a member of the Tuatha Dé Danann who had sought and gained imbas at the Well of Segais on the Boyne. While he was returning from the well, Cú Chulainn captured him. He eventually escaped by playing the three strains of the harp. First, he played the wailing stream so that he was wailing and lamenting, and then he played the laughing stream so that he laughed beyond control. He last played the sleeping strain upon his harp and escaped as Cú Chulainn slumbered.

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While he was at the Well of Segais, Senbecc the Poet encountered the five streams of wisdom that flow from its nine hazels. It was in this way that he received Imbas and he was inspired to chant:

“I am not a boy,  
I am not a man,  
I am not a child in learning.  
The mysteries of the gods have given me great rewards.  
I am Abcán, a sage of learning,  
I am a poet from the Well of Segais.  
Senbecc is what I am called,  
I am the son of the son of Ebrecc,  
I am a dweller from the Síde.  
I have traveled the streams of imbas,  
I have eaten the fruit of nine hazels,  
Fair is the wisdom that flows from the Boyne.”

(Paraphrased and expanded from the original in  
*The Celtic Heroic Age* by John T. Koch and John Carey.)

This story about Senbecc, and other information concerning the Well of Segais, seems to indicate that the five senses are the connection between the nine dúile and the world’s knowledge. The Ogham are used to divide this knowledge into five aicme, just as the world is divided into fifths or coiced.

**These are the names of the nine hazels of wisdom according to Senbecc:**

**Sall, Fall, Fuball, Finnam, Fonnam, Fofuigell, Crú, Crínam, Cruanbla.**

Sall – dirt; a prop? a post or beam?  
Fall – satire; an enclosure; a ring; a circuit; a spot  
Fuball – filth? a moving land? a course? a decision?  
Finnam – bright song / time?  
Fonnam – foundation song / time? ground song / time?  
Fofuigell – (under? in the process of?) speech; discourse; a judgement  
Crú – blood, gore; inheritance, enclosure  
Crínam – withered, decayed, old time?  
Cruanbla. – a crimson plain; lawn; field

**These nine names might be correlated to the lineage of Nede mac Adne as given in “Immacallam in da Thuarad.”**

“I am the child of poetry,  
Poetry, child of reflection,  
Reflection, child of meditation,  
Meditation, child of lore,  
Lore child of research,  
Research child of great knowledge,



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Great knowledge, child of intelligence,  
Intelligence, child of understanding,  
Understanding, child of wisdom,  
Wisdom, child of the three gods of Danu.”

**Equating these properties to their derived Ogham meanings (as given later in this book) reveals the following correspondences:**

Poetry, child of reflection, (Saile-Willow)  
Reflection, child of meditation, (Ur-Heather)  
Meditation, child of lore, (Idad-Yew)  
Lore child of inquiry, (Ailm-Silver Fir)  
Inquiry child of great knowledge, (Ifin / Uileand-Pine / Woodbine)  
Great knowledge, child of intelligence, (Gort-Ivy)  
Intelligence, child of understanding, (Straif- Blackthorn)  
Understanding, child of wisdom, (Ruis-Elder)  
Wisdom, child of the three gods of Danu. (Coll-Hazel)”

These names seem to be purposely obscured by Senbecc within the tale in which they are given, but meaning can be gleaned out of the toughest of nuts, if one “chews the pith” (Dichetal Do Chennaibh). Their associations seem to be connected with the Three Gods of Danu and the Three Cauldrons of Poesy, as well as the three strains of the harp. One possible arrangement of these qualities and associated worlds-gods-strains is given below. The groupings are: Cauldron (Quality) - Harp Strain (Music). Each grouping is also associated with specific deities.

### **Coire Goriath (Sustenance / Warming) – The Sleeping Strain**

**The Dagda / Iuchar – salmon, the spawn of salmon**

1. **Sall** – dirt; a prop? a post or beam? sallow? a willow? - Poetry (éigse; filíocht, Stone-Banba / Cailleach)
2. **Fall** – satire; an enclosure; a ring; a circuit; a spot - Reflection (machnamh; meabhrú, Land-Áine)
3. **Fuball** – (fafall) filth?, (fáball) a moving land?, a course?, a decision - Meditation (léirsmaoineamh, Life- An Dagda)

### **Coire Soís (Wisdom / Áiged-Celebration) – The Laughing Strain**

**Lugh / Brian – speech; brightness, etc.**

1. **Finnam** – bright song / time? - Great Knowledge (eolas; fios; láis, rús, Sun-Ogma)
2. **Fonnam** – foundation song / time? ground song / time? - Lore (fiannaíocht, eolas?, Stars-Fintan)
3. **Fofuigell** – (under? in the process of?) speech; discourse; a judgement - Inquiry (taighde, fochmarc, Sky-Lugh)

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## Coire Éрма (Motion / Vocation) – The Wailing Strain

### Ogma / Iucharba – the death of the salmon? an enclosure of redness? the act of procreating?

1. **Crú** - blood; inheritance, (cró) enclosure - Intelligence (gaois; eigna; éirim, Sea – The Morrígan)
2. **Crínam** – withered; decayed; old time? - Wisdom (críonnacht, Wind-Brighid)
3. **Cruanbla**. – a crimson plain / lawn / field - Understanding (céadfa; meabhair, Moon-Bóann)

The Cauldron of Warming is also a Cauldron of Sustaining. In this role it is also the Cauldron of Rebirth and the Undry Cauldron of The Dagda that satisfies our every need. In this renewal of the body during life, it is very much like sleep, which is when we are renewed. Its phases are meditation, reflection and poetry, which is a source of renewal and continuing life for the traditions of our people and our selves.

The joys of imbas are ours when we have filled our Cauldron of Wisdom. This means that we have gone beyond the limitations of the world and that we have experienced the profound happiness of spiritual ecstasy. Our awareness has expanded to include all worlds and all knowledge. In the moment of our initiation or integration into the wisdom of imbas we are more than we are. We are the tribal knowledge. We are a being of many skills. We are the Sun arising in the West and the ancient hidden mysteries of the Stars.

The Wailing Strain and the Cauldron of Vocation have much in common as they both deal with the life of the world on a day to day basis. It is in our daily work that we encounter our victories and our defeats. This is where we do our battles and we make our marks. Ogma, the champion of the gods, is the deity I most closely associate with this effort. The battle of the salmon to return to its source for mating and renewal also closely describes the struggle and the strain of life to continue. In our struggles we may accumulate wisdom, as does the Salmon of Wisdom at the Well of Segais.

### Seven B's on Birch

*I can frame what no tongue utters...*

Taliesin - Cad Goddeu, 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E., Wales

It is a known fact that the Irish Filidh (Poets/Bards/ seers) had to learn tables of Ogham (150 or so) in their twelve year study. They also learned the secret language of poets (which I believe to be based on the original Ogham sounds and hand symbols). As mentioned previously, the Ogham were used as memory aids in retaining and accessing knowledge by the Druids. Each list element (whether tree, color, bird, tone, or other) was associated with the beginning sound of its corresponding Ogham. “Beith” or “birch” was associated with the Ogham “B,” for instance (it is the first Ogham). The very first use of Ogham was the carving of seven “B’s” on a stave of Birch, which was given to Lugh as a warning. The kenning or meaning of this message was that he should beware; seven attempts would be made to spirit his wife away into the Underworld. It is difficult for the uninitiated to understand how seven “B’s” carved on a stave of wood could possibly have such a meaning, but such is the nature of Ogham and it’s use as a key to Druidic memory. In the dindshenchas, one of Lugh’s wives was named Buí of the Seven Youthful

Periods (she is also known as the Cailleach Bheara, who would age into a Hag and then be restored to youth again). It was frequently the Birch that was the first tree to regrow within a devastated forest, following forest fires and even the destructions of the Ice Ages. The Birch Ogham is frequently assigned the meaning of “new beginnings.” Combining all of these apparently unrelated facts with the custom of using birch in burials, gives us insight into the Ogham kenning, “Beware; seven attempts will be made to spirit your wife away into the Underworld!” Lugh can be interpreted to be the Light that separates the Day from the Darkness. Buí, which in Irish means yellow, can represent the youth of each day as it comes to us with every dawning. It is Light that rescues Day from Darkness and gives us renewal and new Life. Buí was spirited away each Night to the Underworld but she returns to us seven times because Lugh has rescued her. Ogham is the power of the mind to connect lore and symbolism in a living, breathing cascade of image and song. Seven “B’s” were carved on a stave of Birch as the first use of Ogham.

### **Odóireacht na Fedha (Carving the Woods)**

Since the actual performance of an Ogham Divination involves the casting of staves/fedha (or “FEW-eh” as it is pronounced) upon a casting cloth, a discussion of their acquisition, composition and construction is required. Not many commercially manufactured sets are available, though the set I use most often is available from the Druids of Stone Dolmen (who are listed in the Bibliography). The fedha themselves should be about finger length in size and carved with symbols for each of the 25 Ogham. The Ogham symbols are normally carved along the edge of the flesc, but may also be carved on the flat surfaces or the ends. Some people prefer to work with the actual woods that are represented by each Tree Ogham symbol. This is a difficult task to accomplish, since some of the trees do not grow widely outside of Europe. Some “Crane Bag” symbols are also not trees and will therefore have to be carved on some type of “neutral” wood, or some other substance (shells or rocks, for instance). My favorite set of Ogham fidh are made of “faerie wood” (bog oak from Ireland that has lain in the ground for some 6000 years). They are about a knuckle’s length, square, and flattened out (about a quarter inch thick), so that when they fall to the casting cloth, they are either upright or reversed (I make use of this feature of “uprightness” in my own divinations). To aid you in choosing woods for your own flesc, here are some of the trees that have been used to carve Ogham, along with their some of traditional uses:

### **Traditional Uses of Ogham**

Warnings on Birch	Lugh, King of the Tuatha Dé Danann
Inquiries on Yew	Dalan, the Druid of Eochadh
Challenges on Oak and Beech	Cú Chulainn, the Hound of Ulster
Draíocht of Rowan	Mug Roith, the Ard Drui of Munster
Death Measure on Aspen	The Fé of Morann Mac Main
Curing Impotence with Elm	Manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy
Deceptions on Alder	Corc Mac Lugaid, Prince of the Laigin.



## The Sacredness of Wood

Beyond the above listed uses of Ogham for specific woods, the ancient Celts also used certain trees for creating teine éigin (“need fires”). Sacred fire was almost always kindled from the sacred woods (sometime three different tree types and sometimes nine). According to Lewis Spence in his book, “The History and Origins of Druidism,” the Druids kindled the teine éigin from the wood of two oaks (either by rubbing or rotating them against one another). This technique is also mentioned in the “silver Bough” by F. Marian McNeill. The fire was built from nine pieces of oak (arranged around a center). Welsh tradition has it that such fires were started with oak, but were actually built upon nine woods, brought by nine separate men that had gone into the forest (after an initial preparatory ritual). Each man would place a single wood within the fire pit for the fire. In Scottish lore, according to Alexander Carmichael in his *book Carmina Gadelica*, eight of these woods are identified.

### Woods for the Need Fire

“Tagh seileach nan allr,  
Tagh calltainnnan creag,  
Tagh fearna nan lón,  
Tagh beithe nan eas,  
Tagh uinnseann nan dubhair,  
Tagh iubhar nan leuma,  
Tagh leamhannan bruthaich,  
Tagh duire na gréine.”

“Choose the willow of the streams,  
Choose the hazel of the rocks,  
Choose the alder of the marshes,  
Choose the birch of the waterfalls,  
Choose the rowan of the shade,  
Choose the yew of resilience,  
Choose the elm of the brae,  
Choose the oak of the sun.”

*Scottish Lore from  
The Silver Bough by F. Marian McNeill*

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According to McNeill, the ninth sacred wood could possibly be the holly, ash or pine. In the “Song of the Forest Trees,” an Irish poem of wood wisdom from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the following trees are identified as not to be burned:

### **Burn Ye Not**

woodbine - monarch of the forests...  
apple - tree ever decked in blooms of white..  
blackthorn - throughout his body ... birds in their flocks warble.  
willow - a tree sacred to poems.  
hazel - spare the limber tree.  
ash - rods he furnishes for horsemen’s hands.

### **Burn Ye These**

rowan - the wizard’s tree.  
briar - burn him that is so keen and green.  
oak - fiercest heat giver of all timber.  
alder - very battle-witch of all woods.  
holly - burn it green, burn it dry.  
elder - him that furnishes horses to the armies of the Sídh burn.  
birch - burn up most sure the stalks that bear the constant pads.  
aspen - burn, be it late or early.

The yew is singled out as being sacred to the feast. Trees were venerated among the Celts and Druids, especially since they supplied nuts for food and wood for shelter and roads. Each tribe had a special tree that was sacred to it. This tree was known as a Bile. This is the name of one of the sacred ancestors of the Sons of Míl. I expect that this veneration of trees and ancestors implies that a tree was also a part of the hidden Celtic origin or creation story.

### **The Sacred Bile**

“It is very likely that this tree worship takes us back to the beginning of the Irish as a people and to a religion that is much older than Christianity.”

*from the Holy Wells of Ireland by Patrick Logan*

Each Irish Tuatha had a special tree that was chosen to represent the heart and spirit of the tribe. This was known as the Bile. This tree connected the tuatha to the Three Worlds and the Gods. It was a place of meetings, especially those requiring the resolution of spiritual matters and kingship. Patrick Logan showed in his book “The Holy Wells of Ireland,” how these Bile were frequently located next to sacred wells (which were also considered to be passageways to the Gods and the Otherworld). Some of the famous sacred Bile are: Eó Mugna (an oak), Eó Rossa (a yew), Bile Tortu (an ash), Bile Magh-Adair (sacred tree of the ÓBriens.. probably an oak), Ruadbetheach (Red Beech, sacred tree of the ÓConnors), Craebh-telcha (sacred tree of the

Ulaidh), Bile Tulach Oc (sacred tree of the ÓNeills), Crann Áhulla (a stunted ash), Bile Brighid (a sacred oak in Kildare) ....there are/were many, many others.”

When we consider the Ogham to be sacred knowledge we also acknowledge that its trees are sacred. The connection of name, sound, elemental meaning, tree and sacred nature will be demonstrated in the correspondences that are revealed between the Ogham and the knowledge of Druids. The Tree of the North is Birch It represents both Destiny and Rebirth. The Tree of the East is Oak and is the home of both Prosperity and Strength. The Tree of the South is actually the Reed through which we receive both Music and Healing. The Tree of the West is the Aspen, the Summit of Knowledge and Death’s own measure. The Tree at the center of life has its roots in the Depths of the Sea. Its trunk climbs through the Mound of the Kings. The shelter of its branches is the Roof of the Sky. It is the web of being for Land, Sea and Sky. It is the center of heart, tribe and nation. It is the Crann Beithadh, the Tree of Life. It is the Sacred Bile.

Alexei Kondratiev clarifies this idea of a sacred tree at the center of the tribe or a World Tree for us in his remarks from an internet email list:

"The World Tree or World Axis is a concept basic to I-E (Indo-European) cosmology (and found among other cultures of the area as well). In the East it's usually conceived of as a mountain, in the West as a tree (a concept shared with Finno-Ugric tradition, perhaps witnessing to mutual influence). The practical meaning of the World Tree is that it extends between the planes, joining the world of mortals to the various spirit-worlds; and as such the image is very important in ritual contexts. While we don't have unambiguous, historically documented evidence that the pre-Christian Celts shared in these cosmological and ritual beliefs, it's unlikely in the extreme that they didn't, given how general and basic they are, and how unexceptional Celtic beliefs appear in the I-E context. The sacred trees in Celtic ritual space aren't "totemic", but representations of the World Tree serving as communication between the planes. In later temples of the "Belgic" type the 'bilios' is represented by a strategically placed wooden pillar -- again, a feature of Eurasian religious architecture whose "world axis" meaning is well known.

Although it's not named as such, echoes of the World Tree in story appear, for instance, in *Baile in Scáil*, where it marks the place where Conn meets the Sovereignty of Ireland (going from the mundane world to the place where divinities live); and in *Istoria Peredur*, where it grows at the boundary of the worlds of life and death, and clearly exists in both."

Tributes and poetry from the Celtic past describe the relationship of the Celts to their sacred trees. It was through trees that the people connected to the spirit of their land as well as through the kings who ruled and lived at the center.

## **Bile Tortan**

"Three landmarks of Erin, thou seest, are shorn of their strength, the Tree of Ross, the mighty Tree of Mugna, and the red sided Tree of Tortu."

*In Part IV of The Metrical Dindshenchas translated by Edward Gwynn:*

There were five trees in all: The Tree of Ross, the Tree of Mugna and the Tree of Tortu, the three listed above, a Yew, an Oak, and an Ash, respectively. The other two were the Ash of Dathí and the Ash of Usnech. In the dindshenchas about Bile Tortan, it is likened to the entire tribe and is mourned in a way that suggests that The Morrigan has harvested their sons like firewood:

"The woman who loosed their fair locks, many a trim sandal hath she loosed: gleefully she laughed at the felling of Tort's Tree."

It was felled by a wind that would not stop (perhaps the change of religions, though I suspect this could also refer to the loss of a great leader in battle or of a way of life due to invasions). It is said that "...from the roots of the illustrious Tree many a tree might spring." In another work, "Iomarbhagh na bhFilidh," the finding of the sacred tree is said to have occurred on the night of the birth of Conn cé-tach, though in other tales these trees are said to be from a branch of the 'Tree of Lebanon' or the seed of Trefuilngid Tre-eochair (as found in the tale, "The Settling of the Mansion of Tara"). This is clearly a case where the fate of the king, the tribe and the Land is tied to the fate of the sacred bile.

## **Mourned by the Saints**

In "Bile Tortan" from the Metrical Dindshenchas we are told that the ancient tree stood in the lands of the Ui Tortan near Ardraccan which is close to Navan in Meath. It is said to have fallen during the reign of Aedh Sláne during the 4th century CE. In the dindshenchas its merits are lauded by a list of saints. The poem itself might have been composed to mourn the death of Aedh though I think it could also signal the loss of poetry or a way of life:

"Ultan. Fallen is the Tree of Tortu, whose skirts conquered many a storm:... even so they would disperse.

Mochuma. The Tree of Tortu looks down on strife: name ye among the wise him who writes of it! here it stands from the time that it was green till the season of its decay.

Mochua. Sad are all the men of Tortu, mourning for that single tree; dearer to them is the thing they see than all things that are gone from us.

Croin Galma. When the men of Tortu used to meet together round the huge conspicuous tree, the pelting of the storms did not reach them, until the day when it was decayed.

Colum Cille. Though it is withered now, it had not an early end: long has it been on earth: the King who created its form has brought it low again.



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Ultan of Tech Tu/a. Fifty cubits is the thickness of the tree that overpeered the array of the forest: three hundred cubits, famous count, was the full height of its timber.

Mochuma. Three landmarks of Erin, thou seest, are shorn of their strength, the Tree of Ross, the mighty Tree of Mugna, and the red-sided Tree of Tortu.

Mochúa. Deep was the sound of the Tree of Tortu in the storm's fierce torment: the moaning of the wind on winter nights has torn from it here many a swarm of leaves.

Ultan. It found an abode over strong Tortu from the time of the sons of mighty Míl, until its colour faded and it fell, in the time of the sons of Aedh Sláne.

Croin Galma. A wind laid the Tree low - none that is not hard of heart can bear the loss - and it crushed thrice fifty victims of the Conaille, at their fair.

Sinche. Beldame, though thou breakest faggots from its bole on thy hearth, there was many a fair youth that has slept under its bright branches.

Ultan of Tech Tua. The Woman who loosed their fair locks, many a trim sandal hath she loosed: gleefully she laughed at the felling of Tortu's Tree.

Croin Galma. All that meet the eye must fall: they joined in stubborn conflict: the wind withdrew not its hand until it brought down Tortu's pride.

Mochua. To all things come decay: all men in the world go toward death: they are but red earth and lifeless clay, all folk that gathered round Tortu's tree.

Ultan. The plain of Tortu is a plain without a ruler since it lost its noble tree: two parts of its prosperity are gone since the Tree fell.

Torannán. Adam's transgression of old hath undone the children of the free people: such is the lot in store for us since their mighty Tree withered.

Colum Cille. Deserted is Ochann, and noble Tlachtga, since Aillil, son of Nathí, is gone, the chief of the strong troops, that rode through Meath: a death not like that of any other Tree.

Mochua. I am Mochua: I bid Croin not to grieve excessively: from the roots of the illustrious Tree many a tree might spring.

Colum Cille. On a certain summer's day I was in the wood of tufted leafage, having an errand to perform: the crown of Tortu's Tree gave me shelter.

Mochuma. No comfort have I, though the winds stir the treetops of the wood to laughter: today a solitary housewife breaks faggots from the Tree of Tortu.

Ulta, Though the wind made rough sport with it, it could not break the Tree while it was young; but it brings to the ground all that is old: this I know by the Tree of Tortu."

The loss of a sacred tree in Ireland was mourned like the death of a family member or a way of life. This sense of loss is echoed in modern times in such works as *Gone With the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell (regarding the loss of the Southern way of living following the American War Between the States). Among the Celts and the Irish, many qualities and characteristics were ascribed to the tree. Some of these are mentioned in the following section on wood lore.

### Wood Lore

Traditionally, the three sacred woods of the faerie were said to be oak, ash, and thorn.

The Modern Wiccan Rede also advises us to use nine woods for sacred fire, but admonishes us not to use the elder tree, as this is sacred to the Goddess.

Ian Corrigan, a modern Druid, singled out these trees as sacred woods for the fire in his practice of Drúidheachd: oak, hazel, rowan, holly, yew, ash, pine, apple and willow.

Suibhne Geilt seemed to especially hallow these trees: oak, hazel, alder, blackthorn, apple, rowan, yew, holly, birch, poplar.

According to the Book of Ballymote, the eight chieftain trees of the Ogham are alder, oak, hazel, vine, ivy, sloe, furze, and heath. The eight peasant trees are birch, rowan, willow, ash, hawthorn, whin and apple.

I personally think that it can be seen that to make a sacred fire, one needs three or nine woods. If it is to be three woods, I'd choose oak, ash and thorn. For nine woods, I would either use all oak (nine separate trees) or I'd generally use: oak, hazel, rowan, holly, yew, ash, pine, apple and willow. If I had a more specific working in mind, I'd consult the Ogham for the appropriate tree/quality/dúile correspondences before building my own teine éigin.



### The Battle of the Trees

No book about Ogham and trees would be complete without including the wood lore and the kennings of Cad Goddeu in its ranks. This tale is filled with many layers of meaning about the tree lore of the Druids. It takes the form of a battle saga and was probably also a teaching aid for the instruction of young Druids and Bards. The original poem is attributed to Taliesin. I've included a modified and updated version of a Victorian translation of this poem. I've also consulted a variety of Internet translations to balance my own compilation that is provided below. The entire work is said to describe a battle that occurred between Amathaon ap Don and Arawn, King of Annwn. Gwydion, Llew, and Achren were on the side of their kinsman Amathaon and Bran was on the side of Arawn. Each side had a person who could not be defeated in battle unless their names were guessed (signifying that the name has an inherent power among Celts). Gwydion eventually was able to guess that Bran was the man of the hidden name and

undefeated powers supporting Arawn in the battle. This allowed Amathaon to triumph. Here is the poem that Gwydion is said to have uttered when he realized the secret of the name:

Sure footed is my steed, forward under spurring,  
The lofty limbs of alder are on your shield;  
Bran is your name, of the bright branches.  
Strongly-hoofed is my horse, on the day of battle:  
The lofty limbs of the alder are in your hand;  
Bran is your name, revealed by the branch you brandish -  
Amathaon the Good is triumphant.

Robert Graves based his book, *The White Goddess* on this work as well as his invented tree calendar. Though much of that work is speculation, some of it is useful. Indeed some of Graves' work has been in use so long by so many that it has taken on a reality of its own among Neo-Pagans. If this information does not disagree with what is known from the ancient ways, then it will be used and synchronized with our own knowledge base. We will be referring to the information of the Cad Goddeu often as we consider the meanings and correspondences of each Ogham. I have edited and compiled a version of Cad Goddeu from a variety of sources to use in that effort. In my editorial attempts, I took the liberty of using Pagan references to replace those that were obviously Christian. It is my belief that the Celts formed a melding in their approach to Pagan and Christian deities, blending the boundaries between them. I do not believe that this blending or substitution of concepts has diminished the usefulness of the poem or the impact of its reading.

### **Cad Goddeu**

*(compiled from translations by D. W. Nash, Robert Graves,  
Meirion Pennar, W.F. Skene and the Revd. Robert Williams)*

### **The Battle of the Trees**

I have existed in many forms,  
Before I became human.  
I have been a narrow variegated sword blade.  
(I will believe it when it appears.)  
I have been a drop of rain in the air.  
I have been a shining star.  
I have been a word in a letter.  
I have been the first book.  
I have been a light from a lantern.  
For a year and a half.  
I have been a bridge spanning  
Three-score rivers.  
I have flown as an eagle.  
I have been a coracle on the sea.  
I have been a leader in battle.  
I have been a complaint at a banquet.

I have been a sword in the hand.  
I have been a shield in the fight.  
I have been the string of a harp,  
Enchanted for a year  
In the foam of water.  
I have been a spark in the fire.  
I have been a tree in a hidden grove.  
There is nothing in which I have not existed.  
I have fought, though small,  
In the Battle of Goddeu Brig,  
Before the Ruler of Britain,  
Abounding in fleets.  
Lesser bards pretend,  
They create illusions of a monstrous beast,  
With a hundred heads,  
And stories of a grievous combat

At the root of the tongue.  
And another fight there is  
At the back of its head.  
A toad having on his thighs  
A hundred claws,  
A speckled crested snake,  
For punishing in their flesh  
A hundred souls on account of their errors.  
I was in Caer Efyneidd,  
A gathering of trees and grass.  
Those who saw them,  
Warriors and by-standers alike were astonished  
At the song of the conflicts,  
  
As the trees rose to battle,  
That Gwydion made there.  
There was a calling on Neifon,  
And on the Young Son that he would come  
To save them,  
The all-powerful Druid.  
If he had answered,  
Through charms and Draíocht,  
By assuming the forms of the principal trees,  
With you in ranks  
Restraining the people  
Inexperienced in battle.  
When the enchantment came upon them,  
There was hope among the trees,  
That they could escape from the nature  
Of the surrounding fires....  
Better are three as a triad,  
Within a circle of enjoyment,  
And one of them relating  
The story of the beginning of things,  
And one of them the tale of heroes,  
And another of them the ever approaching  
end of time.  
The alder-trees were the first in line,  
They commenced the battle.  
The Willow and the quicken tree,  
They were slow to gain an order.  
The blackthorn is a prickly tree  
That men do not love;  
The elaborate medlar is of a like nature,  
Struggling against severe labor.  
The thorny rose bushes came against

An army of phantoms.  
The raspberry formed a circle  
For the defense of life.  
In the shelter of the other trees,  
The privet and the woodbine  
And the ivy in its season are best suited to reside.  
Gorse is mighty in battle.  
The cherry-tree was alarmed.  
The birch, though very magnanimous,  
Was late in joining the ordered ranks;  
It was not through cowardice,  
But on account of his great size.  
The almond arose and appeared  
As an exotic tree of a foreign nature.  
The pine-tree in the center of the hall,  
Strong in battle,  
By me greatly exalted  
In the presence of kings,  
The elm-trees are his subjects.  
He turns not aside the measure of a foot,  
But strikes right in the middle,  
And at the farthest end.  
The hazel is the judge,  
His nuts are your dowry.  
The privet is blessed.  
Bull of battle, king of the world,  
And the ... and the mulberry.  
Prosperous is the beech.  
The holly is dark green,  
  
A hero putting forth new growth.  
He was very courageous:  
The hawthorn defended with spikes  
on every side,  
Wounding the hands.  
The long-enduring aspens  
Very much broken in fight.  
The plundered fern;  
The brooms with their offspring:  
The furze was not well behaved  
Until he was tamed  
The heather was giving consolation,  
  
Victorious and deftly comforting the people -  
The black cherry-tree was pursuing.  
The oak-tree swiftly moving,  
Before him trembled Sky and Land,

Stout doorkeeper against the foe  
Is his name among all people.  
The corn-cockle bound together,  
Was given to be burnt.  
Others were rejected  
On account of the holes made in them  
By great violence  
In the field of battle.  
Very wrathful the ...  
Cruel the gloomy ash.  
Bashful the chestnut-tree,  
Retreating from happiness.  
There will be a black darkness,  
There will be a shaking of the mountain,  
There will be a purifying fire,  
There will be a first great wave,  
And when the shout is heard,  
Putting forth new leaves are the tops  
of the birch,  
Changing form and being renewed from  
winter's death;  
Entangled are the tops of the oak for us  
From the Gorchan of Maeldrew.  
Smiling from the face of the rock  
(Was) the pear-tree not of an ardent nature.  
Neither of mother or father,  
Was I made,  
My blood and creation are  
Of nine forms of elements,  
Of fruition of fruits,  
Of fruits of the earth Math and Gwydion made  
me,  
Of the blossom of the mountain primrose,  
Of the buds of trees and shrubs,  
Of soil of earthly kind.  
When I was made  
Of the blossoms of the nettle,  
Of the water of the ninth wave,  
I was conjured forth by Math  
Before I became immortal.  
I was enchanted by Gwydion,  
Great enchanter of the Britons,  
Of Eurys, of Eurwn,  
Of Euron, of Modron,  
In myriads of secrets and wizards,

I am as learned as Math who fashioned me.  
I know about the Guledig  
When he was half burnt.  
I know the star-knowledge  
Of stars before the world (was made),  
Where I was born,  
There are many worlds.  
It is the custom of skillful Bards  
To recite the praise of their country.  
I have played in Lloughor,  
I have slept in purple.  
Was I not in the enclosure  
With Dylan Ail Mor,  
Around the edge and in the center  
Between the two knees of the king  
Upon two blunt spears?  
When from the Sky came  
The torrents into the Depths,  
Rushing with violent impulse.  
(I know) four-score hundred songs,  
For administering to their pleasure.  
There is neither old nor young,  
Except me as to their poems,  
Any other singer who knows the whole of the  
nine hundred  
Which are known to me,  
Concerning the blood-spotted sword.  
Honor is my guide.  
Profitable learning is from the Gods.  
(I know) of the slaying of the boar,  
Its appearing, its disappearing,  
Its knowledge of languages.  
(I know) the light whose name is Splendor,  
And the number of the ruling lights  
That scatter rays of fire  
High above the deep.  
Llwch, he leads a host.  
I have been a speckled snake upon a hill;  
I have been a viper in a lake;  
I have been an evil star formerly.  
I have been a mill wheel.  
My clothing is red all over.  
I prophesy no evil.  
Four score puffs of smoke  
To every one who I will carry away:

## Ogham Divination

A hundred slave girls,  
Are the value of my knife.  
Handsome is the golden horse,  
But a hundred times better  
Is my chestnut one,  
Swift as a seagull,  
Which cannot pass me  
Between the sea and the shore.  
Am I not pre-eminent in the field of blood?  
I have a hundred shares of the spoil.  
My wreath is of red jewels,  
Of gold is the border of my shield.  
There has not been born in the gap  
    one so good as I,  
Or ever known,  
Except Goronwy,  
From the dales of Edrywy.  
Long and white are my fingers,

It is long since I was a herdsman.  
I travelled over the earth  
Before I became a learned person.  
I have travelled, I have made a circuit,  
I have slept in a hundred islands;  
I have dwelt in a hundred cities.  
Learned Druids,  
Prophecy to Arthur  
What will be, what is,  
  
What once was understood:  
About the Great Sacrifice,  
And the ever approaching end of time,  
And a tale relating  
The history of Creation.  
We would sing an invocation to the shrubs  
In golden enriching tones;  
I indulge myself in the pleasures  
    of the prophecy of Virgil.

Entire books have been written to interpret the meanings of *Cad Goddeu* (*The White Goddess* being one of them). It concerns a symbolic battle of Bards and Poetry, using the wisdom of the learned class. It seems to draw from a knowledge of Ogham. Many of its part seems almost like a tree version of the Battle of Moytura to me. Amathaon, son of Don, seems to be a version of The Dagda, son of Danu (also perhaps Amathaon's name is shortened and presented as Math in the Mabinogi). Amathaon the Good and The Dagda (The Good God) seem to be cognate in my opinion. Gwydion seems to be like Ogma. Bran and Arawn seem to be playing the roles of Balor and Elatha in a sense. The loss of heads and the imparting of wisdom and protection from them seem to be parallels in works about Balor and Bran. A discussion of this associated information is far beyond the scope of this book or the available space for the present work. Perhaps a deeper discussion can be continued in another volume regarding the ways of *Draíocht* as schools for modern Druids are developed in *The Summerlands*. I will not attempt to do so at this time due primarily to the need to stay focused on the Ogham and their use in divination.

Now that we've briefly discussed the *Cad Goddeu* and have seen the many different ways the Druids, Bards, Poets and ancestors used the sacred trees, let's discuss ways to receive such woods for our own uses (especially for the making of our own Ogham fedha). We should remember that a Druid always asks the trees themselves for permission, before taking any woods from a living tree.

## Choosing a Tree

In my opinion, the important factors to consider in choosing a tree (or trees) for your Ogham fedha are:

1. Selecting trees that have a special relationship to you already;
2. Picking a tree that has been marked by the gods (lightning, fire, winds, floods, or earth movements);
3. Asking a tree to “give” you the wood that you need (my wife actually had a sycamore release a limb to give her a beater for her drum);
4. Receiving the woods as a gift from a loved one or a magical partner (or both if you’re lucky).

One should always first seek permission from the Mother of the Grove, before seeking a tree for a cutting. This is the ancestor tree of all the trees in that area. When She/He has granted your request, leave a small gift and then seek among the trees of the grove. Listen carefully and commune with each tree until you and a tree choose one another. If the tree that you’ve chosen grants you the wood, then, and only then should you cut a branch or limb from the tree. I also suggest leaving a gift for the chosen tree and those that live within it as well. This could be a libation of water, some fertilizer, tobacco, or cornmeal, or even a seedling. Eventually, a tree will choose you just as you have chosen a tree. Have patience. There are many pathways into the forest, and we have only to keep our eyes on the trail to find the way.



## Bri, Bua and Blood

Once, the wood has been received, then the process of empowering, charging, and shaping them should be done. If using hand tools is your choice, that is well, by all means use them, but power tools are also acceptable (depending on the interconnection between the seer and the machinery). Call upon the gods of your people; chant their names; state your purpose and let the your own personal power (Sean ÓTuathail calls this “bri”) flow into the fedha as they are fashioned. With repeated use, their “bri” will be augmented by a form of ritualized power known as “bua.” As in all Magical undertakings, consistency of action and thought allow the forces of one’s spirit to shape the nature of power.

## The Two Forms of Power

When we consider the ways that the Druids used and controlled power, we really are talking about two forms of power: inherent power and redirected power. In esoteric matters, as with all other forms, energy has to obey certain laws. One of these laws is the Law of Conservation of Energy. This law basically states that energy can exist in two forms, but that it cannot be destroyed, only used. The types of energy are kinetic (energy in motion) or potential (energy that has power but no outlet). Another law that all forms of energy obeys is the famous Einsteinian equation of  $E=mc^2$ . This law says that energy can be converted into matter and light or vice versa. It is another way of saying that energy has two forms and defining the relationships that those forms can take.

All this talk about energy and the laws it obeys is necessary so that we can discuss the two forms of energy used by the Druids in their Draiocht: Briga and Búa. These two forms of energy are used to empower your Ogham fedha. Briga is another name for the inherent potential energy of anything as well as the naturally occurring ways in which this energy is converted to kinetic energy. A waterfall is a great example of briga. It is “high” which gives it lots of briga, yet it works in conjunction with gravity and the mass/connectivity of water to “flow” over a cliff and fall into a pool or a river bed below. Most of the power of a waterfall is contained in its creative structure and its very existence. How high is it? How much water flows over it in a minute? How does it impact us by its roar and its grandeur? A mill or a waterwheel is a good example of the other form of energy, which the Druids called “búa.” Búa is a word that describes how energy is used, shaped and channeled. It is a word closely associated with skill and action. Búa is how the waterwheel or the mill uses the briga of the waterfall. The briga of the waterfall is converted into búa by the “briga” of the waterwheel.

### **The Siege of Knocklong**

An excellent example of how briga and búa were used by a Druid is found in the tale, “The Siege of Knocklong.” In this story, the army of Munster is battling against an invading army from Ulster. The major forces at work are Druidic and Otherworldly. I shall speak to the Druidic forces in this message. The Munster Druid, Mug Roith, was called upon to battle a fire that had been created by the Ulster Druid, Ciathruidh. Mug Roith had his helpers gather Rowan wood that had grown in a certain place to create a fire. Next, he had each warrior provide a shaving from the haft of his or her spears. All of this was bundled together into a ball by using butter. After performing suitable invocations to his personal God and while observing all of the appropriate forms. Mug Roith threw his created ball of spear shavings and butter into the rowanwood fire. This created a counter fire and a Magical smoke that Mug Roith ascended while dressed in his bullhide cloak and wearing his feathered bird headdress. The battle was taken into the Otherworld at this point and Ciathruaidh and Mug Roith battled within the clouds. The fires on the surface of the land followed the battle in the clouds. As one prevailed, so did the other. In the end, it was Mug Roith who was the victor. Ciathruaidh and his assistants were turned into stones.

In this tale, the Druid takes the briga of the rowan and the briga of the warriors’ valor and turns it into a new creation by converting it into búa. This conversion process was facilitated by the Magical fire as well as the chanted incantations. The entire working was used to provide a channel for the bri to flow within. Mogh Roith guided the actual búa of the conversion while in his Shamanic state of consciousness known as “Magical Flight.” No energy was lost but much energy was converted between this world and the Otherworld. The skill of the Draiocht was in shaping the working by recognizing what elements of briga were available and necessary and then providing a means for converting that briga into the búa of the working. By his success in the battle, Mug Roith increased his own briga and his ability to channel búa.



## The Empowering of Ogham Fedha

The empowering of Ogham fedha is no different from the techniques used by Mug Roith. When we empower them through a flow of *búa* from our own inner briga. The use of blood to stain the *fidh* is not necessary (though it is a powerful technique for such things and a way of binding them to you). Using blood, water, paint, stains, berries, etc., are more a matter of personal choice and the spirit of the moment. What is required, is that the Ogham establish a direct link with you and your *Anam*. Sweating, chanting, the exercise of personal conviction, and the infusion of your own personal spirituality are sufficient to this task. It was the knife of Ogma that was a mother to the Ogham but it was his immortal spirit that was their father.

After their construction is complete, your *fedha* can be used in Ogham Divination by selecting them (in sets of nine, one for each respective *dúile*) and by casting them upon a cloth. The casting cloth itself should be white with suitable cosmological symbols in the center and at its four corners (in the finest of Northern European traditions). The symbols that are selected for the corners are used to orient the cloth to the four cardinal directions, while the symbols of the center are used to interpret the meanings and relationships of the Ogham *fidh* themselves. The entire cloth should represent the elements of the Cosmos while the Ogham *fidh* can be said to represent the *dúile* of the self (more details will be given later). I will be discussing these relationships more completely throughout this work and will be giving specific examples of my own use of Ogham in the sample readings that are provided in the last section of this book.



## Ogham Types

The Ogham were also used for grave marker inscriptions, property markers and message/warnings between warriors. Another use of Ogham was in Magical inscriptions upon objects. It is thought that the *Filidh* carved Ogham upon their wands and staffs for Magical as well as memory aiding purposes (examples have also been found of wands carved with spirals). In addition to carving Ogham on wood, bone and stone, the *Filidh* used “Hand Ogham,” “Nose Ogham,” or “Leg Ogham” to secretly converse in sign language during meetings and rituals. The fingers were used to form the Ogham characters themselves and either the nose or the shinbone were used for a *druim*. These particular Ogham may also have been used to coordinate the singing and the performance of music as well (a traditional use of hand signals among the Greeks, the Chinese, the Hindus and a variety of ancient people). In addition to the standard forms of Ogham, many other types of Ogham in a multitude of differing shapes and styles are shown within the Book of Ballymote. Some of these alternative Ogham are: Shield Ogham, Host Ogham, Ridgeless Ogham, Snake through the Heath Ogham, and Infilleted Ogham. Most of these alternative Ogham characters are found only in the Book of Ballymote text and a few of the other scholarly writings that reference it. The Ogham type that was most often found on marker stones and *fedha* was generally the simplest form; without all of the “bells and whistles” of the alternative figures. If we wish to master the ancient wisdom of the Ogham, we must start with a discussion of the ways of the Wise Ones who first mastered them. These masters were/are the Druids and *Filidh*, the Masters of Wisdom.



## **Masters of Wisdom**

Who were these Druids and Filidh and how did they master their arts and the secrets of the Ogham? Much more is known about the training and education of a Filidh than is known about that of a Druid. It is generally accepted that the Filidh and the Druids studied similar topics and techniques, though the primary work of each was somewhat different. It is my opinion that the Druids studied the curriculum of the Filidh (poetry, traditions, music and seership), and that they also acquired knowledge in several other areas (such as medicine, warfare, judgments and smithcraft). When I discuss the abilities of the Filidh in this study, I am also referring to the talents and/or skills that were possessed by the Druids as well. The words “Filidecht” and “Draíocht” are used interchangeably within the text. Learning the Ogham forms and studying the Ogham lists was a basic requirement in the education of both a Druid and a Filidh. The Druidic Bards and Filidh studied for as long as 12 to 20 years to learn the epics, chants, spells and histories of their peoples and clans. These works were memorized exactly as given and were a requirement for advancement to any higher or inner levels of the Druidic ranks. Each retelling had to be rendered perfectly, and with feeling, so that the listeners would be spell bound. The story recited by the Filidh played across the inner vision of the audiences as each person relived the events within their own minds (or recalled the working, learned the knowledge, opened the pathways, parted the mists, used the second sight, etc.). Many levels of awareness were involved in such poetical experiences. Many different techniques were used by the Filidh to enchant their listeners. These Bards and the Filidh may have brought many different levels of knowledge and study to the workings. Sometimes a Master chanted alone. Sometimes the Filidh filled the hallways with group chanting. Sometimes they used instruments for accompaniment and effect. At other times, the power of their words alone was deemed appropriate. To better understand the diversity of the Filidh, their music, their Ogham, and their chanting, let’s look at their divisions and levels of accomplishment.



## Levels of Filidh

The Irish Filidh had the following levels of standing: “a ‘Fochlac’, a ‘MacFiuirmedh’, a ‘Doss’, a ‘Cana’, a ‘Cli’, and an ‘Anrad’, with an ‘Ollamh’ as the seventh.” The following table gives some idea of the amount of study and lore that they accomplished in their training:

**The Training and Levels of the Filidh**

Class	Year	Tales	Level
Ollaire, Taman, and Drisac	1	20	Elementary Students
Fochlac	2	30	Advanced Beginner
MacFiuirmedh	3	40	Intermediate
Doss	4	50	Advanced Intermediate
Cana	5	60	Advanced
Cli	6	80	Journeyman
Ánrad	7-9	175	Master/Warrior
Ollamh	10-12	350	Doctor/Judge

This study consisted of tales that were of mythical, ethical and political importance, as well as a study in the techniques of poetry, divination, satire, blessing and praise. In addition to the literary aspects of the traditions, they also learned matters relating to herbal lore, Draíocht and the Brehon Laws. Let’s see what the aspiring Druid/Filidh studied along with their Ogham.



## Prim- Scéla

The Prim-Scéla or “Primary Tales” that a Filidh was expected to know are said to have included:

- Aideda** “Death Tales and Violent Deaths,”
- Aitheda** “Elopements,”
- Baile** (buile) “Frenzies and Visions,”
- Cathanna** “Battles,”
- Comperta** “Conceptions and Begettings,”
- Echtraí** “Otherworldly Journeys and Adventures,”
- Fess** (feis) “Feasts,” Fis “Visions,”
- Forbasa** “sieges,” Imrama “Sea Voyages,”
- Longes** “Exiles,”

**Oircne** (orcun) “Murderings and Ravagings  
**Serca** “Loves,”  
**Slúagada** “Hostings and Military Expeditions,”  
**Tána** “Cattle Raids,”  
**Tochmarca** “Wooings and Courtings,”  
**Tochomluda** “Setting Forths and Advancings,”  
**Togla** “Attacks and Destructions,”  
**Tomadmann** “Bursting Forths of Lakes or Rivers,” and  
**Úatha** “Terrors and Horrors.”

The form of some of these tales is thought to be a later addition to the repertoire of a Filidh (such as the Imrama and the Echtraí), though the subject matter of most of them is much earlier and heroic or mythic in nature. Traditionally a Filidh would recite the appropriate tale for the particular circumstances or occasion, as well as being able to recite a different story for each night of the long winter from Samhain to Bealtaine. In addition to the 150+ Prim-Scéla there were also additional tales known only to the four highest levels of Filidh. These may have concerned the more esoteric knowledge attained at this level such as Imbas Forosnai “Knowledge that Illuminates,” Tenm Laegda “Illumination by Chanting,” and Dichetal Do Chennaibh “Extemporaneous Incantation Using the Ends of the Fingers.” In my opinion, these techniques are similar to those already outlined for our use in Ogham Divination, particularly in the ways that they connect the dúile and the Coire, (but that is definitely another story for another time and place). Beyond the Primary Tales and the secondary Tales, there were also tales known as Dindshenchas “Place Name Origins” and Échta “Exploits” which could be related to the people and the gatherings.

### A Few Examples

A few excellent examples of such primary tales that come readily to mind are:

1. **Táin Bó Cuailgne, “The Cattle Raid of Cooley”** (the conflict between the Men of Ireland and Cú Chulainn, the Hound of Ulster),
2. **Cath Maige Tuired, “The Battle of Moytura”** (the taking of Ireland from the Fomorí by the Tuatha Dé Danann), and
3. **Forbhais Droma Dámhgháire, “The Siege of Knocklong”** (a conflict between Tara and Munster that is resolved in battle by the Druid Mug Roith).

In just these three tales alone, we are shown the inner workings of Irish Celtic honor codes, marriage, kingship, inter-provincial political conflict, the relationships of the primal and the higher deities, and several techniques of Draíocht. How much more would we know and learn if all of the tales were available to us? Such was the knowledge base of the Filidh and the Druids. Many of these tales share a combination of both prose and poetry (which were both used to advantage by the Filidh in achieving the desired effects and impacts upon their listeners). Poetry was included in the twelve years of study by the Filidh, which is the next topic that I’d like to briefly discuss.



## Becoming a Poet

In the first year of study, a fledgling Filidh (known as a Fochlac) would study Ogham, grammar, and tales only. No poetry was involved. In the second year of the Mac Fuirmedh, the knowledge base was built upon a study of Ogham, introductory poetry and more tales. The third year of study covered Ogham, philosophy, poetry, and advanced grammar. At the completion of this study, one was considered a “Dos.” In the fifth year of study, the curriculum included Brethna Nemed (“Law of Privileges”), Eman (“poems with couplets sharing form and meaning”/ simple spells), and even more of the tales. At the completion of this study, one was considered a “Cana” (a singer of tales and poems...perhaps even a Bard?). Year five included more grammar and more tales. The sixth year of study introduced the secret Language of Poets, Nuath (“Poetic Elegies”) and more tales. In the seventh year one studied the Brosnacha (“miscellanies”) and the Laws of Bardism. At this point, the study moved beyond mental and physical exercises into more esoteric practices. The eighth year saw the study of Prosody, Dindshenchas (“Place name origins”), Teinm Laegda (“Divination by use of song”), Imbas Forosnaí (“Illumination by use of the Hands”), Dichetal Do Chennaibh (“Inspiration by means of the Fingers”). This was the Filidh level of Cli (this word seems to be associated with the body and heart as well as with apple trees). After the 8<sup>th</sup> year, a Filidh was expected to be able to compose his/her own incantations, poems and spells. In the ninth year, Sennat (“Poems of Ancient Wisdom”), Luasca (“Chants of swinging and Rhythmic Oscillation”), Nena (“Truthsaying?”), Eochraid (“Warding and shielding?”), Sruith (“Veneration” - Calling the Ancestors?) were studied. In addition to continuing a study of poetry and lore, the Filidh learned the technique of Duili Feda (“Mastery of the Elements”) in the tenth year. At this level, one became an Ánrad (A Filidh of second degree which in Old Irish means “a hero, warrior, champion”), a formidable Druid/Filidh of great power. The following year centered around the poetic form called Anamain, “Magical Toning and Use of the Breath.” In the final year of study, the Ánrad studied and wrote: Cetals, “Religious Chants”; the Four Arts of Poetry; more tales; Anruth, “Glorious Victories.” Achieving the spiritual knowledge of this year qualified one to the title of Ollamh, “Master Druid/Filidh/Poet/Doctor.” Such Druid greats as: Morann Mac Main, Amergin, Nede Mac Adne, Cathbad, and Mug Roith, practiced their arts at this level of Draíocht.



## The Ollamh, Master of Poetry

The Ollamh was the highest level of the Filidh in ancient Gaelic society. These masters were on a level with kings (indeed, the King of Tara could not speak until after the chief Ollamh had first spoken). The job of the Ollamh went beyond mere words and music, serving to bridge the gap between this world and the Otherworld at times. Specifically chosen music and poetic meter accompanied poetical recital. These meters were chosen from the “Dan Direach” (a body of poetic knowledge containing over a hundred separate meters, each a specific poetic significance

and application). Each such meter had an individual title, such as “Rannaigheacht dialtach mhor,” (“great one-syllabled versification”), and an accompanying explanatory formula. The music that was provided to accompany poetic recitals was normally played on the harp, using the three strains of the poet:

1. The “**Goitrai**” or the “Sorrowful Strain,” so that anyone who heard the music would weep;
2. The “**Geantraí**” or the “Joyful Strain,” so that the listeners should laugh in delight;
3. The “**Suantraí**” or the “Sleep Strain,” so that dreams would come along with sleep.

Beyond the three strains, the accompaniment of the harp, and the hundred poetic meters, as well as the thousands of carefully remembered and recited words, was the Magick of Filidecht. It is my belief that this Magical power of the harp and the three strains was derived from the Ogham, and its ability to link words, music, dúile and cosmos. Just as Amergin stilled the waves and cleared the mists; or as the Dagda called forth the seasons with his harp, so it was (and is) that the Ogham have tied Filidecht to the harmony of the stars:

*“Come Daur-dablao,  
Come Cetharchair,  
Come summer,  
Come winter,  
Mouths of harps and bags and pipes!”*

Twelve years of study were required to become an Ollamh. Before I attempt to develop the specific links between the Ogham, music, the planets and the stars, let’s see what keys were used by the Filidh to pass through the doorways of the Wise. As I’ve previously stated, it is my thinking that the Ogham were such keys. They are the Eochra Éocsi.



## **Eochra Éocsi**

Let’s see how the Ogham were used in Celtic Magic, Draíocht and Filidecht. Discovering such techniques (and their use as keys) is difficult at best, because such information was not well documented. In fact, the use of Ogham by the Celts and the Druids seems to have been purposely concealed (many statements exist in the writings regarding the attitude that Ogham were reserved for the “learned” classes). There are references to the practice of “crannchur” (the casting of lots using wood or stone). There is also mention of “fidlanna” (a word that means “the placing and/or carving of Ogham fedha for use in divination”). The game of “fidchell” (wood wisdom) was an early forerunner of chess and a favorite of kings and nobility (as well as the gods...it was sometimes played to determine the fate of mortals). The Ogham are also mentioned to be the “eochra éocsi” (keys of wisdom/seership) in several texts. To discover the ways that Ogham were used, I had to seek my own “Imbas Forosnai” and await that “sudden knowledge of illumination” that comes out of the darkness, as well as using some good old fashioned common sense. It is my belief that each Druid eventually established his/her own set of Magical Ogham

## Ogham Divination

meanings. These meanings and associations would have come out of the “inner work” that each student was expected to perform (in this, the Ogham would be akin to the Runes, which Odin was said to have “received” while suffering a shamanic death, a sacrifice of himself to himself). The Ogham tables would then have become the “keys” to that Druid’s own personal or family gods. These keys would then have been used to divine the future, commune with the Gods, or to travel spiritually (pathworking, Imbas Forosnai). I further believe that this type of “secret wisdom” is implied within the Ogham structure known as Fionn’s Wheel (or Fionn’s shield). There are many legends about this Magical structure that tell how Fionn and his shield acquired wisdom and Draíocht, but that is another story. There were other general and Magical meanings to the Ogham, but these seem to have been lost in the fires of history. One thing that appears to be obvious from their structure and their associated lists of correspondences is that the Ogham were used to allow the Druids and Filidh to become “Masters of Memory.”



## Chapter 8

### The Art of Memory

“Persons desiring to train this faculty (of memory) must select places and form mental images of the things they wish to remember and store those images in the places, so that the order of the places will preserve the order of things, and the images of the things will denote the things themselves, and we shall employ the places and images respectively as a wax writing tablet and the letters written on it.”

*Marcus Tullius Cicero (circa 106-42 BCE) in regard to Simonides in De Oratore, II, lxxxvi, 351-4 as provided in The Art of Memory by Frances A. Yates*

Many debates occur about whether oral memory techniques are reliable and accurate. Many scholars would have us believe that the memories of the Draoithe and Filidh were no better than a party of youths playing the game of “Post Office.” In this game, a phrase is passed around a circle of people, repeated in whispers from one to another until it returns to the original sender. In the process of its transmission of information, the tale or phrase is changed until it becomes completely different and unrecognizable to its author. While this phenomena is observably true among untrained and casual memories at parties, I maintain that it is far from the truth when considering the trained minds and memories of the Druids and other ancient scholars.

It is in the science and the art of memory that we will discover how oral history may be preserved within memory theaters and groves of the mind. As with the techniques of memory mastery, let us begin as the ancients did, at the beginning of the art of memory with a story about its creator.



### The Father of Memory

The Greek Poet Simonides of Ceos chanted a poem at a feast hosted by Scopas of Thessaly in which he included a praise passage regarding the Gemini Twins, Castor and Pollux. Scopas attempted to only pay the poet for half of the poem, saying that Castor and Pollux should pay the other half, since the praise was half theirs. And half his. At some point in the feast, a message was given to Simonides that the Twins were waiting outside to see him. When he went out to see them, the roof of the banqueting hall collapsed crushing his host and all the guests beyond recognition. The families were unable to determine which body was which and could not



accomplish their burials. Simonides was able to visualize the feasting hall, the names of the guests and the order of their seating. It is said that from this experience, he was able to determine that orderly arrangement is one of the prerequisites to accurate recollection.



## The Five Parts of Rhetoric

Marcus Tullius Cicero, another orator and person of phenomenally reputed memory, taught that memory was one of the five parts of rhetoric and that the use of places and images were essential to improving the recollection of long rhetorics with unfailing accuracy. Cicero defined the five parts of rhetorics as:

**Invention**, being the discovery of true things in detail so that one's case is well supported.

**Disposition**, defining the arrangement of the details in the order that they have been discovered.

**Elocution**, selecting words suitable to describe what has been discovered.

**Memory**, preserving the firm perception in the soul of things and words.

**Pronunciation**, dignifying the presentation of words and truth through a varying of the qualities of the voice and the posturing of the body.



## The Mnemonic Principle

An early anonymous work on rhetoric is known as *Ad Herennium* and was preserved because it was thought to be by Cicero. It describes a way of using vivid images to fix ideas in memory so that they will last in the long-term memory:

We ought, then, to set up images of a kind that can adhere longest in memory. And we shall do so if we establish similitudes as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague but active; if we ornament some of them, as with crowns or purple cloaks, so that the similitude may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily. The things we easily remember when they are real we likewise remember without difficulty when they are figments. But this will be essential - again and again to run over rapidly in the mind all the original places in order to refresh the images.



## The Artificial Memory

Another early work on memory is *Institutio Oratia* by Quintilian circa 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Quintilian details the rules for creating the artificial memory used by early poets and speakers. The artificial memory is described as being:

...a spacious house divided into a number of rooms. Everything of note therein is diligently imprinted on the mind in order that thought may be able to run through all the parts without let or hindrance. The first task is to secure that there will be no difficulty in running through these, for the memory must be most firmly fixed which helps another memory. Then what has been written down, or thought of, is noted by a sign to remind of it. This sign may be drawn from a whole ‘thing’, as navigation or warfare, or from some ‘word’ for what is slipping from memory is recovered by the admonition of a single word... These signs are then arranged as follows. The first notion is placed... in the forecourt; the second... in the atrium; the remainder are placed in order all around ... and are committed not only to the bedrooms and parlors, but even to statues and the like. This done, when it is required to revive the memory, one begins from the first place to run through them all, demanding what has been entrusted to them, of which one will be reminded by the image. Thus, however numerous are the particulars which it is required to remember, all are linked one to another as in a chorus nor can what follows wander from what has gone before to which it is joined, only the preliminary labor of learning being required.

What I have described of as being done in a house can also be done in public buildings, or on a long journey, in going through a city, or with pictures. Or we can imagine such places for ourselves.

We require therefore places, either real or imaginary, and images or simulacra that must be invented. Images are as words by which we note things we have to learn, so that as Cicero says, ‘we use places as wax and images as letters’.

Here in the works of Cicero, in the anonymous author of *Ad Herennium*, and in *Institutio Oratia* by Quintilian, we find descriptions and details of how to order, to construct and to use artificial memory as an aid in performance, poetry, rhetoric and public speaking. It is my opinion that the Druids were aware of these feats of memory by their contemporary poets and scholars, using similar techniques to assist their own phenomenally renowned memories. The idea of recording memories as writings within the mind and using its symbols as indices into lists of objects and places is exemplified by the Ogham lists in the *Auraicept na n-Éces*, the Scholars Primer of the Filidh. Among the trees of the Nemeton and within the structure of Ogham as well as its mandalas and diagrams, we will find our own Druidic memory groves of the mind.



## Memory Groves of the Mind

Perhaps Tacitus was referring to *memory groves of the mind* when he spoke about the Druids' sacred groves? I doubt that he ever set foot in one and was probably going on what the Druids told him. I would not put it past them to have played a royal punning practical joke on him and their classical historians:

“Woods and groves are the sacred repositories; and the spot being consecrated to those pious uses, they give to that sacred recess the name of the divinity that fills the place, which is never profaned by the steps of man. The gloom fills every mind with awe; revered at a distance and never seen but with the eye of contemplation.”

- Tacitus about the Germanii.-

Each of us contains many, many memory groves of information within our own personal memories. We can each visit and recite from these memory groves over and over, perfectly without failing (even though this ability may not be obvious to us, since we take it for granted). We've naturally created memory groves for ourselves as we've experienced life and engaged in discourse with other people. We probably could have created more such memory groves, but the modern educational system did not properly train us for or instruct us in this technique. This lack of proper memory training is primarily due to the use of books, libraries and files as aids to memory and the retrieval of knowledge. That is how we are educated today. We are taught to use books as references rather than to rely upon our own memories. Such was not the case among the ancients and the Druids in particular. They were taught techniques that allowed them to remember the histories, laws, lore and traditions of their people.

Modern scholars point out how oral traditions unreliably preserve information. They consider that the followers of such traditions corrupt orally preserved knowledge. What these scholars fail to realize is that speakers and poets of many ancient civilizations studied and developed techniques of the mind and memory that assisted them in preserving and maintaining traditional knowledge (such as the Coimgne). These memory techniques were developed and used because they did not readily have the necessary materials to write them down. How such oral traditions could have been constructed so that the knowledge would have been easily remembered and accurately retained without change is what a Memory Grove and the Ogham lists are all about. As has been previously stated, we each contain many memory groves of information that represent a personal oral tradition (albeit an informal and somewhat untrained one). Just what are these memory groves that we each contain and how is it that we modern people can retain such knowledge reliably?

## **The Stories of Numbers and Letters**

The first memory grove that we normally encounter in our modern lives is the story of numbers. This ability is closely related to the memory grove of letters that we are also taught at about the same time. Each of us could probably reliably tell the story of the numbers from one to one million or the letters from A to Z., as well as retaining thousands of word spellings, definitions, songs, poems and stories. If we needed to repeat the numbers we've learned, we'd simply count them off, using the memory of the numbers from one to ten and the concepts of decimal structure (i.e. tens, hundreds, thousands, millions, etc.). Most of us retain these counting memories for our entire lives. The story of numbers remains the same story for each of us in the languages that we've learned from birth: In the case of English, the number "one" would be followed by "two" and then "three" and then "four" and so, on up to a million or more. The repetition of the sequence of the numbers has an internal relationship. This internal structure of relationships helps us to keep the story of the numbers straight. Because we have an idea of their structure and sequence, we can easily and accurately repeat each number in its proper place. The entire process may be very dull and obvious, but the numbers are accurate and repeatable. The story of the letters ("A, B, C...Z") or the alphabet is similar to that of numbers though the relationships differ. Each of these sequences is accurately remembered and has been so remembered for hundreds if not thousands of years. The numbers and the alphabets are a part of our current oral tradition and are accurately remembered by most of society. The ability to accurately remember information is one that most of us possess though we do not develop it beyond the fundamental skills that are required by our present society and lifestyle. It's clear from these two examples that humans can accurately remember large quantities of information if its structures and sequences are well defined.

## **The Rhythm of Sequences and Songs**

Let me touch on a few more of the ways that we are taught to remember knowledge in our modern world, before I discuss the ways in which the Druids of old went beyond us in these skills. The examples of numbers and letters probably have you saying, "So what?" Such common, simple examples warrant the making of such a remark. A way in which most of us remember more complex knowledge is by the use of the techniques of sound, rhythm and tonal qualities. This may seem like a complicated academic approach to memorizing, but is really no more complicated than the techniques of numbers and letters. The most common examples of sound, rhythm and tonal qualities that each of us experiences in today's world are called "songs". Each of us can probably remember hundreds of songs accurately, though we may not eloquently perform them. Their words and tunes are each accurately remembered within our brains. While listening to a performance, most of us could certainly tell when and where a performer might have departed from the correct reproduction of the words or the music of our favorite songs. Professional singers and entertainers have larger repertoires of songs in their own memories that dwarf those of the average person. This is because they have trained themselves in the art and possess a focus on music and art. Actors and stage performers also evidence this type of memory accuracy and training in their oral recitals and film or television performances. Each of them accurately remembers the words of the plays, scripts or performances that they have studied. This ability to remember and recreate is found in their individual performances in the specific nuances of inflection, mood, setting, emotional stresses, and delivery. We have all seen how such

performers can accurately remember and recite their repertoires each time that we go to a play, attend an opera, listen to a radio or watch a television. The ability to accurately remember is a common ability to most of mankind. This ability is not exceptional. It need not be limited to actors, musicians and stage performers. We can each accomplish such acts of accurate memory storage and recital. We just do not practice the ancient memory techniques enough in today's world. One of the main reasons for this loss of mental discipline in modern life can be attributed to reliance on written notes, computer files and books.



## **The Atrophy of Memory**

Writing and books cripple our memory capabilities by providing us with a convenient memory prop. Most of us see no need to remember facts nor do we seek additional for our memories. This atrophy of memory is the same type of loss that occurs for the math student who possesses an electronic calculator. No such calculators existed prior to 1950, yet students and engineers could accurately perform complicated calculations in their heads if necessary. The advent of cheap, easy electronic calculation has caused many of us to lose the discipline and ready availability of our earlier mathematical techniques. Books serve a similar function and effect for storing concepts and have a similar atrophy effect upon our memory capabilities (to that of calculators on our mathematical abilities) as evidenced in the atrophy of our own personal, internal, memorized knowledge base. Books accurately record and reflect the words that are within them, yet those words are not accurately retained within most modern minds. We have to constantly search our references to recall data and facts simply because we have not kept our memory skills intact. This causes difficulties and impediments to creativity when our books are far away and not immediately accessible. Our minds rely on the external memory of books and notes. They do not possess the memories of the ancients to inspire us. There is no instant or ready reference to information. If we seek examples of courage or techniques of skill, we must take the time to look them up. After that, we can try to reconnect to the thoughts, images and words of our creative moments. Without a large amount of current, accurate information within our own minds we are “stifled” and “held back” in our abilities to become inspired and creative. This “looking it up in a book” technique is at the root of a loss of efficiency in our creative abilities. The use of book references and written notes to maintain accuracy can sometimes impede us in our quest for wisdom. Such was not the case with the ancients.



## **The Oral Tradition**

The ancient Druids practiced, learned, taught and lived within an oral tradition. They took the basic memories, skills and abilities that each person naturally possesses and they enhanced them by using certain basic techniques. These techniques were sound, music, taste, color, texture, flow

and structure (I'm certain there were others but these come readily to mind). Sometimes these techniques and attributes were referenced as the "senses". Repetition and recital further enhanced the impact of each of these qualities within a "teaching" that was to be orally retained. The fact is that repetition is essential to correctly storing and remembering information within the human mind. \*Impact\* is another essential attribute to determining the type and form that our memory takes. Impact causes us to remember an event or a story much longer than would have been the case if the item to be remembered had only been encountered while "passing". Our "passing" memory is the "... in one ear and out the other memory". Impact is our "...I can close my eyes and see it like it was happening right now..." type of memory. A great example of this might be the moment that we graduated from a school, gave birth, won a prize or received a promotion. Such events \*impact\* upon our minds and are indelibly stored within our long-term memories. Repetition is a technique that also allows our minds to allocate information that has been stored within our "passing" memory, to our larger, more permanent long-term memory. When vivid, "impacting" events are systematically and culturally stored within our long-term memories, they are called an oral tradition. The problem with long-term memory is that it stores a lot of information which then requires "associations" to be formed which are used to key the retrieval of their interlocked, vivid and accurate contents. Hypnosis is one such retrieval technique. Meditation, ecstasy and trance are other such techniques. How many other such techniques could we name that are esoteric or mundane in nature?



## Modern Druidic Memory Systems

Because there is so much knowledge to be remembered in the modern world, we are required to use computers and other references to augment our memories. This does not mean that modern Druids need to forsake the Ogham for their own esoteric and Druidic memory use however. On **alt.druid.religion** (an Internet news group), we've discussed how the Ogham are used with computers. One such use is the "Gorchan system" of a modern group in Britain that was invented by Branwen Elen Fyrnae Tootell:

I should explain that it isn't really a technique (at least not yet; we're still developing it), but a classification system. It only has connections with the Ogham in the sense that the Ogham are often used with it to create categories—I'll attempt to explain.

The word Gorchan... is an archaic Welsh word that is rarely or never used anymore, meaning 'enchantment' or 'magic.' All the Gorchan classifications begin with this word, which we often shorten in writing, as I will do now, to G.

Here's how it works. For example, on my hard drive—where I use the Gs as a directory system—I have a directory folder called G Brws, meaning, literally, 'Magic [of the] (paint-) Brush. In this folder, which then has many sub-directories, are all of my graphics files relating to sacred/magical themes. If I were to go into G Phagos (and it should be noted that in this context I'm using the connection of Phagos with books and writings), then I would find all my documents. Similarly, in G Telyn, I would find all my music and audio files.

Understanding this, I'll wager that you can now guess what it is I keep in the sub-directory folder called G Phagos Ogma (which is actually abbreviated again, as are all the sub-directories and sub-classifications, to G P Ogma).

Therefore, in G P O Beith (actually a .zip file and not a folder) are all the documents and writings I have collected or written having to do with that particular few. However, in G P Beith, one would find all the writings/enchantments/rituals, etc. that we associate with Beith-type things: births, beginnings, info for beginners, and the like. And if you're wondering where I keep my rituals for the seasonal festivals, they're tucked away in G P Ruis, as I associate Ruis with annual cyclic change (among many other things) and thus with the Wheel of the Year. We have a list of all the Gs so far, but it's still under construction. This is primarily due to the fact that not all of us can agree on what should go in which category, but we're getting there.

You may be wondering why this seemingly over-complicated classification system has been developed. Why, for example, don't I keep my documents in 'My Documents', or my graphics files in a folder called 'Graphics'? The truth is that originally I wanted a system to separate my sacred stuff from my secular stuff, for easier access. (I do, in fact, keep my mundane documents in 'My Documents'.) However, as time has passed (I've been working with and on the Gs for 8 years), I've found that the separation is actually a useful tool in the same sense as donning garb for ritual—when I go into the G section of my directory, it (now that I've been working with them for so long) automatically puts me into the frame of mind/magical mood to more easily mentally absorb the contents of those files.

Another thing I've found with working with and sorting stuff into the G categories is that it's really made me think about what goes where, thus strengthening my knowledge and beliefs concerning the meanings of the Ogham fews. In the above two ways, the Gs have become a technique of sorts!

When I print out documents, the G classification is printed as a tiny (but legible) header in the upper left corner, so that anyone familiar with the Gs (i.e. our Grove) can look at it and at a glance know the subject matter that the document contains, so they don't have to skim through it to find out if the actual title is not forthcoming. This is also handy for classes and whatnot; if someone says that they're going to have a class or discussion on Luis, they ask all who plan to attend to bring with them their G P O Luis writings/files/documents, if they have any. Several members of our Grove, esp. ones with computers, have adopted this system for their own use. You can too if you want; just change 'Gorchan' to whatever its Irish equivalent is, and you're off and running!

The G(orchan)s all have little poetic descriptions that go with them. For example:

**Gorchan Phagos Ayr: Magic of Air** - The Dragon's Breath Rituals and writings for Air, Sky deities, Weatherworking, working with the elements, and incense making.

**Gorchan Phagos Saile: Magic of the Willow** - The Moon's Gentle Call Moon rites and women's Mysteries, spells of consolation and emotional healing.

The Gs were originally inspired by my old ArchDruid, Gwydion (now Gweneth) Stone, who came up with the concept in the first place. The Gs as they stand now are primarily my

creation (that's right—I made them up!), and are often in a state of change as I learn more about the Ogham and my perceptions of it change.

The beauty of an Ogham system for memory and recollection is that the Ogham possess a vivid imagery in their associations with the traditional tales, as well as a linked structure. This linked structure allows one to systematically categorize information as well as to have reminders or “keys” imbedded in the data or its location. When we work with this memory structure and its keying during divination, entire worlds of associated information open up to our spiritual selves to use in communicating to our minds. It is this spirit-mind connection through a trained memory that makes the Ogham ideal for use in divination. Though the Ogham are a good filing system for use with computers and written records, they are also essential keys to Druidic memory.



### **Set Aside from the Mundane**

The use of your personal set of Ogham fedha should be set aside from mundane activities and reserved for divination purposes. This special status accorded to your Ogham will serve to ‘switch’ your consciousness closer to the levels required for divination. I also recommend not allowing general access by other people to your own personal set. Treat them like you would the other elements of a sacred altar. Their sacred nature, special handling and the memory techniques of repetition, impact, imagery, structure and association allow us to use the Ogham to touch worlds of knowledge that can otherwise only be accessed through techniques of imbas. It is my opinion that this is a primary reason why the ancient Druids and Filidh studied the Ogham concurrently with their memorization of the major tales and traditions of their people.



### **The Druids, Masters of Memory**

The Druids were considered to be the “Masters of Memory” by the Classical historians and by Julius Caesar (quoted here in *De Bello Gallico*, VI, 13-18):

There they are said to learn thoroughly a great number of verses. On that account, some continue at their education for twenty years. Nor do they deem it lawful to commit those things to writing; though generally and in their public and private accounts they use Greek letters. They appear to me to have established this custom for two reasons; because they would not have their tenants published, and because they would not have those, ho learn them... neglect the exercise of memory.

It is my firm opinion that the Druids “keyed” their memories to the Ogham, to its poetic structure and information, and to its fundamental association to their language. This keying and memorization was just as true for esoteric as it was for mundane information. The Ogham were perfect for this use, since they possessed an inherent numerical as well as structural order. They



could also easily be tied to the harp strings of wisdom possessed by each Filidh (but that is defiantly another story). Each Filidh was required by his/her education to first master hundreds of Ogham and Ogham lists, then they were required to completely and to accurately memorize hundreds of tales and traditions during their twelve years of training. I further believe that their staffs (which they each carried) and other objects (such as wands, jewels, clothing adornments, etc.) were carved with Ogham symbols to serve as guides for the retrieval of lore. Such carved staffs were the mark of the ancient Druids and Filidh. It's also possible that Ogham carved poles were placed at the centers of the ancient Nemetons. Only a symbol or two upon their surfaces would have been necessary to open the proper part of memory and start the "flows" of memory to appear. A Druidic memory would have been as at home in the sanctuary as it would have also been among the trees.



## Memory Prompts and Symbols

The use of "keyed" staffs and Ogham is similar to another process: the "prompts" that may be required by modern performers in plays or other dramatic productions (to remember their lines). Such keys are like note cards during a presentation. Once an Ogham key had been used by a Druid, Bard or Filidh, then the doorway to long term memory would have been opened for them. The rivers of knowledge would then have flowed forth as surely as the waters of Segais followed Bóann. Since the poetic structure of Draíocht and Filidecht was interlinked through techniques such as alliteration, assonance and rhyme (all invented by the Druids and the Filidh), the ending or content of one line or stanza would then have become the parent of the next. The Druids, Bards, Filidh and Priests of the Celts would periodically meet in convocation at their sacred centers to hear, refresh and increase their storehouses of knowledge and memory. We should ask ourselves these questions and consider their answers:

### **Q. Can we remember accurately?**

A. Yes, we can. The numbers and letters are perfect examples of this, even today we remember perfectly songs and music in our memories.

### **Q. Can we remember epic amounts of information that are very complex?**

A. Yes, we can if we train ourselves in the same ways that actors, singers and other performers develop their own memories. This is particularly true if we follow the same sort of memory theater techniques that have been used for thousands of years.

### **Q. Has information ever been accurately preserved by oral traditions?**

A. Yes, the ancient Greek and Roman orators did so. The ancient Druids were known for the

accuracy of their memories. Some of their oral tradition was actually written down by the medieval scribes. The Vedas of the Brahman are a similar construct and an accurate recording of orally preserved information. The Psalms of the Hebrews are still another source. There are many other examples that could be mentioned and identified.

**Q. What are the techniques for accurately remembering?**

A. Not hard to say. The techniques of memory are structure, sequence, impact, repetition, association and imagery.

**Q. How should we structure and sequence such memories?**

A. Easily answered. We should key them to the Ogham, their lists, their diagrams and their associations, and we should also link them through the poetic arts.

According to Cicero in *De Oratore*, one must use a large number of places for memory theaters. These places must be “...well lighted, clearly set out in order, at moderate intervals apart; and images which are active, sharply defined, unusual, and which have the power of speedily encountering and penetrating the psyche.” The Ogham kennings known as Briatharogam and the Ogham mandalas called Fionn’s Wheel, the Stream Strand of Ferchertne and the Wheel Ogham of Roigne Roscanach are ideally suited to such uses. Let’s discuss the other spokes that we can use to support our wheels of wisdom on our pathway to knowledge. These spokes are music, tree toning, chanting, meditation, pathworking and cosmology. They will assist us in our work of uncovering the “True Music” and the “Poets’ Secret.”

## Ogham Divination



## Chapter 9 Spokes in the Wheel

Our task today as modern Druids and followers of their ways, is to study the world, to study our fellow humans, to study the knowledge of the ancestors, to study all Draíocht and to grow in wisdom. At some point during this quest, we will each acquire our own Ogham keys for our own Magical, mundane and spiritual use. If such new Druids and Filidh were then to meet in convocation as did the Druids of old, perhaps by their mutual sharing, challenging and discussion, each could increase the knowledge base of the others. Sharing wisdom seems to be the best pathway to growth in such well-concealed matters. Using our own Ogham as keys to our new knowledge, will allow each of us to become better stewards of the Earth, as well as true priest/esses of the Sun, the Moon and the stars. The Ogham were first learned in the groves and among the trees, and it is with them and within their wisdom that we will start our rediscovery of their ancient meanings. We are each a sacred Tree of the Grove, a Spoke in the Wheel. It is together that we shall conquer our ignorance.



### The Nine Branches Of The Sacred Tree

I'd like to suggest a course of study, references and reading materials for an aspiring Druid's education that is based upon an analogy with the art and science of Yoga and a correlation with the Nine Dúile from Celtic lore. Quoting from *\_Ayurveda and the Mind\_* by Dr. David Frawley (Vamadeva):

Classical Yoga provides an eightfold approach (Ashtanga) to achieve its aim of reintegration. These eight "limbs" are not simply steps or stages, though they do follow a certain sequence. They are like the limbs of the body or parts of a house. Each has its proper role, though not all are equally important.

## The Eight Limbs of Yoga

The eight limbs of Yoga treat the development of the self and its latent abilities like the growth of a tree. In its growth and its elements this tree of the self has connections to corresponding parts of the Cosmos and also to the parts of a person's life:

1. **Yama** - Rules of Social Conduct
2. **Niyama** - Rules of Personal Conduct
3. **Asana** - Physical Postures: Right Orientation of the Physical Body
4. **Pranayama** - Breath Control: Right Use of the Vital Force
5. **Pratyahara** - Control of the Mind and Senses
6. **Dharana** - Concentration: Control of Attention
7. **Dhyana** - Meditation; Right Reflection
8. **Samadhi** - Absorption: Right Union

## Correspondences of the Dúile

Now, among the Celts and Druids there was a nine-fold division of the self and the Cosmos known as the Dúile. These divisions are summarized in the next list with their corresponding body parts, principles and cosmic correspondences.

1. **Cnaimh (Bones)** - Cloch (Stone) - Foundation
2. **Colaind (Flesh)** - Talamh (Earth) - Form
3. **Gruaigh (Hair)** - Uaine (Plant Life) - Growth
4. **Fuil (Blood)** - Muir (Sea) - Emotion
5. **Anal (Breath)** - Gaeth (Wind) - Life Force
6. **Imradud (Mind)** - Gealach (Moon) - Intuition
7. **Drech (Face)** - Grian (Sun) - Perception
8. **Menma (Brain)** - Nel (Cloud) - Wonder
9. **Ceann (Head)** - Neamh (Heaven) - Mastery

## A Tree of Learning

If we look into the lore of the Celts and the wisdom of the Druids, we can see a pattern that allows us to develop a series of nine steps or branches to the Sacred Tree or Bile:

1. **The Foundations of Society** (The Triads and The Brehon Laws)
2. **The Wisdom Texts** (Audacht Morainn, The Advice of Cormac, the Rules of the Fianna)
3. **The Lore of Places and Nature** (The Dindshenchas, Ogham, Herbal and Tree Lore, Animal Lore)
4. **The Skills of Battle** (Martial Arts and Emotional Disciplines, the Tests of the Fianna, Games of Skill, Postures)
5. **Calling the Winds** (Poetry, Teinm Laegda, Music, Chanting, Balance work)
6. **The Well of Segais** (The Bed of the Poets, Meditation, Imbas Forosnai)
7. **The Champion's Portion** (The Single Attention, the Divided Attention, Dichetal Do Chennaibh)

## Ogham Divination

8. **The Cattle of Tethra** (Geasa, Divination, Cloud and Star Lore)
9. **The Great Song** (Death, Rebirth, Becoming and Making)

## Holistic Pursuit

These nine groupings are not to be pursued in a linear fashion but holistically. We do not grow naturally in this manner and should not expect our wisdom to grow in any different way. My own pursuit of excellence in knowledge and wisdom of self is guiding me into these areas. I would be interested in discussing each of them further, as well as being favored with your own perceptions and practices along the Druid Way.

Many of us have had strange events occur within our lives. Such occurrences and episodes are unsettling, to say the least, and require a tremendous amount of balance work for one's psyche. It also helps to know that the mind has many more potentials than what the mundane world ascribes to it. If the mind has more potentials, then the spirit is the world of the unlimited where anything, however strange can occur, in much the same way that the physical world is the world of limit and hence also a place of form and separation (as well as limitation). Our disciplines must teach us to go beyond such self-imposed barriers to mind and spirit, through and ever-increasing use and natural awareness of them both.

In days gone by, there would have been a school for studying the techniques necessary for people with psychic gifts. Such schools are sadly lacking in today's world, but perhaps they will be reborn out of the needs of the seekers?

In conjunction with the Nine Limbs of the Sacred Tree, I would like to present a list of a few of the skills of Druids as provided by Sea/n O'Tuathail. We should perhaps discuss these and decide what they concern and also consider how we could implement them into our disciplines.



## A Beginning for Study

Here is a beginning for our study and consideration of terms used for many of the esoteric arts associated with Draíocht in a list that is given in *Foclóir Draíochta - Dictionary of Druidism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, le Seán ÓTuathail, copyright 1993 John Kellnhauser / Cainteanna na Luise, (excerpted by Searles O'Dubhain):

### Pathways

**Slí** - way, path in life, passage, journey, road, room to proceed, correct course of action, means, method, manner, appropriateness, direction, space allowed for,

**Idircheo** - area of overlapping liminality between an domhan-so and an saol eile. (lit. Between-mist)

**Ilsaoltaíocht** - (practice of) multiplicity of realities

### Dreams

**Taibhreamh** - dream (esp. Clairvoyant; c.f. ailsing)

**Aisling (-í)** - dream/trance vision much stronger more lucid than taibhreamh

## Visions

**Léaspáin** - dancing coloured lights (mealladh, c.f. méarnáil)

**Méarnáil** - phosphorescent light of (usually lesser) sídhe

**Iomas** - poetic intuition or inspiration (c.f. éicse; poc, síúlacht, túras)

## Attention and Focus

**Iarraidheall** - lit. “solicitous attention”; blank-mind receptiveness

**Mionaire** - lit. Fine(small) attention; perception in which data are distinct, events staccato, time contracted (c.f. nascaire)

**Nascaire** - lit. “link-attention”; state of perception in which data are patterned, events flow, time expands (c.f. mionaire)

**Leapaidh lánlaidhí** - lit. “harbourage of complete attentions”; (esp. Secure or powerful) mind-set (to do bríocht or in meditation)

**Athmhothú** - (act of switching) alternative states of consciousness

**Gabhlaireall** - “forked attention”, division of consciousness, esp. During somhoill

## Psychic Ability

**Astaidhbhrecht** - “reading” (in the clairvoyant sense of an object)

**Aigne** - mind, basic dispositions, emotional outlook, basic inclinations (c.f. aireachtail. Ciall, cuilmne, dúil, éirim, inchinn, intinn, meabhair, meanma, meon, mothú, smaoinemh, toil)

**Aireachtail** - perception, sense (both physical and 6<sup>th</sup>), c.f. aigne

## Trance

**Amhainseacht** - paleo-shamanism, seizure trance

**Dásacht** - 1) fit of raging madness; 2) possession by spirit; 3) sudden panic

**Támhnéal** - trance in general

**Támas** - indistinct trance vision

**Léargas** - insight, non- (or very light) trance vision, psychic sight

**Taise** - 1) wraith, spirit-double; 2) relic; 3) ruins (esp. Of sacred place); 4) sudden swoon, faint

**Toinéal** - trance (esp. Immobile without outside originating visions)



### Shape-Shifting

**Díchealtair** - magical disguise, esp. Concealment

**Mealladh (mealtaí)** - glamour, magically-induced illusion

**Aithriocht** - shape-shifting, actual not mealladh (v athdholb)

### Magical Power

**Brí** - inherent/intrinsic personal power set by dán (lit essence, vigour, significance), cannot be won or gained, only developed or allowed to atrophy; c.f. bua

**Bua - 1)** gained or attained personal power, esp. In a given area (c.f. brí); 2) [usually as plural

**Buatha:)** actions which win or maintain bua v tairbhe); (lit. Victory, merit, talent)

**Buachaitheamh** - to “flare power”, neutral samhchaitheamh

The entire *Foclóir Draíochta* can be found online at **The Summerlands Public Library** website (<http://www.summerlands.com/crossroads/publibra.htm>). Let's see how the practice of Draíocht and Filidecht were a part of the life of the people. Nowhere is this Magical element more prominent than in their music and their singing.



### Singing to the Sun

“Glory to thee, thou Sun,  
Face of the God of Life.”

*A fragment from the morning hymn to the Sun,  
that comes from the outer islands of Barra,  
as contained in the Carmina Gadelica  
compiled by Alexander Carmichael*

Anyone that has ever performed Magick knows that it involves resonances and associations. Magick has much in common with the art of music. We have all experienced the Magick of music in our contemporary lives. Sometimes, this Draíocht can come in the form of attending a concert, where we are literally ‘blown away.’ Other times, it can be noticed when we are alone and listening to our favorite tunes: ‘in a world of our own.’ Modern day religious services also take advantage of the Draíocht inherent to music to enhance their own rituals. This can be as simple as the singing of a hymn, or it can be much more complex, as in the offering of organ and choral anthems. I’m sure that we will all agree that music in such situations alters our state of being. We are uplifted and changed by the ritual music that we experience. It should be no surprise, that the ancient Celts used music in a similar manner. In Morgan Llywellyn’s fictional novel, ‘Druids,’ we find a good example of the Druidic use of music in Draíocht. The chief

Druid of the village would greet the Sun each morning with a song, as well as leading the village each day in welcoming the Sun back from the Underworld. When the Sun set, another farewell song was enjoined, led by the Druid and offered by all. This practice of singing to the Sun is still followed by some in Celtic lands to this very day. Examples of such incantations and greetings to the Sun may be found in the *Carmina Gadelica* by Alexander Carmichael, a vast resource of ancient and more recent Celtic verse and song:

### **Greeting the Sun**

‘Hail to thee, thou Sun of the seasons.  
As thou traversest the skies aloft;  
Thy steps are strong on the wing of the heavens,  
Thou are the glorious mother of the stars.  
Thou liest down in the destructive ocean  
Without impairment and without fear;  
Thou risest up on the peaceful wave-crest  
Like a queenly maiden in bloom.



### **Wisdom Will Bloom**

To sing as the ancients sang will require us to learn the harmony of the forest. To honor Nature and Her dominions will require us to walk upon the pathways of the Wise. An understanding of each of the trees and its corresponding Ogham symbol will also be required of us, if we expect to achieve any type of success in our divinations. This series on Ogham Divination serves as a brief introduction to the deeper knowledge of the Ogham. As such, an attempt will be made within the following tables to describe some of the characteristics for each Ogham symbol. The effects and connections between the dúile, the Three Worlds and the Trees themselves are also listed. Since it is my belief that each Druid eventually developed and assigned his/her own meanings to the Ogham, no attempt will be made to exhaustively define each Ogham. As Knowledge is gained, Wisdom will bloom and the forest of Ogham meanings will grow within your own Drafocht. It is expected that those who seek the Knowledge of the Trees will spend some time with each tree of the Ogham. As you become attuned to the trees, the forest itself will become your Teacher. If you are quiet, the soul tones of the trees will play upon the heartstrings of your being and you will learn as the ancients learned. This teaching is known as the ‘Song of the Forest Trees.’



## True Music

‘Theyre verses are usually songe at all feasts and meetings,  
by certayne other persons, whose proper function that is...’

*Edmund Spenser - 1552-1599 CE*

*(source: “Fonnsheen,” Dalriada Celtic Heritage society, F. Tulis)*

As we previously discussed, music was an integral part of the Filidh’s poetic recital. Specifically, the music of the harp that accompanied the Filidecht of the Poets was accorded a special status. It was held apart from the common songs used for partying and merriment, and was given a place of highly sought honor. Such music was called ‘Fonnsheen,’ (‘True Music’ or the music of the Sídh). Such music frequently comes from the lands of the Ever-living and is said to herald the opening of the doorways between worlds. In truth, this music is a natural harmony, which can be heard by a trained ear or a poetic heart. To the ancient Celts, music was to be found within each part of the natural ‘Green World’ as well as the bright feasting halls of the Sídh. The Dagda, being the God of the Druids, was the guardian of this secret music. Due to its ability to connect the unspoken wonders of the Otherworld to the forms and images created by the poet’s chanting, the harp has sometimes been called ‘the bridge between Heaven and Earth.’ It was the Dagda’s harp that opened the ways, controlling the seasons, and stopping the flow of time itself.



## Music of the Seasons

The name of The Dagda’s harper was called Uaithne (which means ‘pillar’ or ‘post’). In ancient times, such a pillar was thought to support the foundations of the world itself. The Dagda’s harp could only be played by Him. It was keyed to him by its name, Daur Da Blao, which means ‘Oak of the Two Greens.’ Daur Da Blao summoned forth the seasons that are spun out on the Wheel of Time. The Dagda’s Music, called Coir Cetharchair or ‘four cornered,’ created the space within which the Cosmos Itself was created. His poetry was released by calling out to the name of his Inner Music (which was really the name of his harper, Uaithne). We can do this for ourselves by calling upon the names of our own chosen High Ones (examples are provided below). The Dagda shows us the keys to opening the doorways between worlds, but we are responsible for passing the barriers that restrain our own ‘inner voice of enchantment.’ To hear the four cornered music of The Dagda, we must carefully chant the secret godnames within our own ‘inner quietness.’ Invoking this inner state can be accomplished by using the combined techniques of Magical chanting, ‘Words of Power,’ and the ‘Music of the Spheres.’

Such a marriage between words and music has always characterized Celtic music, both in ancient times, as well as today. Words speak to the dúile of our Brains and address our deductive, logical capabilities, while the Draíocht of music resonates within the wavelike,

intuitive nature of our Inner Mind, and the adjacent World of Dreams. This use of musical chanting was not unique to the ancient Celts, it was also common to many of the ancient peoples. It was especially the provenance of those people who worked within the ways of the spirit, traveling the astral pathways of the Heavens. The ancient Chinese said that Music was the order of Heaven, while Li ('right behavior') represented the order of the Earth. The Vedic chants of India combined words and music in order to harmonize the Earth with the Heavens. It was thought that the practice of correct music toning and repetitive chanting could cause the two realms to co-exist. In ancient Greece, the Pythagorean philosophers assigned a musical harmony to the motions and natures of each of the heavenly spheres. A geometric shape and number was also assigned to each of the primordial concepts of being. Each note of the Pythagorean musical scales equated to the names of deities, or elemental powers. These Pythagorean correspondences will be covered in more detail later, as I attempt to derive a musical relationship for the Ogham within the Celtic Cosmos. Before we more completely cover the 'Music of the Spheres,' let's talk about another group of ancient people that incorporated music, chanting, form, and order, into their own 'Words of Power.' We know this group of people as the Children of Abraham. They used sound, form, tone and number to tie the self to the Cosmos. The Magical art that resulted was known as Cabala.



## Words of Power

In many Magical systems, 'Words of Power,' are used to create resonances within the minds of the Magicians. This is done so that they may attain a higher state of awareness. Frequently, these names are the outer or secret names of the Gods Themselves. The use of such words also serves to open the internal 'Power Centers' or 'Chakras' of the participants (in our own practice they synchronize the Three Cauldrons and align the dúile). These godnames are constructed using the letters of their respective Magical alphabets, as well as by using the natural tones and corresponding resonances that are associated with each letter or symbol. Within the ancient Hebrew Cabala we find examples of such chanting:

*YHVH* is toned as, "*Yud Heh Vahv He...*"  
(a Cabalistic godname)

The incantation of such a godname becomes a chant with its own inherent power, melody and rhythm. Such sounds, generated from an occult alphabet, have inherent Power within their individual vibrations and cosmologies. They are thought to generate Magical resonances between the Magician, the Cosmos, and the ritual working itself. As was previously shown, such a use of resonance and power in the chanting of names and tones is not unique to Cabala. Many other workers of Magick used chanting and music, as well as the sacred alphabets. The Druids also used such techniques of sound and form. It is my belief that the ancient Celts and Druids used the power of music and sound from their secret Ogham alphabet to aid them in working Draíocht. This form of Magical chanting was known by the ancient Irish as 'Amrún.'



## **Amrún**

The first Amrún was held at Grellach Dollaid and it was called “Amrún Fer nDéa Grellaid nDollaid,” (‘the Amrún of the Men of the Goddess’). Lugh, The Dagda, and Ogma were joined by Dian Cécht and Goibniu, as they chanted together, in secret, for ‘a year and a day.’ They called on Danu and Her Three Gods within their Magical chanting. It was in this way that they received the knowledge of the Three Gods of Danu. Gaining the Wisdom of Danu enabled them to prepare a battle plan, as well as to defeat the Fomorii at Cath Maige Tuired. An Amrún is clearly a Magical amrán (‘song’). It is conducted in secret (Run means ‘secret’ in Old Irish), and it is usually held within the Otherworld. Such chanting and singing of incantations to the gods was known to sometimes go on for days. This was a very important way to raise power among the Druids and Filidh.

Before I present any further theories and traditions of Druidic chanting, here are a few examples of such chanting that I use to harmonize and empower my own inner music:

### **To Raise Power:**

“AAH-Noooo-DAAH-Noooo-VREEE-Jeehh-DAAAK-Dahhhhh...”  
(Anu, Danu, Brighid, Dagda)

### **To Receive Imbas:**

“OHH-Maaahh-VREEE-Jeehh- sCAAH-Thaah-LOOoo...”  
(Ogma, Brighid, Scathach, Lugh)

### **To Perform a Healing:**

“JEE-ah-kehkt-MEEE-ah-kehkt-AWR-vith-UHK-rool  
(Dian Cécht, Míach, Airmid, Octriull)

### **To Wage Battle:**

“Mor-REE-gaan-NEEV-aann-MAHK-uuhhh-BOVH”  
(Morrigan, Nemain, Macha, Badb )

### **To Ease a Passing:**

“MAAN-aann-nann-KAAHWLL-yuch-TAAHWL-too-CROMM”  
(Manannán, Cailleach, Tailtiu, Crom)

### **To Bless a Baptism:**

“VrEEE-jeeh-BOHH-aann-BAANN-baah-BOO-aahh”  
(Brighid, Bóann, Banba, Bua)

This list is not fixed and does not imply that these deity names are the only deities that are important to such workings. Each of you must choose your own pathway to the gods. I select chants based upon the imbas of the moment. Look within and chose for yourself. Please honor the gods of your people in the way that is best for you. When chanting the chosen words of

power, we should also try to vibrate the godnames within our mind/spirits and ourselves. This internal vibration of the name is much more important than the external sounds that are voiced. These rhythmic interweaving of sounds and form, build our energy levels, and allow us to become more aware of the presence of our chosen deities. Sometimes, I also chant words that symbolize the object (or focus) of the working, as well as calling out to the gods. I have found that a bodhran can be a very useful tool to use in drumming up power while chanting, and have even used pre-recorded music to set the mood for the required meditations. There are many, many ways that music can aid and center our ritual Magick. As previously noted, such uses of music to accompany chanting and ritual are age-old techniques that go across cultures and time.

One could chant the words of Amergin to create a powerful Magical working or space. It is my opinion that such a chant includes the elements of ‘Becoming’ and ‘Making’ that are so often attributed to Druids in the lore. The following version comes from Seán O’Tuathail’s “Excellence of Ancient Word” and can serve as an example for us in constructing such chants.



### **Amergin’s Challenge**

I am a wind across the sea  
I am a flood across the plain  
I am the roar of the tides  
I am a stag of seven (pair) tines  
I am a dewdrop let fall by the sun  
I am the fiercest of boars  
I am a hawk, my nest on a cliff  
I am a height of poetry (magical skill)  
I am the most beautiful among flowers  
I am the salmon of wisdom  
Who (but I) is both the tree and the lightning strikes it  
Who is the dark secret of the dolmen not yet hewn  
I am the queen of every hive  
I am the fire on every hill  
I am the shield over every head  
I am the spear of battle  
I am the ninth wave of eternal return  
I am the grave of every vain hope  
Who knows the path of the sun, the periods of the moon  
Who gathers the divisions, enthralls the sea,  
Sets in order the mountains. the rivers, the peoples

### **Duan Amhairghine**

Am gáeth tar na bhfarraige  
Am tuile os chinn maighe  
Am dord na daíthbhe  
Am damh seacht mbeann  
Am drúchtín rotuí ó ngréin  
Am an fráich torc  
Am seabhac a néad i n-aill  
Am ard filidheachta  
Am álaine bhláithibh  
Am an t-eo fis

Cía an crann agus an theine ag tuitim faire  
Cía an dhíamhairina cloch neamh shnaidhite  
Am an ríáin gach uile choirceoige  
Am an theine far gach uile chnoic  
Am an scíath far gach uile chinn  
Am an sleagh catha  
Am nóma tonnag sírthintaghaí  
Am úagh gach uile dhóich dhíamaíní  
Cía fios aige conara na gréine agus linn na éisce  
Cía tionól na rinn aige, ceangladh na farraige,  
cor i n-eagar na harda, na haibhne, na túatha.

We will be using the 'I am' technique of Amergin in some of our Ogham Divinations in connection with the Briathairrogam. This combination of chant and phrase Ogham will create the magical working space for our readings and set the stage for improved forms of understanding and knowing by allowing us to become more connected to the sacred trees at the center of knowledge. Such chants would have been accompanied by music as performed on traditional instruments.





## Musical Instruments

The lower levels of the Filidh seem to have been considered to be Bards or performers, while the higher levels were known as Poets, Healers, Philosophers, seers and Druids. According to some authors, such Bards learned to play the pipes, the whistle, the harp, the lyre (cruit, 'harp'), the flute (feadog), the sistrum (similar in function to a craebh ciuil???, 'musical branch'), and the bodhran, among other instruments. These authors go on to conjecture, that each particular instrument was used or selected based upon the specific mood and/or tone that the particular Bardic work required. Using such thoughts as a guide, I created the following table of possible Celtic instrumental correspondences :

### Instruments and Elements

The Feadog	Breath and spirit
The Harp	Mind and Magick
The Bodhran	Flesh and Bones
The Craebh Ciuil	Brain and Head
The Pipes	Blood and Face
The Voice	Hair and skin

The music of these instruments was woven within the webs of the Filidh as they chanted forth their Filidecht. How was this music structured and determined? What was its source? How did the elements of the dúile relate to the tones and the sounds? How was the Magick accomplished? My own belief is that the Bards usually accompanied themselves with the harp as they recited their repertoire. The works of the higher levels of the Filidh (the Cli, the Anrad, and the Ollamh) were also performed by such Bards, while the Poets themselves directed or guided their chanting. Rarely would an Ollamh Chant him/herself. Upon such rare occasions, great things happened. Amergin's chanting of "The Mystery" was just such a rare and Magical occasion. Another exception to the rule would have been the execution of the Glám Díceann (a satirical cursing of one king by the Filidh of another). This action required participation by all seven levels of Filidh and was considered to be a matter of life or death (a hawthorn tree was used to center and amplify the power of the chanting). Whosoever was true in the matter under dispute would survive the cursing.

Recalling that Ogham were used as keys to memory, with verses being linked by assonance and alliteration, I maintain that each Ogham had a unique tone or note associated with it on the harp. The tone or string for a particular fidh was vibrated as the Ogham sound was spoken or sung with at least two notes occurring per line. The beginning and ending notes served to connect individual lines of poetry to the next line in a continuing stream of verse and song. In the world of my imagination, I can hear the tones and words of the Bards echoing as they float upon a wave of melody across the room. The sounds I hear remind me of the chanting of monks within the plainsong of their own worship. Perhaps the chanting of Filidh was similar to the practices of modern Anglican or Roman Catholic monks? To better understand these matters let's discuss two books, *The Poets' Secret* by Sean ÓBoyle and *Trees for Healing* by Chase and Pawlik, that reinforce these impressions for me.

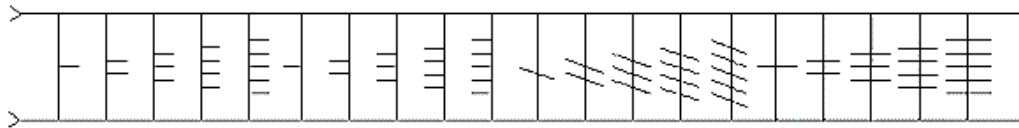


## Ogham Divination



## Chapter 10 The Poets' Secret

Poets and Bards carried 'craebh ciuil,' branches with bells and amulets attached to them. A beginner's branch would be made of bronze, while journeymen carried a silver branch, and the Master Bards (Ollamh) carried a golden branch. The music of the bells would announce the Bard's presence and perhaps an impending performance or ritual. In his book, *Ogam, The Poets' Secret*, Sean ÓBoyle made a very convincing case for the first use of Ogham to be as a musical tabulature.



### Aradach Fionn (Fionn's Ladder)

#### Fionn's Ladder

He showed how each Ogham had its own corresponding note on the Irish small harp. Much of ÓBoyle's analysis is based upon the relative positions of tones and semi-tones (steps and half steps). He was able to successfully show a direct correspondence between the symbols of the Ogham alphabet and the tones and semi-tones. He also explained how the relationship of the 'tri foilcesta in ogaim,' ('three composite letters of the Ogham: Q, NG, and STR), accounts for inflections in the sequence of musical tones. These are the conclusions I draw from a review of his work:

1. The Ogham form known as Aradach Finn (Fionn's Ladder) is a pictograph relating the strings of the Irish practice harp to musical scales. Full tones exist between the symbols having a distinct beginning sound. Semi-tones generally exist prior to the Ogham consonants that represent a

## Ogham Divination

muted sound of the preceding consonant ('T' and 'D,' 'Q' and 'C,' 'NG' and 'G,' 'STR' and 'R'). The semi-tone existing in the Ogham vowel sequence is found at the dividing point between the vowels that are considered to be 'broad' ('A,' 'O' and 'U') and those that are 'slender,' ('E' and 'I').

2. These relationships are listed below for the Greek Dorian scale (which is the 'characteristic octave in the 'Greater Perfect system' of Greek music'):

### Greek Dorian scale - Ogham Relationships

<b>Note</b>	e'	d'	c'	b	a	g	f	e	d	c#
<b>Ogham</b>	B	L	F	s	N	H	D	T	C	Q
<b>Note</b>	B	A	G#	F#	F	E	D	C	B <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>
<b>Ogham</b>	M	G	NG	STR	R	A	O	U	E	I

3. The stringing and tuning of the traditional Irish harp as given by Edward Bunting (Belfast, 1792), with its scale of thirty strings, seems to agree closely with the Greek Dorian assignments.

### Traditional Irish Harp - Ogham Relationships

<b>Note</b>	e'	d'	c'	b	a	g	f	e	d	c
<b>Ogham</b>	B	L	F	S	N	H	D	T	C	Q
<b>Note</b>	B	A	G	G	F	E	D	C	B <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>
<b>Ogham</b>	M	G	NG	STR	R	A	O	U	E	I
<b>Note</b>	G <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>1</sub>					
<b>Ogham</b>	EA	OI	UI	IO	AE					

**The following exceptions to the Dorian tuning are explained:**

- a. All 'f sharps' are tuned as naturals or as a lowered semitone (half-step).
- b. The tenor 'F' is tuned as a 'G,' giving two successive 'G's' (called 'The sisters,' also known as the Ogham NG and STR), which were the first strings to be tuned to the proper pitch. These strings facilitated modal changes in the middle of the scales. Manipulation of the Ogham strings 'Q,' 'NG,' and 'STR,' allowed the tuning sequence to be changed so that one could play a scale using the same fingering from any position on the harp. This was a form of 'key changing.'

## Ogham Divination

- c. The ‘E’ strings of the harp were called Tead Leagtha (‘fallen string’) and were changed to ‘F’ when the melody required it.
- d. This basic scale was altered by the above techniques to facilitate using seven different scales in correlation to the Ogham starting points.
- e. The many different Ogham types listed from 1 to 93 in the Book of Ballymote are indicators of musical arpeggios, selected for suitability in accompanying chanting.

It is clear that, regardless of their many other uses, the Ogham were also a way of relating musical tones and relationships. This is stated plainly within the Book of Ballymote:

*“Ogham received its name from sound and Matter -  
who are the father and mother of Ogham...”*

This reliance on sound and structure, which was inherent within the Druidic Ogham system, was also found within another school of ancient philosophy, the school of Pythagoras. From the “Fragments of Philolaus” (a Pythagorean of the fifth century BCE), we hear similar thoughts to those expressed within the *Book of Ballymote*:

*“The world’s being is the harmonious compound of Unlimited  
and Limiting principles;  
such is the totality of the world and all it contains.”*

Pythagoras was said to have gained much of his knowledge from ‘the barbarians’ (the use of the word: ‘barbarians,’ by the Greeks was equally applied to Celts, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Etruscans, Persians, and Scythians). In the Pythagorean cosmology, it was said that the Unlimited was Itself Matter and that the Limited was actually Form. It was further believed that Form and Matter were the parents of the phenomenal Universe. This is mirrored within the Druidic belief that sound and Matter are the parents of Ogham. The almost exact similarity between these two approaches to Cosmos suggests that Pythagoras may well have studied with the Druids. There is a substantial body of folklore that he did exactly that, even having a Druid as a follower by the name of Abaris. I am not suggesting that the Druids were Pythagoreans (though both groups may well have traded philosophies and influences). I am suggesting that since the Greeks and Celts certainly shared commercial and military adventures, that they may well have shared philosophies as well. Further consideration of the direct correspondences between the Ogham and the ancient Greek Dorian musical scales, also leads me to the strong possibility that the ancient Celtic Cosmos may have been related to the Pythagorean concept known as ‘The Harmony of the spheres.’ This philosophy attempted to interconnect the microcosm of the self to the macrocosm of the Cosmos in a manner that was remarkably similar to the ways of the Druids. By studying the relationship of the Pythagorean harmonies, we may discover additional insights into the hidden meanings of the Ogham.



## The Harmony of the Spheres

“Do you not behold the regions to which you have come?  
The whole universe is comprised of nine circles. or rather spheres.  
The outermost of these is the celestial sphere, embracing all the rest,  
itself the “Star Goddess” (supreme god), containing all of the other spheres.  
In it are fixed the eternally revolving movements of the stars. “

*“The Dream of Scipio” from De Republica  
by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-42 BCE)  
(names in “quotes” added by myself)*

The “Dream of Scipio” embraces many of the planetary correspondences included in the Pythagorean concept of the Harmony of the spheres. In many ways, the Universe, that I have experienced both exoterically and esoterically, is very much like the short description of the “Dream of Scipio” listed above. In my own spiritual journeys, I have gone beyond the bounds of ordinary reality to walk the pathways of the Beyond. Such a place is the realm of the star Goddess. We’ve already encountered Cicero and his work when we discussed ancient memory techniques that may have been similar to those used by the Druids. I have chosen Cicero’s work as an illustration of the cosmology of the spheres for many reasons. First, because he was familiar with the philosophies of the Druids from his association with the Druid Diviciacus (who addressed the Roman Senate in 60 BCE), and secondly, because he followed the philosophies of Plato and the Stoics (Plato being a Pythagorean revisionist). Thirdly, Cicero was an initiate of the Elysian Mysteries, believed in reincarnation and life after death, as well as also having served as the chief Auger of Rome. Finally, Cicero was also a student of Posidonius, who was said to have possibly been the greatest expert on the Celts and the Druids of all time. Cicero publicly recognized the Druid Diviciacus as a philosopher, which clearly suggests that the Druidic beliefs and philosophies were considered to be on a par with those of the Pythagoreans (even though they were not the same). Both sets of philosophies believed in the reincarnation of the soul, in the existence of eternal regions beyond this world, in the literal execution of shamanic flight, and in the healing powers of music. They each used the learning techniques of oral recital and memorization rather than writing. In fact, Cicero was a major proponent of ‘Memory Theaters’ while the Pythagoreans were practitioners of musical and numerical techniques. They both maintained that the self and the Cosmos were interconnected. Using the similarities to Druidic belief and practices that existed within the work of the Pythagoreans, and the memory practices and writings of Cicero, we will attempt to rediscover some of the relationships between the Ogham and the Cosmos.

Let’s start by considering two tables of correspondences: The Irish Harp-Ogham Relationships, and the Natural Concordance of Notes with the Planets, which was based upon the beliefs of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Pythagoreans:

### Traditional Irish Harp - Ogham Relationships

Note	e'	d'	c'	b	a	g	f	e	d	c
Ogham	B	L	F	S	N	H	D	T	C	Q
Note	B	A	G	G	F	E	D	C	B <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>
Ogham	M	G	NG	STR	R	A	O	U	E	I
Note	G <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>1</sub>					
<b>Ogham</b>	EA	OI	UI	IO	AE					

I added ÓBoyle's Ogham correspondences to a table of notes found within a Medieval Concordance that was ascribed to the philosopher Boethius. I also restated the meanings of the Medieval qualities that were listed in that work. This re-assignment of names made the selection of the corresponding Irish Pagan deity names for the notes a much simpler task.

### The Natural Concordance of Notes with the Planets

*(from a work of Boethius, a fifth century Philosopher,  
as transcribed in a 12 century CE manuscript)*

Boethius	Harp Note	Ogham	Quality	Celtic Deities
Seraphim	a'			
Cherubim	g'			
Thrones	f'			
Dominations	e'	B	Being; Essence	Bile
Principalities	d'	L	Vitality	Lugh; Brighid
Powers	c'	F	Living; Life	Fergus, Bran
Virtues	b	S	Natural Energy	Sionann
Heavens	a	N	Wisdom	Nuada, Nemed
Saturn	g	H	Intelligence	hUath, Cú Roi
Jupiter	f	D	Kingship	The Dagda
Mars	e	T	Impulsive Virtue	Tuirenn, Ogma
Sun	d	C	Vital Faculty	Finn, Grian
Venus	c	Q	Sexual Energy	Áine, Anu
Mercury	B	M	Glory; Honor	Manannán, Lugh
Moon	A	G	Foundations	Bóann, Morrigan
Earth	Silence	NG	Silence	Danu

It has always been my contention that the realms of Land, Sea and Sky are physical parts of this world through which deity and spirit manifest to us. We are connected nine ways through the dúile and we live within the three realms that they constitute. The threes of the world and the self are reflected in the Cauldrons and the deities themselves. Vedic astrology even goes so far as to

assign demons, ancestors and deities to each of the realms as well as dividing the houses of the Moon along these same lines. I've seen mention by Peter Berresford Ellis of such a division being a part of Celtic Astrological lore. I quote from his *The Ancient World of the Celts*

“It is from the sixth century AD that we begin to find a wealth of written evidence from the insular Celts concerning cosmology. From it we find that Irish cosmology falls into four historic phases. The pre-Christian phase, of which we only have fragmentary knowledge, indicates that the Celts shared the Indo-European knowledge of numerology, astronomy and astrology which emerges in the Vedas.”

“Aibhistin, an Irish astronomer writing in AD 655, shows a masterful display of computational skills and in his text we find evidence of an ancient lunar-based astrological system which appears to have similarities to the twenty-seven lunar mansions of the Vedic system, called the Nakshatras. Aibhistin is the earliest medieval writer to discuss the relationship of the tides to the phases of the moon. He is also the first Christian writer to proclaim that the Three Wise Men in the Gospel of St. Matthew were astrologers.”

Many times, the Celts did not speak the names of their gods aloud in public, nor did they assign these names to the planets in a mundane way. It is thought that they did so in an esoteric and secret manner however. I've looked at Vedic deity/planet assignments and this is what I've been able to glean from that study:

This discussion of deity gender and how they relate to the planets is a favorite of mine. I am constantly looking for clues as to how they might be associated. One area in which I have looked for guidance is the Vedas and Vedic tradition. In Vedic Astrology, all of the planets are seen as male (The Lords that Wander) and all of the stars and constellations are seen as female. The Sun and Moon are considered to be planets. The rulers of the planets and their over-rulers are as follows:

### **A Correspondence between Vedic Deities and the Heavens**

*(from Astrology of the Seers by David Frawley,  
reordering by Searles O'Dubhain)*

<b>Planet</b>	<b>Ruler</b>	<b>Over-ruler</b>
Mercury	The Maintainer	The Mover on the Waters
Rahu	Goddess of Power	The Serpent God
Sun	God of Fire	The Great God
Moon	Water Goddess	The Great Goddess
Jupiter	King of the Gods	The Creator
Ketu	God of Karma	God of Knowledge
Saturn	God of Death	The Lords of Progeny
Venus	Queen of the Gods	King of the Gods
Mars	Earth Goddess	War God

If we were to seek to place Celtic deity names to these Vedic descriptions, then we would get IMO:

### A Correspondence between Celtic Deities and the Heavens

Planet	Ruler	Over-ruler	Dúile
Mercury	Lugh	Manannán	Sky
Rahu	Midir	Ogma	Stars
Sun	Aedh	Bile	Sun
Moon	Bóann	Danu	Moon
Jupiter	Brighid	The Dagda	Wind
Ketu	Domnu	Tethra	Sea
Saturn	Donn	The Fomoiré	Nature
Venus	The Morrigan	Nuada	Earth
Mars	Anu	Net	Stone

It is to be understood that deities do not map exactly from culture to culture. I'm certain we could have a long discussion as to meanings and roles of each of the deities that I've listed above. One point I would like to make is that the Vedic civilization considered the planets and Stars as incarnations or manifestations of the deities and not the entirety of the deity. I believe that the Celts also viewed them in this manner (we probably do much the same in modern religions). This concept goes along with my own view that the deities manifest in many items of our local life and area (rivers, streams, trees, wells, fires, stones, hills, mountains, storms, etc.), even as people at times.



### Tree Toning

In a much more modern work, *Trees for Healing*, Pamela Louise Chase and Jonathan Pawlik independently identified what they called tree 'soul tones,' which are said to uniquely resonate with the spirit of each tree. This book is all about trees, their lore and their spirits. It describes techniques for meditation to determine the harmonic resonances for a variety of trees. I believe that the ancient Druids also detected certain harmonic tones for each tree and used them in their Tree Ogham Alphabet. If we use the tones that have been rediscovered by Chase and Pawlik, and combine them with the ancient chants, incantations and songs of Taliesin and Amergin, we may also be able to work powerful Magicks. This Draíocht can take many forms: from enchanting an audience, to calling the winds. The Greek Bard Orpheus was able to walk between the worlds in this manner (in much the same way as the Druids). Some of the tree tones that I've listed were derived from meditation and resonance, while some were based upon the colors associated with the Ogham. My suggestion is to find each tree yourself and to meditate under it. Play a pipe, a whistle or a harp (even a guitar will do in a pinch!) until you find the correct tone for that tree. Most tones will reflect from the tree; only the 'soul tone' of the tree will be absorbed. You will possibly feel a tingle of energy that is released by the spirit of the Tree in response to your music.



This interaction between the musician and Nature is somewhat akin to the common belief in Ireland (even today) that the Sídhe (also famed for their enchanted music) may have taught a particularly gifted musician, harper or piper. Celts believe in harmony and rightness in all things and particularly in Nature. It should be no surprise that their music could be found within their Ogham symbols, the trees of the forest, or even the ‘Harmony of the Spheres.’

There are many similarities between these three systems: tree toning; Ogham based musical scales; and the ‘Harmony of the Spheres.’ There are also several other modern works that point to the spiritual presence of the trees, and their interaction with the dúile of both the macrocosm of space and the microcosm of the individual. As we’ve already discussed, Ogham itself was keyed to the memories of Druids, serving as a music of the mind and as a key to the linking of many concepts. Such a linking of concepts will be essential for each of us if we hope to use the Ogham within our own divinations. We shall need to relearn the ancient songs of the trees. It was within the rhythm of such songs that the Druids first greeted the Sun and the Day. It was among the trees of the Grove that the Druids learned the Truth of the World, and it is within the Ogham, the Knowledge of the Trees, that we will chant our own true wisdom.

### **Magical Implements**

Sometimes, the many different parts of a Magical working were carved in Ogham upon wooden fedha (to serve as a memory trigger, as well as to increase or focus Magical power). Such fedha may have been selected from a particular place or even from a particular tree to further enhance the power of the spellwork. Names and intentions were probably also carved upon these fedha. They may have eventually been used as: votive offerings to the gods of the rivers, lakes, and sacred wells, or they could have been set into the ground to mark out a sacred space. In the case of Eochaidh’s search for Étain, his Druid Dalan cut four wands of yew and wrote Ogham upon them. It was revealed to Dalan, through his own poetical chanting and the use of Ogham fedha, that Midir had spirited Étain away to the brúgh of Bri Leith. Such a use of four wands planted in the ground to define a sacred space, is a very similar technique to how I suggest we create our own sacred space. We can use the symbols of the Four Hallows of the Tuatha Dé Danann as markers of sacred space, when we attempt our own Ogham Divinations. By surrounding ourselves with the gifts of the Wizards and the power of the Gods, we can establish a home for the song of the spirit.



## Chapter 11 The Inner Circle

My chair is in Caer Sidi  
where no one is afflicted with age or illness.  
Manawydden and Pryderi have known it well.  
It is surrounded by three circles of fire.

*Taliesin in the defense of the Chair as translated by Caitlin Matthews*



### Creating Sacred Space

We can create our own sacred spaces in a variety of ways. We can use chanting and musical intonation as we previously discussed, or we can construct spells and carve them upon Ogham wands or fedha. We can use symbols for each of the Four Hallows and place them in the appropriate Quarter. We could also use forms of personal meditations such as the Tree Meditation given within the Keltria Book of Ritual, or we could focus on the dúile themselves, that are found at the centers of each of the Three Cauldrons. I call this technique the Cauldron Meditation. It shares many common elements with chanting and drumming methods of achieving altered states, as well as with the Tree Meditation. Before we discuss these meditations and methods, let me say a few words about setting the stage, gathering the attention and focusing the will.

#### Setting the Stage

To adequately meditate, gather attention or focus the will, one must first address the needs of the body against the many distractions of the world. To achieve a gathering of attention requires each of us to achieve a physically relaxed posture. Among the Celts and Druids, there are three postures that have been reported as being used for meditation and attention. I call these three postures:

1. **A Suide Súadh (The Sage's Seat):** sitting cross-legged with the back straight, (as the Stag God is shown on the Gundestrup Cauldron).

2. **A Suide Righ (The King's Seat):** sitting in a chair with the legs together and the back straight (like a chief or king sitting upon their thrones).
3. **Leapaidh Lánlaidhí (The Bed of the Poets):** lying completely prone (in a secluded guarded place), with the hands upon the eyes (or with the body covered by a blanket, a skin or a cloth).

The object of these postures is to allow the body to take care of itself while the mind seeks its own natural state through control of the attention. IMO imbas can be achieved primarily through meditation. To properly meditate for imbas, requires that the body and mind first be quieted so that the spirit is not chained by their needs. The first essential step in such a meditation is to find a place to meditate that is comfortable. The next step is to relax the body by assuming a posture that is stable and self-supporting. This can be in any of several positions: the famous Lotus position or prone (lying down) works well. After the muscles joints and bones are completely relaxed, then the breath, heart and mind must be placed into rhythms that are automatic and quieted. I slow my breathing and journey on my heartbeat until they are one and then I think about absolutely nothing until I am in an altered state. This experience is called the "natural state" and can be very peaceful or it can be ecstatic beyond description.

The key to reaching imbas through meditation is connecting with all of yourself and the gods. That is why the conscious mind must be quieted from all of its programming, preconceptions and inherent limitations. A first step towards this ability is to use what is known as a single focus. This was traditionally done on an object or on a concept (visualization). Among the Filidh, this object was a small stone that was placed on the chest while lying on a secluded bed in a guarded area or room. I personally try to visualize things outside of normal reality in order to shock my senses into being more aware. An example of this technique would be to visualize seeing both ahead and behind at the same time or to see the insides and the outsides of an object all at once. One might try to hear a color or to taste a melody in an effort to awaken the senses into a higher, more symbiotic state.

Other ways to reach the state of imbas are to simply \*will\* yourself into that connection. The first attempts at doing this might require that a person call out to their gods and deities. I do not suggest doing this audibly, but rather that these names should be chanted within the quieted mind. Call your deities using the power of your mind and spirit. Repeat the name and the need over and over within yourself. Try to reinforce the power of your inner calling of the name until your mental/spiritual volume increases. Be alert for changes in the way that reality presents itself around you and be ready to follow the light, the music or the flow of perception that will appear when the deity approaches. Take the step or leap across the void into their presence when the pathway opens.

### **Ground Luminosity**

Depending on the purpose of one's meditation, one can go to the gods, reside in peaceful harmony, or obliterate the ego to reach the so-called "Ground Luminosity." This is the light that exists at the core of Creation. It is encountered at the moment of death and imbas (please note that the Gaelic word for death 'bas' is found within imbas). How we act and what we bring to such an encounter will determine our own experiences within the Otherworld, and will also shape our existence within each life that we live or throughout many lifetimes. Do not fear that

you will be trapped within these experiences (especially if you are within a consecrated space and are strongly grounded as well as connected via bonds of love and honor to family). If one has an anamchara (a soul-friend), then that person will be the guiding light for the outward / inward journey, as well as the return journey. There is always a return path for those who clearly see their own truth or the truth of a soul-friend. Those who are in confusion (and without spiritual connection or guardianship), are recommended to \*not\* seek this pathway or the calling of the gods during such a meditation. Without a center, a ground or a connection, ventures into the Greater Awareness are not recommended. The meditation itself takes one only to the doorway. It is the will and the spirit of the seeker that takes one beyond. It is the will of the Gods of Destiny that allows one to enter. It is the love of family, friends, tribe and anamchara, that allows one to return.

The daily meditation does not automatically take you anywhere other than into your own inner peace. This is a healthy and beneficial place for all of us to be every day. One must strive mightily to go elsewhere (or even NO-Where, i.e. the Not-Place). The use of mantric techniques must be coupled with the meditation to effect a \*journey\*. One must call out to the gods or willfully plunge within the nothingness of the Void. Among the Poets or Filidh, such a meditation was called the "Bed of the Poets." It was accomplished within a safe, well-guarded and well-shielded room and bed, a place where imbas could be safely and reliably sought.

### **The Edge of Consciousness**

The edge of consciousness and being (that represents the "in-between-ness" of the worlds) is a fine line like a razor, and is easily missed by both the seeker and the spirit of a dying person. If this "two-places-in-one," divided-attention doorway is missed, then the meditation is a normal one and the cycle of life-death-transition-rebirth begins anew in most of us. To be aware of it, is to have the choice of attempting the walk along its pathway, but stepping upon the edge of such a way is a choice that requires much knowledge of the self and of truth and is \*not\* recommended to those who have not studied and prepared themselves in their many lifetimes.

On the other hand, every person can and will eventually achieve their re-union with themselves and their ancestral spirits, which is a totality of communion and an uplifting ecstasy. It is a matter of lives and death and learning and loving. It is also a matter of doing and creating. That is why it is important for each of us to do the work of the body, mind and spirit, in truthfulness each and every day. That is also why one should endeavor to be even more honorable in the world of dreams, than when we are within the world of pain and of illusion. Within the world of the self's truth, one wields the power to create and to destroy. It is the line between these extremes that we call life. When we are within this world we may not be fully aware, yet we are guided by our geasa and our dán.

One of the purposes of meditation for the Draíothe and the Filidh was to achieve imbas, a form of enlightenment and elevated awareness. In their long training, this practice was reserved for the two highest classes, the Anruith and the Ollamh. A master of such things could also have what was called a 'divided attention.' This is similar to sleep walking or talking, but with the added ability of conscious awareness in each state (dreaming consciousness and waking consciousness). Techniques in lucid dreaming are other ways that subconscious focus is

practiced. The key to success in each of these efforts is found in mastering the ability to concentrate. Let's look at the classical methods for developing this skill.



## Gathering the Attention

Among those who would be Druids and Seers, there are three different methods for becoming focused. All of these methods rightfully assume that the people attempting to obtain focus have as a minimum the ability to concentrate. I call these three attention-gathering techniques:

1. **An Mionaire - lit. 'fine (small) attention' (i.e. I am Very Small):** concentrating on a very small non-living or inanimate object so that one may become absorbed.
2. **An Neidín - 'the little nest', (i.e. A Place of Safety):** concentrating on the breath or a breathing object so that the mind and body may rest naturally.
3. **An Iarrairdeall - lit. 'solicitous attention' (i.e. I am Very Large);** Concentrating on an abstraction to blank the mind and go beyond ego.

### An Mionaire, I am Very Small

An Mionaire meditation requires concentrating on a very small non-living or inanimate object. This form of concentration requires focusing on a single point, a symbol on paper, or a very small object (made of metal, plastic, wood or glass). Place the chosen focal point in front of you. Sit in a relaxed position with the legs crossed (if on the floor or ground) or with the legs to the front (if in a chair). Gaze only at the object with an unwavering stare. Do not ask yourself questions about the object, nor imagine anything about it or its possibilities. Simply gaze upon it and observe it. It is for this reason that the more plain and simple that the object is, the less distracting it will be to the focus of attention. It is used as an aid to the attention in this exercise to open a pathway between yourself and the two forms of spirit: That Which Creates and That Which Destroys. In establishing and maintaining this deep connection between yourself and the source or end of ALL Things, allow distractions to be consumed as easily as you breathe or as your heartbeats. If you feel constrained by your surroundings, go to a place of isolation and safety. If you are restless, make relaxation your first goal (to be accomplished through exercise, posture, breathing and gentle movement). Always return to your focused gaze and attention upon the object. The object could also be a Mandala or a letter, even an Ogham. The use of such a focal point is a universally accepted standard for shifting the attention so that mastery of the self can be achieved in relaxation. This relaxation and focusing exercise works so well that it is taught to expecting mothers in the Lamaze techniques of natural childbirth. A birth of the self through spirit and a birth of new life from the womb are both assisted by achieving a single pointed/single minded focus. The Lamaze birthing techniques also make use of breath control as a means of achieving control, harmony and unity in the body. Learning to control the breath is the next time-honored technique for improving concentration and accomplishing meditation.

### **An Neidín, A Place of Safety**

An Neidin meditation places one at ease. It is a matter of being absorbed in a rhythmic natural process (i.e. the beating of the heart, breathing like a baby, soothing sounds). A connection is made between the meanma or inner mind and the cycles of the web of life around us. This method of meditation is primarily achieved through centering on one's own breathing habits and breath, though it could also involve such things as the clouds overhead, the swaying of the trees, or the rolling of the waves. Once again, the technique should begin by assuming one of the three major Celtic relaxation postures. Pay attention to your breathing and attempt to change the way that you inhale and exhale to the way that you breathe while sleeping. This breathing is also the way that a baby breathes. First, draw the breath in through the nose and into the lungs by allowing the lower lungs to fill first and then expand until the air reaches the top of the lungs. Next, exhale slowly through the nostrils, by pushing the air from the lungs using the abdominal muscles. Once this process has been repeated many times and becomes a second nature to you, begin to count (in your mind) the number of breaths that are taken. Extend this counting to an entire day (at times) so that you know the length of a day in the breaths of your body. When this task is no longer difficult to accomplish, change the focus of your attention to the actual breath itself. Follow the quality of the air as it comes into your body through the nostrils and into the upper chest, reaching the extents of the lungs. Feel the air pass into your blood and journey through your blood vessels, until your body's own heat and natural exertions have changed it. Return to your lungs along the pathways of your blood through the heart and into the lungs again. Observe the changes of the breath as the products of the body's dúile have altered the nature of the air within it. Watch these breaths as they leave your body and reconnect to the greater Dúile of the Cosmos. Begin the cycle anew with each succeeding breath. One can assign a sound or a color symbol to better describe and facilitate each part of this process of transformation within the breathing. This method of paying attention can be expanded to the ways in which trees breathe: inspiring from and expiring into Nature. Following such a flow naturally increases the connections between the center of self and the center of Nature.

### **An Iarrairdeall, I am Very Large**

To become very large, one must expand beyond the barriers of ego by thinning the barriers that separate us from the rest of the universe. This thinning of the ego is accomplished by concentrating on an abstraction that has no form or shape. The process of An Iarrairdeall is actually the elimination of worldly thoughts so that the mind rests in a completely natural state. That is to say, that it is observing everything equally without internal or external prejudice in its attention. This exercise in regulating the attention is the most difficult form of concentration to achieve. It is also perhaps the most rewarding way of focusing the inner attention to obtain imbas. There are two basic methods for achieving this state in my experience: cutting off extraneous thoughts as they occur and \*sinking\* such thoughts into a \*void\* of nothingness on a continual basis. In the first method, the meditating subject cuts the thought off as soon as it manifests and returns to the preferred posture while thinking absolutely nothing. This done while remaining attentive all transient thoughts that must be 'chopped' or 'cut-off' as soon as they occur. The mind eventually becomes disciplined to not manifesting such distractions for itself (and creating useless work that is counter-productive to its \*real\* work). In the other method for focusing on abstractions for the mastery of attention (sinking the thoughts into the Abyss), the

process involves yielding to the thought and letting it flow beyond the consciousness into a bottomless pit (or other suitably visualized abyss). A black flame can be used for consuming such thoughts as a kind of void. At other times, this void can be visualized and formed as a black bubble. As the mind continues to be emptied of distractions, it should also be approaching the flame/bubble until it is completely within the void. This is the natural state of the mind and one should and no longer have to sink or discard extraneous thoughts. It is at this point that the realization is achieved that there is no mine or yours, nor anything such as inside or outside. The consciousness can be extended so that one sees and experiences ‘nothingness’ in every direction equally, both within and without. In this way the attention is equally centered and alert for ‘what is’ and for what ‘is not.’

These are some of the ways that a person can master the attention of their consciousness. They should be everyday practices for Druids and those who hope to obtain imbas through practices of meditation.



## Achieving a Spiritual Union

W. Y. Evans-Wentz describes the various aspects of Yoga and their general relationships to one another in the following table:

### The Parts of Yoga

THE PART	MASTERY	CONTROL
Hatha	Breath	Physical Body and Vitality
Laya	Will	Mind
Bhakti	Love	Divine Love
Shakti	Energy	Forces of Nature
Mantra	Sound	Sound Vibrations
Yantra	Form	Geometrical Form
Dhya/na	Thought	Thought Processes
Ra/ja	Method	Discrimination
Jn~a/na	Knowledge	Intellect
Karma	Activity	Action
Kundaliní	Kundaliní Psychic-nerve	Force
Sama/dhi	Self	Ecstasy

**I'd like to equate these to the Dúile:**

### **Mastery and Control**

<b>THE DÚILE</b>	<b>MASTERY</b>	<b>CONTROL</b>
Blood/Breath/Flesh	Physical Body and Breath	Vitality
Mind	Will	Mind
Skin/Flesh/Mind	Love	Divine Love
Blood	Energy	Forces of Nature
Breath	Sound	Sound Vibrations
Bones	Form	Geometrical Form
Brain/Mind	Thought	Thought Processes
Face	Method	Discrimination
Brain	Knowledge	Intellect
Blood	Activity	Action
Skin/Mind/Brain	Kundaliní Psychic-nerve	Force
Head	Self	Ecstasy

These relationships, as presented in the above tables, will be more fully described and detailed in another work. We will use them to define a linear approach to meditation that leads from the Physical to the Spiritual through various stages of Body/Mind control and empowerment. The Mind aspect will be coupled to just about every stage of the process and could be deleted to simplify the arrangement of the table.

Working through the different parts of the Self through disciplined meditation and focused awareness allows one to achieve a spiritual union with other spirits that leads to ecstasy. In this state of ecstasy, one can live in the spirit and can connect to more of knowledge, while achieving better control over the forms and powers of the world around them. It is also my belief and practice that the Druids observed and achieved control over most of these aspects of the Self and the parts of reality with which they link. The entire process is achievable but is not safely realizable without gaining an understanding of the Self and all of its facets before energizing or releasing them.

There's obviously a lot of work that needs to be done by the individual to follow this pathway and there is an immense body of knowledge and information that must be described and discovered to quantify the experiences in Celtic terms. For now, it is enough for us to seek to discover our own pathways to spirit through self-knowledge, openness and meditation.. Opening these pathways within our selves, will sensitize us to the voice of spirit and enable us to more effectively access divine knowledge.





## Cauldron Meditations

Aligning one's cauldrons and dúile is like a journey beyond self. It is a voyage beyond the nine waves of being into unknown seas. It is a return to spirit from the hardness of the physical world and the cutting edges of the mind. The entire process involves a letting go from hardness to an acceptance of the intangible. When we exceed the ninth wave, we are beyond all that is imagined and known. We are then within the Otherworld where different rules apply and different beings live. In that world we are entirely spirit. I personally think that fire is the wave that runs along the edges of all nine waves, though perhaps it is only between the boundaries of the cauldrons as seems to be implied in Taliesin's, "Defense of the Chair." It is a measure of how we flow from one state to another. It is the surface of the waves and the boundaries between them. It is the difference between one state of being and another as we transcend physicality and mentality into realms of spirituality.

Celtic meditations, as described below, should start in the hard elements of the self and flow outward as waves of spirituality and beyond. A gateway is sometimes experienced in the transitions from one world to another. It becomes an opening that takes us through the limitations of illusion into the actual destinies of present, past and future reality. One can literally become a spirit so that the experience of deity is like the flowing of a river into a mighty ocean. In the journey, many connections will be made and much will be revealed as we return to the essence of who we are and how we are connected through spirit to the gods.

In using the Cauldron Meditation we should attempt to empower, focus, and still, each of the Three Cauldrons of the body: Coire Ernma, Coire Goiriath, and Coire Sois. The first Cauldron to be addressed is the Cauldron of Vocation. This cauldron comprises the bones, the flesh and the skin/hair. One should attempt to find a safe, relaxing place to stretch out (I always orient my head toward the direction that is chosen to be most suited to the purpose of the working). The next step is to lay down and get comfortable. The meditation can also be done while sitting or standing, though I personally believe that it is more easily accomplished while laying down (in the dark if possible). The usual method is to start at the feet, lifting them one at a time, then letting them gently drop. As they come to rest, try to sense and feel sensations of peace and relaxation as they flow up the legs into the torso. The meditator may have to lift and drop, then release each leg, several times until it is truly relaxed and completely 'at ease.' Once the legs are relaxed and 'floating,' the same process should be performed upon the arms until they are completely relaxed. The next body part to be relaxed is the head (and the face, as well as the neck). Drop and release. Flow and relax...until completely apart from the muscles, separated from the heaviness of the bones and any tactile sensations of the skin. At this point, the Cauldron of Vocation has been placed in order. The next stage in the meditation is to regulate and release the Cauldron of Warming. The first dúile to be addressed is the breath. Focus upon the act of breathing. Is it natural? Is breathing being done deeply and slowly? Is the torso tight? Please do whatever it takes to ensure that the act of breathing in meditation is exactly like the breathing of one who is asleep (though the mind should be very much awake and focused at this point). Eventually, breathing becomes automatic and forgotten. At this point, the primary awareness should be on the heartbeat and the thoughts (comprising the other two dúile of the Coire

Goiriath: the blood and the mind). Please focus on your heartbeat. Is it fast or slow? Is it regular? Does it have a strong steady beat? Listen to the drumming beat of the heart and consciously *Will* it to be deep, slow, and strong. The volume of the drumming will increase and stabilize until the point is reached (which is very akin to the 'silent point' of shamanic drumming) where the heart is no longer heard. At this point, the mind is in synchronization with the heartbeat and the breathing. They are no longer separate but have become One. It is now time to quiet the thoughts and prepare the Cauldron of Knowledge to receive inspiration or Imbas. Consciously focus on a black circle within the mind's eye. Let this circle grow as random images appear within it and come out of it. Let the circle of darkness grow. Feed thoughts into the cauldron as one would feed a fire. Slowly project your consciousness into the darkness. Maintain the vision of the circle of darkness as you enter into the Cauldron of Knowledge. Within its center there is perfect quietness and perfect blackness. It is filled with beginnings and endings. It has no front or back...no up or down. All of existence should have become an empty cauldron in every direction... black within and without. When the capacity of the mind has been expanded to see the blackness in all directions simultaneously, all around and within at the same time, it is ready to be filled. Those that have been called upon for aid can be expected to come at this time, or perhaps the answers that were sought will themselves appear? sometimes the gateways between worlds open and sometimes we are touched by the spirits of the Otherworld. This is the time when the dúile of the self are in resonance with the dúile of the Cosmos. Three Worlds are become one Center and Three Cauldrons sustain Nine Dúile. It is in this state that the self can gain the wisdom of the Gods. This wisdom will eventually be revealed to us by the Ogham that we interpret during divination. Such a meditation is not an everyday occurrence and is definitely a powerful experience; it is not to be undertaken lightly. The state of oneness that it gives with the Cosmos will persist for many days afterward. It is during this time that I recommend casting the fedha. To perform more mundane divinations, there is another way to meditate that also gives good results that is commonly called 'Pathworking.'



## Pathworking

One of the basic techniques of pathworking is to concentrate on a mandala. I use several mandalas in my own practice of pathworking. Courtney Davis created some of these designs in his excellent book called 'Celtic Mandalas.' Other mandalas that I have used are based upon Fionn's Wheel and the tale, the 'Voyage of Mael Duin' (both of which will be presented in graphic detail later in this work). After selecting a mandala, I suggest that you take some time to just observe the symbols and interconnected images. Listen to what they are saying to you. Allow them to speak and allow them to take control of your mind's eye. Both activities require a safe, quiet and sacred space to complete the entire process. This effect of 'going into the mandala' is very similar to the way that a so-called 'Magic Eye' image causes our mind to shift our method of perception. The order of the mandala becomes the new order of our own elements. Our dúile are connected to the dúile of the image. The flow of the symbols becomes its own creature and we are propelled upon a journey of the spirit into another world. If the mandala has been properly chosen, this Otherworld will contain our answers and will also connect us to our

spirit helpers. Perhaps we can hear the music of the Sídhe or the Voice of the Gods at this time? The purpose of the mandala is to open us to the experience and to also lighten our footsteps along the pathways to illumination. When we've returned from such a journey, we have only to interpret the knowledge that has been revealed, and to cast the Ogham to resolve the uncertainties that might exist for us in interpreting our experiences. Casting the Ogham to determine the signs is always a good precaution to take, both before and after such a pathworking (or any other powerful Magical Working for that matter). The most powerful mandala of all is the World Tree that connects the Three Worlds to the self and the Center. It was just such a tree that taught Odin the Runes in Norse tradition and it is this same tree that will give us the knowledge of the Wise. The Ogham are the leaves of this tree. The pathways are the branches and the roots are our destiny twining up to encircle us. The breath of the gods is heard within the music of its leaves. The Magical fruit of the Bile feeds our creative fire and nourishes our spirit. The Ogham leaves of the World Tree grow within the Celtic mandala known as Fionn's Wheel.



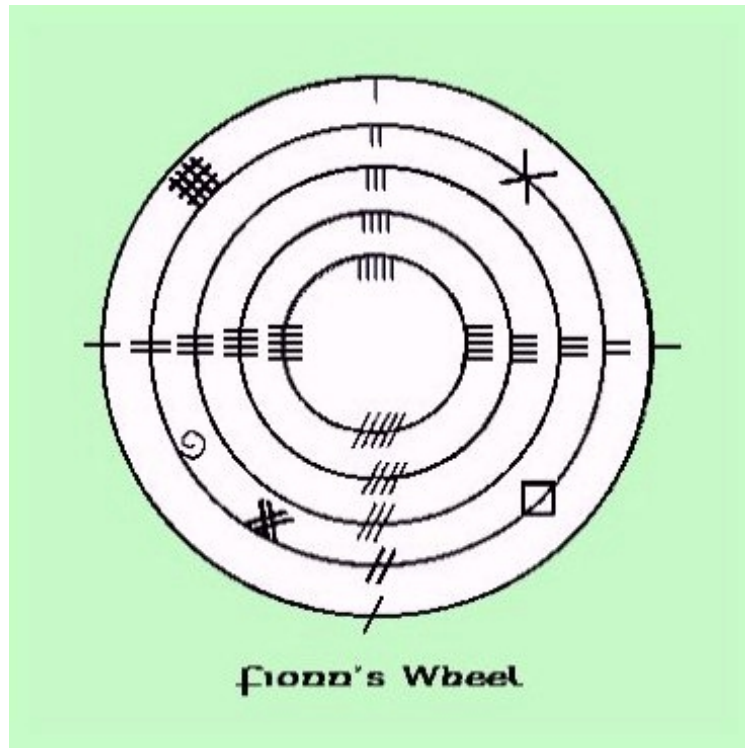
### **Fionn's Wheel**

Fire in the Head,  
Head full of Stars,  
Starways to Skinways,  
Skinways of Serpents.  
Serpents of Change,  
Change between Heartbeats,  
Heartbeats of Drumbeats,  
Drumbeats beyond Darkness.  
Darkness beneath Stone,  
Stoneways above Wormways.  
Wormsigns through Lifesigns,  
Lifesigns of Love.  
Love brings a White Light,  
White Light above Pathways,  
Pathblazing and Fire Finding,  
Fire in the Head.  
Headstones of Prophets!  
Prophets of Wisdom!  
Wisdom of Worldways!  
Ways of Bright Knowledge!

Fionn's Wheel is a cryptic figure that is found within the Book of Ballymote and its treatise on Ogham. Within the structure of Fionn's Wheel is hidden the Cosmology of the Celts and the Druids. It is a Magical Mandala of Ogham, as well as a symbol of the Mysteries that are Ireland. The Ogham aicme, are shown on Fionn's Wheel as separate pathways connecting the five circles

## Ogham Divination

of existence. Each of these pathways is formed by Ogham symbols that connect the extremes of the Cosmos: the Circle of the Heavens ('Cruinne, Roth') and the sacred Center of Being ('Bile'). The exception to this connection of outer/inner pathways is called the 'Forfedha,' the fifth set of Ogham, which are arranged around the second ring of the Wheel. I call this circle the Circle of Poetic Thought or the Circle of the Oak.



It is my belief that the Forfedha were placed here, due to their use by the Filidh in ritual. How this could have happened is based on the concepts of number and time, as well as the changing of the seasons, as determined by the Dagda's Harp.

### One is the First Number

In Irish, the number *one* is 'Aon.' This word has deep connections to assemblies and can best be associated through Ogham to the primal Goddess Anu, Mother of All. *One* is a number that is representative of the center, the self, even the beginning. It is for this reason that the Forfedha Ogham Eadha was placed at the *first* position in its aicme on Fionn's Wheel. Not only does it start the aicme, but it also symbolizes Imbolc, which is all about the center of life, the beginnings of flow, the hearth fire, and the home of the Celtic family. The *first* Ogham of the Forfedha is also the cross of the Sun. It represents Being, Creation, Nature and the source.

## Two is About Becoming

If *One* is about Being, then *Two* is about Becoming. In Irish, the number *two* is ‘*dó*.’ ‘*Dó*’ I associate with The Dagda, ‘who was good at everything that he did.’ *Two* is a number about actions and changes. *Two* is the transformation of *One*. It is the revelation of the *Draíocht* that exists within Being. It is also a measure of time. There are *two* parts to a day: darkness and lightness. There are *two* parts to the year: Winter and summer. There are *two* great parts to Being: Death and Life. The Dagda’s staff itself has two ends, one dealing out death and the other giving forth life. There are two parts of Becoming: Giving and Receiving. It is for this reason that the opened doorway of the Diamond represents the *second* character of the Forfedha. It is placed at the time of Bealtaine on the Wheel, a time of giving and receiving, a time of fertility and a time of growth. It is a time when we pass between the *twin* fires of Bel, embracing the fertility of life and the growth of summer.

## The Three Gifts

‘*Tri*’ or ‘*Three*’ could mean ‘*Triple God/desses*’ or it could mean ‘one child with *Three Gifts*.’ Three is the child of *One* and *Two*, just as Angus was the child of Bóann and the Dagda. Angus, the child, is the result of their mating. He is the New Sun arising from the powers of the Brugh. *Three* is the third part of the spiral at the entryway to the White Mound. It completes the Three Worlds and establishes our reality. It is what transforms our diversity of two into a harmony of three. Three was a number of balance to the Celts. There are *three* Sons of Tuirenn, three Gods of Danu, three Brighids, *triple* Morrighu, *three* Queens of the Tuatha Dé ... *Three* was a number of continuing and a melody of harmony. The *third* Ogham of the Forfedha on Fionn’s Wheel is Ifin, which is represented by the combinations of the Cross and the Diamond. *Three* is a number of transformation. It also contains the *crossroads* of four within it.

## Four Around the Spiral

‘*Cathair*’ or ‘*Four*’ is a number that connects and assimilates. It is a number of focus. *Four* is represented by the Ogham Uileand, a vine that spirals around the sacred Bile. As its spiral tightens, all of our hazy and uncertain concepts take form to reveal their secrets. Four is a number that turns a plane into a solid, and gives form to appearance. *Four* establishes the mental pathways that are necessary for weaving the cloth of knowledge from the threads of information. Four is Mastery of Divination. It is all about seeing beyond the ordinary to other worlds and to other dimensions. I associate ‘*Cathair*’ with Cathbad, Druid seer extraordinary. The Ollamh’s chair at Emain Macha, rightfully belonging to Cathbad, was itself called ‘*Cathair Ollaman*.’ I also associate *cathair* with ‘*Coll*’ which is symbolic of the source of all ‘seeing’ which is the Magical Well of Segais. This well could only be safely accessed when Nechtan and his *three* cupbearers chanted around it. Such chanting by *fours* around a well was also found in the healing work of Dian Cécht and his *three* children at the Well of Sláne. *Four* Druids chanted the spell of Truth over the dreamer of the Tarbh Feís. If the Celtic Cosmos consists of Land, Sea, and Sky, then *four* represents the pathways that exist between these worlds. It is a spiral of stitchwork that melds the *Three Worlds* into a new creation. This spiral also represents the entry way to the House of Donn (always in the southwest) and/or the Brugh na Bóinne (which is opposite it in the Northeast) . One direction on the spiral leads down into the World of the Sea and the Isles of the

Ancestors. Reversing the spiral, takes us up through the Brugh of the Gods and into the World of the stars. The unity of the *Three Worlds* is woven within the weave of the spirals by the vine of life. This weaving of four yields a new creation, which is *five*, our pathway to Destiny.

## Five for Mastery

‘*Cuig*’ or *Five* is a number of mastery and completion (as also is nine). Five is also a number that represents the Land. I associate ‘*Cuig*’ with ‘*Quert*’ as this is the altered Magical ‘*C*’ sound. What better *five* than the five pointed star concealed within the seeds of the Apple? What better Land than the Isle of Apples itself, which is concealed within the mists of an Otherworldly Sea? There were *five* parts to the Land; *five* fingers to the hand; *five* strokes to the Ogham. *Five* is the center defined by *Four* and *Three*. It is the center of worlds, plains, and realities. *Five* exists on many levels and in many directions. *Five* is symbolized by the *Four* directions and *Four* Hallows as They lay across one another to form the Fidchell board of the Gods. *Four* lines by *four* lines yields a figure that has *nine* compartments. This is the Cró of Lugh within which he was able to trap all opponents. This is the maneuver that Lugh used to defeat Ogma at the game of fidchell, thereby gaining entrance to the fellowship of Tara. The mystery that connects *five* to *nine*, within the intersections of time and space, is found contained within the word ‘noinden.’ This word signifies a gathering of warriors, or it can also be applied to the ancient Celtic week, a period of *nine* days. As a gathering of warriors, it is the number of the Cró of Lugh. As a period of *nine* days, it shows us that the *fifth* day is the center of the week. The mastery of *five* is that it defines the center, which is also defined by the center of *nine*. This center is our connection to Creation. The relationship of *five* and *nine* is also shown in the lore of the Well of Segais, which was surrounded by *nine* hazels, but which also was the source of *five* streams of wisdom. If we are wise, we will embrace the strategy of Lugh amid the Draíocht of Segais, when we connect the *fivefold* nature of the Ogham to the *ninefold* nature of the Dúile. May the center of wisdom guide us in our own efforts at foreseeing the future. May our Wood Wisdom reveal that which is hidden. May our Cauldron of Wisdom be positioned to receive the flow of imbas. *Five* is the game of Destiny. It is a creator of Worlds and a map to the Cosmos. *Five* is the window that connects us to the Gods and the Ancestors. It is at the center of the Feast of Age. *Five* is the Mystery and the Mastery.

The five elements of the Forfedha are also said to be the gift of the ‘Crane Bag’ of Manannán Mac Lir (which is curiously similar to the ‘crane bag’ that Finn inherited from his father Cumhal). Manannán and Finn are no strangers to the Ogham or the Wheel. It was Manannán that caused the White Hazel containing Balor’s severed head to be made into the Shield of Fionn (another name for Fionn’s Wheel). Manannán fashioned this shield and made Finn a gift of it. It was in this way that men received the wisdom of Balor without succumbing to the poison of his ‘evil eye’ (but that is another story). Another name for Fionn’s Wheel is Fionn’s Window which is representative of the Celtic zodiac as it is seen through the smoke hole in the roof of an Irish hut. It is only when the ‘star speech’ from the Skyworld is superimposed upon the ‘wood wisdom’ of the Ogham, that the true pattern of the Wheel is revealed. It is my hope in this analysis (and the divinations that result), to decipher some of the ancient wisdom and meanings of the Druids.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### The Year in the Gaelic Calendar

The modern calendar System was introduced into Gaelic fairly recently. Traditionally, different months and times of the year were identified by terms connected with the weather and agriculture. These times did not correspond directly with the English/Latin months; there is much evidence to Suggest that their timing corresponded with the phases of the moon.

**JANUARY** - an Faoilleach. Traditionally, the 'wolf month', two weeks before the festival of an fheille Bride (known as 'faoillteach geamhradh' - winter wolftime) and two weeks after it (known as 'faoillteach earraich - Spring wolftime). Also known as the 'storm days'

**FEBRUARY** - an Gearran, the gelding or horse. (Middle Irish - a workhorse; Gaulish Coligny - Equos). The horse was used to draw the plough. Gearr also means 'to cut' and gearran is one of the many names used to describe the Spring winds. Hence, gearran is the cutting wind; feadag is the whistling wind (the plover); gobag is the biting wind (dogfish).

**MARCH** - an Mart, the Seed time. There is much folklore concerned with the charm known as 'na tri Mairt' (the three Marches) which was Said to protect the harvest from fairy enchantment.

**APRIL** - an Giblean. The end of April is known as Seachdain an t-sionnaich, the week of the fox (end of the winds).

**MAY** - an Ceitean. The first weather of Summer. (Old Irish cetsoman; Cet - first). The two weeks before Bealtaine (ceitean earrach - Spring maytime); the two weeks after Bealtaine (ceitean Samhradh - Summer maytime).

**JUNE** - an t-Ogmios. The young month. (Perhaps from the idea of the young Summer, the young Sun god).

**JULY** - an t-Iuchar. The border time, traditionally the last two weeks of July and the first two weeks of August. Also known as the 'dog days'. ( Sirius, the dog Star, can be Seen in the Sky).

**AUGUST** - an Lunasdal. From early Irish Lughnasadh, the festival of Lugh.

**SEPTEMBER** - an t- Sultainn. The fat time. ( Sultar - plump, fat, in good condition. Early Irish - Sult; Gaulish Rivros - fat; Gaelic - Reamhar). All these names refer to the ripening harvest. The September moon is gealach an abachaidh, moon of ripening.



## Ogham Divination

OCTOBER - an Damhair, the Stag rut. Gaelic - damh, a Stag. Old Celtic - damo. Gealach a 'bhruic - moon of the badger.

NOVEMBER - an t- Samhainn, Summer's end. The month of the festival of Samhain. (Old Celtic - Samoni; possibly Sam + fuin - end of Summer).

DECEMBER - an Dubhlachd. The Dark Season. Old Celtic - dubo - dark.

The word for autumn, foghar, also means harvest. Spring is earrach. Old Irish - errech; Old Celtic - ersako. The Gaelic word earracais means a Scarcity of food and fodder. Winter is geamhradh, which also means Stormy. Old Irish - gaimred; Old Celtic - gaimo.

Origin:

**Dalriada Celtic Heritage Society,  
Isle of Arran**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Fire Scrying**

(from the Witches Forum BB S, Virginia Beach, VA - Book of Shadows)

Fire Scrying is one form of divination that is sometimes used by witches. The term Fire Scrying, is exactly as it is said, scrying into a fire. In order to do this one would prepare by gathering a pile of driftwood on seashore, building a fire on the seashore, after sunset. If one is far from a Sea, then you may use any old weathered wood. It should be noted that new wood is not suitable for Scrying and should not be used. After the fire is well burned and is starting to die out, lay on it a cedar log, a juniper log and three good handfuls of sandalwood chips. Let these burn well, then, as the fire again begins to die down, gaze deeply into the dying embers, there you will See Scenes of the past, present and future, you may see the actual scenes, but more than likely you will see symbolic scenes that need interpreting.

## APPENDIX C

### The Ogham Directional Correspondences

#### The North - Words of Conflict

<b>Birch</b>	<b>Rowan</b>	<b>Alder</b>	<b>Willow</b>	<b>Ash</b>
Purification	Revelation	Shielding	Appearance	Examination
Initiation	Quickening	Sheltering	Discovery	Challenge
Manifestation	Intuition	Preservation	Awareness	Assault
Will	Perspective	Contentions	Resistance	Hardihood

#### The East - Words of Prosperity

<b>Hawthorn</b>	<b>Oak</b>	<b>Holly</b>	<b>Hazel</b>	<b>Apple</b>
Affinity	Nobility	Continuity	Wisdom	Love
Compatibility	Bounty	Energy	Survival	Arousal
Encompassing	Strength	Essence	Creativity	Passions
Opportunity	Preeminence	Principle	Wonder	Harmony

#### The South - Words of Song

<b>Vine</b>	<b>Ivy</b>	<b>Reed</b>	<b>Blackthorn</b>	<b>Elder</b>
Strain	Learning	Calmness	Battle	Embarrassment
Binding	Fulfillment	Peace	Turmoil	Conflict
Fierceness	Ambition	Health	Mistrust	Curse
Law	Knowledge	Modesty	Clarity	Wisdom

#### The West - Words of Knowledge

<b>Silver Fir</b>	<b>Gorse</b>	<b>Heather</b>	<b>Poplar</b>	<b>Yew</b>
Foundation	Upholdings	Earthing	Distinction	Death
Learning	Sustaining	Humus	Achievement	Surrender
Science	Shaping	Germination	Ordering	Service
Teachings	Eloquence	Reflection	Judgement	Mastery

### **The Center - Words of Sovereignty**

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<b>Grove</b>	<b>Spindle</b>	<b>Pine</b>	<b>Honeysuckle</b>	<b>Sea</b>
Gathering	Doing	Inquiry	Research	Journeying
Community	Making	Testing	Discovery	Mystery
Blessing	Wishing	Excellence	Direction	Cycles
Centering	Primacy	Truth	Completeness	Destiny

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## APPENDIX D

### The Ogham Correspondence Tables

#### Aicme Beith

<b>Birch</b>	<b>Rowan</b>	<b>Alder</b>	<b>Willow</b>	<b>Ash</b>
Fasting	Beliefs	Guarding	Shape	Examination
Cleansing	Lessons	Alliances	Image	Testing
Baptism	Increase	Protection	Discovery	Challenge
Initiation	Quickenings	Sheltering	Feelings	Defiance
Being	Animation	Rescuing	Touching	Aggression
Manifestation	Intuition	Preservation	Awareness	Assaults
Beginnings	Instinct	Defending	Alertness	Attacks
Consciousness	Viewpoint	Assertions	Wariness	Contests
Will	Perspective	Contentions	Resistance	Hardihood

#### Aicme Huath

<b>Hawthorn</b>	<b>Oak</b>	<b>Holly</b>	<b>Hazel</b>	<b>Apple</b>
Likeness	Generosity	Tradition	History	Unions
Similarity	Abundance	Custom	Tales	Encirclings
Compatibility	Bounty	Energy	Survival	Arousals
Agreement	Reward	Potency	Inheritance	Excitement
Acceptance	Dedication	Purity	Heritage	Ecstasy
Encompassing	Strength	Essence	Creativity	Passions
Containing	Clarity	Elements	Revelation	Radiance
Fortunes	Distinction	Fundamentals	Inspiration	Warmth
Opportunity	Preeminence	Principles	Wonder	Harmony

#### Aicme Muin

<b>Vine</b>	<b>Ivy</b>	<b>Reed</b>	<b>BLACKT HORN</b>	<b>Elder</b>
Obstacles	Values	Solidarity	Instability	Blemish
Desires	Appreciation	Communion	Deception	Distortion
Bindings	Fulfillment	Peace	Turmoil	Conflict
Oaths	Satisfaction	Stability	Upset	Disturbance
Vehemence	Control	Wholeness	Despair	Curses
Fierceness	Ambition	Health	Mistrust	Argument
Intensity	Attainment	Soundness	Dilemma	Discussion
Power	Information	Sanity	Accuracy	Determination
Law	Knowledge	Modesty	Clarity	Balance

### Aicme Ailm

<b>Silver Fir</b>	<b>Gorse</b>	<b>Heather</b>	<b>Poplar</b>	<b>Yew</b>
Lessons	Support	Burial	Veneration	Collapse
Study	Maintaining	Decompose	Respect	Release
Learning	Sustaining	Humus	Achievements	Surrender
Sacrifice	Determination	Seeds	Intensity	Freedom
Dedication	Focusing	Blessings	Exaltation	Liberty
Science	Shaping	Germination	Guidance	Service
Logic	Persuasion	Illumination	Deductions	Meditation
Observations	Expression	Consideration	Rulings	Insight
Teachings	Eloquence	Reflection	Judgement	Mastery

### The Forfedha

<b>Grove</b>	<b>Spindle</b>	<b>Pine</b>	<b>Honeysuckle</b>	<b>Sea</b>
Assembly	Purpose	Requests	Study	Honoring
Weaving	Joining	Protocol	Research	Ancestors
Community	Making	Testing	Discovery	Mysteries
Family	Healing	Fitness	Well Being	Sacrifice
Fosterings	Chanting	Quality	Ordering	Offerings
Blessings	Wishing	Excellence	Direction	Cycles
Attunement	Delight	Validity	Spiraling	Ages
Alignment	Pleasure	Rightness	Transforming	Existence
Centering	Primacy	Initiation	Completeness	Destiny

## APPENDIX E

### Modern Ogham Correspondences

*D. L. Conway - Celtic Magic*

*Douglas Monroe - The 21 Lessons of Merlin*

*Edred Thorsson - The Book of Ogham*

*John Matthews - Celtic Shamanism*

*Murray Hope - Celtic Magic*

*Nigel Pennick - Magical Alphabets*

**B** - Happy/Immature, New Beginnings, Changes, Purification, Vitality, Power, Age

**L** - Protection against Psychic Attack, Life Force, Sacred Fire, Insight, Quickening, Controlling life, Protection, Love, Spiritual/Fanatical.

**F** - Royalty, Foundation, Protection in Magical Conflicts, Defense, Ambitious/Impulsive, Make Choices, Spirit Guides.

**S** - Death, Wise/Bitter, Gain Balance, Protection against Diseases, Harmony, Blessing, Intuition.

**N** - Rebirth, Peace, Feeling Bound, Locked in, Love, Passage from Inner World to Outer Realms, Keys to the Future, Opposition, Charming/Egocentric.

**H** - Passionate/Ruthless - Rhiannon - - Judgement, Protection Against All Magicks, The Terrible Hag, Challenge, Misfortune, Held back for awhile, Chaos, Dreams.

**D** - The Doorway to Inner Knowledge, Use the Keys, Endurance, Fatherly/Dominating, Seeking, Justice, Security, Strength.

**T** - Balanced Strength and Power, Fire, Strife, Third of ..., Determined / Insensitive Cú Chulainn - The Chariot, Balance, Energy and Guidance

**C** - Discovery, Word Wisdom, Generous/Deceptive, Creative Energies, Beauty, Creativity

**Q** - A Choice is made, Rebirth and Eternal Life, Motherly/Weak-willed Protection, Beauty, Eternity.

**M** - Effort, Inner Development, Sympathetic/Dependent, Inwardness, Assimilation for Inner Development, Mortality.

**G** - Time of Reflection, Satisfaction, Ambitious/Lazy, Development, Immortality, Changes for Growth, Earth Grounded Knowledge.

**NG** - Healing, Harmony, Adaptable/Indecisive, Upsets and Surprises, Riches, Maintainer of Order.

**STR** - Anger, Confusion, Resentment, Power in Visible/Invisible World, Overcoming Resistance, Honest/Deceptive, Control, Coercion.

**R** - Inspiration, End of Cycle or Problem, Balance of Threes, Time-Existence-Goddess, Change, Fate, Intelligent/Unfortunate.

## Ogham Divination

**A** - Learn from the past, Misery, Gain Higher Perceptions and Strength, Outgoing/Introverted , Objectivity, Sovereignty.

**O** - Information for Change, Travel, Wisdom, Synthesis, Strength in the Face of Adversity, Prospering/Vain.

**U** - Fear, Carefree/ Superficial, , Gateway, Passion, Healing, Spiritual Development, Gain, Good Luck, and Renewal.

**E** - Overcoming, Problems, Doubts, Fears, Caring/Insecure, The Power of the Will, Insight.

**I** - Change in Life or Attitude, Death, Immortality, Transformation, Wisdom, The Unity of Life and Death, Enduring/ Sanguine.

**EA** - Ability, Wheel of the Year, Eight Major Festivals, Middle, Focus, Wisdom past Illusion.

**OI** - Truth, Finish Obligations, The Spindle of the Wheel, Child Birth, Harmony, Space.

**IO** - New Experiences, Taste, Conflict, Resistance, Entering into the Inner Mysteries, Crane Dance.

**UI** - The Foundations of Ancient Wisdom, Magical Hardness, Learning, Spiral, Proceed with Caution, Discovery.

**AE** - Travel, Manifestation, The Container of Wisdom, The Sea, The Secrets of the Ley Lines, Exhaustion.



## APPENDIX F

### The Qualities of the Five Parts of Eireann

(as given by Fintan and Trefuilngid Tre-eochair  
in the 'Settling of the Manor of Tara')

#### North (Ulster) - Cath (Battle)

##### ATÚAID - NORTH

**contentions** (*arse, casmirt*): conflicts, arguments, claims, thesis, discussion, challenge.  
**hardihood** (*dúiri, crógacht, dánacht*): boldness, daring, impudence, insolence.  
**rough places** (*drobela, gairbhe*): coarseness, ruggedness, wildness.  
**strifes** (*drenna, cogadh*): conflict, fighting, disagreement, disharmony, competition, Struggle.  
**haughtiness** (*díumasa, uaibhreas*): arrogance, pride.  
**unprofitableness** (*dimáine, neamhthairbheach*): leanness, unbeneficial, losses, disservice.  
**pride** (*húaill, uabhar; brod*): ego, Self-esteem, egotism, arrogance.  
**captures** (*hallud, tógáil*): gains, takings, winnings, victories.  
**assaults** (*hindsaighthi, tosáí, fogha*): attacks, compelling, rapes.  
**hardness** (*crúas; cruas*): resistance, toughness, Sternness, harshness, difficulty.  
**wars** (*congala; cogadh*): conflicts, competitions, Struggles.  
**conflicts** (*coicthi; comhrac*): hostilities, clashes, Strife, war, contentions, difficulties.

#### East (Leinster) - Bláth (Prosperity)

##### ANOIR - EAST

**prosperity** (*bláth*) - prosperity  
**supplies** (*dino; sólathar*): collection, procurement; Supply, provision.  
**bee-hives** (*neathamnass; coirceog*): hives.  
**contests** (*ceasa; comórtas*): comparisons; competitions.  
**feats of arms** (*cosnuma; beart; gniomh*): cast, move; Shift, plan; action, proceeding, doing, performing, working, exercising.  
**householders** (*cleas n-airm; ceannas*): headship, Sovereignty; authority; command.  
**nobles** (*noethaighi; uasal*): noble, high-born; gentle; precious, fine.  
**wonders** (*halle; ionadh*): wonder, Surprise.  
**good custom** (*hinganati; béas*): habits; customary tax; dues  
**good manners** (*sobés; muineadh*): teaching, training; good behavior, manners; chastening; moral, lesson.  
**splendor** (*sochostud; niamhracht*): bright, lustrous, Shining, resplendence.  
**abundance** (*háinis; fairsingeacht*): width, extent; breadth; expanse; plenty, abundance; lavishness, liberality.

**dignity** (*himid; maorgacht*): Staleness, dignity.  
**strength** (*horddan; neart; daingne*): Strength; force; power; plenty; power to prevent, to remedy; ability. Also: fortified, Strong, Solid, Secure.  
**wealth** (*tráchta; Saibhreas; maoin*): riches, wealth; richness. also: gift, benefit; property, wealth; treasure.  
**householding** (*turchartha; teaghlachas; ceannacht*): domestic economy, housekeeping; establishment; household troops; retinue. Also: chieftain, management;  
**many arts** (*hilldána; dán*): gift, offering; craft, calling; art, faculty; poem; lot, fate.  
**accoutrements** (*teglochus; úim*): harness; weaving harness, gear, tackle. Also: D'aon úim = Ogham.  
**many treasures** (*hil máine; Stór; maoin*): Stores, Stock, provisions, abundance, treasure, riches, value, esteem. also: gift, benefit; property, wealth; treasure.  
**satin** (*sróll; Sról*): Satin; Smooth.  
**serge** (*síric; Saraiste*): Serge, a twilled cloth of worsted wool.  
**silks** (*sítai; Sioda*): Silks.  
**cloths** (*britgraighi; eadach, brat*): cloth,; Sail; clothing; mantle, cloak; covering; curtain.  
**hospitality** (*brugannos; féile*): generosity, hospitality; festival, feast.

## South (Munster) - Séis (Music)

### ANDEAS - SOUTH

**waterfalls** (*hesa; eas*): waterfall; cascade, cataract; Swift current, rapid.  
**fairs** (*hóenaigi; aonach*): fair; horse fair; assembly. aon = “one.”  
**nobles** (*donda; uasal*): noble, high-born; gentle; precious, fine.  
**reavers** (*dínerga; foglai*): plunderer, pillager; marauder, trespasser.  
**knowledge** (*súithi; fios; eolas*): knowledge; practical knowledge, understanding; familiarity; information; direction, guidance.  
**subtlety** (*cruithnecht; mine; grinn*): Smoothness, Softness; fineness, delicacy. also: perceptive; clear, accurate.  
**musicianship** (*céolchaireacht; ceoltóireacht*): playing of music; Singing; musicianship.  
**melody** (*bindis; Séis, fonn*): Sense, meaning, order, arrangement; Strain, melody; hum; talk.  
**minstrelsy** (*hairfídeadh; amhráin*): Songs, Singing; a poetic chanting, meter.  
**wisdom** (*hecna; eagnaiocht; crionnacht; gaois*): Wisdom; cleverness in debate; prudence; Shrewdness, Sagacity; maturity, old age.  
**honour** (*hairmitniu; onóir, urraim*): honor; esteem; respect; deferential regard.  
**music** (*séis; ceol*): music; Song; vigor, animation; ringing Sound.  
**learning** (*foglaim; foghlaim*): learning; instruction, teaching; experience.  
**teaching** (*foirceatul; múinteoireacht*): teaching.  
**warriorship** (*fiansa; Saigdiúireacht; laochas*): Soldering; courage; heroism; valor.  
**fidchell-playing** (*fidchellacht; fidlana*): chess; a game of wood wisdom.  
**vehemence** (*démne; tréine; racht; fórsa*): Strength, power intensity; pent-up, violence, emotion; fit; outburst; force of wind.  
**fierceness** (*díscere; fraoch; tréine*): heather; fierceness, fury.  
**poetical art** (*filidecht; filidecht*): poetry; lyricising; lampooning, Satire  
**advocacy** (*fechemnus; abhcóideacht*): advocacy; counseling.  
**modesty** (*féle; cúlantacht*): modesty; Shyness; backwardness.

**code** (*forus; córas*): System.

**retinue** (*tascor; lucht; coimhdeachta*): cargo; people; accompaniment, companionship.

**fertility** (*torthaigi; torthúlacht*): fruitfulness, fertility, richness.

## West (Connacht) - Fios (Knowledge) ANÍAR - WEST

**learning** (*fis, foglaim*): learning, experience; teaching, instruction.

**foundations** (*forus, bunú*): foundation, establishment.

**teachings** (*foirceatol, muineadh*): teaching, training; good behavior, manners; chastening; moral, lesson.

**alliance** (*bág, cairdeas*): friendship; alliance; fosterage.

**judgement** (*breithemnus, breithiúnas*): judgement; Sentence.

**chronicles** (*comge, coimce?*): chronicles; ancient knowledge.

**counsels** (*comhairle*): advice, counsel; direction, influence.

**stories** (*sécla, Sceal*): Stories; historical Story; account; narrative; tale.

**science** (*eolaiocht*): Science.

**comeliness** (*slacht*): finish; polish; good appearance, neatness, tidiness.

**eloquence** (*solabharthacht*): affability, civility; fluency, eloquence.

**beauty** (*háine, áilleacht*): beauty, loveliness; delight.

**modesty** (*cúlánacht*): modesty; Shyness; backwardness.

**bounty** (*gart, féile*): generosity, hospitality; festival, feast.

**abundance** (*fairsingeacht*): width, extent; breadth; expanse; plenty, abundance; lavishness, liberality.

**wealth** (*saibhreas; maoin*): riches, wealth; richness. also: gift, benefit; property, wealth; treasure.

## Center (Meath) - Riogacht (Kingship)

**stewards** (*maor; atmháistir*): Steward; warden, keeper; overseer; prefect; herdsman; lesser weaver.

**dignity** (*maorgacht, mórgacht*): Stateliness; dignity; greatness; majesty.

**primacy** (*tosaíocht, bunaidh*): precedence; preference; priority; origin; ,original; fundamental.

**stability** (*buanseasmhacht*): perseverance;

**establishments** (*cruthú, firinne*): creation; proof; testimony.

**supports** (*cuaille; iompraim, taobhaim*): Stakes; poles, posts; companion; Supporter;

**destructions** (*togla*): destructions; Sack.

**warriorship** (*ánradacht*): heroism; valor; warriorship

**charioteership** (*carbadóireacht*): charioteership.

**soldiery** (*saighdiúireacht*): Soldiery; military Service.

**principality** (*flaitheas*): rule; Sovereignty; heaven.

**high-kingship** (*ardríocht*): high kingship.

**Ollaveship** (*ollamnacht*): master poet; learnedness; expertness; professorship.

**mead** (*meá*): mead; a poet.

**bounty** (*féile, oineach*): honor, good name, reputation; generosity, hospitality; bounty.

**ale** (*leann*): ale; beer; liquid, fluid; binding; influence.

## Ogham Divination

**reknown** (clú): reputation; honor; reknown.

**fame** (cail): reputation; quality  
**prosperity** (bláth): blossom, flowers; bloom; beauty, prime;  
prosperity, abundance.

## APPENDIX G

### A Pronunciation Guide for Irish and Welsh Deity Names

I was asked to provide pronunciations for the deity names used in the *Keltia Book of Ritual*. Realizing that there are many ways to pronounce these names, I asked a variety of persons interested in Celtic matters (and fluent in the Celtic languages) to give me their own ideas and Suggestions as to the proper pronunciations. I also used their examples to correct and augment my own approach to these pronunciations. Alexei Kondratiev, Clinton Moreland-Stringham (Kinrowan), Fred Clegg, and Kathryn F. Hinds graciously provided me with Suggestions, pointers, and alternative Spellings, as well as their own pronunciations to use in this effort. Their contributions are respectively indicated in the text that follows by: <sup>(AK)</sup>, <sup>(CM-S)</sup>, <sup>(FC)</sup> and <sup>(KFS)</sup>. The first Set of names and pronunciations (presented in boldface type) are my own contributions to the list. In a few instances, the pronunciation has changed over the years. The Middle Irish, as well as the Modern Irish variations are given for each deity name if there is a difference. I have also included Some very general guidelines to Modern Irish and Welsh pronunciations.

#### **The Dagda** (an DAGH-dha)

In mediaeval pronunciation, an DAGH-dha, with the “gh” a voiced guttural aspirant, and ‘dh’ representing the voiced “th” of “then.”<sup>(AK)</sup>

un DAHG-duh <sup>(CM-S)</sup>

#### **Bridget** (BREEJ-it)(Brigid, Bríd) (BREEJ-id, BREEJ)

Mediaeval form “Brigit” pronounced “BREE-ghij” (or later “BREE-yij”); modern form ‘Bríd’ pronounced “BREEJ.”<sup>(AK)</sup>

Brigid/Bride: BREEJ or BREED <sup>(CM-S)</sup>

In Welsh - Ffraid (horrible to relate, it’s probably pronounced “fried” in English!)<sup>(FC)</sup>

#### **Angus mac n’Og** (AHNG-us mak-NOG)(Oenghus, Mac ind Oic) (ENN-is, MAK en-NOG)

The first vowel of ‘Oengus’ is a Sound that doesn’t exist in English (the ‘barred i’ of phonetics: basically like “EE” but with the throat open instead of constricted). The Anglicized form “Ennis” gives an approximation of the pronunciation.<sup>(AK)</sup>

AHNG-gus MAK ind OK <sup>(CM-S)</sup>

#### **Bóann** (BO-an)(Bóand, Bóannan) (BO-an, BO-awnan)

(The pronunciations for Bóann were all very close.)

#### **Bíle** (BEE luh)(Bel, Beli, Belenos) (BELL, BEL-eh, BELL-eh-noz)

‘Bile’ is “BEE-luh.” Most people Say “BELL-eh-noz,” but the real pronunciation was almost certainly “Bell-EH-nos.”<sup>(AK)</sup>

**Danu** (DAH-oo)

In Welsh Do^n (pronounced as written)<sup>(FC)</sup>

**Don** (DOHN)<sup>(KFH)</sup>

**Lugh** (LOO)

In Welsh: Lleu (pronounced “hley” where hl represents the Welsh “ll”)<sup>(FC)</sup>

Lleu Llaw Gyffes (TLAY-ee TLAH-oo GUH-fehs) [some people Say that the “ll” is better pronounced by forming the H Sound instead of the T Sound before the L Sound]<sup>(KFH)</sup>

**The Morrigan** (an MOHR-ree-ghan)

Mediaeval: “an MOR-REE-ghan.” Modern: “an MOR-reen.”<sup>(AK)</sup>

un MOHR-ee-gahn<sup>(CM-S)</sup>

**Gobniu** (GOHV-noo)

GOV-nyu.<sup>(AK)</sup>

In Welsh: Gofannon (goVanon)<sup>(FC)</sup>

Gofannon (goh-VAHN-nohn)<sup>(KFH)</sup>

**Manannán Mac Lir** (MAWN-an-nan mak-LEAR)

In Welsh: Manawydan (as Spelt with an “i” for the “y”)<sup>(FC)</sup>

Manawydan (mah-nah-OOIH-dahn)<sup>(KFH)</sup>

**Diancecht** (dee-an-KEKHT, je-an-KEKHT)

Modern: Jee-an KYEKHT.<sup>(AK)</sup>

DYAN-kext (x being the ‘ch’ in loch), JAN-kext<sup>(CM-S)</sup>

**Nuada** (NOO-ahda)

Mediaeval: NOO-a-dha (soft th). Modern: NOO-a or NOO-agh.<sup>(AK)</sup>

**Ogma** (OG-ma)

**Oghma** (OWE-ma)

(Everyone generally agreed on these pronunciations for Ogma)

## Some Tips on Pronouncing Names in Irish

(by Searles O’Dubhain)

The letter C is always pronounced as a hard “K” Sound (especially before “broad” vowels like a, o, u). When it precedes a “slender” vowel like i and e, it Sometimes takes on a KY Sound. The letter T Sounds like English Soft “ch” when it precedes a Slender vowel (the word for fire is tine, pronounced “chini”). When T precedes a broad vowel, it

Sounds exactly like English “t.” If T is aspirated (has an h following it), it Sounds like an English “h” (Tomás is pronounced Thomas but “a Thomáis” is pronounced “a Homish”). The letter D is Similar to T in its variations. D before broad vowels is just like English “d” but D before a Slender vowel takes on a “j” Sound (see Diancecht above). If D is aspirated, it can also take on a “y” Sound. In older times, these variations of T and D were not present but are definitely the modern (and common) usage.

Combinations of consonants (such as BH and MH) Sometimes Sound like English “w” or “v” depending on the dialect. My own name of O’Dubhain can be pronounced O DUH-van or O DOO -wan depending on the regional dialect. Another good example of this is the name Samhain, which can be pronounced as SOW-in or SAHV-in. GH can take on a very “breathy” Sound when aspirated and PH Sounds more like English “f.”

L can Sound like English “l” when preceding a broad vowel like “o” or it can Sound like a “y” if preceding a Slender vowel (especially at the beginning of a word). LL Sounds very much like the “ll” in million. R is fairly well behaved, though it can rumble a bit, especially when doubled. N is also pretty much like English “n” except when doubled. It then can Sound like it has a “ya” Sound appended to it. (Brúgh na Bóinne is pronounced “BREW na BO-in-yeh). This is especially true for cases where “n” precedes a Slender vowel.

The vowels in Irish follow the Standard European practice and can be both Short and long (even while “broad” or “slender”). A is like the English Short “a” when Short in Irish, but more like English “aw” when it is long. O generally Sounds like an English “o” in most cases. U is like English “u” when Short but more like “oo” (as in moon) when long. E is pronounced like English “ay” when long. The letter I is Similar to “ee” (as in See). The lengthening of vowels is accomplished with an accent mark called a “fada.” This usually means that their Sounds are Stretched out in pronouncing a word. If in doubt about an ending in Irish involving the letter e and a consonant, I always use an “eh” or “uh” Sound. Remember, there are many ways to pronounce Irish and Somewhere, Sometime, your way may just have been the correct way!

I have also included Kathryn F. Hinds’s list of additional Welsh deity names, as well as her brief guideline to Welsh pronunciation in the following paragraphs for those of you that wish to use Cymreig in your rituals.

## **Additional Welsh Deity Names (furnished by Kathryn F. Hinds)**

**Amaethon** (ah-MY-thohn)

**Arawn** (AH-rown)

**Arianrhod** (ah-ree-AHN-rhohd)

**Blodeuwedd** (blo-DOY-wedh) [dh=th as in “them”]

**Bran** (BRAHN)

**Branwen** (BRAHN-ooen)

**Ceridwen** (keh-RID-ooen)

**Cigfa** (KIG-vah)

Ogham Divination

**Dylan** (DIH-lahn) [the y Sound is actually between “ih” and “uh”—think one and Say the other, and you’ll usually get the Sound right]

**Goewin** (goh-AY-win)

**Gwawl** (GOOAWL)

**Gwydion** (gooih-DEE-uhn)

**Gwyn ap Nudd** (GOOIN ap NEEDH)

**Hafgan** (HAHV-gahn)

**Lludd Llaw Ereint** (TLEEDH TLAH-oo EH-raint) [the diphthong in that last Syllable is Sort of a cross between long A and long I]

**Llyr** (TLIR)

**Math ap Mathonwy** (MAHTH ap mah-THOHN-ooee)

**Pryderi** (prih-DEH-ree)

**Pwyll** (POOITH)



## **APPENDIX H**

### **Open Charts**

## **Glossary**

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## Ogham Divination

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## **About the Author**