

Askei Kafaskei

the official Covenant of Bekate ezine



ISSUE 2

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Editorial

Doesn't time fly? Already we are halfway through October and here in the UK the seasonal shift is taking hold bringing with it a myriad of weather: chill winds, frosty mornings, bright sunshine and stormy skies abound as the earth readies herself for the coming winter. There's also that smell in the air of the first bonfires and of damp leaves as the coming of Halloween (in the northern hemisphere) approaches the veils begin to thin.

Reflecting that theme, this issue contains some great pieces with a lovely autumnal feel. Tina Georgitsis in her piece "Hekate and Halloween" (page 19) talks about Hekate at this time of year and shares a simple ritual. Anastacia Simon in "Feasting the Dead" (page 16) talks about ways to honour the dearly departed with food offerings, which is perfectly accompanied by a tasty recipe for "Ritual Focaccia Bread" (page 18) by Robert Podmore.

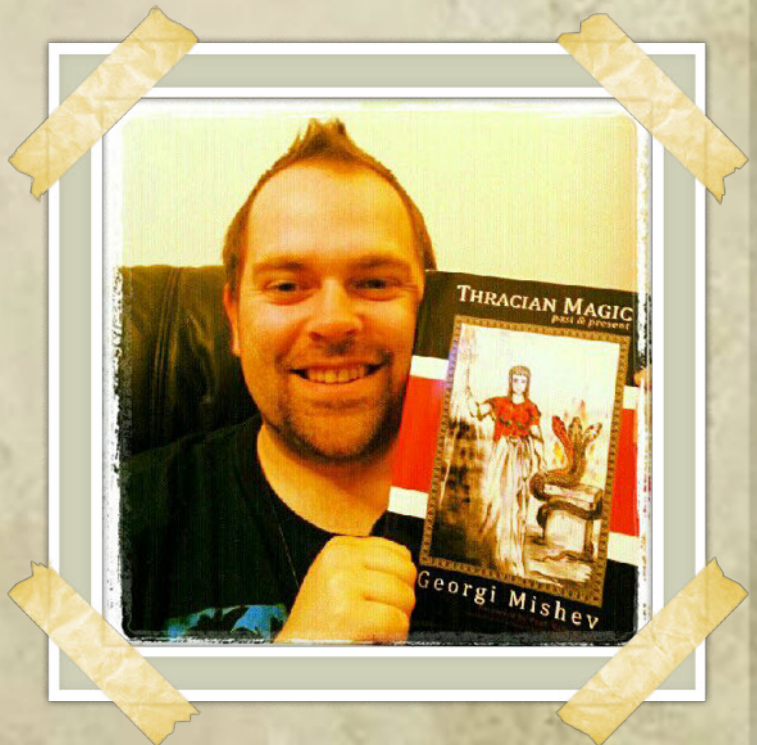
We also have a special treat with a five-page interview with author, artist and priest Georgi Mishev about his work, faith and the release of his debut book *Thracian Magic: Past & Present* which is reviewed this issue by yours truly. As you can see by this issue's editor photo, I'm very pleased to have my copy. Many thanks to Georgi for taking time from his busy schedule and also to Ekaterina for translating his answers into English.

In the coming months, Covenant Torchbearers across the UK, Australia and USA (for starters) are putting the finishing touches to the creation of special Sanctuaries that will help facilitate Hekatean worship in smaller, local groups. Links to the current Sanctuaries are listed on page 30 where you can find more on specific Sanctuary details.

Before I sign off and let you all get stuck in to this jam-packed issue I just want to extend my thanks to everyone for the support and comments on the debut issue. As a "community project", this publication will ultimately be what you make it. But I will endeavour to take on board ideas and suggestions to ensure that *Askai Kataskai* remains fresh and vibrant and constant - much like our Great Lady!

En Erzbos Phos!

Kenn



P.S: There is now an official Facebook page for *Askai Kataskai*:
<https://www.facebook.com/AskaiKataskai> containing news, previews, links, submission guidelines and much more to come.

What is the Covenant of Hekate?

The Covenant of Hekate (CoH) was born out of the desire to create a community and centre of study for those who share a passion for the history, mysteries and magic of the Goddess Hekate. This desire was dramatically demonstrated on 27th May 2010 when thousands of people worldwide performed the Rite of Her Sacred Fires ritual created by Sorita d'Este in a unique act of devotion to the goddess Hekate.

Within the CoH we view the Goddess Hekate as the Cosmic World Soul. Hekate is a liminal goddess who often expresses herself through Triplicities of form and power, such as her three bodies facing three ways, her control over land/sea/sky, birth/initiation/death and divination/dreams/oracles. We believe that she is a natural force whose power extends through all realms and whose formless fire illuminates the path of the universal mysteries, where she is both our guide and initiator.

Within the CoH we explore the Mysticism and Magic of the goddess Hekate through the practice of theurgy ('divine-working') to achieve henosis (union with the divine), through contemplation, experience, intuition, divination, meditation and ritual within the realms of the Western Esoteric Traditions.

The CoH is rooted in firm foundations of knowledge and practice from the traditions of the ancient world which honoured Hekate. This knowledge and practices form the basis of the modern manifestation of Hekate's worship in ways relevant to this age and accessible to all who seek her mysteries. The torchbearers of the CoH are individuals from around the world who through their actions and studies are shining the light of Hekate's torches and expressing the spirit of the ancient mysteries.



ENCHANTMENTS FROM THE KEYBEARER

Greetings from Glastonbury!

I take great delight in writing this 'enchantments' for the second issue of *Askei Kataskē!* Issue #1 was such a delight and I am so proud of what editor Kenn Payne, and all the wonderful supportive contributors have achieved for this community through their combined efforts – thank you and congratulations to all of you. It is my sincere hope that their work will inspire many readers to submit work to future editions of *Askei Kataskē!* and in doing so ensure the future of this marvellous project!

As the last warmth of summer fades with the cascades of autumnal leaves in the wind, we prepare to welcome winter here in Britain. It is the time of the Cailleach, the primordial winter-crone of these lands, she stamps her staff and the land turns to frost, ice and snow. It is also a time that I am reminded that Hekate is a liminal goddess. She is the goddess of the threshold, of life and of death and of the crossroads – and for me, she also represents the in-between seasons, i.e. autumn and spring.

Recently I spent a night camping with a friend near Glastonbury Tor; for me a warm crackling campfire under a clear starry night is an incredibly exhilarating and magical experience. It puts things into perspective. Gazing up at the infinite stars in the heavens, I frequently ponder just how insignificant we all are, yet we are not separate from everything else in the universe, instead we are part of it. As I gazed upon the millions of silver stars, a brief, but beautiful streak of light danced above us – a shooting star! My thoughts moved to the star goddess Asteria, mother of Hekate. I pondered the many other gods and spirits my ancestors and those who lived and work the land where I am sitting, imagined, or maybe recognised, amongst those very same stars. Maybe they were sitting around a campfire, sharing stories with loved ones in the shadow of Glastonbury Tor just like I was? I watch the fire consume a large log, as I ponder the cycle of life, the words of Psellos recorded in the Chaldean Oracles come to mind: *'When thou shalt behold that holy and formless Fire shining flashingly through the depths of the Universe: Hear thou the Voice of Fire.'*

I remember a ceremony which took place more than a decade earlier, in Chiswick (West London, England) in which I took the role of the oracular priestess in a ceremony in which Hekate was invoked into me. These are some of the words which were recorded on that night, it was published as *"Hekate Speaks"* in the book *Hekate Keys to the Crossroads* (2006):

Hekate Speaks

*I am the Guardian of the Mysteries
The Guardian of the Serpent Power
Whom you have called upon time and time again
Hekate the beautiful
Hekate of the crossroads
Of Heaven of Earth of Sea
Of Life of Death of Rebirth
I am the Saffron Clad Terrible Queen
Feared, Hated, Loved
I will lead you into the shadows and light the darkest night
Tonight my chosen
I reveal that which is hidden and forbidden
My torches, will illuminate the way
To the inner most reaches of the self
where even you may fear to look
Yet there is power in the dark!*

During these past few weeks I have been catching up with the "Her Sacred Fires" channel on YouTube, and have done dozens of new video clips for the channel, answering frequently asked questions and sharing some recommendations and ideas along the way. Please come and have a look and tell me what you think of my various musings on Hekate related topics. You will find the channel at www.youtube.com/hersacredfires and do feel free to PM the channel with requests for topics, comments and questions.

If you are within travelling distance from Glastonbury, here in Somerset (England) you are welcome to come and join me and my friends for a celebration of the mysteries of the Goddess Hekate in mid-November. This is when the first meeting of my new group, the Sanctuary of Hekate Sotera, will be meeting for a devotional rite. Contact me at admin@hekatcovenant.com for more information.



That is all my news and musings for this issue,

May you all dance in Her Sacred Fires with love, joy and beauty in the coming months.

Blessings...

Sorita d'Este

www.sorita.co.uk

Grand Evocation of Hekate

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Hekate! Key-holding, Titan Queen!
By honey, torch, and key do I petition thee.
You of sovereignty thee,
Who guides the lost with torches twin,
and is honored from on high.

Distant One! Mistress of Witchcraft! Wort-cunning Maiden!
Threshold standing and night wandering,
Harken to me!
Emerge from your cave,
and attend this rite.

At the heart of midnight I whisper,
strewn the dusts with sigilic song.
YES - I evoke thee! I evoke thee!
Three times, I evoke thee!

Hekate! Delicate, bright nurse!
By honey, cord, and key do I petition thee.
You who bestows victory,
Slew the warring giant,
and robs the lantern.

Terrible One! Crossroad Guide! Daughter of Night!

Descending dragons and arresting stars,

Harken to me!

Cast your gaze forth,
and fortify my workings.

I trumpet your name to the Horses,
And draw you forth with great fear and dread.

I evoke thee, I evoke thee,
Three times, I evoke thee!

Hekate! Lovely, and saffron veiled!
By honey, knife, and key do I petition thee.

You who is drawn by bulls,
Trembles the oaks,
and knows of all things.

Lady of Storms! Daughter's Attendant! Sister to Stars!

Stirring seas and provoking winds,

Harken to me!

Grant me an audience,
and bestow your blessings.

Your arrival foretold by hound, serpent, and wraith,
and your footfall causing the land to groan and bleed.

Hekate! I evoke thee! I evoke thee!
Three times three, I evoke thee!

BY SHIVIAN BALARIS (INSPIRED BY RUBY SARA)

HEKATE

QUEEN OF BEASTS



Painted by Sara Croft

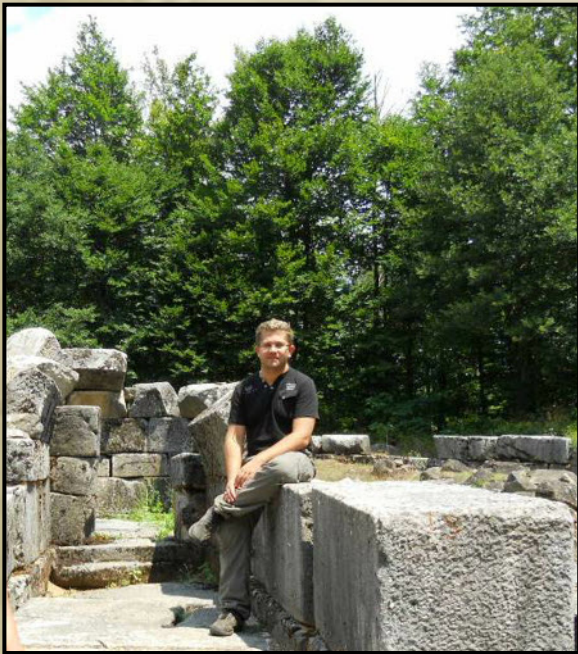
INTERVIEW WITH *Georgi Mishev*

AUTHOR, ARTIST AND PRIEST, GEORGI MISHEV TAKES SOME TIME FROM HIS BUSY SCHEDULE TO TALK TO *ASKEI KATASKEI* ABOUT HIS DEBUT BOOK "THRACIAN MAGIC: PAST & PRESENT", HIS DEVOTION TO THE GODDESS, HIS GROUP THRESKEIA AND THEIR WORSHIP AS WELL AS AN INSIGHT INTO THE CREATIVE PROCESS THAT HE EMPLOYS IN HIS ARTWORK.

[TRANSLATED FROM BULGARIAN BY EKATERINA ILIEVA]

Askei Kataskai: What are your earliest memories of Hekate in your life?

Georgi: To record some experiences and emotions and the desire to convey them by means of language is really hard and on one hand gives the opportunity for others to get a glimpse of it, but on the other takes away from them their true feeling and thrill. When these experiences are related to contact with the divine they really are a part of the most intimate world of a person and this makes their description even more specific. Still the recorded remains and in this connection, no matter that the text containing such narratives might be just their pale reflection – it still gives the opportunity to the others to get glimpse of one such connection and to seek their own.



GEORGI MISHEV AT THE THRACIAN SANCTUARY *MISHKOVA NIVA* IN STRANDZHA MOUNTAIN

I have always found it difficult and unnatural to describe my experiences and my memories connected with the image of the Goddess. I hope that the readers will forgive me my inability to convey the sensations and the true intimacy of these experiences, but I'll try to a certain extent to tell about how and why I took and stood on that path – the path of the Goddess. Unlike the numerous romantic stories about divine revelations and enlightenments in the teenage years, my first memory of a kind of interaction with the Goddess was at the age of 7, during a severe illness. Of course at the time I wasn't familiar with her namings such as Hekate, Bendis and others. For me she was a huge female silhouette, which in that burdensome moment gave me peace and strength. Probably this is the main thing that marked my perception of the Goddess. In relation to Her I will always remain in the image of that child which felt under Her protection, which is going to seek Her approval and which is going to want to earn Her benevolence. The contact with the divine is a crucial moment, which marks the whole life of a person.

"Seeing" the divine implies difficulties, because it separates a part of us outside the normal and the human and places it in another world, which follows its own rules and norms. Such contact in a Christian environment usually has a couple of ways for development. One of them is when a person finds comfort in the Christian ideology (or respectively in some other official religious doctrine), but there is also another path, which in its essence is heretical, because it separates from the official. I can't tell that either the one or the other is completely true for me because the Bulgarian traditional belief is much closer to the ancient pagan notions, than to the Christian canon. Some would call this syncretism, but this syncretism has more pagan than Christian elements. I grew up

in a folk environment filled with dreams in which female “saints” (in my opinion the Goddess) give behests and directions for performing rites – preparing of sacrificial breads, washing with herbs and others. This folk environment, as well as the deep connection with nature (for which I am especially grateful to all those elderly people, which surrounded me in my childhood), have defined in a great scale my perception of the Divine.



GEORGI MISHEV AND EKATERINA ILIEVA, TRANSLATOR “THRACIAN MAGIC: PAST & PRESENT” AT THE THRACIAN SANCTUARY HARMAN KAYA IN THE EASTERN RHODOPES

The elderly healers in my native region, as well as the other people their age, had their own opinion and perception of the Divine, which was completely different from the official

Christian view. Some years ago when I was drawing an icon of a female saint worshiped in my hometown, I depicted her not in the manner of the Christian canon, but like she was dreamt by a local woman. The words of that woman were: “Here we see her like that, we dream her like that...” My introduction to the magical rituality also took place in this environment. There were no books, no grimoires and no pretentious explanations about the energies. Folk magic is a carrier of the folk wisdom and those who practice it are unusual people. Their strong will is their main instrument, which armed with the knowledge of generations of ancestors, who inhabited these lands, makes them exceptional persons. The thing that’s different when someone is initiated in the magical in a traditional way and as a part of the traditional folk culture is exactly the recognition of authority. In the rituality there is no equality. Individuality is an important element of folk magic, when it transforms in part of the line of generations; in that case it complements and enriches them or vice versa.

Along with the recognition of authority, what one learns is responsibility. The rites performed in a small collective suppose taking responsibility for their consequences. This is different from the contemporary environment where often the so called magicians and their patients/eligents don’t know each other or never meet each other again. Motivation is the next major milestone. The elderly healers always used to say that assistance should not be refused and money should not be demanded, i.e. the motivation should never be connected with one’s own economic well-being. The image of the Goddess is preserved in the folk rites and although she is called a saint, in the rite she always remains the Great Goddess. The ritual texts of the incantations, the calendar rituals and the beliefs preserve until the present day an image of a divinity which combines all the elements, because they descend from Her. But of course with time, the one who has had some kind of contact with the Goddess, begins to understand that what he or she felt differs from the official religious doctrine (in my case the Christian), where the image of the Goddess is degraded and even humiliated.

AK: What was the first book you read on Hekate?

G: I can’t say with certainty which was the first book I read in this connection, because this was really a long time ago (before 16-17 years).

AK: How has your worship of the Goddess evolved over time?

G: The seeking, the studying of historical sources, as well as the connection between the places of performing a number of rites and the ancient sanctuaries situated there, determined also the development of my perception of the Goddess. In this moment of realization begins and the separation in one completely formal way, as it happened with me and with the formation of Thracian society "Threskeia". The human is of course a social animal and seeks people with similar beliefs and perceptions. This is how our group formed, which we called "Threskeia". The very word has Greek origin and it was used by the ancient authors to name the rites, which the Thracians performed, as well as their more different religious notion. Self-naming gives distinctness, recognition, which is an important moment in the world today. Of course we don't seek the return of the past, but in the same time we don't share a number of the beliefs of the contemporary pagans and wiccans in the sense that everything is permitted if it doesn't hurt anyone.

The conservative nature of our group, as well as the strict ritual discipline and rituality are based on many things. Most of us are very familiar with the traditional belief, i.e. follow rites established by generations before us. We know well and perform our rituals on many of the ancient sanctuaries. The ancient sacred places require respect and following certain rules of behaviour. This is of course really hard to understand by some contemporary pagans, which have formed their views on the basis of the books they have read and the movie productions they have seen. In this sense we don't deny the personal contact of each of us with the divine, their enrichment and personal development, but

in the same time we don't think that the individual must shape millennial cultural messages. That is why the spiritual path of the group rite is the same in deed and words, but in its individual performance and application is a personal responsibility and right to every carrier of the belief.



GEORGI MISHEV AND PRIESTESSES OF THRESKEIA AT A CROSSROAD
HONOURING THE GREAT GODDESS

AK: Can you share some insight on how you and your fellow worshippers view the Goddess and worship her in your homeland?

G: We worship and see the Goddess mainly as a Creatrix and Womb of life. Because she is the beginning and in the same

time contains the end and what is between them. The calendar period and the nature itself are images of the different manifestations of the Goddess. Along with that during each and every day She also appears and receives honour in her many forms. The main thing is that She is unity in multitude. Although we have sacred images, we almost don't use them in our rites, because within an ancient rock sanctuary we perform the rite in the embrace of the Goddess. Sometimes the ancient Thracians call the Goddess Mountain Mother and probably that's the reason why most of the rites done in Her honour even nowadays are done on high places in the mountains, near sacred springs or in the womb-like darkness of the caves.

For thousands of years the Thracian culture has assimilated the space, sacralised it and this is inherited today in the Bulgarian traditional culture. In the rituality itself most of the ritual elements

are also traditional – the ritual breads, which are prepared by the women (offered by the priestesses), the wine poured by the men in a toast (by the priests), burning frankincense and so on. In this sense the Thracian ritual texts are very helpful and beneficial because Thracians and Thracians are very close both ethnically and culturally, i.e. in religious plan. If the Thracians didn't leave us writings about their rites, the Thracians have done it in full detail. Even if they are not identical, they have a lot of parallels in the traditional rituality, which is preserved even today.

AK: You are also a talented artist; can you describe how you work through the creative process in relation to your faith and worship?

G: I began drawing from an early age, but depicting the Goddess and other divinities has always been a more special process. Usually the image is a vague shape in my mind and during its creation it clarifies and forms, sometimes different than my original vision. The creation of an image for a certain person or for a certain reason is very interesting, because I have the feeling that a special bond is created between them and they affect each other. No matter how much authorship and creativity I invest in the images of the Goddess, I think that the tradition should be followed. The attributes of the divinities, the way of their depiction, shaping their accessories, all this is connected also with ritual acts.

This is what distinguishes the cult image from the plain picture or sculpture. Following the tradition the newly created image also fits in one spiritual path and bears a spiritual message. Of course there are always innovations, but the cultural symbols are such exactly because they have become a layer of our collective memory, but not of the whims of individuals. This is the way things are, in my opinion, in the sphere of rite and faith. Art for art's sake is another topic. When we want to send a letter we take into consideration the postcode and the address of the addressee; and how pretty we'll write the numbers and what envelope we'll place the letter is an addition, but not the essential. But if we write instead of the prescribed postcode our favourite numbers or just some sequence of numbers, which we like, it is quite possible that the letter will be received, but not from the one we think we are looking for...

AK: What inspired you to begin writing your book, "Thracian Magic: past & present" and how long did it take you to write it?

G: Actually the idea for writing the book "Thracian magic: past & present" came really spontaneous during a conversation with Sorita d'Este. While we were discussing different topics and the drifting of the contemporary pagans away from the traditional practices and beliefs, she asked me why I don't write a book, which will introduce and give the opportunity to more people, i.e. the English speaking readers, to become familiar with Bulgarian folk belief, rites and magica. The Western world in a great scale underestimates this part of Europe, the Balkans. Of course this is most often due to the economic criteria, but on the other hand this part of Europe, where in antiquity flourished the cultures of Thracians, Illyrians, Hellenes and others, has preserved a lot of relics from the past.



HEKATE KOUROTROPHOS (NURSING THE CHILDREN) BY GEORGI MISHEV

The unique destiny of Bulgaria is the reason why in the Bulgarian traditional beliefs are preserved, until a very late stage, many pre-Christian beliefs and rituals. The huge quantity of material, which I wanted to include in the book was the reason why writing it took me two years. The text, which was published, is actually probably one third of the original contents, which I was planning to develop. I hope, if Fate is favourable, that the other two parts will also see the light of the day.

AK: What was the hardest part of writing your book?

G: Without doubt the hardest part was to sift out the things – what will be and what won't be in the book. On one hand this has to do with rites and on the other about the information of those rites. Every book is a message and a way of communication. The oral transmission of knowledge begins



MOTHER OF THE SUN BY GEORGI MISHEV

to fade in the past and though it can never be completely displaced by the written, the book becomes an increasingly important part and greater opportunity for preserving the cultural memory. The rites are for the people, they are a chance for communication with the divine and development of the divine, which is in us. The contemporary world is over saturated with modernistic, futuristic and pretentious practices, which instead of giving us back our connection with nature do exactly the opposite.

It is not the same to meditate for a walk in the woods under the full moon and to really do it; when are we going to stop fearing the world around us? The most difficult part of the book was namely this – to explain to all these people, who make the rituals and the rites, that they bear responsibility before the Gods, as well as before their ancestors, and mostly before what Socrates calls – their personal dæmon, i.e. their consciousness.

AK: Did you learn anything from writing your book and what was it?

G: The process of writing a book is beneficial also to the author or at least it was for me. When you explain something, you put in order your own thoughts. During the research new and unknown facts, which support, expand or change the thesis of the author, always arise. What makes me happy and what I'm proud of is that writing "Thracian magic: past & present" was the reason to meet many people, visit many places and experience a lot of emotions. I can say absolutely earnestly that I hope that the reader can sense the difference, when the author has really visited, saw and experienced the things he is writing about. The caves, springs, rites and people in this case are not reported information, which has been gathered around the libraries, but they are living places, events and people, which I hope I managed to bring closer to you – the respectable readers. In this connection I would like to thank you as an author, my dear readers, for this that with peeking in my book you have decided to be part of the magical spirit of antiquity, which still lives on in the lands of South-eastern Europe and resp. Bulgaria.

"Thracian Magic: Past & Present" is available to purchase via Avalonia (www.avalonia.co.uk); 352 pages, Paperback, RRP £16.99 with free postage & packaging worldwide.

Keep reading for a review of Georgi's debut book "Thracian Magic"...

All images & photos: courtesy of Georgi Mishev

THRACIAN MAGIC: PAST & PRESENT

REVIEWED BY KENN PAYNE



Thracian Magic's introduction states "...that the introduced subject is commented on from the position of both a carrier and practitioner of this knowledge, because the empirical side is also included..." and whilst this might seem a given for any subject matter for a book, the fine line between the scholarly and mystical is expertly straddled with a foot planted firmly on each side.

At over 300 pages the book can seem intimidating but merely flicking through it you are drawn into reading about topics both old and new and the chapters are punctuated with fascinating and endearing photographs from Georgi's own personal archives as well as his stunning and unique artwork, which also graces the cover. Reader's may also be familiar with his writing and art previously from *Hekate: Her Sacred Fires* as well the cover of *The Temple of Hekate* by Tara Sanchez.

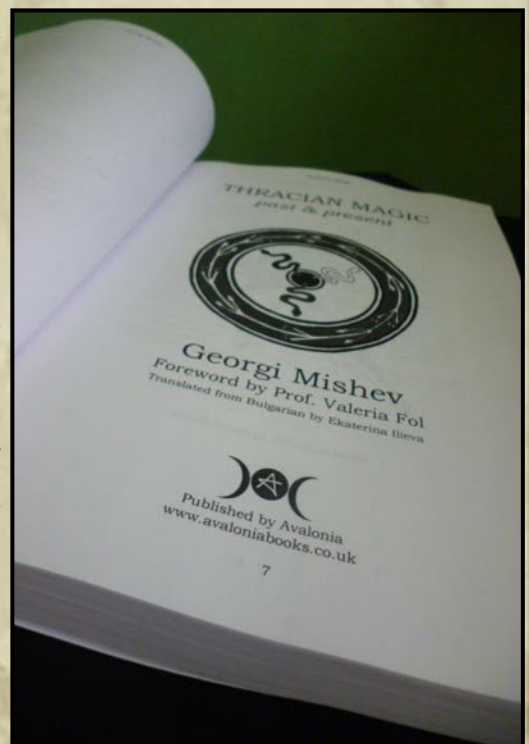
Thoroughly researched and articulated (thanks to the translating prowess of Ekaterina Ilieva) the book is a melting pot of history, faith, mystery and magic; there is truly

something inside it for everyone and will appeal to many from a multitude of angles.

Personally I have found the previously "unknown" [to me] aspects particularly interesting. I had never before encountered or heard of the *Derweni Papyrus* and I found pieces on the Thracian Prophetsess of Dionysos, Hekate and the magical practices of the Balkan Peninsula truly eye-opening and fascinating.

The historical fusion of cultures and other religions that touched the region have only added to the rich and vibrant mysteries of Bulgaria which Georgi's words begin to lift the veil upon.

A definite must for people wanting to expand their knowledge of historical practices and the evolution of indigenous belief systems and Goddess worship, this book will not disappoint and takes a leaf from Walter F. Otto in the believable tangibility of the writing and the passion and devotion of the author to the subject matter.



Photos: courtesy of Sorita d'Este/Avalonia

Feasting the Dead

by Anastacia Simon

The wheel has turned. The seeds we put to earth in spring, spent the summer dreaming and blossoming, until harvest time. We have measured our successes, and our failures and we cut away where appropriate. Even with your eyes closed you can sense the great change all around you ; the pre winter breezes which whisper the trees to sleep, the dry tang of leaves riding the wind. There is a scent of decay, of deep underworld mustiness all around. It's time to wrap ourselves up tight, and make ready for the long wintertime ahead. It's easy, surrounded by so much slumberous stillness, to sink into reflection - and to think of those who are no longer sharing life with us.

It's only natural to want to honour our beloved dead. Most are familiar with the true roots of Halloween, when we would don the visage of the spirits which cross the veil at the end of October - for many, the Pagan new year. Some light fires to both celebrate the successful harvest, and to lead our deceased loved ones home. Not surprisingly, other cultures host the dead at this time of year - South America's *Día de los Muertos*, for instance. It's worth mentioning that there are cultures which celebrated their dead in completely different seasons, such as the Roman *Parentalia*, a three day festival in February, and the Native Americans held celebrations often in midsummer. The Huron tribes held their feasts every ten to fifteen years, based on major changes within tribal structure.

But what our cultures have in common, is that we feel driven to host or celebrate our deceased loved ones, if only for honour's sake, at a time and place appropriate. It's fairly simple to find examples of how to host a Feast for the Dead - but often I feel we must be reminded of how personal this experience can be. With this in mind, I offer you my suggestions for feasting those who have gone before, and who may be returning to share our harvests, if only for a night.

In the days leading up to the event, why not treat this family visit like any other? Start by generally putting your house in order; clean the windows and open them up to get some fresh air in, as you tidy up for your expected guests. It's an excellent idea to cleanse your house spiritually with sage or sweetgrass, and this may be part of your Samhain ritual already. The purpose of this is to create a clean and comfortable atmosphere for both the living and spirit. With this in mind, have you considered decorating appropriately? Perhaps some ribbons or balloons in their favourite colours. My own grandmother loved Christmas Trees - so much, that she actually brought out the tree for just about every reason one can imagine, from birthdays and anniversaries to traditional holidays - she even set up a Halloween Tree, complete



Photos: courtesy of Anastacia Simon (top) & Robert Podmore (bottom)

with spooky spider webs and flashing orange and green fairy lights. I am sure she would love to cross the veil and find a tree waiting for her.

Even if your deceased loved ones weren't as eccentric in life as my grandmother, there are simple things you can do to create a warm, inviting home for them. And if you don't have time, space, or freedom to decorate - just light a candle for your loved ones to find their way home, and pour your loving intention into that flame before placing it in a westerly position.

Remember that our ancestor's experience will be very different to our own - they can't physically consume, but they can experience the essence of the food you offer. They can feel our intentions and emotions. If you dance, they will surely dance with you.

Why not host a lavish feast, full of music and fine foods, and invite friends and loved ones to partake? Traditionally, this would have been a time of year when family would gather. It's a good chance to catch up, with those on both sides of the veil, and if your ancestors liked a good knees up, this would be especially appropriate. It is important to consider the desires of the guests in question, as it is their homecoming. Imagine you're going home for a family event.

Do you long for the special foods or customs from your youth? A favourite cake, your grandmother's meatloaf; some small but significant tradition which, if ignored, would leave a void in your soul? It's the same with our beloved dead. If your grandfather, while living, preferred a Sunday roast with a drop of sherry afterward, you can be assured that he will enjoy a lovingly prepared meal of the same, especially if you follow family recipes.

As in life, it is often the simple pleasures which comfort the soul.

The most important thing you can do at this time, is to honour your emotions. Whether you are remembering a death recent or in the past, we all mourn individually. If you prefer to remain more solemn, go with your intuition. You can take this time to tell them anything you feel you couldn't in life, to nurture closure or a fresh, open hearted relationship. Be honest with yourself, and with your ancestors, and don't be afraid of whatever feelings which surface during this experience. To be alive is to feel, and life is full of so many things worthy of feeling. Pain and sorrow have a place and time - be patient with yourself.

And finally, given that this is the Pagan New Year, why not share this with your ancestors. You can raise a glass or meditate with them, and reflect upon the toils and triumphs of the past year. Count your blessings and make wishes for the year ahead. In everything we do, our loved ones are ever present and guiding you through your life - which reminds me, don't forget to say thank you!

Whatever you choose to do, be it simple or lush, please enjoy this special time and remember - though the nights grow long and the warmth of the sun seems a lifetime away, the wheel will keep on turning.



RITUAL FOCCACIA BREAD

By Robert Podmore

Ingredients

2 teaspoons dried instant yeast
200ml olive oil
300 ml tepid water
450g plain flour
4 teaspoons sea salt
3 cloves of garlic sliced
Handful of olives
3-4 rosemary sprigs



Method

- Put flour yeast and 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a bowl and mix together
- Add 4 teaspoon sea salt and mix – gradually add water until it forms a ball
- Lightly dust dough with a little flour - knead for 4 – 5 minutes to activate yeast
- Add olives and garlic roll dough into a ball
- Lightly but thoroughly oil bowl and lightly oil top of dough with brush
- Wrap loosely in cling film (but airtight), leave to double in size (around 2 hours)
- On floured board ‘knock back’ then roll out into a circle
- Lightly flour non stick or lightly oiled oven tray
- Lightly press on dough right to edges with your fingers
- Pre heat oven to 250c/gas 8
- Leave to prove for a further 30-60 minutes
- Uncover dough and gently prod to give texture
- Brush with oil and insert rosemary into dimples sprinkle with sea salt
- Bake for 15 – 20 minutes
- Remove from oven and allow to rest for 5 minutes
- Remove from tray and using chopping board cut into generous portions
- Drizzle with olive oil and serve

HEKATE FOR HALLOWEEN

By Tina Georgitsis



Halloween is also celebrated as the witches new year and is the time when the veil between the worlds is at its thinnest and therefore perfect for divination or contacting the dead. Hekate's connection to witches can be traced back to classical Greece where they worked with her for various incantations, spells and called upon her for assistance and blessings.

Hekate, the virgin titaness who prefers solitude, goddess of the sea, earth and sky, light bearer and revealer to those who seek, keeper of the crossroads who roams the cemeteries for lost souls, queen of magic and the night, key bearer who has access to the otherworld and can commune with those who have passed between the veils, goddess of ghosts and necromancy, patron of travellers who guides them to

their destination.

Goddess of witchcraft, magic and ghosts - Hekate in my opinion exudes the energy of Halloween. During Halloween Hekate, the embodiment of death roams the earth and is therefore one of the most suitable gods to honour during this time. Since Hekate is known as goddess of the dead, mistress of souls who can accompany the departed between the realm of the living and that of the dead, witches have naturally been drawn to call upon her during the festival of the dead: Halloween also known as Samhain. Hekate can be called upon as an intermediary to connect you to your ancestors especially since our dearly departed tend to visit us during Halloween. Also communing with the ancestors during this time can reveal future fate and Hekate can also be of assistance when divining.

Venerating the ancestors and Hekate during this time which also celebrates the last harvest ensures blessings and that fertility to the land is returned in spring. The ancient Greeks would often leave offerings to Hekate in order for their crops not to fail and for her storm aspect to be pacified. Considering winter is a time of storms and the earth lays dormant, getting Hekate on your good side with respects to these aspects is forward thinking.

Photo: courtesy of Tina Georgitsis

I personally see that during Mabon (Autumn Equinox) is when Hekate, torches in hand, guides and protects Persephone as she descends into the underworld. At Halloween, Hekate has returned from the Underworld with news from the dead, as she is one of the few gods who can traverse between all the worlds.

Constructing a dumb supper for Hekate and your ancestors is a wonderful way to honour them both by placing a plate of food that Hekate and your ancestors would appreciate then leaving it on a Hekate or ancestor altar, on a crossroads or on your doorstep ensures they will take on the essence of the food offered.

Offerings to your ancestors can include food they enjoyed during life and offerings to Hekate that compliments Halloween includes apples, pomegranates, garlic, onion, wine, mead and mugwort tea.

Here is a simple ritual for Hekate, Halloween and your ancestors I have composed and used successfully in the past:



Prepare a dumb supper and place in the NW of your circle or on the left of your altar.

Create sacred space.

Light some incense preferably dragons blood, frankincense or livani (which is found at Greek continental shops and I prefer the rose scented type). Have a candle placed in the middle of your altar before an image of Hekate in red or black so your deceased loved ones can make their way to you whilst invoking a hymn to Hekate (I prefer the Orphic Hymn to Hekate). Have a key (I prefer skeleton keys) and an image of a skull

(I prefer to use crystal) on the left side of your altar. Any forms of divination should be placed on your shrine which include, tarot cards, seying bowl or mirror.

Begin the rite by lighting the spirit candle and evoke Hekate with the following Orphic hymn:

"Hekate Einodia, Trioditis, lovely dame, of earthly, watery, and celestial frame, sepulchral, in a saffron veil arrayed, pleased with dark ghosts that wander through the shade; Perscis, solitary goddess, hail! The world's key-bearer, never doomed to fail; in stags rejoicing, huntress, nightly seen, and drawn by bulls, unconquerable queen; Leader, Nymph, nurse, on mountains wandering, hear the suppliants who with holy rites thy power revere, and to the herdsman with a favouring mind draw near."

Take the key and tap the top of the skull three times and repeat the following chant:

"Hekate we ask that you open the gates of Hades
and allow our ancestors to traverse to us this night
Guide our loved ones who have passed over, to us with your wisdom and might
Bring our ancestors of old and new with you to share with us their gift of foresight
Great Goddess we seek to commune with them in the name of all that is light
Bless us for we pay homage to you and our departed ones in this very rite"

Commune with your ancestors and use your divination tools to see what the year has in store for you or ask any specific questions that you have.

Thank and farewell your ancestors and Hekate.

Close sacred space.

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<http://www.thgoi.com/Rhthonios/Hekate.html>



Photo: courtesy of Robert Podmore

EPITHETS OF HEKATE

WORDSEARCH

V S J L L K O Z S R Y S D K F
S J B K W L R R E C Q J S H J
U D X G R O V N A J G S P Q B
R J T M L T A R I E T O S Z U
O Y X H F R M W N K Q M K W H
H S I M X I Z G O R W K L Y M
P T N V J O V Z H E Y K E F O
S R E I O D E E T X Y L I G L
O I E E I I D Z H L H N D U W
H F F N V T I Z C L Z A O C K
P O R G N I X Q Q P M I U V E
L R J X C S I O K P E D C Z N
M M Y R P J W Q F K T O H I C
R I W A W E I D X P K N O P H
T S H S W U P P R S T E S S R

CHTHONIA
ENODIA
SOTEIRA
TRIFORMIS
TRIODITIS
KLEIDOUCHOS
PHOSPHORUS

HEKATE



Painted by Mima Cornish

Hecate Mistress of the three ways
Offerings at the crossroads, you find

Hecate, Light bearing Queen
Come forth and enlighten my mind.

Hecate, Queen of the Witches
Give power to my magic this night.

Hecate, Keeper of the Keys
Unlock your power and bless this rite.

By Sosanna

Hekate's Key Tarot Spread

By Susa Morgan Black

Locks and keys go back thousands of years in history, and the deity most associated with keys is the Greek Goddess Hekate. She unlocked many magical mysteries of earth, sea, and sky. Shuffle and lay six cards out along the pattern of a key.



1

2

3

4&5

6

1. *The Bow* (also called the handle) – this is the part you hold with your fingers to twist the key in the lock. It comes in many elaborate shapes, but the older varieties were mostly round or square. *Ask – This is about your goal or journey. What is it that you are trying to achieve? What door are you trying to open? What is your approach? Are you confident, dubious, afraid? Are you committed to your goal?*
2. *The Neck* (also called shank or stem) – this is the part that attaches the bow to the blade. The neck can be long or short, and can be straight or ornately carved. *Ask: This is your path to your goal. Has it been smooth, complicated, difficult? Are you still on your path? Are you discouraged or excited?*
3. *Collar* (also called throat) – This part of the neck is thicker, giving the key durability, keeping it from breaking when being twisted. *Ask: What qualities or strengths do you have, or seek to achieve this goal? What keeps you from breaking? What do you need to keep from breaking?*
4. *The Blade* – this is the part that attaches the “teeth” to the neck. *Ask: What special knowledge, skills or guidance do you have or do you seek that will help you accomplish your journey or goal?*
5. *Teeth* – This is the irregular part that interacts with the locking mechanism. They come in a great variety of styles, can be one, two, three or four sided. The object is to push the locking pins inside the chamber of the lock so that they release and the lock can open. *Ask: When you are turning the key to open the portal, will the door open? Will your plans work or fail? What do you need to know or do so that the combination is correct and you will succeed?*
6. *Pin* – this is the very end of the key, extending beyond the blade. *Ask: What will be the final outcome of this goal or journey? Where do you go from there?*

Sample Spread

I did this Tarot reading for myself, asking about starting my practice as a professional hypnotherapist. I have recently gotten the certificate, and considering doing a six month internship with Hypnosis Clearing House in Lafayette (CA) before starting my business.



1. *The Bow or Handle*—The Queen of Pentacles (Earth) shows me as a very confident, grounded person who has reached my goal and manifested what I desire. I am holding my product (certificate) in my hands. I am very pleased, but need to get outside of my comfort zone and take the next step.
2. *The Neck*—The Ten of Wands (Fire) is a card of completion, and shows me bent over with the burden of my wands (four months of hypnosis classes), heading toward a structure (my new business). This card acknowledges that I worked very hard to achieve my goals and am exhausted, but still heading toward completion.
3. *Collar or Throat*—The Ten of Swords (Air), is another card of completion. I think this card is telling me that I need to deal with self doubt, which has always hampered success in the past. The strength indicated is my willingness to put doubt and darkness to rest and face a new dawn full of possibility.
4. *The Blade*—Temperance (Sagittarius) is the Sage, and in some decks, the Alchemist, which indicates how much I have learned from my all my various studies and reminds me that there are always more opportunities to learn and consult with teachers. This indicates that I should do the internship, and continue the program for the next six months before I set up my business.
5. *Teeth*—The Fool (Uranus) bids me to take the chance and just do it, and trust that the door will open for me. Very auspicious card!
6. *Pin*—The Moon (Pisces) is the world of the deep unconscious, which is the realm in which hypnotists work. I think this reading is asking me to finish the process, do the six month internship, and go into business!

thou art crossroads



I often wonder how many of us “choose” our crossroad spot to honor Hekate, or does she choose it for us? Something to think about ey?

I am a private person when it comes to my “solitary” work with Hekate, so it really surprised me to be drawn to a crossroad that is so open. My crossroad spot is a three way road at the end of my street which faces west here in the US.

This area is never used but it is owned by someone so this does limit what I can do there. It wasn't by choice to use this area; instead I was pulled by an overwhelming feeling one winter day as I noticed the bare twisting trees with their leave-less branches stretching out toward me, pulling me in. Beautiful-multiple facial imagery including Hekate emerged and metamorphosed amongst the changing leaves over the following four seasons each depicting a seasonal representation of the earthly cycles. Since I attribute the images I see as a visionary gift from Hekate, I was instantly connected to this spot.

At my spot, I smell the salty scent of this ocean inlet that butts up along this area, which reminded me of my Goddess, and the call of the dogs nearby increases my anticipation of her arrival. There is also a small grassy area under these trees overlooking the ocean, which is a cozy place to sit. This place is a crossroad binding of sky, sea and land and despite the ongoing traffic of cars, bikes and pedestrians, I enjoy sitting there gazing at the water, quietly connecting to her realms. Across this ocean inlet about 100 yards away is a small walking park, so gazing across this ocean inlet, my perception becomes bridge-like linking 2 worlds; an enchanted liminal connection that stretches across the ocean cove and the abundant blue sky.

Here I meditate, perform mini-rituals, leave crossroads offerings, and have had some great personal experiences. I have even “walked” my entire coven down the road to this spot! This place has such a pull on me that it is now engrained in my subconscious mind. So much so, that when I visualize or meditate upon a crossroad image, this is the place I visualize. The only difference is the road is unpaved and there are fewer homes in the area. I am very connected to this place and I often wonder how many people in the past have traveled down this windy road along this tiny magical coastline, and how many have felt the divine pull, even if unaware, to our beloved Goddess...Hekate.

*Hekate trivia; lady of the ways.. by three
A mystical crossroad bound by earth,
sky and sea*

*This is my place of honor & offerings; to
you....from me!*



by Cheryl Reynolds

Photos: courtesy of Cheryl Reynolds

READER'S SHRINES

CONNECTING WITH HEKATE THE WORLD OVER



Top Left: Consecration of the Sanctuary of Hekate Sotzira by Sorita d'Este

Top Right: Autumn Equinox by Robert Podmore

Below: Outdoor Hekate Shrine by Maria Brazil



The Red Mother

One Person's Experience of the Hekate Triformis Symposium 2012

BY VICKY NEWTON

When I heard that Sorita was hosting a Symposium on Hekate I did not hesitate in booking my ticket. Although there were times when I came close to cancelling my ticket I held my ground and stuck to my decision and in the merry month of May set out to Glastonbury for the first time with a great deal of excitement.



Not only did I connect with fellow Hekateans; friends both old and new, but I listened to some inspirational and enlightening speakers. I was also privileged enough to experience clear, direct and personal communication from Hekate through her High Priestesses.

The gathering of so many of Her Devotee's led to this event being an intense weekend for everyone involved and no doubt that each participant took away some personal experience with them.

The oracular rite, in which Emily Carding, Andrea Salgado Reyes and Lezley Forster channelled the energies of Hekate Soteria, Chthonia and Kleidophoros respectively, was by far the highlight of the weekend. I had never attended an oracle ritual before and I found it awe inspiring and an emotional experience.

Most compelling, for me, was the oracle from Hekate Chthonia. I found drawn in as she described the initiation of young women in a dark and secret cave. The images and emotions invoked by her words were powerful and evocative.

The Goddess asked those assembled if they were ready for initiation into Her Service. As she spoke I found myself wondering if I myself was ready? By the time this oracle was complete I felt in my heart that the answer was yes; and I proclaimed it in the silence of my mind. But events around me were moving on. I was so caught up with the ritual at large that I thought no more on this personal revelation.

The following day revealed the implications of this revelation in the form of a further message channelled through Andrea. After completing her inspirational talk Andrea



found that she did not have time to complete her talk, by passing on personal messages from Medea. However, Andrea felt compelled to pass on one message that day.

In all honesty I do not remember all the words she spoke, I was too busy looking around the room to see who the message was for. But the words "and this person is the Red Mother" caught my attention. This phrase caused an immediate spark of recognition, Andrea had my full attention and our eyes met. She moved from addressing the room at large to speaking to me directly. "And she will be Hekate's new High Priestess and next year she will stand here where I am and present her own talk."

At this stage I was the focus of the attention of the whole room and I am sure that I literally turned into the "Red Mother" when I blushed scarlet and attempted to shrink into the chair but the force of that moment and message could not be denied.

That afternoon I left the symposium early so that I could meet my train but I was lucky enough to have time in which to perform the Rite of Her Sacred Fires in the White Springs privately. During the rite I made a private offering of thanks for the message that I had just received and began the process on reflecting on all of my experiences that weekend.

During the journey home that I realised that my silent acknowledgement to Hekate's Chthonia's had been witnessed by the higher-power present at the rite that night and acknowledged in return the following day. This was, and still is, something that shakes me to the core.

Since that weekend my connection to Hekate has gone from strength to strength. As I continue to communicate with the Goddess through divination, meditation and ritual I find a path unfolding before me. Through the Covenant of Hekate and its members Hekate has led me to a safe and nurturing environment. Here I feel I can explore this path and find my voice in Her Service, and for that I give thanks.

What is a Sanctuary?

1/ A "Sanctuary" in the Covenant of Hekate is a devotional community centred around an icon (statue or other image) of the Goddess Hekate with the aim of facilitating at least one ritual gathering a year for a local community of people interested in exploring the Goddess Hekate in accordance with the aims and goals of the CoH;

2/ A CoH Sanctuary can only be facilitated by a Torchbearer of the Covenant of Hekate. Click here for a list of our current Torchbearers.

Sanctuaries are currently forming around the world, most of which will initially be in the UK, Australia and in the USA.

For more information on Sanctuaries which are currently accepting applications from prospective members, or who conducts occasional public ceremonies, select from the following:

Sanctuary of Hekate Enodia (South Manchester, England, UK)

<http://hekatcovenant.com/sanctuaries/sanctuary-of-hekate-enodia-south-manchester-england-uk>

Sanctuary of Hekate Magna (London, England, UK)

<http://hekatcovenant.com/sanctuaries/sanctuary-of-hekate-magna-london-england-uk>

Sanctuary of Hekate Sotzira (Glastonbury, England, UK)

<http://hekatcovenant.com/sanctuaries/sanctuary-of-hekate-sotzira-glastonbury-uk>

Sanctuary of Hekate's Crossroads (Melbourne, Australia)

<http://hekatcovenant.com/sanctuaries/sanctuary-of-hekates-crossroads-melbourne-victoria-australia>

Sanctuary of the Nyktarian Crown of Hekate (Melbourne, Australia)

<http://hekatcovenant.com/sanctuaries/sanctuary-of-the-nyktarian-crown-of-hekate-melbourne-victoria-australia>

Sanctuary of the Voice & Flames of Hekate (Nr. Croydon, England, UK)

<http://hekatcovenant.com/sanctuaries/sanctuary-of-the-voice-flames-of-hekate-nr-croydon-england-uk>

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ASKEI KATASKEI WILL BE A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION CENTERING ON THE GODDESS HEKATE AND THE GOINGS ON OF THE COH. READERSHIP WILL BE MADE UP BY — BUT NOT LIMITED TO — COVENANT MEMBERS, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS FROM A VARIETY OF RELIGIOUS FAITHS AND SPIRITUALITIES THE WORLD OVER. WHAT OUR READERS HAVE IN COMMON IS A SHARED PASSION FOR THE HISTORY, MYSTERIES AND MAGIC OF THE GODDESS HEKATE, VIEWED WITHIN THE COVENANT AS THE COSMIC WORLD SOUL.

SUBMISSIONS CAN INCLUDE, BUT ARE BY NO MEANS LIMITED TO:

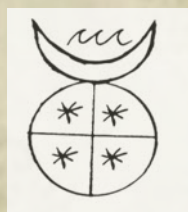
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2. POETRY (BETWEEN 125 AND 600 WORDS LONG, IDEALLY)
3. RECIPES FOR INCENSE, FOOD, OILS ETC (BETWEEN 250 AND 600 WORDS, IDEALLY)
4. EXPERIENTIAL ESSAYS - ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO COH RITUAL EXPERIENCES (AT LEAST 500 WORDS LONG, AND NO MORE THAN 3000)
5. REVIEWS OF BOOKS, GATHERINGS, EVENTS ETC (AT LEAST 300 WORDS LONG, AND NO MORE THAN 850)
6. PHOTOGRAPHY (SHRINES, RITUAL GATHERINGS, CREATIVE OFFERINGS) AND ARTWORK (DRAWINGS, PAINTINGS, PRINTS)

FULL, IN-DEPTH GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE FOUND ON THE COH WEBSITE.

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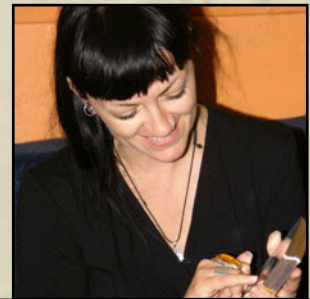
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