

# **A** **Very Brief History of Witchcraft 1.0**

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# What Does the Word "Witch" Mean?

This is one of those seemingly easy questions that requires a very complex answer, for hardly anyone seems to be able to agree with anyone else on a proper definition. Even those people who call themselves "witches" today, or who point to others as being such, differ widely as to their interpretations of the term.

Is a "witch" anyone who does magic, or who reads fortunes? Is a "witch" someone who worships the Christian Devil? Is a "Witch" (capital letter this time) a member of a specific Pagan faith called "Wicca?" Is a "witch" someone who practices Voodoo, or Macumba, or Candomble? Are the anthropologists correct, when they define a "witch" as anyone outside of an approved social structure who is suspected of doing evil magic and/or of being a monster who can curse people with the "evil eye?"

All these definitions have been claimed as accurate in the past and are used to this day by both friends and foes of (whatever they consider) witchcraft. Most people discussing the topic seem to have their own pet definition and are outraged at those with differing concepts.

Is there a way out of this quagmire? Is it actually possible to distinguish between "real" and "fake" witches? Much of the evidence that would enable us to give positive answers to the relevant questions has been deliberately suppressed or destroyed, centuries ago, by those with religious, economic and/or political axes to grind. However, some aspects of the problem can be cleared up with the help of a little linguistic and historical investigation.

I know that many people are bugged by etymology, but sometimes the best clues to understanding old folk beliefs and customs are to be found in the pages of etymological dictionaries.

Those clues must be treated very cautiously, since words are slippery, slithery things. Many times the same word will be used for different concepts (not always closely connected), and of course most languages have concepts that are referred to by several different words. Depending upon the emphasis desired. Even within a single tongue, the meanings of words change drastically with time. New words are invented and old ones forgotten; war and trade bring in "slang" and "loan words" which frequently replace venerable and respected terms. Whenever possible, of course, one must consider the social and cultural environment in which a given word was used -- a difficult task when most of the relevant data has been lost.

## Tiptoeing through the Dictionaries

With those warnings firmly in mind, let's make a start at clearing up the linguistic chaos. As some people may already know, the word "witch" in Modern English comes, via the Middle English *wycche*, from the Old English *wicce* (feminine) and *wicca* (masculine). The plural form was *wiccan* (now used as an adjective for followers of Neo-pagan Witchcraft, see below). All these terms referred to agents or performers of *wiccian*, defined in most etymological dictionaries as meaning "to practice sorcery or magic."

Old English, Old Norse, Old Irish, Old Dutch, Latin and a few other tongues, are all members of the Western branch of the Indo-European languages. These in turn are all outgrowths of an original mother tongue, called by linguists, "Proto-Indo-European" (or "PIE" for short). By comparing variations of a word not just within a given language, but among and between its sister tongues as well, it is often possible to trace back its linguistic development from an original PIE root.

It appears that the absolute, rock bottom root of "witch" in early PIE was *\*wy-*, "to bend, twist" (an asterisk is used by linguists to indicate reconstructed words or word fragments). Within PIE, this root developed in at least two directions having to do with trees: *\*wyg-*, meaning "elm" and *\*wyt*, meaning "willow." In both cases the words seem to have referred not only to the culturally and economically important trees themselves, but to the withies and shoots of the trees, artifacts woven or twisted out of them (cords, ropes, mats, thatched roofs, etc.), and the very concepts of weaving, twisting, binding and bending.

As the centuries rolled by and the original PIE speaking community split up and began migrating, these simple roots began to grow and mutate. Their pronunciations were changed several times, the denotations (items pointed to) of elm and willow were switched back and forth (and occasionally blended), but the connotations (ideas pointed to) of bending and weaving, etc., were maintained and elaborated.

The development of primary interest for the origin of "witch" was that of the Anglo-Saxon *wic-*, meaning "to turn, twist or bend." This root also later grew into "weak," "wicker" and "wicked," all based on the idea of something bendable or twisted. In Old English *wicca/wicce* this concept was extended in a specifically magical direction. (I am indebted to Paul Friedrich's *Proto-Indo-European Trees* for most of this botanical/linguistic data.)

The sort of magic involved may be surmised from a comparison with simultaneous developments in the sister tongues. In Old Norse, the root *vik-* became the Icelandic/Norwegian *vikja*, meaning "to turn aside, conjure away, exorcise." Proto-Germanic *wik-* became the Low German *wikken*, "to foretell," and the Middle Dutch *wicker*, "a soothsayer." Various other words referring to sorcery, divination, special knowledge, and so forth, developed out of the PIE *\*wyg-* and *\*wyt-*, via the roots *wic-*, *wik-*, *wig-*, *wit-*, etc.

The fact that several of the words referred to knowledge led some to claim a link between all of these roots and the PIE *\*wys-*, meaning "wise." They then declared that original meaning of *wicca/wicce* was therefore "wise one."

This argument will not hold water for two major reasons. Firstly, Old English had a very well known word for the phrase "wise one," *wysard*, or what became in Middle and Modern English, "wizard." Although the word "wizard" was used as a masculine synonym for the usually feminine "witch" during the late Middle Ages, there is no evidence at all to indicate that centuries earlier the term *wysard* was used to refer to a *wicca* or a *wicce*, except as an occasional term of respect.

Secondly, although PIE *\*wys-* does seem to be the source of the Modern German *wissen*, "to know," and this is used as a synonym to the above mentioned *wikken*, (as in the phrase "I know I'm going to get into trouble with such opinions"), there is no proof that these words were used as synonyms 1,200 years ago, and so one cannot make the equation that "*\*wic-* = *\*wys-*" and therefore that "*wicca* = *wysard* = wise one."

One interesting sideline that needs to be pursued, however, involves the connections (pointed out by Osborn & Longland in *Rune Games*) between Old High German/Anglo Saxon/Old Norse *Wurt/Wurd/Wyrd* ("Destiny, what has been chosen or willed"), Old English *weorthan* ("to become, to turn into"), and the Modern English/German word *Wurt* and *will/Will*. All these terms apparently trace back to PIE *\*war-*, with three meanings: "to choose or to will," "to speak," and "to wind or torn." That last meaning, of course, may tie *\*war-* in with *\*wy-*.

This could be a direct tie, or an indirect one via some of the other PIE roots for elms and willows, such as *\*Vlmo-*, *\*sVlik*, or *\*wrb-*. In any event, there appears to be clear etymological evidence that the Indo-European cultures associated words, intention and the performance of magic, and at least some of the time expressed these ideas in

terms of bending, twisting and weaving. Those are extremely common concepts worldwide for of magic and divination (see Real Magic) The references to weaving also tie in with hints from other sources that the Western Indo-Europeans may have had their own version of what later developed into the Hindu and Buddhist magical traditions known as Tantra (based on Sanscrit tan-, "to weave").

Now then, by a very conservative etymological extension of wic- to wicce(a), I feel we can safely state that the original meaning of the word that later became witch (via the Middle English wycche) was one who bent things to his or her will, one who could turn aside evil or good; concepts often used to refer to people performing magic and divination.

At this point, I'd like to look at the words that were routinely used to translate wicce, wicca, and wiccacraeft ("witchcraft") into other European languages.

The Ancient Greeks used the term *pharmakos* based on the word *pharmakon*, meaning "drug, poison, spell" (this is the source of that infamous Billy Graham quote that "the word witchcraft comes from the same word as drug and I think that proves something." It certainly would, if the Ancient Anglo-Saxons had spoken Greek). Later the Greeks used the term magissa, the feminine of mago ("magician," from the Persian priesthood called the Magi). The Latin language used saga, from sagire, "to perceive keenly," praesagire, "to presage, or fortell," as well as striga, "a vampiric nightowl," maga, "a female magician," and venefica, "a female poisoner or magician," etc. The Italians used strega, and the Roumanians used striga, both obvious derivations from the Latin. The Italians also used maliarda, "an evil charmer" and fattuchiera, from the Latin fatum or "fate." The French used magicienne/magicien for "a female/male magician" and sorciere/sorcier for "a female/male sorcerer." The latter comes from Latin sortilegus meaning one who does divination or magic by casting of lots (see also Gaelic crannehur, "stick placing"). The German, Danish and other languages use words that translate literally as "magician," "wonderworker" "spell singer," "diviner," or "knowledgeable one," all usually female.

What can be tentatively concluded from all this? It would appear that a strong tradition of folk magic, divination and, herbalism survived among the European peoples well into the Middle Ages, that the practitioners of these arts were generally mistrusted by at least the literati (all of whom were Church trained), and that as time went by, the terms used became regularly feminine and almost exclusively negative (as distinct from their earlier neutral-to-negative meanings before). Another possible conclusion (though it is a long shot) is that "women's magic" was the central concept shared by all these diverse cultures, thus lending credence to the Universal Goddess Cult theories (though that does not plausibly explain how a wicca -- a male witch -- could be performing that magic).

One piece of research that still needs to be done would be to investigate every scrap of written materials from the early and middle Middle Ages that mentions the subject, to see which specific terms were used in what times and places, the literal meanings and origins of those terms, and how the word usage changed with time.

We do know that, even at the height of the witch-hunting hysteria in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, the terms used to refer to the victims (such as bacularia, fascinatix, herbaria, Hexen, Wettermacherinnen, etc.) all meant people (usually women) with real or seeming herbal, weather, magical and prophetic knowledge or powers, who could control people, raise storms, and kill or cure humans and animals.

Notice that there is little or nothing in the etymology of witchcraft and related terms to indicate any sort of religious role for witches except as unchristian scapegoats during the witch hunts. This basic lack of a religious flavor to the word "witchcraft" is in complete contrast to the almost exclusively religious flavor of the word "priestcraft." We know a bit about the Pagan priests and priestesses in pre-Christian Europe, but their exact relation to local witches is quite fuzzy. A certain hint can be gleaned from the fact that the Celtic priests called "Druids" were called that because of the root dru-, which refers to "oak tree," "firm," "strong." There is no doubt that the Druids were involved in tree worship (which was indeed common throughout Europe) and that oaks were the favorite trees in northern climes for this worship; it could be that the Druids were called such because they represented the "firm" and "strong" principles of their faith (they were in fact the highest religious authorities among the Celts). The willow-like "bending" and "chaos" of wiccacraeft and the oak-like "firmness" and "order" of druidecht ("druidry") may point to an ancient distinction between the social functions played by each. I suspect that "witches" were usually considered part of the "Outsiders" class in Indo-European Paleopagan Europe.

Now almost all tribes have full or part time healers, who use both herbs and magic. Frequently they will also have seers and weather predictors/controllers. Midwives, almost always female, are also common, and there is frequently a priest and/or priestess working at least part time. What causes confusion, especially when dealing with extinct cultures, is that many tribes combine these various offices into different people. Sometimes the healers will be the midwives, sometimes the healers won't be midwives but will be seers, etc.

What tribal functions did the people I call "Classic Witches" originally perform? We know their later functions, after the Christian conquest, to have included healing (with drugs made from herbs and magic), midwifing, producing abortions, providing love potions and poisons, predicting and/or controlling the weather, blessing and cursing, etc. These all seem to break down into herbology, divination and simple magic. But what did they do when there were still Pagan priests and priestesses around? Remembering that almost everyone in a Paleopagan culture will do simple folk magic for him or herself, did they exist side-by-side with the priests, handling simple matters while the clergy handled complicated ones? Did the witches merge with the Pagan clergy after the Christian conquest, or replace them entirely? Did the witches only begin to exist after the clergy had been overthrown, because the witches were the remnants of that clergy and their descendants? Nobody really knows, though lots of people have theories.

There do seem to have been religious communities of both genders in Celtic territories, patterned perhaps in a similar way to the ones in India formed by retired householders from many castes. The ones for women have been described as being situated on islands surrounded by willow trees. There were also individual mystics living solitary lives in the woods, perhaps similar to the arhats ("saints") of India. Priestesses of Freya, for example, lived as solitary mystics in Scandinavia, minding small temples and riding from village to village with statues of Freya for rituals at various times of the year. Could the witches have been descended from such communities or individuals?

And where do the "wizards" fit in? The term of "wise one" could have been a mere complement, applied to anyone showing extraordinary wisdom about any topic. Contrary to the fond beliefs of many occultists and theologians, such a category is not now and never has been limited strictly to people involved in magic and religion. The major folkloric figure of the wizard is as late a development as is our knowledge of witchcraft in the early Middle Ages, yet it too may point to an earlier truth. The Classic Wizard, such as Merlin or Gandalf, is usually described as a loner, a stranger who wanders about performing wondrous deeds with little equipment save a staff or a sword. In fact, the description is very similar to that of Odinn as He walks about the earth, testing humans. Odinn is a magical/religious figure, greatly associated with magicians and priests. Could it be that the term "wizard" became attached to various Pagan priests who had gone into hiding, and who traveled from village to village, providing some of the old priestly services to people now no longer able to get them? We shall probably never know.

What we do know are the functions served by the Classic Witches for many centuries after the Christian conquest of Europe (which was, remember, a gradual process, taking almost a thousand years to complete). So, for our purposes here, we shall define a Classic Witch as follows: a person (usually an older female) who is adept in the uses of herbs, roots, barks, etc. for the purposes of both healing and hurting (including midwifing, poisoning, producing aphrodisiacs, producing hallucinogens, etc.) and who is familiar with the basic principles of both passive and active magical talents, and can therefore use them for good or ill, as she chooses. A typical Classic Witch, being an old peasant, would probably also be a font of country wisdom and old superstitions, as well as a shrewd judge of character. Such a person would be of great value to local peasants, but would also be somewhat frightening and resented.

Classic Witchcraft itself was not a crime during the first ten centuries of the Christian era. Only if a witch caused actual physical damages could he or she be prosecuted, and then for causing harm, not for practicing witchcraft. Indeed, it was official Church policy that all the magic produced by non-Christians was illusionary or demonic, and that belief in the ability of anyone to fly through the air, cast spells, etc., was a Pagan, and "therefore" heretical belief. The official Church document on this was the *Canon Episcopi*, purporting to be from the fourth century, but actually forged around 906 c. e., which read in part:

"It is also not to be admitted that certain abandoned women perverted by Satan, seduced by illusions and phantasms of demons, believe and openly profess that, in the dead of night, they ride upon certain beasts with the pagan goddess Diana, with a countless horde of women, and in the silence of the dead of night fly over vast tracts of country, and obey her commands as their mistress, while they are summoned to her service on other nights.

"But it were well if they alone perished in their infidelity and did not draw so many others along with them into the pit of their faithlessness. For an innumerable multitude, deceived by this false opinion, believe this to be true and, so believing, wander from the right faith and that relapse into pagan errors when they think that there be any divinity or power except the one God.

" & It is therefore to be publicly proclaimed to all, that whoever believes such things or similar things loses the faith . . . "

This typical Churchly arrogance was the official party line for several centuries and caused no end of theological trouble later when the Inquisition wanted to persecute people for actually doing what Church doctrine had earlier said was impossible. This evidence, coming as late as 906 C.E., that the Church was aware of Pagan survivals in its heartland of Italy (assuming that they meant the ancient Roman Diana, and not another goddess of similar nature) has been taken as proof by some of the Margaret Murray theory of witchcraft, although it would seem to prove nothing except that there were at least a few Pagan survivals connected with women's religion in Christendom something we know from a lot of other sources as well.

At the very same time as this dogma was being stated, there were still undomesticated Pagans in northern and eastern Europe building temples, carving statues of their gods, giving sacrifices to trees and streams, etc. There may well have been similar survivals throughout Western Europe, for an AngloSaxon law of about the same time condemns "witches" who are worshiping wells, trees, stones, etc. This would seem to indicate that for several centuries after the Christian conquest witches remained Pagans, or were only mildly Christianized. Again there is no evidence of an organized cult of witches in this law, nor are the worship activities mentioned part of the usual theories of how a postulated cult of witches worshiped.

### **Gothic Witches or Satanists**

By the 11th century, however, these holdovers had pretty much died out or gone very far underground. Most of the Pagan cultures of Western and Central Europe had been destroyed and pacification programs had been instituted against any who objected. Having slain all the competition they could find outside of the Church, the Christians proceeded to slay each other. The Inquisition was founded and "Crusades" mounted against heretics (these were much more successful than the Crusades mounted against the Moslems, who kept winning). Heretic roasting became a lucrative source of wealth, power and sexual satisfaction for the Inquisitors and their civilian helpers. By the middle of the 14th century, though, they began to run out of heretics to kill. This was disastrous, since many Inquisitors and nobles had built their entire fortunes on confiscated property taken from convicted heretics. A few hopeful sadists had been suggesting to the Popes for quite some time that sorcery and witchcraft should be declared heretical. This was slowly done over a period of two centuries and in 1484 Pope Innocent VIII officially sanctioned the arrest and trial (that is to say, the torture, conviction and execution) of all persons accused of witchcraft.

The theological excuses were extremely easy to manufacture and are being defended in official Church literature to this very day (see *The Inquisition*, by Femand Hayward, published by the Society of St. Paul and with a full *Imprimatur* and *Nihil Obstat* -- official Church approval -- in 1965). Since there was only "one God, one Faith and one Church," anyone disagreeing with the Roman Catholic Church (or the later Protestant Churches) was automatically a heretic. Similarly, by monotheistic reasoning (actually dualistic, as far as Christianity is concerned) anyone using a system of magic or religion in competition to Christianity was obviously of another religion -- to wit, worshiping the Christian Devil, who was the only other god allowed to exist in Christianity.

The early heresies (hundreds of them) had threatened to disrupt the theological and political power of the Bishop of Rome. The Popes were especially sensitive on this matter, since the Pope himself was considered a heretic by all non-Roman Bishops in early Christianity, a heretic who had unlawfully usurped the powers of the Council of Bishops. Having crushed all opposition and declared their opponents to be the heretics, the Bishops of Rome built an empire of their own out of the ashes of the Roman Empire. Wherever the Roman Catholic Church went, it would first wipe out the native Pagan culture, then wait a few centuries and start executing heretics. There was a vital psychological and theological need to keep the attention of Christendom focused against real or imagined enemies, in exactly the same way that Christian leaders of many denominations focused the attention of American Christians on the "communist peril" in the 1950's.

So through a series of astonishing theological gymnastics, the leaders of the Inquisition managed to declare that the *Canon Episcopi* was in essence, irrelevant (they couldn't say "wrong" because it was Church Law) or referred to another cult of the same description. Now it became heresy not to believe in witches who flew through the air, and had powerful magical powers given by the false deity they worshiped -- only now that deity was said to be Satan rather than Diana. This shift of belief was accomplished by the old quote that "all heathen gods are the Devil in disguise." And so the Church created, out of whole cloth, a brand-new kind of "witchcraft," never before seen on earth, which I term "Gothic Witchcraft" (note that I coined this term twenty years ago, before the rise of the Goth subculture of vampire fans).

Gothic Witchcraft was essentially the same thing as "Satanism," or "devil worship." Accusations of this sort had been made against Pagans, Gypsies, Jews and heretics for many centuries. Now the accusations were dressed up and

made detailed, following the "*Big Lie*" technique used by Adolph Hitler, many centuries later. The details of Gothic Witchcraft were easy to invent. Since Roman Catholicism was "the only true religion," and since Satan was "the opposite of God," therefore Satanism was the exact reverse of Roman Catholicism (other Christian sects accused the Gothic Witches of reversing their particular One True Right and Only Way of worship). This is where the whole concept of the "Witches' Sabat," "Black Masses," and the like came from. The Ancient Roman urban legend about the Christians (that they profaned sacred things, ate little babies, held wild orgies, etc) having been used against the Jews for centuries, were dusted off and laid at the feet of Gothic Witches. All of these lies kept being repeated, over and over again, and "evidence" was manufactured to support them. Nonetheless, it took several decades before the average peasant took them seriously enough to support the activities of the witch-hunters.

### The First Burning Times

I really should not go into the details of the persecutions against suspected (and therefore "guilty") Gothic Witches, since most readers may not have strong stomachs. Somewhere between 50,000 and a quarter-million women, children, and men were hideously killed in ways that make the atrocities of Nazi storm troopers and death squads look like child's play. Human beings were torn limb from limb by wild horses, flayed alive, covered with boiling pitch (the equivalent of napalm), had red-hot irons locked around their bodies, had toenails and fingernails ripped off, toes, fingers and testicles crushed; women had their hair burnt off and nipples torn off and jagged irons shoved up their genitals, or if they were girl children, were raped to death by teams of Inquisitors and/or horses.

This, mind you, was what was done during questioning, before "guilt" had even been "proven" and sentence passed. The actual executions were swift and merciful by contrast; hanging, burning alive, drowning, etc.

The whole psuedolegal point of the torture was to ask the accused people long involved questions, and to force them to answer "yes or no." The torture continued until the accused "confessed" all he or she was told to. Then they would take the person out of the torture room and ask the same questions, threatening to return them for further torture if they did not reaffirm their confessions. Then the Inquisitors could state in the records that "the accused confessed without torture," and send the victim (usually a woman or girl) back into the torture room for the men to do with as they chose.

The depravity and evil of these "men of God" is impossible to believe for anyone who did not go through World War II in a Nazi concentration camp. There is no pervert more dangerous and twisted than a self-righteous one, doing what he thinks is good and holy, no matter how many people he torments and kills to do it.

After a few decades, many of the Inquisitors themselves began to believe the Big Lie. They put more and more pressure on the civil authorities to torture and execute witches and other heretics, threatening to have them executed as heretics if they did not comply. Thus, in direct opposition to Christian defenses to this very day, it was the Inquisitors who egged the civil courts on, not the other way around. But, once the civilians realized that they too could share in the political, economic and sexual benefits of witch-hunting, they too became zealous. The new Protestant leaders all agreed that "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" was true for Protestant and Catholic alike, and proceeded to roast witches, heretics, Catholics and each other.

What, beside the greed and sexual depravity of the Christian clergy, turned the witch-hunts into a socially accepted activity? Part of the answer lies in the general scariness of psychic phenomena to ignorant people. Thus, even the Classic Witches had always inspired fear as well as respect. With ten centuries of propaganda drumming it into their heads that all magic came from either Jesus Christ or Satan, more fear of magic workers developed. The Black Plague wiped out a third of Europe's population almost overnight, and demagogues were quick to suggest that this was punishment from the Christian God for laxity in Christendom. Jews, Gypsies, strangers and anyone unusual were turned into scapegoats on a massive scale never before reached. This soon included itinerant magical workers such as the Classic Witches.

Another major factor was the innate paranoia of Christian mythology. There was said to be a gigantic fight going on between Good and Evil, one that could go either way. Anyone, therefore, who was not a good Christian was committing, spiritual treason by helping the enemies of Christendom. This was a far worse crime than mere political treason (which was more of a past-time than a crime in those days). The power of Satan was gradually increased in Christian mythology, until it was declared that he had an entire "anti-church" of his own. The congregation of this anti-church consisted of heretics in general, and Gothic Witches in particular. For more details on this whole, sick mess, Consult Rossell Hope Robbins' book, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*. Even though he is a total cynic on the subject of magic, his book is one of the standards on the subject of Gothic Witchcraft and the Inquisition. Jeffrey B. Russell's *A History of Witchcraft : Sorcerers, Heretics, and Pagans* is also useful here.

## Thought some of you might like to read this, especially since the term Wicca has come up.

There are three main strands I intend to examine:

1. one, Gardner's claim of traditional initiation, and its subsequent development;
2. two, magical traditions to which Gardner would have had access;
3. and three, literary sources.

As we look at these three main threads, it is important to bear in mind that Gardner was 55 years old at the time of his claimed initiation; that he had spent many years in Malaya, and had an enormous interest in magic, Folklore and Mythology. By the time he published *High Magic's Aid*, he was 65, and 75 when "*The Meaning of Witchcraft*" appeared. He died in 1964, at the age of 80.

Gardner was born in 1884, and spent most of his working adult life in Malaya. He retired, and returned to the UK in 1936. He joined the Folklore Society, and in June 1938, also joined the newly opened Rosicrucian Theater at Christchurch where it is said he met Old Dorothy Clutterbuck.

I chose 1939 as my arbitrary starting point as that was the year that Gerald Gardner claims he was initiated by Old Dorothy into a practicing coven of the Old Religion, that met in the New Forest area of Britain. In his own words,

"I realized that I had stumbled upon something interesting; but I was half-initiated before the word, "Wica" which they used hit me like a thunderbolt, and I knew where I was, and that the Old Religion still existed. And so I found myself in the Circle, and there took the usual oath of secrecy, which bound me not to reveal certain things."

This quote is taken from *The Meaning of Witchcraft*, which was published in 1959. It is interesting that in this quote, Gardner spells Wicca with only one "c"; in the earlier "*Witchcraft Today*" (1954) and "*High Magic's Aid*" (1949), the word Wicca is not even used. His own derivation for the word, given in "*The Meaning of Witchcraft*," is as follows:

"As they (the Dane and Saxon invaders of England) had no witches of their own, they had no special name for them; however, they made one up from "wig" an idol, and "laer," learning, "wiglaer" which they shortened into "Wicca."

"It is a curious fact that when the witches became English speaking they adopted their Saxon name, "Wica."

In "*An ABC of Witchcraft Past and Present*," Doreen Valiente does not have an entry for Wicca, but when discussing Witchcraft, does mention the Saxon derivation from the word Wicca or Wicce. In the more recently published *The Rebirth Of Witchcraft*, however, she rejects this Saxon theory in favor of Prof. Russell's derivation from the Indo-European root "Weik," which relates to things connected with magic and religion.

Doreen Valiente strongly supports Gardner's claim of traditional initiation, and published the results of her successful attempt to prove the existence of Dorothy Clutterbuck in an appendix to "*The Witches' Way*" by Janet and Stewart Farrar. It is a marvelous piece of investigation, but proving that Old Dorothy existed does nothing to support Gardner's claims that she initiated him.

In his book, "*Ritual Magic in England*," occultist Francis King does offer some anecdotal evidence in support of Gardner's claims. However, it is only fair to point out that in the same book, he virtually accuses Moina Mathers of murder, based upon a misunderstanding of a story told by Dion Fortune! With that caveat, I'll recount the tale in full.

King relates that in 1953, he became acquainted with Louis Wilkinson, who wrote under the pen-name of Louis Marlow, and had contributed essays to Crowley's *Equinox*. He later became one of Crowley's literary executors. King says that in conversation, Wilkinson told him that Crowley had claimed to have been offered initiation into a witch coven, but that he refused, as he didn't want to be bossed around by a bunch of women. (This story is well-known, and could have been picked up anywhere.)

Wilkinson then proceeded to tell King that he had himself become friendly with members of a coven operating in the New Forest area, and he thought that whilst it was possible that they derived their existence from Murray's "*Witch Cult in Western Europe*," he felt that they were rather older.

King draws the obvious conclusion; that these witches were the very same as those who initiated Gardner. King claims that the conversation with Wilkinson took place in 1953, although "*Ritual Magic in England*" was not published or presumably written until 1970. However, on September 27, 1952, "Illustrated" magazine published a feature by Allen Andrews, which included details of a working by, "*the Southern Coven of British Witches*," where 17 men and women met in the New Forest to repel an invasion by Hitler. Wilkinson had told King of this working during their conversation, which King believes to be proof that such a coven existed. There are some differences in the two stories, and so it is possible that two sources are reporting the same event, but as Wilkinson's conversation with King came after the magazine article, we shall never know.

In the recently published "*Crafting the Art of Magic*," Aidan Kelly uses this same source to "prove" (and I use the word advisedly - the book "proves" nothing!) that Gardner, Dorothy, et al created Wicca one night following a social get together! Of one thing we can be certain though, whatever its origin, modern Wicca derives from Gardner. There may of course be other traditional, hereditary witches, but even if they are genuine, then it is unlikely that they would have been able to "go public" had it not been for Gardner.

There have been many claims of "hereditary" origin (other than Gardner's own!) One of the most famous post-Gardner claimants to "hereditary" status was actress Ruth Wynn-Owen, who fooled many people for a very long time before being exposed. Roy Bowers, who used the pseudonym Robert Cochrane, was another: Doreen Valiente describes her association with him in "*The Rebirth of Witchcraft*," and The Roebuck, which is still active in the USA today, derives directly from Cochrane, via Joe Wilson. "*Witchcraft: A Tradition Renewed*" by Evan John Jones with Doreen Valiente describes a tradition derived from Robert Cochrane. Alex Sanders, of course is another who claimed hereditary lineage, and like Cochrane, deserves his own place in this history, and we'll get to both of them later.

Many people have been suspicious of Gardner's claims, and have accused him of making the whole thing up. They suggest that the Wicca is no more than the fantasy of an old man colored by a romantic imagination. One particularly virulent attack upon Gardner came from Charles Cardell, writing under the pseudonym of Rex Nemorensis.

One of Gardner's initiates who is still active in the Wicca today has an interesting tale to tell about Cardell, whom he knew:

"Cardell claimed to be a Witch, but from a different tradition to Gardner's. Cardell was a psychopathic rat, with malevolent intent toward all and sundry. He managed to get a woman called Olive Green (Florannis) into Gardner's coven, and told her to copy out the Book of Shadows so that Cardell could publish it, and

destroy Gardner. He also contacted a London paper, and told them when and where the coven meetings were held, and of course the paper got quite a scoop. Cardell led people in the coven to believe that it was Doreen Valiente who had informed on them. Doreen had just left Gardner in a bit of a huff after a disagreement; another coven member, Ned Groves, left with her. Anyway, the day the paper printed the exposure, Cardell sent Gardner a telegram saying, "Remember Ameth tonight." (Ameth was Doreen's Craft name, and as it has now been published, I see no reason not to use it here)."

My informant also said that Olive Green was associated with Michael Houghton, owner of *Atlantis Book Shop* in Museum Street, who was the publisher of *High Magic's Aid*. Through this association, she also encountered Kenneth Grant of the OTO, although their association was not friendly.

Cecil Williamson, the original owner of the witchcraft museum on the Isle of Man, and present owner of the Witchcraft Museum in Boscastle, has also published a number of articles where he states quite categorically that Gardner was an utter fraud; but, he offers only anecdotes to support these allegations.

Although Gardner claimed his initiation occurred in 1939, we don't really hear anything about him until 1949, when "*High Magic's Aid*" was published by Michael Houghton.

This book has very strong Solomonic leanings, but like Gardner's own religious beliefs, combined the more natural forms of magic with high ceremonial. In his introduction to the book, Gardner says that: "The Magical rituals are authentic, partly from the Key of Solomon (MacGregor Mathers' translation) and partly from magical MSS in my possession)." Gardner did indeed have a large collection of MSS, which passed with the rest of his goods to Ripleys in Toronto after his death.

Scire (pseudonym) was the name Gardner took as a member of Crowley's branch of the OTO; although it is generally agreed that his membership was purely nominal, he was certainly in contact with people like Kenneth Grant and Madeline Montalban (founder of the Order of the Morning Star).

Gardner was given his OTO degree and Charter by Aleister Crowley, to whom he was introduced in 1946 by Arnold Crowther. As Crowley died in 1947, their association was not long-lived, but Crowther confirms that the two men enjoyed each other's company.

**So, after that brief introduction we can have a look at the first of the strands I mentioned.**

In 1888, the *Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn* was born, beginning a renaissance of interest in the occult that has continued to the present day. It is impossible to overstate the importance of the GD to modern occultists, not only in its rituals, but also in its personalities. And of course, through making available a large body of occult lore that would otherwise have remained unknown, or hidden in obscurity.

I will be looking at this body of occult lore with other literary influences later, and will here concentrate on the rituals and personalities that have influenced Wicca.

We cannot look at the GD in isolation from its own origins. It is descended from a myriad of esoteric traditions including Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, and Freemasonry. The latter in its own right, as well as via the SRIA - a scholarly and ceremonial association open to Master Masons only.

Whether the German Lodge or Fraulein Sprengel actually existed is a matter still under debate; but either in fact or in spirit, this is the source for the "Cypher Manuscripts" which were used to found the Isis-Urania Lodge in 1888.

As I'm sure everyone knows, Isis-Urania was founded by Dr Wynn-Westcott, Dr Woodman, and MacGregor Mathers. Not only were all three Master Masons, Wynn-Westcott and Mathers were also members of the Theosophical Society. The most important thing though is the fact the these three men were a ruling triumvirate that managed the affairs of the SRIA. This is important, for the SRIA included Hargrave Jennings in its membership, and Jennings is reputed to have been involved with a Pagan group at the end of the 19th century, which drew its inspiration from Apuleius - The Golden Ass.

But back to the GD - whether the Cypher Manuscripts actually existed, or Wynn-Westcott manufactured them is now irrelevant. Mathers was commissioned to write-up the rituals into a workable shape, and thus the Golden Dawn was born.

Members of the Isis-Urania Lodge at various times also included Allan Bennett, Moina Mathers, Aleister Crowley, Florence Farr, Maud Gonne, Annie Horniman, Arthur Machen, "Fiona Macleod," Arthur Waite and WB Yeats. Also associated were Lady Gregory, and G W Russell, or AE, whose "*The Candle of Vision*" was included in the bibliography of "*The Meaning of Witchcraft*." The literary and Celtic influences within the GD were immense.

From the Isis-Urania Lodge sprang all the others, including the so-called Dissident Orders derived through Crowley. It is this line that some commentators trace to modern Wicca, so it is the one upon which we will concentrate.

Aleister Crowley was initiated into the Isis-Urania Lodge on 18 November 1898. As you most probably know, Crowley later quarreled with MacGregor Mathers, and in 1903 began to create his own Order, the Argenteum Astrum, or Silver Star. In 1912, Crowley was initiated into the OTO, and in 1921, succeeded Theodor Reuss as its Chief.

According to Arnold Crowther's account, it was in 1946, a year before Crowley's death, that Crowley gave Gardner an OTO Charter. Ithell Colquhoun says only that it occurred in the 1940s, and further states that Gardner introduced material from the OTO, and less directly from the GD, into " . . . the lore of his covens."

As Doreen Valiente also admits, "Indeed, the influence of Crowley was very apparent throughout the (Wiccan) rituals." This, Gardner explained to her, was because the rituals he received from Old Dorothy's coven were very fragmentary, and in order to make them workable, he had to supplement them with other material.

To give an example of some of the lines by Crowley which are rather familiar to modern Wiccans:

I give unimaginable joys on earth; certainty, not faith, while in life, upon death; peace unutterable, rest, ecstasy; nor do I demand aught in sacrifice.

I am Life, and the giver of Life, yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death.

And of course, the Gnostic Mass has been immensely influential.

Not only poetry, but also magical practices in Wicca are often derived from GD sources. For example:

1. the way of casting the circle: that is, the visualization of the circle, and the pentagrams at the quarters, are both based upon the standard GD Pentagram Ritual;

2. both the concept and word "Watchtowers" are of course from the Enochian system of Magic, passed to Wicca via the GD (although I would like to make it very clear that their use within Wicca bears no relation to the use within Enochia - the only similarity is in the name);
3. the Elements and colors generally attributed to the Quarters are those of the GD;
4. the weapons and their attributions are a combination of GD, Crowley and Key of Solomon.

In "*Witchcraft Today*," Gardner says, "The people who certainly would have had the knowledge and ability to invent (the Wiccan rites) were the people who formed the Order of the Golden Dawn about seventy years ago . . . "

The GD is not the only influence upon Gardner; Freemasonry has had a tremendous impact upon the Wicca. Not only were the three founders of Isis-Urania Temple Masons, so too were Crowley and Waite; Gardner and at least one member of the first coven (Daffo) were both Co-Masons. Gardner was also a friend of JSM Ward, who had published a number of books about Masonry.

Doreen describes Ward as a "leading Mason," but Francis King says only that Ward was, "a bogus Bishop . . . who had written some quite good but far-fetched books on masonry, and who ran a peculiar religious-cum-occult community called The Abbey of Christ the King . . . " Whether the books were far-fetched or not, we can assume that some of the many similarities between Wicca and Masonry are in some ways due to Ward's influence.

Some of these include:

- " The Three Degrees
- " The Craft
- " So Mote It Be
- " The Challenge
- " Properly Prepared
- " The 1st Degree Oath (in part)
- " Presentation of the Working Tools at 1st degree

and so on.

It seems to me quite clear that even if Gardner received a traditional set of rituals from his coven, they must have been exceptionally sparse, as the concepts that we know of as Wicca today certainly derive from ceremonial magic and Freemasonry to a very great extent. Indeed, Gardner always claimed that they were sparse.

It could be argued that all derive from a common source. That the appearance of a phrase, or technique in one tradition does not automatically suggest that its appearance elsewhere means that the one was taken from the other. However, Gardner admits his sources in many cases, and Doreen confirms them in others, so I think it is safe to presume that the rituals and philosophy used by Wicca descends from the traditions of Freemasonry and Ceremonial magic, rather than from a single common source. However, as Hudson Frew points out in his commentary upon Aidan Kelly's book, the phenomena of the techniques and practices of ceremonial magic influencing folk magic and traditions is widely recognized by anthropologists, and certainly does not indicate plagiarism. And of course there are many traditional witchcraft aspects in the Wicca.

We have looked at the development of the magical orders which resulted from the British occult revival of the 19th and 20th centuries, and now we can see where this ties in with Wicca, and Gardner's claim of traditional initiation.

I have here a "family tree" of the main branches of British Wicca. It is by no means exhaustive, and is intended to provide an outline, not a definitive history! I have included my own coven lines and development as an indication of the kind of "crossover" of tradition which often occurs, not to suggest that these are the only active groups! Also, it would not be ethical for me to include details of other covens.

We have two possible "hereditary" sources to the Gardnerian Craft: one, the Horsa Coven of Old Dorothy, and two, the Cumbrian Group which Rae Bone claims to have been initiated into before meeting Gardner. (NB: Doreen Valiente says that the Horsa Coven is not connected with Old Dorothy, but is another group entirely.) There is also sometimes mention of a St Alban's group that predate Gardner, but as far as I know, this is mistaken. The St Albans group was Gardner's own group, which as far as research confirms, did not predate him.

To return to Rae Bone. She was one of Gardner's High Priestess, and her "line" has been immensely important to the modern Wicca. She was featured in the magazine series, "*Man Myth and Magic*" if anyone has a copy of that.

In her heyday she ran two covens: one in Cumbria, and one in South London. Rae is still alive, and lives in Cumbria, although her last coven moved to New Zealand many years ago, and she is no longer active. No-one has ever been able to trace the coven in New Zealand.

At this point, I will just mention George Pickingill, although he is not shown on the tree, as I think it extremely dubious that he had any connection with Gardner, or any other modern Wiccan.

Pickingill died in 1909, whilst Gardner was still in Malaya. Eric Maple is largely responsible for the beginnings of the Pickingill myth, which were expanded by Bill Liddell (Lugh) writing in "*The Wiccan*" and "*The Cauldron*" throughout the 1970s. Mike Howard still has some of Liddell's material which he has never published, and I have yet to meet anyone within the British Craft who gives credence to Liddell's claims.

In the book, "*The Dark World of Witches*," published in 1962, Maple tells of a number of village wise women and cunning men, one of whom is George Pickingill. There is a photograph included of an old man with a stick, holding a hat, which Maple describes as Pickingill. This photograph has subsequently been re-used many times in books about witchcraft and Wicca.

Issue number 31 of "*Insight*" Magazine, dated July 1984, contains a very interesting letter from John Pope:

"The photograph purporting to be Old George Pickingill is in fact a photo of Alf Cavill, a station porter at Ellstree, taken in the early 1960s. Alf is now dead, but he was no witch, and laughed over the photograph when he saw it."

A very respected Craft authority has told me that he believes the photo, which is in his possession, to be of Pickingill, but like so much to do with Craft history, there is no definitive answer to this one.

Many claims were made by Liddell; some obviously from cloud-cuckoo land, others which could, by a stretch of the imagination, be accepted. The very idea of Pickingill, an illiterate farm laborer, co-ordinating and supervising nine covens across the breadth of the UK is staggering. To accept - as Liddell avers - that he had the likes of Alan Bennett and Aleister Crowley as his pupils bends credulity even further.



The infamous photograph which Liddell claims shows Crowley, Bennett and Pickingill together has conveniently disappeared, and no-one admits to ever having seen it. Like most of Liddell's claims, nothing has ever been substantiated, and when pushed, he retreats into the time-honored favorite of, "I can't reveal that - you're not an initiate!"

But to return to the family tree: the names of Doreen Valiente, Pat and Arnold Crowther, Lois Bourne (Hemmings), Jack Bracelin and Monique Wilson will probably be the most familiar to you.

Jack Bracelin is the author of Gardner's biography, "*Gerald Gardner, Witch*," (published 1960) now out of print, although still available 2nd hand, and in libraries. (In *Crafting the Art of Magic*, Kelly claims that this book was actually written by Idries Shah, and simply published under Bracelin's name. As with every other claim, Kelly offers no evidence of this)

I have seen a copy of Bracelin's *Book of Shadows*, which it is claimed dates from 1949, although in *The Rebirth Of Witchcraft*, Doreen says that Bracelin was a "relative newcomer" in the mid-1950s. I have also been told by two different sources that Bracelin helped Gardner write "*The Laws*." In *The Rebirth Of Witchcraft*, Doreen states that she did not see *The Laws* until the mid 1950s, when she and her partner Ned Grove accused Gardner of concocting them in order to re-assert control over the coven. As Bracelin was in the Gardner camp during the break-up of the group, it seems reasonable that he did in fact help with their composition. (NB: Alex Sanders increased the number of "*The Laws*" much later - these appeared in June Johns' book, "*The King of the Witches*")

Although Doreen claims that the reason for the coven break-up was the fact that Gardner and Bracelin were publicity crazy, there was another reason, which was the instatement of a new lady into the coven, effectively replacing Doreen as HPS. This is also the main reason for Gerald's Law which states that the HPS will, " . . . gracefully retire in favor of a younger woman, should the coven so decide in council." Needless to say, Doreen was not impressed, and she and Ned left the coven under very acrimonious circumstances. It was quite some time before Doreen had contact with Gardner again, and they never quite regained the degree of friendship that had previously existed.

Monique and Campbell Wilson are infamous, rather than famous, as Gardner's heirs who sold off his magical equipment and possessions after his death, to Ripleys in the USA.

Monique was the last of his Priestesses, and many Wiccans today still spit when her name is mentioned. Pat Crowther was rather scathing about her recently in an interview, and in *The Rebirth Of Witchcraft*, although Doreen tells of the sale of Gardner's magical possessions to Ripleys, she doesn't ever mention the Wilsons by name. In effect, the Craft closed ranks against them, and they became outcasts.

Eventually, in the face of such opposition they had to sell the Museum in Castletown, and they moved to Torremolinos, where they bought a café. Monique died nine years after selling the Museum. It is rumoured that Campbell Wilson moved to the USA, and met with a car accident there: this is only hearsay though - I really do not know for sure what happened to him.

However, Monique was influential in a way that even she could not have imagined, when in 1964 or 5 she initiated Ray Buckland, who with his wife Rosemary (later divorced), was very influential in the development of the Wicca in the USA.

Fortunately, Richard and Tamarra James managed to buy the bulk of Gardner's collection back from Ripleys in 1987, for the princely sum of US \$40,000, and it is now back within the Craft, and available for initiates to consult and view.

D and C S. are probably completely anonymous, and if it were not for the fact that C initiated Robert Cochrane (briefly mentioned earlier) they would probably stay that way!

Cochrane's origins are obscure, but I have been told that he was initiated into the Gardnerian tradition by C S, and met Doreen Valiente through a mutual acquaintance in 1964. When he met Doreen, however, he claimed to be a hereditary witch, from a different tradition to Gardner's, and as Doreen confirms, was contemptuous of what he called "Gardnerian" witches. Indeed, Doreen believes he coined the term, "Gardnerian."

Doreen said she was completely taken in by Cochrane and for a while, worked with him and the "*Clan of Tubal-Cain*" as he described his tradition, which was also known as "*The Royal Windsor Cuveen*," or 1734.

The figures "1734" have an interesting history. Doreen gives a rather strange account of them in *The Rebirth Of Witchcraft*, which contradicts what Cochrane himself describes in a letter to Joe Wilson, dated "*12th Night 1966*," where he says,

"...the order of 1734 is not a date of an event but a grouping of numerals that mean something to a witch.

"**One** that becomes **seven** states of wisdom - the Goddess of the Cauldron. **Three** that are the Queens of the Elements - fire belonging alone to Man, and the Blacksmith God. **Four** that are Queens of the Wind Gods.

"The Jewish orthodoxy believe that whomever knows the Holy and Unspeakable name of God has absolute power over the world of form. Very briefly, the name of God spoken as Tetragrammaton . . . breaks down in Hebrew to the letters YHVH, (Y&H&V&\*) or the Adam Kadmon (The Heavenly Man). Adam Kadmon is a composite of all Archangels - in other words a poetic statement of the names of the Elements.

"So what the Jew and the Witch believe alike, is that the man who discovers the secret of the Elements controls the physical world. 1734 is the witch way of saying YHVH." (Cochrane, 1966)

Although Doreen says that Cochrane's group was small, it still proved to be remarkably influential. As well as Cochrane and his wife (whom Doreen refers to as "Jean") and Doreen herself, there were others who are well-known today, and a man called Ronald White, who very much wanted to bring about a new age in England, with the return of King Arthur.

In *The Rebirth Of Witchcraft*, Doreen elaborates upon the circumstances surrounding the death of Cochrane: the bald facts are that he died at the Summer Solstice of 1966 of an overdose. Craft tradition believes that he became in fact, and of his own choice, the male ritual sacrifice which is sometimes symbolically enacted at the height of Summer.

The Royal Windsor Cuveen disbanded after Cochrane died, only to be re-born from the ashes at Samhain that year under a new name - *The Regency*. All of its early members were from the Royal Windsor Cuveen, and they were under the leadership of Ronald White. *The Regency* proved to be of great importance to the development of the Wicca, although its existence was kept a fairly close secret, and even today, there are relatively few people who have ever heard of it.

Meetings were held in North London, at a place called Queens Wood. As well as Ron White and Doreen Valiente, members included "John Math," founder of the Witchcraft Research Association in 1964, and editor of *Pentagram*

magazine, and the founder of the Pagan Movement, Tony Kelly. At its height, there were frequently more than 40 in attendance at rites, which tended to be of the dramatic, pagan kind rather than the ceremonial associated with high ritual magic. *The Regency* operated fairly consistently for over twelve years, finally disbanding in 1978. The Membership roll reads like a who's who of the British Wicca! Some of the rites have been incorporated into modern Wiccan rituals - in fact, one was used at the Pan European Wiccan Conference 1991 with very great success.

Moving back over to Rae Bone's line, there are a number of influential people here, mainly through her initiates, Madge and Arthur, who probably take the award for the most prolific pair in Wiccandom! Rae, although initiated by Gardner, does of course also claim a hereditary status in her own right.

Madge and Arthur's initiates include:

### **John and Jean Score.**

John Score was the partner of Michael Houghton (mentioned earlier), and the founder of the Pagan Federation, which is very active today. Houghton died under very mysterious circumstances, which is briefly mentioned in "The Sword of Wisdom" by Ithell Colquhoun. My Craft source told me that this was actually a ritual that went badly wrong, and Houghton ended up on the wrong end of some fairly potent energies.

There is an interesting anecdote about Houghton in *The Rebirth Of Witchcraft*, which is taken from "*Nightside of Eden*" by Kenneth Grant, and agrees in some respect to a similar story that I was told some years ago. Doreen suggests in *The Rebirth Of Witchcraft* that the story may relate to a magical working involving Kenneth Grant and his wife, Gardner, Dolores North (Madeline Montalban), and an un-named witch, who was probably Olive Green.

They were all to perform a ritual together, supposedly to contact an extraterrestrial being. The material basis for the rite, which took place in 1949, was a drawing by AO Spare.

Apparently soon after the rite commenced, a nearby bookseller (Michael Houghton) turned up and interrupted proceedings. On hearing that Kenneth Grant was within, he declined to enter, and wandered off. The rite was disrupted, and the story goes that everyone just went home.

Kenneth Grant claims that as a result of disturbing their working, Houghton's marriage broke up, and that Houghton died in mysterious circumstances. In fact, the Houghton divorce was a cause celebre, with her suing him for cruelty because he boasted of being a Sagittarian while sneering at her because she was only a dingy old Capricorn!

The interrupted ritual could well have taken place. Madeline had a flat near to Atlantis (Houghton's shop), and would certainly have known both Grant and Houghton. I know for a fact that Madeline was acquainted with Gerald, although her opinion of both him and the Wicca was rather poor. One of Madeline's older students told me that she thought Gardner rather a fraud, and ritually inept. She also had a very low opinion of Wiccans, and refused to allow her own students to participate in Wiccan rites. The reason for this lies in an anecdote which Doreen doesn't relate: the story goes that Madeline agreed to participate in a rite with Gerald, which turned out to involve Madeline being tied up and tickled with a feather duster! The great lady was not amused.

### **Prudence Jones**

Prudence was for many years the president of the Pagan Federation, and editor of its newsletter. She inherited her role from John Score, after he passed away. With Nigel Pennick, Prudence also runs the Pagan Anti-Defamation League (PADL), and is an active astrologer and therapist. She has edited a book on astrology, and with Caitlin Matthews, edited "*Voices from the Circle*," published by Aquarian Press. Although Prudence took her degree in Philosophy, her main interests lie in the areas of the Grail and troubadour tales, and she has published privately an excellent essay on the *Grail and Wicca*. She is also a very highly respected astrologer, who lectures extensively in Britain.

### **Vivianne and Chris Crowley**

Vivianne Crowley, is author of "*Wicca - The Old Religion in the New Age*," and also secretary of the Pagan Federation. She has a PhD in Psychology, and is perhaps the only person to have been a member of both a Gardnerian Coven and an Alexandrian one simultaneously!

Vivianne is very active at the moment, and has initiated people in Germany (having memorized the ritual in German - a language she doesn't speak!), Norway, and - on the astral - Brazil. As a result of her book, she receives many letters from people from all around the world, and organized the first ever pan-European Wiccan conference, held in Germany 1990. The second conference was held in Britain at the June solstice, and the third (1992) in Norway. In 1993, the Conference will be in Scotland.

**John and Kathy (Caitlin) Matthews**, are probably well-known to everyone, but possibly their Gardnerian initiations are not such common knowledge. The story that John Matthews relates in "*Voices from the Circle*" is essentially the one which he told the HPS who initiated him.

### **Pat and Arnold Crowther**

I have left Pat and Arnold till last, as it is from their line that the infamous Alex Sanders derives! It is no secret anymore that Alex, far from being initiated by his grandmother when he was seven, was in fact turned down by Pat Crowther in 1961, but was later accepted by one of her ex-coven members, Pat Kopanski, and initiated to 1st Degree.

In "*The Rebirth of Witchcraft*" Doreen says that Alex later met Gardner, and was allowed to copy from the *Book of Shadows*; Craft tradition is somewhat different! It has always been said (even by Alex's supporters!) that he pinched what he could from Pat Kopanski before being chucked out, and that the main differences between the Alexandrian and Gardnerian *Books of Shadows* occur where Alex mis-heard, or miscopied something! There are certainly significant differences between the two Books; some parts of Gardnerian ritual are quite unknown within the Alexandrian tradition, and the ritual techniques are often different. It is usually very easy to spot whether someone is an Alexandrian, or Gardnerian initiate.

Alex needed a HPS, and as we know, chose Maxine Morris for the role. Maxine is a striking Priestess, and made a very good visual focus for the movement which grew in leaps and bounds.

In the late 1960s, Alex and Maxine were prolific initiators, and a number of their initiates have become well known. Some came to Australia, and there are still a number of covens in the UK today whose HP and/or HPS was initiated by Alex or Maxine.

Alex and Maxine's most famous initiates are almost certainly Janet and Stewart Farrar, who left them in 1971 to form their own coven, first in England, then later, in Ireland. Through their books, they have probably had the most influence over the direction that the modern Craft has taken. Certainly in Australia, the publication of "*What Witches*

*Do*" was an absolute watershed, and with Janet and Stewart's consistent output, their form of Wicca is more likely to become the "standard" than any other type.

Since their early days of undiluted Alexandrianism, they have drifted somewhat towards a more Gardnerian approach, and today, tell everyone that there are no differences between the two traditions. In fact, despite the merging that has been occurring over the last few years, there are very distinct differences between the traditions; some merely external, others of a very significant difference of philosophy.

Seldiy Bate was originally magically trained by Madeline Montalban, and then took an Alexandrian initiation from Maxine and Alex. Her husband, Nigel, was also initiated by Maxine, and they have been "public" witches for a number of years now, often appearing on TV, radio and in the press. Their background in ritual magic is expressed in the type of coven that they run; a combination of Wicca and Ceremonial Magic.

In 1971, Alex and Maxine went their separate ways. David Goddard is a Liberal Catholic Priest, and for many years, he and Maxine worked in the Liberal Catholic faith, and did not run a coven of any kind. Then in 1984, Maxine gathered together a group again, and started practicing a combination of Wicca, Qabalah and Liberal Catholicism. She and David separated in 1987, and since then her coven has been exclusively Wiccan. In 1989, she married one of her initiates, Vincent, and they are still running an active coven in London today.

Alex's history after the split was a little more sordid, with one girl he married, Jill, filling the gutter press with stories about Alex being homosexual, and defrauding her of all her money to spend on his boyfriends. Sally Taylor was initiated by Maxine and David, but then transferred to Alex. She was trained by him, and then started her own group.

I'd now like to focus upon the last of the strands which I believe has been influential upon the birth and development of Wicca; that of the literary traditions and sources to which Gardner would have had access. To a certain extent these are contiguous with the magical traditions described earlier, as nowhere is it ever suggested that Gardner did in fact ever work in a magical Lodge, so we must assume that his knowledge came from the written form of the rites, not from the actual practice of them.

From reading Gardner's books, it is quite apparent that Margaret Murray had a tremendous impact upon him. Her book, *"The God of the Witches"* was published in 1933, and twelve years previously, *"The Witch Cult in Western Europe"* had appeared. *"The God of the Witches"* has been tremendously influential on a number of people, and certainly inspired Gardner.

In fact, *"Witchcraft Today"*, published by Gardner in 1954 contained a foreword by Margaret Murray. At this time, remember, Murray's work was still taken seriously, and she remained the contributor on the subject of witchcraft for the Encyclopedia Britannica for a number of years.

Now of course her work has been largely discredited, although she remains a source of inspiration, if not historical accuracy. In Gardner's day, the idea of a continuing worship of the old pagan gods would have been a staggering theory, and in the second article in my series about Murray (published in *The Cauldron*), I made the point that Murray may have had to pretend scientific veracity in order to get her work published in such times. Don't forget that Dion Fortune had to publish her work privately, as did Gardner with *High Magic's Aid*. Carlo Ginzburg's excellent book, *"Ecstasies"*, also supports Murray's basic premise; although of course he regrets her historical deceptions.

There were of course other sources than Murray. In 1899, *"Aradia: Gospel of the Witches"* was published. Most of Crowley's work was available during the pre- and post-war years, as were the texts written and translated by MacGregor Mathers and Waite. Also readily available were works such as *The Magus*, and of course the classics, from which Gardner drew much inspiration.

Of paramount importance would have been *"The White Goddess"*, by Robert Graves, which is still a standard reference book on any British Wiccan's bookshelf. This was published in 1952; three years after *High Magic's Aid* appeared, and two years before Gardner's first nonfictional book about witchcraft. I would just like to say at this point that Graves has taken some very unfair criticism in respect of this book. *The White Goddess* was written as a work of poetry, not history, and to criticize it for being historically inaccurate is to miss the point. Unfortunately, I agree that some writers have referred to it as an "authority," and thus led their readers up the garden path. This is not Graves's fault, nor do I believe it was his intention.

Another book which has had a profound influence on many Wiccans, and would undoubtedly have been well known by Gardner is *"The Golden Bough"*; although the entire book was written based upon purely secondary research, it is an extensive examination of many pagan practices from the Ancient World, and the emphasis of the male sacrifice could certainly have been taken from here equally as well as from Murray. Certain of the Gardnerian ritual practices were almost certainly derived from *The Golden Bough*, or from Frazer's own sources.

In *"Witchcraft Today"* Gardner mentions a number of authors when speculating where the Wiccan rites came from. He says that, "The only man I can think of who could have invented the rites was the late Aleister Crowley."

He continues to say, "The only other man I can think of who could have done it is Kipling...." He also mentions that, "Hargrave Jennings might have had a hand in them &" and then suggests that "Barrat (sic) of *The Magus*, circa 1800, would have had the ability to invent or resurrect the cult."

It's possible that these references are something of a damage control operation by Gardner, who, according to Doreen, was not too impressed when she kept telling him that she recognized certain passages in the Witch rites! *"Witchcraft Today"* was published the year after Doreen's initiation, and perhaps by seeming genuinely interested in where the Rites came from, Gardner thought he might give the appearance of innocence of their construction!

As mentioned previously, Gardner also had a large collection of unpublished MSS, which he used extensively, and one has only to read his books to realize that he was a very well-read man, with wide-ranging interests. Exactly the sort of man who would be able to draw together a set of rituals if required.

The extensive bibliography to *"The Meaning of Witchcraft"* published in 1959, demonstrates this rather well. Gardner includes *Magick in Theory and Practice* and *The Equinox of the Gods* by Crowley; *The Mystical Qabalah* by Dion Fortune; *The Goetia*; *The White Goddess* (Graves); Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of *The Mabinogion*; *English Folklore* by Christina Hole; *The Kabbalah Unveiled* and *the Abramelin* by Mathers; both Margaret Murray's books and Godfrey Leland's *Gypsy Sorcery*, as well as a myriad of classic texts, from Plato to Bede!

Although this bibliography postdates the creation of Gardnerian Wicca, it certainly indicates from where Gardner draws his inspiration from. There are also several books listed which are either directly, or indirectly, concerned with sex magic, Priapic Cults, or Tantra.

Hargrave Jennings, mentioned earlier, wrote a book called "*The Rosicrucians, their Rites and Mysteries*," which Francis King describes as a book, "concerned almost exclusively with phallicism and phallic images - Jennings saw the penis everywhere."

As I mentioned earlier, Hargrave Jennings, a member of the SRIA, also belonged to a group, described as a coven, which met in the Cambridge area in the 1870s, and performed rituals based upon the classical traditions - specifically, from The Golden Ass. There is no evidence to support this, except that there are often found references to a "Cambridge Coven" linked to Jennings' name. Many of the rituals we are familiar with today were of course later additions by Doreen Valiente, and these have been well documented by both her and the Farrars, in a number of books. Doreen admits that she deliberately cut much of the poetry by Aleister Crowley, and substituted either her own work, or poems from other sources, such as the Carmina Gadelica.

Of course we can never really know the truth about the origins of the Wicca. Gardner may have been an utter fraud; he may have actually received a "Traditional" initiation; or, as a number of people have suggested, he may have created the Wicca as a result of a genuine religious experience, drawing upon his extensive literary and magical knowledge to create, or help create, the rites and philosophy.

What I think we can be fairly certain about is that he was sincere in his belief. If there had been no more to the whole thing than an old man's fantasy, then the Wicca would not have grown to be the force that it is today, and we would not all be sitting here in Canberra on a Saturday morning!

## Witches as Pagan "Cultists"

Was there any actual underground movement to act as a peg upon which the Pope could hang his branding irons? Could the Classic Witches have actually been the leaders of a European-wide Pagan revival (as Margaret Murray and others later claimed), one that the Church merely distorted into a Satanic cult?

Since the Classic Witches would usually be among the eldest members of any village social structure (it takes a long time to become adept at healing, herbology and divination) they could have been at the forefront of the sporadic efforts to preserve Pagan traditions. They may have helped to organize the dances, parades and other folk customs with which tiny remnants of the old religions were kept alive. This, however, is a far cry from the theories of a well organized cult spanning the entire continent.

Murray took the "confessions" extorted under torture during the *"Burning Time"* (a Neopagan term for the persecutions from 1450-1750) and compared their artificially constructed similarities (caused by the Inquisitors' use of torture manuals such as the *Mallus Maleficarum*) with collections of folk beliefs and customs from England, Brittany and Italy. The major conclusions she came to in her book *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, were somewhat astonishing (the kindest comments made by her academic colleagues were that she was "speculative and unscholarly." Most just said she was a crank). She argued that perhaps there had been a gigantic, anti-Christian cult in medieval Europe, only it had been Pagan instead of Satanic. Furthermore, the leaders of this cult might have been the witches, as the descendants of the priestesses of "The Old Religion." This religion, she speculated, was a belief system based on the worship of Diana, and was so well organized that every witch in Europe had essentially the same theology, ethics, cosmology and rituals, so that a witch could travel from Denmark to Italy, from England to Poland and be accepted into the local services. This, she said was why the persecutions happened there really was a gigantic threat to Christianity, run by witches.

This is an important theory that needs to be discussed, for many "Neopagan Witches" and "Feminist Witches" (see below for definitions) accept it as proven and it has been published as absolute truth in many books. To begin with, I'll refer the reader to the discussions elsewhere on this site on pre-Christian European religions. As you will recall, the evidence in favor of a universal cult of any sort is scanty, while contrary evidence is plentiful. However, for the sake of the argument, let us assume that there really was a unified cult throughout Europe, concerning "the" Goddess and her Consort "the" Horned God, which survived intact into the Christian era. Could the traditions and beliefs of such a cult survive 500 to 1500 years of oppression?

There are certain well known laws concerning the requirements for the safe transmittal of a tradition from generation to generation. It must either be written down, and thereby altered by the requirements of the literary form (rewritten to fit a poetic rhyme-forms for example) or else it must become part of an oral literature supported by public approval of the bards, minstrels, storytellers, etc. Are either of these two requirements met?

Unfortunately, there are no equivalents that have been discovered yet to the Eddas or the Mabinogion (collected tales of Norse and Welsh mythology, respectively) which present the entire mythology of the "Universal Witch-Cult" as practiced by our hypothetical ancestors. Granted, a large number of people have claimed that the above mentioned texts are just chock full of references to "The Old Religion" and are "really" about the Witch-Cult. The fact remains, however, that the sacred scriptures of the postulated Witch-Cult's beliefs and traditions (with the exception of quotes from old poems and folk songs) were never found in written form until the last hundred years.

Christianity of course did not provide much in the way of support for competing religions. The Church accepted some local planting and herding customs and holidays, turned the local gods and nature spirits into saints and demons, and went merrily on its way subverting and co-opting the faiths of the conquered tribes. Now, it could be argued that as an underground movement, the Witch-Cult provided a subculture that might have given public support to an oral literature of religious witchcraft. But Europe of the Middle Ages was not the England or America of today, where subcultures are somewhat tolerated, even if despised. A subculture has to be pretty big to provide the necessary amount of support. Long before it could have reached that size, it would have been subverted or destroyed by the Church. The Odds Against Survivals

I think it's useful here to take a glance at the Moranos, the secret underground Jews of Catholic Spain. In 1492, the King of Spain ordered all Jews living there to leave Spain, convert to Catholicism, or be executed. Many left, many died, but many others chose to convert, at least some of them under false pretenses. These latter Jews decided to go underground and practice their faith in secrecy while pretending in public to be good Catholics. When caught, they were referred to as "Moranos," a Spanish word meaning "pigs" used because it was especially insulting to Jews, who considered pigs unclean animals.

Over four hundred years passed by before some of the Moranos decided to go public with their religious identities. Unfortunately, they chose to do so at a very bad time, just before World War II, and were imprisoned or murdered by Hitler's Spanish ally, Franco. The remaining Moranos decided to stay hidden for a while longer. A few years ago, however, many of them went public, demanding to be allowed to immigrate to Israel under the "Law of Return," that says Jews anywhere in the world have a right to move to Israel and become citizens. As the government of that nation has taken to doing, they sent a team of linguists, anthropologists and rabbis to Spain to interview the Moranos.

What they discovered was that the Moranos knew they were supposed to study "the Old Testament" and ignore the "New," to light candles and say special prayers on Friday nights and Saturdays, and to use mezuzahs and other Jewish talismans hidden away. That, except for a handful of Hebrew words, was about all the Moranos knew about being Jews (for details, read The Mezuzah in the Madonna's Foot). Why do I mention this story? Because a group of highly literate people, with a rich and deep tradition of organized religious beliefs and practices, lost 99% of it after only 500 years of being underground. Just how likely is it that illiterate members of a Paleopagan belief system would have been able to keep their religion alive for nearly twice that long, let alone for three times that long as believed by some Neopagans?

Sure the medieval peasants went out into the woods and held orgies, sure they built need-fires at certain times of the year, sure they followed the agricultural customs of their ancestors anyone who's read Frazer's *Golden Bough* knows that. None of this activity necessarily proves that they had any idea, magically or religiously, of what they were doing. This is why outside observers must always be making stupid remarks like "the peasants really did this because & " or "they didn't know it, but they were actually worshiping an old Pagan god named Irving, who was & "

You do not need a religious or magical reason to perform customary or enjoyable acts. The mere fact that "this is the way my Grandfather did it" or that, "actually, I've always rather enjoyed orgies," is more than sufficient to assure that some form or other of that act will be perpetuated in the future. After all, in magic and religion, as in many other fields, one does not always have to consciously understand what one is doing in order to get results (though it helps). Just because a group of peasants is performing a ritual of possible magical efficacy, does not mean that they have had someone train them in the art of magic, or that they have the slightest idea of what they are doing.

To the average Medireview peasant, the Church provided (deliberately, and with malice aforethought) nearly every religious comfort that the old belief systems did, except for one area: sex. Sexual customs were more likely to be clung to (!) than nonsexual ones, and were the ones most likely to occur outside of a Christian context. Granted, there were peasants who went out into the woods to hold orgies. But it is entirely possible that they only wanted to get laid, not enlightened.

So, while there is plenty of evidence of ancient Pagan traditions surviving under thin Christian veneers in isolated parts of Christendom, there is almost nothing logical to suggest that the people leading these traditions were in touch with each other or shared more than the vaguest common beliefs. Therefore, the theories of both the Inquisition and Margaret Murray have got to be dismissed as unlikely to be true.

### **Family Traditions of Witchcraft?**

Could there have been a link among underground Pagans, who weren't peasants? It has been suggested, based on the well-known historical principle that rich people don't get persecuted as much as poor people do, that throughout Europe and the British Isles it would have been possible for wealthy families and minor nobility to quietly continue Pagan practices as "private family business." Of course, this ignores the fact that many Inquisitors chose rich, or at least well-off, victims precisely because they had wealth that would go to the Church and local secular authorities.

Considering that these local leaders (of the "Squire" sort) living in small cities and outside of large towns, are notoriously conservative about family customs, it is entirely possible that survivors of the witch-hunts did prosper and keep their family secrets. Whether such families thought of themselves as being "witches" of any sort (say, Classic, as being most likely) or as "Pagans" or as just plain "family," cannot now be determined. I have run across people who claim to be descended from such families, and they usually call themselves "witches" now. To my everlasting regret, I coined the term "Family Tradition Witches" or "Fam-Trads" to describe such persons, though one could also consider some of them merely present-day Classic witches.

Remember though that such families of petty nobility (unlike the wealthier and more traveled major nobility) are usually highly suspicious of outsiders from their own country, let alone from others. This hardly strikes one as a promising syndrome for setting up a complex communication network for Pagans from scores of European cultures.

So while it's possible that Fam-Trads exist, and have been practicing traditions some of them now describe as "witchcraft" for centuries, there is as yet no proof that the influence of any given family could have spread more than a hundred miles or so, until the 20th century. There is also no proof that the traditions handed down by these families are either (a) uncontaminated by later traditions and/or (b) in agreement with the beliefs of some Neopagan and Feminist Witches concerning the "Witch-Cult." On the contrary, there is a great deal of evidence against both of these possibilities, especially the former.

### **Real Satanism Arises**

The persecutions went on for over three hundred years, finally petering out in the 1700's, first in western Europe, then in central and southern Europe. In all that time, with all those murders, not one shred of proof that would stand up in a modern court was ever produced to show the existence of an organized Pagan or Satanic cult among the peasantry (except the Benandanti in Italy, discussed in Carlo Ginzburg's *Night Battles*, which was a Pagan-rooted anti-witch cult). One truly ironic note however, was that the creation of Gothic Witchcraft by the Church did manage to produce actual Satanic groups -- not among the peasantry, but at the Court of Louis XIV, King of France. The highest nobility in the land apparently engaged in hideous crimes and asinine theatrics, trying to relieve their boredom by holding "Black Masses" and slaughtering infants, just as they had been told by the Church was the accepted fashion. In 1662 this all came out and many of the middlemen and women in the case were punished (though few of the nobles were). In that same year, by a curious coincidence, Louis issued an Edict that, in effect, restrained witchcraft trials throughout France.

To this very day, there are "Neogothic Witches," or modern Satanists, trying their very best to be everything the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches said they should be, though only a few go so far as to perform human sacrifice like they are "supposed" to. Representing only a tiny percentage of the people now calling themselves "witches," these Neogothic types invariably grab all the publicity they can get, in order to present themselves as more important than they really are. Naturally, there are conservative Christian groups who are delighted to have the Neogothic Witches around to support their idea that "all witches worship the Devil." Some former Neogothic Witches are now making lucrative livings as traveling evangelists, denouncing their former ways.

Neogothic Witches publish books purporting to be about magic and the occult, but actually being warmed over techniques for psychological manipulation, seduction, extortion and right-wing demagoguery. The average Satanist has far more in common with Richard Nixon or Jerry Falwell, than with the mainstream of occultism and witchcraft in America.

### **Immigrant Traditions of Witchcraft**

After the First Burning Times ended, no one seemed to be very interested in witches of any sort anymore. c was dawning, and the powers of the churches dwindling, at least among the intellectuals of the day (see the 1768 *Encyclopædia Britannica* definition of Witchcraft). Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, Theosophy and Spiritualism swept over Europe and America, along with mechanistic theories of Science, the new god. All these currents of thought had drastic effects upon both rich and poor alike.

Millions of peasants immigrated to America (North and South), most of them the descendants of farmers and serfs. Others came as indentured servants or as convicted criminals, working for wealthy land owners. In some cases, those rich people could have been members of Fam-Trads, sent off to America to earn their fortune, or to establish new holdings, or to escape quasilegal persecution at home. During the 300 years of settlement, scores of Pagan and semi-Pagan groups -- both peasant and purported Fam-Trad -- immigrated here and continued their ways out in the boondocks (this was especially true of groups from the wilder parts of Europe and the British Isles). These varied groups, who soon started to intermingle their beliefs and magical practices with those of Native American and African peoples, I have referred to as "Immigrant Traditions" or "Imm-Trads" (not a felicitous abbreviation, that later).

A second major change to European peasant cultures was brought about by the scientific revolution. As was mentioned by Aidan Kelley (in an article published in *Gnostica* when I was editor there), when the average peasant found out that eclipses were not caused by creatures eating the sun, that the earth revolved around the sun and not vice-versa, that most diseases were not caused by demons or fairies, his or her faith in old Pagan deities began to fail. Since what was considered to be the basis of all his or her magic was all "false," he or she abandoned even more of his or her vestigial Paganism and became almost exclusively Christian.

The Classic Witches seem to have dwindled in prestige during this time, but the people who might have been Fam-Trad witches would not have been so badly affected. Being more intellectual and better educated, they would

have had a sophisticated enough set of metaphysics (and a better understanding of magic and psychic powers) so that they could easily handle the traumatic information. However, since Scientism was rapidly becoming the supreme religion in the West, most members of Fam-Trads would have made efforts to conceal their "superstitious" beliefs and Pagan magical systems, perhaps by getting involved in Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism in the 18th century, Spiritualism and Theosophy in the 19th all of these movements were considered more respectable than witchcraft, and would still have allowed the Fam-Trads to practice occult arts.

Wealthier nobles and intellectuals had practiced ceremonial magic (mostly based on Christian Cabala and Greek and Latin magical texts) throughout the Middle Ages, and most escaped persecution because of their wealth and power. But during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries the ceremonial magicians and alchemists began to join these various movements just mentioned.

So as the years went by, members of the postulated Fam-Trads would have absorbed more and more from non-Pagan magical sources, and handed their new information down to each generation, perhaps carelessly letting the descendants think that a Rosicrucian spell or alchemical meditation was a legitimate part of their Pagan heritage. So by today we would have "Fam-Trad Witches" who would be closer to being Theosophists or Spiritualists than to being Classic or Neoclassic Witches.

As modern medicine and pharmacology developed, fewer and fewer people resorted to the remaining Classic Witches for aid. Except in isolated villages, witchcraft in western and southern Europe slowly died out. Not enough is known about what happened to similar people in central and northern Europe. However, I believe that the dying out process was much slower for two reasons: (a) material technology did not spread as fast there and (b) they had been Christianized at later dates, and hence had more of their Pagan tradition left at the time of the collapse of religious authority in the face of scientific authority.

### The Early Anthropologists Step into the Debate

From 1860 to 1880, a scholar named J. J. Bachofen conjectured, from predominately (speculative) philological evidence, a matriarchal age in early human civilization. His thinking was based on Hegelian logic and the "Social Darwinism" movement, and was quickly picked up by an obscure writer named Karl Marx. This theory of a matriarchal age eventually became an integral part of Marxist Social Evolution Theory (though few talk about it anymore among Marxists except for Marxist feminist theoreticians) and became an extremely popular idea among the intellectuals of the day.

From 1880 to 1900, much important work was done in the archeology of the Mediterranean and in comparative mythology and folklore (i.e., the study of other people's religious beliefs). Sir James Frazer published the first volume of his monumental *Golden Bough* in 1890, proposing his theories about the presence of the "Divine King" and goddess worship in most European cultures. In 1887, Karl Pearson published a speech he had given six years earlier, entitled "*Woman as Witch*" (it appeared as one of the essays in *The Chances of Death and Other Studies*). Pearson investigated European folklore and the medieval witch-hunt and came to the conclusion that medieval witches were holdovers from Bachoven's "*Age of Mother Right*," in which, women were, not supreme, but far more powerful than they were in the Christian age. Unfortunately, most people read him sloppily, and thought he was going further than he really did. Bachofen and Pearson provided a theoretical framework used by major figures (to be discussed below) in the "Neopagan Witchcraft" revival, such as Murray, Leland, Graves and Gardner.

In 1899, a book was published by the previously respected folklorist Charles Leland, entitled *Aradia: Or the Gospel of the Witches of Tuscany*. The book was a folklore study of the beliefs of members of a peasant culture in Italy concerning what they called "*The Old Religion*." Despite Leland's high reputation as a scholar, the book was so greatly ignored as to have been almost suppressed. The book contains stories, legends, rites and traditions concerning a goddess named "*Aradia*," who was the messianic **Queen of the Witches**, having inherited her powers from her mother, Diana, and her father Lucifer! The work shows a heavily Christian influence that was probably so much a part of the peasants' beliefs that they didn't know it was there, and the traditions contained do not seem to go directly back further than the 17th century or so. But *Aradia* does show that at least some peasants had retained a self-image as Pagans, despite all the persecution. Leland's source for most of the material, his mistress Maddalena, was apparently a Classic Witch of peasant stock who obtained the written manuscript for Leland after much urging. It has been suggested (and hotly debated) that she may have written it herself in order to please Leland; but Leland thought it reasonably authentic, in that it repeated at greater length things she had told him verbally before.

If the document was true, it is amusing that a stone's throw away from Rome, there was still in 1899 an active Pagan cult of Diana worship. Could this have been a direct survival of those "abandoned women" who believed that they flew through the night to a place where they worshiped Diana? Perhaps. But during the Renaissance, there had been enough of an obsession with Greek and Roman mythology on the part of artists and scholars, that any Pagan belief system (if it had died out entirely) could have been resurrected in mutated form by the gradual sifting down of data on Roman and Etruscan Paganism to the peasants. They hated the Church anyway, and may have started worshiping Diana just to spite the Christian clergy. Centuries later, they would claim that they had always worshiped Her, with no break. This of course is pure speculation. It is entirely possible that among the wild hills of Tuscany (and elsewhere in Italy and Sicily) genuine Pagan traditions might have survived, including a cult of Diana.

But again, we have the same problems we had with Classic Witches in other parts of Europe. Was Maddalena a strega ("witch") who just happened to also be familiar with the *Aradia* cult; or was she a strega because she belonged to the cult? Were all the witches in Italy priestesses of the *Aradia* cult? What happened to all the other Roman and Etruscan gods and goddesses? After all, the "Old Religion" in Italy had a lot of deities in it.

### Witchcraft in the Early 20th Century c.e.

From 1900 to 1920 the fields of comparative religions, mythology, folklore, anthropology, archeology, sociology and psychology really began to develop as sciences in Europe and America. A tremendous hodgepodge of conflicting data and theory was erected that would be mined for decades. Tons of books were published dealing with the beliefs (native or ascribed) of Pagan cultures, folk societies and nonliterate tribes around the world. Broad, sweeping generalizations were the order of the day, as everyone looked for the theory that would explain all religion. Naturally, nobody succeeded.

At the same time, psychical research became better known to the public and the superiority of tribal magical systems began to make itself evident to these researchers (though many, for racist, creedist, and ethnocentric reasons preferred not to admit it). Spiritualism and Theosophy were extremely popular, ceremonial magic was being revived in England and Europe, and the whole world was intellectually aquiver.

World War I put an end to the isolation of many villages in Europe, forcibly bringing the survivors into the 20th century. A lot of peasant cultures, with whatever Pagan customs they might have had, were irrevocably disrupted.

In 1921, Margaret Alice Murray published *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, the theories of which I have already mentioned briefly. Somewhere between 1920 and 1925 in England some folklorists appear to have gotten together with some Golden Dawn Rosicrucians and a few supposed Fam-Trads to produce the first modern covers in England; grabbing eclectically from any source they could find in order to try and reconstruct the shards of their Pagan past.

Murray's *The God of the Witches*, came out in 1933. By this time archeologists and anthropologists had completely disproven the Bachofen theory of a universal matriarchal age (though even today neither Marxists nor some Feminists will admit it); folklorists and other scholars had torn Murray's first book's theories to shreds; and all the social scientists had begun to show the enormous variation of Pagan and folk beliefs throughout Europe. Nonetheless, Murray went even further out on her limb, claiming that witches throughout the continent had worshiped the same Goddess and Horned God, following Frazer's theories exactly, setting up a political as well as a religious underground.



## Enter Gerald Gardner

In the year 1939, a man named Gerald Gardner (he later claimed) ran into a Theosophical theater group that was actually a front for a Fam-Trad coven, all of whose members were very old and who claimed to be the last of their tradition. Gardner supposedly was initiated into this coven that same year and, having decided that their traditions were fragmented and incomplete, he began to research and write new rituals and traditions in a highly eclectic fashion. Throughout the war he worked, taking material from any source that didn't run fast enough to get away. He apparently was friends with Aleister Crowley, who gave him a charter -- never used -- to found a branch of Crowley's magical organization, the O.T.O.

Crowley gave him permission to use some of his poetry and ritual materials, leading to claims years later by critics that Gardner had paid Crowley to write rituals for him (as several folks have said, "Ridiculous! The poetry would have been much better!"). Lance Sieveking, in his autobiography, *The Eye of the Beholder*, claims that Montague Summers (author of several credulous books on werewolves, vampires and the Inquisition) told him in 1922 that Crowley and he were "both honorary members of several of the best covens" and had attended "many a Sabbat" together. Of course, there was also a rumor in British occult circles for many years that Crowley had been "kicked out of" covens for refusing to obey priestesses, but this rumor started at a time when some people were trying to "prove" the existence of pre-Gardnerian priestess-led covens and inventing evidence right and left Handed.

There is little doubt that Gardner was sincerely trying to reconstruct a Pagan tradition of witchcraft, for he sent typewritten copies of his first drafts of rituals for the holidays, poems and theological meditations, etc., to his initiates, asking for corrections and advice on whether or not the material "felt right." I have copies of these materials, by the way, and they have affected my views on several matters.

Some of Gardner's friends may have been, as claimed, members of a surviving coven of what I call a "FamTrad" of witchcraft, or they may have been a motley assortment of British occultists who had decided to create a new religion out of whole-cloth based on the books of Murray, James Frazer, Charles Leland, and other folklorists. There appear to have been several groups of British occultists, with overlapping memberships (England is a small island), attempting to create a religion of Witchcraft at the time.

Whether or not he had the "authority" to do so, from this coven that may or may not have existed, Gerald Gardner founded his own coven during World War II and went merrily on his way. The war had a devastating effect on Paganism and occultism in Europe. Large numbers of peasants were wrenched from their land and forced into the armies. Many of them were forced into the Mesopaganism created by Hitler. At least half the Gypsies in Europe were exterminated, along with many astrologers, psychics, Rosicrucians, theosophists, spiritualists and occultists. This period is sometimes referred to as the "Second Burning." Of any Fam-Trads who might have been left in Europe by 1940, probably few would have survived, precisely because they had been masquerading as all those other kinds of occultists, and were thus known targets.

In 1948, Gerald Gardner published his first novel, *A Goddess Returns*, Rachel Levy published *The Gates of Horn*, and Robert Graves published *The White Goddess*. This last book had a great effect upon the theology of the Neo-pagan Witchcraft movement, most especially in his promotion of the idea that all goddesses are either Maidens, Mothers, or Crones. Up to this point, Fam-Trads and other Reconstructionists had mostly been following the works of Leland, Frazer, and Murray, all of whom were folklorists and anthropologists. Now Graves, writer of historical novels and prolific poet, jumped into the act.

The purpose of *The White Goddess* was to prove that the Universal Goddess Worship theories were correct. To do this he jumped back and forth from the Mediterranean to the British Isles. After admitting that he spoke no Celtic language, he appointed himself an authority on Welsh language and customs. He used obsolete and inaccurate translations of Celtic poetry (when there were perfectly good ones around in 1948), perhaps because the then current accurate translations wouldn't have supported his theories as well. In the book, Graves constantly asked his readers to accept a "slight" bit of illogic and error, then built these up into gigantic megaliths of theory. Every time I read *The White Goddess* I become infuriated by the sloppiness of his logic, the inferior quality of his sources (he builds a great deal of theory on the "*Battle of the Trees*" from Iolo Morganwg's forged Barddas book, for example), and his general dishonesty with his readers. Graves put together a lovely myth system but it had little to do with historic fact. It was, instead, almost entirely the product of his poetic inspiration -- which is fine, it's a very pretty system, but he claimed it to be factual, as do many of his fans today.

In 1949, Gardner published *High Magic's Aid*, under the pen name of "Scire." He was at this time apparently a member of Crowley's O.T.O., since the note "4 = 7" appears under his name. This would indicate that he had reached the level of "Philosophus," which was halfway up through the system. Then as now, it was rare for anyone to actually work through the middle grades of the system (nepotism and graft being a much faster way to rise), so Gardner must have had some solid background in the Golden-Dawn and Tantric-based O.T.O. system of occult theory and practice.

In 1951, the Witchcraft Law of England was repealed and a variety of witches surfaced. The most famous of these was Sybil Leek, who claimed to be what I have called a Fam-Trad Witch. It appears her mother was a member of a British occult group, the "Pentagram Club," that competed with Gardner and his friends in the Witchcraft inventing process.

In 1950 or '51, Gerald Gardner managed to scrape some money together and moved out to the Isle of Man, settling into a building known as the "Witches Mill." Two years later he started a "coven" while running Cecil Wilkerson's "Witchcraft Museum" there, the first in the world (the contents of which were later owned by Ripleys). Among the many well-known priestesses he ordained we must include Doreen Valiente (who dramatically rewrote most of his early ritual materials, and probably the other fiction as well, before starting her many excellent books, including *An ABC of Witchcraft Past and Present*, *Witchcraft for Tomorrow*, and *Witchcraft: a Tradition Renewed*), Patricia Crowther (also author of several books, including *Lid off the Cauldron*, *Witches Were for Hanging* and the forthcoming autobiography, *High Priestess*), Monica Wilson, Eleonore Ray Bone, Rosemary Buckland and others.

In 1954, Murray published *The Divine King in England*, in which she essentially claimed that every king of England had died ritually, as in Frazer's *Golden Bough*. By this time there were few scholars in the world who would believe her arguments, based as they were on obsolete evidence and sloppy logic. But there were plenty of would-be witches happy to accept it all.

## Witchcraft and the Straight Counterculture

From the late 1950's on, new covens split off from Gerald's original one, both legitimately (through the process known as "hiving off") and illegitimately (through the process known as "stealing a copy of the Book of Shadows").

The latter groups generally claimed to belong to "traditions" of Witchcraft that predated Gardner, as did the members of other competing Witchcraft religions in England, yet somehow almost all of them wound up using rituals that were obviously derived from early versions of Gardner's. The first and most famous of these thieves, Alex Sanders, was the one who started referring to Gardner's new religion as "the Gardnerian Tradition" or "Gardnerianism." Gardner himself called it simply "the Art" until 1958, when he started calling it "the Craft" or "the Old Order" or "Wica" (with a single "c"). Later thieves and imitators settled on the last term, eventually restoring the missing second "c."

According to a letter seen by Aidan Kelley, Alex Sanders (who was later to make a career for himself as the King of the Witches) was initiated in 1963 by Patricia (Pickering) Crowther, one of Gardner's priestesses. Later, Jessie Wicker Bell or "Lady Sheba," author of *Lady Sheba's Book of Shadows* (which was a plagiarism of parts of Gardner's Book of Shadows), was initiated, probably to the Second Degree only, by Alex or one of his coven, possibly by mail! She attempted in the 1970's to get herself declared "Queen of the Witches" of America. Ray and Rosemary Buckland were initiated into Gardner's coven, probably by the Wilsons, to all three Degrees in one weekend (not really unusual by Masonic custom, by the way).

Almost all of the significant core materials in the original BOS have been published at one time or another, either by Gardner himself, his followers and spiritual descendants, or various plagiarists trying to cash in on his work. It has not been difficult to learn the basic polytheology and rituals of the Craft, especially since most of it was borrowed from well-known occult authors, and I have violated no oaths in my retelling of the tales. Many sincere people, perhaps inspired by the Goddess and unable to contact a working coven of any tradition, have simply created their own traditions of Neopagan Witchcraft from the available published materials.

Traditions of Wicca can be ranged on a spectrum of orthodoxy-to-heterodoxy thusly: the Gardnerians, Alexandrians, and other groups that call themselves "British Traditionalists" are the oldest and the most conservative. The New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn ("NROGD"), the gay/bisexual/straight groups who call themselves "Elvish" or "Fairy Traditions" (including that of Starhawk's, author of *The Spiral Dance*), and the various feminist groups, are all on the liberal or heterodox side of the spectrum. Most other Wiccan groups fall somewhere in between.

Many on the orthodox side like to make a dichotomy (sometimes a dualism) between themselves as "Traditionalists" and all the others as "Eclectics." Some Wiccan groups cheerfully call themselves "Eclectic," but the word is often used by the conservatives to imply that the liberals don't have The Real Truth and have to make things up as they go along. Similarly, the word "traditional" is often used by the liberals to mean "stuffy." The vast majority of Wiccans are religiously neither conservative nor liberal (on this particular spectrum), but somewhere in the middle, so they are usually accused by members of each extreme of belonging to the "enemy" camp.

In point of fact, beyond all the arrogance and egotism of these arguments, the primary difference between the eclecticism practiced by both the orthodox and the heterodox Wiccans, going all the way back to Gardner himself, is not the amount of material borrowed from other sources, but rather the speed at which new material is accepted as a permanent part of each tradition/denomination.

I cannot in this short study give an adequate history of how Gardner's followers carried the faith to America and elsewhere. Suffice it to say, that by the middle 60's, there were a handful of Gardnerian "covens" operating in the United States and Canada, and other parts of the English speaking world (Aidan Kelley's *Crafting the Art of Magic* (though severely flawed by cheap shots at Gardner's sexuality) and Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* cover this material well). But the next step in the evolution of the word "witch" occurred in the late 60's with the dawning of the "counterculture."

Whenever drugs with strong mind-altering tendencies become common in a culture or subculture (I'm speaking of hallucinogens here) one of the usual reactions is a renewed interest in matters magical and mystical. Drugs are frequently used in tribal cultures to help train young magicians and priests/priestesses, because they give a direct appreciation of the magical Law of Infinite Universes and the related concept of "multiple levels of reality." Drugs are an integral part of magical systems around the world and an interest in either topic (drugs or magic) sometimes leads to an interest in the other.

So the hippies became interested in magic, mysticism, psychic phenomena and new religious experiences. Several individuals started up religious groups of the sort that have since become known by their members as "Neopagan," because they attempt to recreate or invent new religions using the old (or "Paleopagan") polytheistic faiths as guides. Naturally, Gardnerian Witchcraft, with its Goddess, Horned God and unspecified other deities fit very nicely into this mold, although at the time it was still fairly Mesopagan, and the followers of Gardner received an unexpected population explosion. The handful of Gardnerian covens (real and imitators) became a dozen, then a score, then a hundred &

But during this period of the late 60's and early 70's (known as the "occult boom") members of these various Neopagan groups were communicating with each other through the pages of such periodicals as *Green Egg*, *the Waxing Moon*, *the Crystal Well* and others. Soon it became clear to everyone that the Gardnerians were Neopagans (or could be with a little work), and they and their offshoots (Alexandrians, Algards, Shebites, etc.) became increasingly termed "Neopagan Witches," by the Neopagan community.

### **The First Neopagan Heretic**

These Neopagan Witches began to hold conventions and other meetings, at one of which a major bombshell exploded, flung by yours truly. At a "Witchmeet" held in Minneapolis on September 20-23, 1973 c.e., I gave a speech entitled "The Witch-Cult -- Fact or Fancy?" This was based upon an earlier article by myself in *Tournaments Illuminated*, under the title "Where Hast Thou Been Sister?" and dealt with most of the materials mentioned in this study.

The result was that I became the first universally recognized heretic in the Neopagan movements (for by that time I had been a priest in the Reformed Druids of North America for several years, and I considered them such). Stunned silence, then angry shouting greeted my speech. This turned into a positive roar of anger and hostility after the speech was published (sans the Bibliography, alas!) in *Gnostica News*, Llewellyn's in-house magazine which I was later to edit for two years.

Rebuttals were written and published in *Gnostica News*, angry letters poured into the Neopagan media from all over the country, then slowly, one by one, various Neopagan Witchcraft leaders began to publish letters and articles saying, in essence, "that so-and-so Bonewits is right," though hardly any of them mentioned my name. Instead they began to talk about the need for honesty in relating the past of Neopagan Witchcraft, about the joys of creating whole new religions, about how their movement could be redefined as a reconstruction from scattered fragments of how the Old Religions (plural now) might have been, and so forth. Today, almost every major leader of a Neopagan Witchcraft sect admits (at least in private) that I was right and some of them have become friends.

I have mentioned all of this for reasons other than those of personal pride. Future historians should know the exact date and action that caused a major change in the faith known as Neopagan Witchcraft. Twenty-seven years later, only a handful still believe the dogma that their sects are literally descended in an unbroken line from the imaginary Universal Goddess Cult. However, there is one rather sizable exception.

## Feminist Witchcraft

For there were other things going on in America in the early 70's. Perhaps the most important phenomenon was the rise of the feminist movements. Many feminists were members of groups seeking new spiritual directions, away from the male-dominated "great religions." This "women's spirituality movement" became a strong part of feminist consciousness for many women, some of whom (perhaps inevitably) ran into some Neopagan Witches. Morning Glory Zell, spouse and priestess to the founder of the Neopagan Church of All Worlds, the artist formerly known as Tim or Otter Zell, claims to have been the first Neopagan to attend a major feminist event and to speak about "the Goddess" to the participants.

The discovery of a religion in the 20th century that worshiped a Goddess was quite a delightful shock. Many women suddenly felt "at home," and in ever-increasing numbers many of them had spiritual experiences with this Goddess. There were already several of the Neopagan Witchcraft leaders (of both genders) who considered themselves feminists, so an alliance or merging of the two movements was a natural outgrowth of their meeting.

There had already been several of the Neopagan sects (Wiccan and non-Wiccan) which had downplayed the Horned God part of the theology almost to the point of removing Him from the religion entirely. Perhaps these were the ones which had the highest population of strong women to begin with. When politically active feminists (especially the lesbians and the feminist separatists) entered "the Craft" and spun off to start their own all-women covens, they decided that they could do perfectly well without the Horned God at all.

The result was the creation of a new form of Witchcraft:

"Feminist Witchcraft," a faith originally based on the Gardnerian systems but which became increasingly different as various women decided to form new covens (often with no real knowledge of or contact with the Neopagan ones) in which a great deal of experimentation and creativity took place.

There are a number of dogmas that were soon believed in by most Feminist Witches, the majority of which match those of the Neopagan Witches prior to my speech of 1973. These are, as a general rule, even more extreme in their statements (i.e., the Universal Goddess Cult covered the entire world, not just Europe; it goes back 100,000 years, not just 10,000; and so forth), and their scholarly research is even more sloppy. Any historical, semi-historical or pseudo-historical theory by any writer (qualified or not) which bolsters their dogmas in a desired fashion is seized upon and expanded. Statements or theories which do not support them are ignored as being the products of male or male-dominated minds, and therefore irrelevant.

The Feminist covens grew (and are still growing) at a spectacular rate and members of these groups may very well outnumber those of the Neopagan sects they are a spinoff from. The number of groups of women who have formed covens completely independently is impossible to surmise and their theologies are no doubt quite mixed, but feminist revisionist "**herstory**" is probably common to all of them.

So while the Neopagan Witches were slowly ceasing to claim literal truth for their religious theories of history during the middle 70's, the Feminist Witches continued those same fantasies, and in fact made them more spectacular and archetypically rich. It has only been in the last decade or so, that some Feminist Witches have begun to doubt these dogmas. Perhaps it is finally becoming known that dozens of committed feminist historians, anthropologists and archeologists of both genders have been unable to find a shred of evidence to support the ideas about matriarchies having ever existed, or about there ever having been an organized religion of Witchcraft in Europe, or about the likelihood of the intact transmission of a complex pre-Christian tradition.

I suspect that the feminist movement will continue like every other political movement in history, to produce sloppily researched tomes to support its ideals. There is, after all, no such thing as completely unbiased scholarship and feminists should be allowed to exercise their historical creativity as much as any other political group. But I have been noticing increasing communication between Neopagan and Feminist priestesses and a gradual transmission of accurate data about the history of what both groups call "the Craft." Within another decade or two Feminist Witchcraft groups may well be admitting that their various sects are not ancient relics, but rather brilliant and beautiful creations of modern religious geniuses.

Let me stress here that the relative youth of Neopagan and Feminist Witchcraft, compared to other religions, is utterly irrelevant to any judgments of spiritual power and worth. The deities whom Neopagan and Feminist Witches worship are ancient, no matter how new our religions might be. A large part of the maturing of the Neopagan community over the past ten years has been precisely the realization that we don't have to tell fibs about an unbroken line of succession going back to the Stone Age in order to have a worthwhile faith

# Classifying Witchcrafts

Mind you, this entire discussion of Witchcraft in the 20th Century has been limited to those individuals and movements which speak English or American as their mother tongue. There are thousands of people using various systems of magic and religion in their own ethnic neighborhoods, who are called "witches" by many English speakers. In their own languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, etc.) they are called various names which translate out as "priest or priestess," "healer," "magician," "sorcerer or sorceress," and so forth. These often bear a minor or major similarity to those I have termed "Classic" or "Gothic" Witches, but in order to keep them clearly distinguished from our European ancestors, I prefer to call them "Ethnic Witches," if one has called them any sort of witch at all.

At this point it would probably be best to close this study with a review of the classification system I have presented herein, which I sincerely believe to be one that will enable the historian, anthropologist, sociologist or theologian to distinguish the various European and American sorts of "witches" from one another. As with the words "artist," "doctor," or "priest," the word "witch" is almost meaningless without some sort of qualifying adjective in front of it.

I have used the following terms in this classification system: Classic and Neoclassic, Gothic and Neogothic, Family Tradition or Fam-Trad, Immigrant Tradition or Imm-Trad, Neopagan, Feminist, Ethnic, and Anthropological Witchcraft.

A "Classic Witch" was someone using herbal remedies and poisons, magic and divination, and practicing midwifery and other forms of healing on animals and humans. His or her religion may well have been irrelevant to his or her techniques. Some became Christians (or Moslems in Spain and Portugal), others may have retained a certain amount of pre-Christian religious tradition. Classic Witches have continued to exist to this very day, in ever dwindling numbers. "Neoclassic Witches" refers to all those people today who call themselves "witches" because they are studying herbology, ESP, Tarot, etc., and who are trying to be modern equivalents of Classic Witches.

"Gothic Witchcraft" or "Satanism" was the invention of Medieval Christianity, and was said to consist of people who worshiped the Christian Devil in exchange for magical powers that they used to harm people with. Gothic Witchcraft is what most Christians have in mind when they talk about "witches," and this concept is also responsible for the Disney stereotype.

"Neogothic Witches" are modern Satanists who try to follow what the Christians say witches should do. Some of them perform "Black Masses," commit blasphemy and sacrilege, hold (or at least long to hold) orgies, etc. They are almost always "losers" as far as their psychology is concerned, but some are genuinely sick.

"Family Traditions" or "Fam-Trads" (also called "Hereditary Witches") are supposedly families that have been underground Pagans and occultists for generations, getting away with it by a combination of wealth, power and camouflage. None of them could have a pure tradition by now, though some who call themselves by this term claim they do. Ninety-nine-point-nine percent of all the people I have ever met who claimed to be Fam-trad Witches were lying, or had been lied to by their teachers.

"Immigrant Traditions" or "Imm-Trads" refer to both supposed Fam-Trads and Classic Witches and peasants who moved to America and tried to keep their faith alive. Many of these mingled their beliefs with those of the Native Americans and the African slaves, helping to produce the dozens of kinds of Voodoo or Voudoun, as well as Pennsylvania "hex" magic and Appalachian magical lore.

"Neopagan Witchcraft" is primarily the invention of Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente. It started out Mesopagan, and only after arriving in America did it become Neopagan. It is a duotheistic religion whose members may call themselves "Wiccans," "followers of Wicca," "members of the Old Religion," "Crafters" and/or "members of the Craft." They worship a Goddess who is a combination of Greco-Roman and Celtic goddesses of the Moon, the Earth and the Sea, and who is usually described as having three "aspects" or archetypal images: "the Mother, the Maiden and the Crone." Most but not all Neopagan Witches also worship a Horned God who is a combination of Greco-Roman and Celtic fertility, hunting and sun gods. Where both the Goddess and the Horned God are worshiped, the former is almost always superior in power and importance.

"Feminist Witchcraft" is partially an outgrowth of Neopagan Witchcraft (with the Horned God unceremoniously booted out of the religion entirely) and partially a conglomeration of independent and eclectic do-it-yourself covens of spiritually inclined feminists. It is still very much in the process of formation and like most new religions is insecure about its history, so its members tell and believe a number of unlikely tales about ancient religions and their supposed survival to this day.

"Ethnic Witchcraft" is a catch-all term for those various practitioners of non-English religious and magical systems, such as Candomble, Santeria, Huna, Voodoo, etc. Anglos call them "witches," so eventually some of them started using the term themselves,

"Anthropological Witches" are people that English-speaking anthropologists call "witches," usually meaning anyone in a culture or subculture who is doing magic (usually suspected of being evil) outside of the accepted social structures, and/or is a monster in disguise who can curse people with the "evil eye." This, in fact, is fairly close to Paleopagan attitudes toward "bad" Classic Witches, so their use of the term is entirely logical.

I would like to stress again, now that I have come to the end of this long story, that this is an incomplete "beta version" of what will eventually become a full length book. Comments are welcome, though I may not be able to respond directly, and legitimate scholarly feedback will be incorporated in future editions.

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