

## Additional Lectures of the Bardic Grade .

# On the Tree of Life

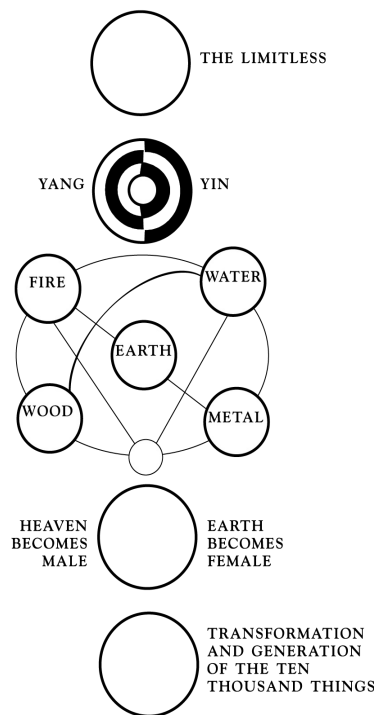
THE TREE OF LIFE has already been introduced to you in a variety of forms in your studies in the Ovale Grade. In the Western Mystery Schools it is the most important as well as the most commonly used symbolical glyph. Its nature, symbolism, and uses will be central to much of the work before you in this and the subsequent grade, and a careful study of the material in this lecture, along with the recommended reading, will thus greatly assist your progress.

## I. On the Origins of the Tree of Life

The version of the Tree of Life diagram used at present in the majority of Mystery Schools in the Western world came to those schools by way of the Kabbalah, the branch of the Mystery Teachings that belongs to the Jewish people. It was during the Renaissance that Christian initiates of the Mysteries studied the Kabbalah closely, in the hope that a better understanding of the Jewish roots of Christianity might assist them in rediscovering the inner dimensions of their own faith, of which so much had been lost in the persecutions of the Gnostics, Cathars, and Templars. In this they were not disappointed, and from this circumstance came a belief, which is still common in certain Mystery Schools, that the Tree of Life is exclusively Jewish in its origin.

This is, however, a misconception, and the diagram on the following page may help to clarify matters. This diagram is the T'ai Chi T'u, or Diagram of Ultimate Polarity, and it first appeared in the writings of the great Chinese philosopher Chou Tun-yi. Chou's diagram appears in an extensive treatise that explains, in terms of the Taoist and Confucian teachings of China, the origins of all things in the cosmos. It incorporates all the fundamental elements of traditional Chinese Mysteries—the beginning of the cosmos from Wu Chi, the Limitless; their polarization into yang and yin, the active and passive potentialities of the cosmos; the further differentiation of the five elements of Chinese magical tradition; then the coalescence of the whole into male and female creative forces and, from this, the creation of the manifest cosmos.

The similarities between this diagram and the Tree of Life are by no means superficial. Each of the elements of the T'ai Chi T'u has the same function as the corresponding part of the Tree of Life—for example, the sphere of Earth in the center is the principle of balance and harmony, just as is the sephirah Tiphareth, which occupies the same place in the Jewish version of the Tree.



**The T'ai Chi T'u, or Diagram of Ultimate Polarity**

Chou lived and taught in the eleventh century of our era. The first version of the Tree of Life in the Jewish Kabbalah was created in the school of Rabbi Isaac the Blind in the city of Narbonne around AD 1150, roughly a century after Chou's time. It is thus evident that Chou was not copying a Jewish diagram, and it is no more likely that Rabbi Isaac or any of his students had knowledge of Chinese; rather, both teachers clearly drew on older teaching diagrams that were current in Mystery Schools across the Old World quite probably for some time before either of these great teachers devised their own variant on the common theme.

That common theme may well date back to classical times, and perhaps further still. The number mysticism of the Pythagorean school, which was founded in the sixth century BC, makes use of a set of symbolic attributions to the first ten numbers, and these correspond closely to the symbolism of the Tree of Life as this has come down to us. Similarly, the ten essential concepts discussed by Aristotle in his *Categories* can be assigned to the Tree of Life with a precision that suggests the great Greek philosopher was familiar with some similar pattern—perhaps one of the unwritten teachings of Plato, in whose school he studied.

It is in this sense that the Tree of Life has been adopted into the Druidical tradition in place of whatever lost diagrams might have been used by Druidical instructors in ancient times. As you have already learned, each sphere of the Tree has its own proper title, a divine name associated with it, and a number of other symbols and meanings; those correspondences form the basis for the more complex material outlined in this lecture.

## II. The Ten Spheres of the Tree

Down through the centuries, the Tree of Life has become the center of a wealth of symbolism and philosophy, but at its core it is a structure of immense simplicity. It begins with pure being, the simplest and most basic attribute that can be applied to any existing thing whatsoever, and descends step by step to the full complexity of manifest existence. In this way, according to tradition, it reflects the way the cosmos itself came into being and likewise reflects the structure of the higher dimensions of existence. In this is concealed an important teaching, for creation is not a thing that took place once and for all at the beginning of time; it is a continuing process by which the cosmos is brought into

being anew at every moment.

CELI, THE FIRST SPHERE, is the beginning of that process of creation and the first element of the creative triad, just as it is the highest and most abstract of the realms of existence. It is pure being without any other attribute; strictly speaking, one may say no more concerning it than IT IS. In it there is no space, time, or change, for the manifestation of each of these things requires more than one thing to exist—space can be known only by the separation between here and there, time by the difference between before and after, change by the distinction between the thing changing and the thing changed—and in Celi, there is only One Thing.

In sacred geometry it is the point, the symbol of being;  
In the categories of Aristotle it is position;  
In the T'ai Chi T'u it is Wu Chi, the limitless and unpolarized;  
In the Kabbalah it is Kether, the crown.

PERYDD, THE SECOND SPHERE, is the next step in the process by which the cosmos comes into being, the second element in the creative triad. In the language of an ancient metaphor, pure being overflows into becoming as a still lake overflows into a river, and so change comes into existence. As yet abstract, beyond space and time, it is pure becoming, without any permanence or rest. It is the origin and first exemplar of all generation and corruption, all coming into being and passing away, and it is therefore also the source of all power, for power is the capacity to bring about change.

In sacred geometry it is the line, the symbol of extension;  
In the categories of Aristotle it is action;  
In the T'ai Chi T'u it is Yang, the principle of heaven;  
In the Kabbalah it is Chokmah, wisdom.

DOFYDD, THE THIRD SPHERE, completes the triad of creation. It exists on the same plane of being as Perydd, and thus is shown on the same level in the diagram of the Tree of Life; indeed, these two spheres, Perydd and Dofydd, cannot exist in isolation from one another, and their equivalents in the T'ai Chi T'u are thus shown as two halves of one great circle. Where Perydd is change, Dofydd is rest; where Perydd acts, Dofydd is affected by that action. It is thus the principle of all stillness, passivity, and receptiveness, and it is the ultimate root of substance.

In sacred geometry it is the circle, the symbol of limitation;  
In the categories of Aristotle it is affection (that is, being affected);  
In the T'ai Chi T'u it is Yin, the principle of earth;  
In the Kabbalah it is Binah, understanding.

BETWEEN DOFYDD AND THE SEVEN LOWER SPHERES lies a discontinuity, or existential distinction, known traditionally as the Abyss, which separates the circle of Ceugant from that of Gwynfydd. The Abyss lies between those realities that are pure, abstract, and absolute (which are above it) and those that are composite, concrete, and relative (which are below). The Abyss may not be traversed by any created being; only what is already above the Abyss may inhabit the realm of the creative triad. In the innermost core of each human soul is a spark of the light that is above the Abyss, and it is what makes the human soul a child of eternity and an inheritor of the power and wisdom of the eternal gods; yet this spark is latent until it be kindled into flame. Of this more will be said in a further grade.

ENER, THE FOURTH SPHERE, is the first of the spheres below the Abyss, reflecting the first sphere on the plane of manifestation, and it is thus the highest reality that may be comprehended by the human mind. It is the sphere of concrete being; that is, it establishes the capacity for individual things to come into being, exist, and pass away. At this stage in the creative process, no individual things have yet emerged; only the conditions under which they may exist have emerged, and those conditions are comprised in Ener. This sphere may most easily be comprehended under the image of space.

In sacred geometry it is the equal-armed cross, the symbol of radiation;  
In the categories of Aristotle it is space;  
In the T'ai Chi T'u it is the element of water;  
In the Kabbalah it is Chesed, mercy.

MODUR, THE FIFTH SPHERE, is the second sphere below the Abyss and thus reflects the second sphere on the plane of manifestation. It is the sphere of concrete becoming; that is, it establishes the process by which individual things come into being, exist, and pass away. As shown in the diagram of the Tree of Life, it exists on the same level as Ener, a level on which individual things have not yet emerged; it is the principle of all the processes of generation and corruption prior to any specific manifestation of those processes. It may therefore most easily be comprehended under the image of time.

In sacred geometry it is the vesica piscis, the symbol of creation;  
In the categories of Aristotle it is time;  
In the T'ai Chi T'u it is the element of fire;  
In the Kabbalah it is Geburah, severity.

MUNER, THE SIXTH SPHERE, is the third sphere below the Abyss and therefore completes the reflection of the creative triad on the plane of manifestation. Concrete being and concrete becoming unite here to bring individual things into existence; as it reflects the third sphere, Muner grants each such individual thing the capacity to remain itself and retain its own identity. Here, for the first time in the creative process of the cosmos, the distinction between one thing and another has meaning. Where Ener and Modur are the spheres of space and time respectively, Muner is the sphere of the individual thing, filling a certain space and existing for a certain time.

In sacred geometry it is the equilateral triangle, the symbol of manifestation;  
In the categories of Aristotle it is substance;  
In the T'ai Chi T'u it is the central element of earth;  
In the Kabbalah it is Tiphareth, beauty.

BETWEEN MUNER AND THE FOUR SPHERES BELOW IT lies a barrier—not an existential distinction like the Abyss but a limit traced by the capacities of the uninitiated human soul—traditionally called the Veil. This is the dividing line between the circle of Abred—which represents the powers, perceptions, and capabilities that the human soul has evolved heretofore—and the circle of Gwynfydd, which

represents further powers, perceptions, and capabilities that the human soul has not yet evolved collectively but that each human being has the potential to attain. The work of initiation in which each Druidical initiate is engaged has, as its goal, the parting of the Veil, so that he may rightly claim the full birthright of humanity.

BYW, THE SEVENTH SPHERE, is the sphere of fire and represents the capacity of each individual thing to act upon its surroundings, reflecting the second sphere on the plane of individual existence. Included in Byw are all the motive forces and potentials for action present in every individual thing, from the momentum of a falling stone to the biological desires that drive the animal consciousness to action to the focused, deliberate will of the initiated human being. It is thus especially the sphere of art, for this unfolds from the active potentials of the human soul, bringing what is within the soul outward into manifestation.

In sacred geometry it is the square and its diagonal, the symbol of generation;

In the categories of Aristotle it is quality;

In the T'ai Chi T'u it is the element of metal;

In the Kabbalah it is Netzach, victory.

BYTH, THE EIGHTH SPHERE, is the sphere of air and represents the capacity of each individual thing to perceive its surroundings, reflecting the third sphere on the plane of individual existence. Included in Byth are all the means and capacities by which any individual thing can be affected by its surroundings, from the material response of a stone when struck by some object to the senses and perceptions of the animal consciousness to the finely tuned intellect and aesthetic sense of the initiated human being. It is thus especially the sphere of science, for this unfolds from the perceptive potentials of the human soul, observing what is outside the soul and understanding it within.

In sacred geometry it is the double square, the symbol of progression;

In the categories of Aristotle it is quantity;

In the T'ai Chi T'u it is the element of wood, which is also associated with wind;

In the Kabbalah it is Hod, glory.

NER, THE NINTH SPHERE, is the sphere of water and represents the union of all the capacities of each individual thing, active and passive, into a single web of relationships connecting it to the rest of the cosmos. It thus reflects the integrating and unifying power of the sixth sphere after its own fashion, and on its own plane. Included in Ner are all the connections between any individual thing and the things that surround it, near and far, obvious and subtle, from the purely physical relations that obtain between one rock and another, through the biological and emotional relations that exist between one animal and another, to the psychological and spiritual relations that develop between one human being and another. It is thus especially the sphere of magic, for the potencies of magic unfold from the connections that unite the mage with the rest of the cosmos, uniting within and without into a seamless fabric.

In sacred geometry it is the Golden Section, the symbol of harmony;

In the categories of Aristotle it is relation;

In the T'ai Chi T'u it is the sphere of generation in which heaven becomes male and earth becomes female;

In the Kabbalah it is Yesod, foundation.

NAF, THE TENTH SPHERE, is the sphere of earth and represents the coalescence of all individual things and all their relations into a single cosmos, one coherent whole. It thus represents the primordial unity of the first sphere, even as it stands at the opposite extreme from Celi's unity of pure being. Included in Naf are all the beings, things, and phenomena we encounter directly in the course of our lives—their essential being descending from Celi, their capacity for change from Perydd, their capacity for stability from Dofydd, their dimensions in space from Ener, their dimensions in time from Modur, their individual nature from Muner, their capacities for action from Byw, their capacities to receive and perceive from Byth, and their relations to all other things from Ner. It is thus especially the sphere of all ordinary activities, practical skills, and the various professions.

In sacred geometry it is the pentagram, the symbol of unity in diversity;

In the categories of Aristotle it is state;

In the T'ai Chi T'u it is the transformation and generation of the ten thousand things;

In the Kabbalah it is Malkuth, the kingdom.

### ***III. Patterns on the Tree***

In the knowledge lectures of the Ovate Grade you were introduced to many of the basic patterns and relationships among the spheres that define the inner structure of the Tree of Life. These are crucial to a fuller understanding of the Tree and its many uses in the Mystery Teachings, and they should be reviewed at this time. The patterns already introduced are the following:

In the second knowledge lecture, the Three Rays and the three circles;

In the third knowledge lecture, the four elemental triangles;

In the fourth knowledge lecture, the geomantic structure of the Tree;

In the fifth knowledge lecture, two additional elemental correspondences;

In the sixth knowledge lecture, the Golden Chain of Homer;

In the seventh knowledge lecture, the geomantic figures and the Platonic solids.

These should be studied in detail as you work with the teachings of the Bardic Grade and should be compared with the insights you receive while meditating on your experiences with the four inner groves of the elements and the six paths connecting them.

In addition to the patterns already mentioned, a series of triadic relationships runs all through the Tree of Life and should be the subject of sustained study and regular meditation during the time you spend in this grade. These triadic patterns may be traced out on the Tree by noting triangles formed by the spheres and paths. Any three spheres connected by three and only three paths form a triad, and the three elements of each of these triads relate to one another as a ternary, following the pattern introduced to you in the first knowledge lecture.

The following triads may be found on the Tree of Life:

Celi, Perydd, and Dofydd

Celi, Perydd, and Muner

Celi, Dofydd, and Muner  
Perydd, Dofydd, and Muner  
Perydd, Ener, and Muner  
Dofydd, Modur, and Muner  
Ener, Modur, and Muner  
Ener, Muner, and Byw  
Modur, Muner, and Byth  
Muner, Byw, and Byth  
Muner, Byw, and Ner  
Muner, Byth, and Ner  
Byw, Byth, and Ner  
Byw, Byth, and Naf  
Byw, Ner, and Naf  
Byth, Ner, and Naf

In each of these triads each pair of spheres forms a binary, which is resolved by the third into a ternary. Thus in the first triad, for example, Celi and Perydd form a binary that is resolved by Dofydd; Celi and Dofydd form a binary that is resolved by Perydd; and Perydd and Dofydd form a binary that is resolved by Celi. Time spent exploring these relationships in the light of the meanings of the spheres given earlier in this lecture will elucidate much concerning the structure of the Tree of Life and its meaning as a chart of the process whereby creation unfolds from pure being to the world of everyday experience.

#### **IV. The Tree of Life in Practice**

The Tree of Life serves the initiate in a Mystery School in much the same way as a good map serves a traveler in unfamiliar countries. The ordinary, unawakened human soul is aware solely of the tenth sphere, Naf, the endpoint of the creative process—a realm of effects rather than causes, surfaces rather than depths, appearances rather than realities. Looking around, the dweller in Naf experiences the world as a given, a fixed reality subject to change only in small details, and imagines creation as something that took place once and for all at the beginning of time. It is only those who begin to lift their eyes from this world of appearances who come to suspect that the fixity of Naf is more apparent than real, and that whole worlds of power and meaning lie behind the surfaces that confront the soul on every side.

Those who begin to make this discovery often leap to the conclusion that what lies on the other side of the world of appearances is a single world of realities, parallel to the world of Naf in every way. It is from this kind of thinking that we inherit the conventional notion of heaven or, in folklore, of an otherworld that is merely a mirror image of the world of our everyday experience. It takes time, repeated encounters with inner realities, and a willingness to revisit one's initial assumptions—not all of which are easy for the spiritual seeker to achieve—to pass beyond this overly simple model and grasp the full complexity of the inner realms that await the awakening human soul.

The Tree of Life simplifies this latter process by presenting a model of inner experience sufficiently rich and detailed to embrace the complex experiences of the soul in the early stages of initiation. By studying the Tree, the initiate comes to realize that the first glimpses he attains of the world beyond appearances may come from any of three higher spheres of being—Ner, the sphere of life, which brings wordless, intuitive perceptions of vitality and power; Byth, the sphere of mind, which brings insights, images, and intellectual understandings; or Byw, the sphere of heart, which brings emotional and aesthetic experiences. Recognizing that each of these spheres is a world unto itself, fully as rich and complex as the world of everyday experience that we call Naf, the initiate avoids a too-simple analysis of the experiences he encounters, and as these three spheres above Naf become familiar ground, he learns to recognize the first faint whispers of the spheres even further up the Tree.

One lesson that may be drawn usefully from these considerations is that there is always more than one way to relate a symbolic pattern such as the Tree of Life to the phenomena of human experience. It is never appropriate to insist that one set of correspondences are correct while all others are wrong. This is quite as foolish as the supposed argument between the Englishman, the Frenchman, and the German about whether the four-legged animal barking at all three was a dog, un chien, or ein Hund! Certain systems of correspondence have been found useful in the work of training and initiation, and each Mystery School has its own tables relating symbols to experiences; students of any school may reasonably be expected to attain a good working knowledge of the system of correspondences their school teaches, as indeed you are expected to do; yet it is a mistake, as counterproductive as it is common, to believe that the differences between one school's correspondences and another's shows that one school is right and others are wrong. As you proceed further in the work of initiation, you would do well to keep this in mind.

#### **V. Further Study**

*An Introduction to the Study of the Kabbalah* by William Wynn Westcott is recommended for all students of the Tree of Life; while it deals principally with the Jewish Kabbalah, it does so from the point of view of modern students of the Mysteries. *The Kabbalah* by Adolphe Franck and *The Kabbalah* by Christian D. Ginsburg may also be consulted.

# On the Sacred Geometry of the Druids

THE KNOWLEDGE LECTURES OF the Bardic Grade introduce the rudiments of the art of sacred geometry as it pertains to the Druidical Mysteries—the circle and equal-armed cross as essential generative principles; the equilateral triangle and square as basic figures derived therefrom; the *ad triangulum* and *ad quadratum* schools of geometry that unfold, in turn, from these; the progression from point to line to plane to solid that sets out the three dimensions in space; and the five Platonic solids and the set of proportions that may be derived from them and applied to the material, aetherial, and intellectual levels of existence.

To learn these as abstract concepts is a first step, but only a first step, in understanding the sacred geometry that formed such an important part of the studies of the ancient Druids. Even in a study as seemingly intellectual as geometry, the mind can only travel so far on its own; it must sooner or later descend into the realm of manifestation if it is to pass beyond its own limits and enter into a wider world. Thus the student of sacred geometry must sooner or later pass from contemplation to creation—the actual construction of geometrical designs—and then return to contemplation with the insights gained from the act of construction.

Mastering the art of sacred geometry requires practice and not merely study. The constructions basic to the art must be drawn in the traditional manner, not once but many times, using the classic tools of the geometer. In this the process is as important as the product, and the steps by which any given geometrical form is created have at least as much to reveal to the studious and meditative mind as does the completed form itself.

The constructions included in this paper are among the most basic in the sacred geometry of the Druidical tradition. Others may be found in books on the subject, some of which are listed at the end of this lecture.

## ***I. The Tools of Sacred Geometry***

The traditional tools of the sacred geometer are the pencil, the straightedge, and the compasses. These differ slightly from those of the ancient Druids, who, in common with other ancient peoples, used cords and wooden stakes to carry out their geometrical constructions, and the earth itself as their writing surface (*geo-metria*, “earth measure”). Every Druid should on at least one occasion lay out a construction or two on bare earth using ropes and stakes, following in the footsteps of the builders of stone circles and tumuli; still, for everyday use it is a good deal more convenient to work on paper with less cumbersome tools.

The pencil, straightedge, and compasses have symbolic as well as practical dimensions, for they represent three fundamental principles in sacred geometry. The first, the pencil, symbolizes position, which is also symbolized by the geometrical point. It is, after all, the point of the pencil that matters! The paper, before it receives its first mark, is as close a representation as can be had in the realm of geometry to the undefined and limitless void; once the pencil marks a point upon the paper, it is as a voice saying “Let there be unto the void a restriction.” The pencil, therefore, is the emblem of Being, the first element of the creative triad.

The straightedge represents extension, which is also symbolized by the straight line. A point, according to the formal definition, is pure position without any other qualities. The line, by contrast, may extend to infinity in either direction, at least in an ideal sense, or it may be bounded on one or both ends by a point; in either case it has the dimension of length, which is lacking in the point. It is with the straightedge that a line may be extended in any direction, and for this reason the straightedge is the emblem of Becoming, the second element of the creative triad.

The compass represents limitation, which is also represented by the circle or the arc, that is, a portion of a circle. A circle possesses the dimension of breadth as well as that of length, and thus it exists in two dimensions, not merely one as does the line. It may be large or small, but it cannot extend to infinity without ceasing to be a circle. The compass is the instrument by which circles are drawn, and it also serves to define and limit a desired length, cutting the line at an interval determined by the distance between its points. For this reason the compass is the emblem of Limiting, the third element of the creative triad.

### **Exercise 1: The Three Geometrical Tools**

Unless you already have experience with practical geometry, you will find it useful to explore the pencil, straightedge, and compass by using them without any particular construction in mind. Simply mark some points, draw some lines, and trace some arcs and circles upon a sheet of paper. As you do this, pay attention to the concepts represented by the tools you are using; as you mark a point, see it as a representation of being; as you draw a line, of becoming; as you trace an arc or a circle, of limiting. At the same time, you will begin the process of gaining facility with the tools; you will learn the kind and amount of pressure needed to hold a straightedge in place against the pressure of a pencil sliding along its edge, for example, and the trick of the wrist that neatly produces a circle. When you feel comfortable with your tools, proceed to the first of the constructions given below.

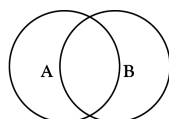
## ***II. The Genesis of the Triangle***

As you have already learned, the sacred geometry of the Druids belongs to the school that in later centuries was called *ad triangulum*, “by the triangle.” It thus differs from the school central to modern Freemasonry and, as a result, to much of contemporary sacred geometry. Freemasons, as is commonly known, meet “on the square,” while Druids gather in the circle. The philosophical and esoteric traditions that derive from a Masonic source begin with the material world, symbolized by the square and the cube; proceed from there through the modalities of inner experience that we call the aetherial realm, symbolized by the equilateral triangle and the solid figures made from it; and finally attain the intellectual realm, symbolized by the pentagon and the dodecahedron. It is thus no accident that modern science had its origins in an intellectual milieu permeated by Masonic teaching and activities.

Druid sacred geometry, and the *ad triangulum* school more generally, proceeds by a different route to the same goal. The starting point here is the individual consciousness and its inner world of experience, represented by the triangle; from there, the work proceeds to the outer world of the senses, represented by the square; and finally to the intellectual realm from which both inner and outer worlds take their origin, and which is represented by the pentagram.

Thus the practice of Druidical sacred geometry begins with the genesis of the triangle, and this starts from the primary geometrical pattern of the *ad triangulum* school, the vesica piscis.

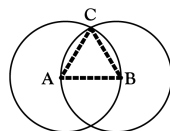
### **Exercise 2: Construct a Vesica Piscis**



Using the compasses, draw a circle with any point A as center and any convenient distance between the compass points. Choose any point B on the circumference of circle A; without changing the distance between the compass points, draw a second circle with B as center. The space included in both circles is the vesica piscis, or “vessel of the fish.”

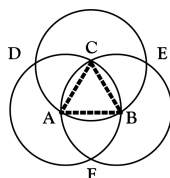
It is important, again, not merely to read these instructions but to follow them several times, paying close attention to the details of the experience. Certain things will be learned by reflecting on even so basic a geometric construction that in no other way can be learned as effectively.

**Exercise 3: Construct an Equilateral Triangle from a Vesica Piscis**



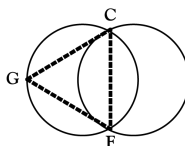
FIRST METHOD: Construct a vesica piscis using the method in [exercise 2](#). Mark one of the two points where the circles intersect as point C. With the straightedge, draw lines connecting A and B, A and C, and B and C to create the triangle ABC as shown.

You may also use this construction to create an equilateral triangle in which every side is equal to a given line. If you begin with line AB, simply create a vesica by drawing circles or portions of circles with centers at A and B and the compasses set to the distance between A and B. Find point C by their intersection and proceed from there.



SECOND METHOD: Construct a vesica piscis using the method in [exercise 2](#). Mark one of the two points where the circles intersect as C. Draw a third circle with C as the center and the compass points at the same distance apart you used to draw circles A and B. Connect the three points A, B, and C as shown to create the triangle ABC.

Notice that this method defines two equilateral triangles—the smaller triangle ABC and a larger triangle that may be formed by connecting the three intersections D, E, and F. The outer triangle is exactly four times larger than the inner triangle. If you then draw three more circles with centers at D, E, and F, and the distance between any two of these points as the compass setting, the outer intersections of those circles would define a third triangle, four times as large as triangle DEF; the same process may be repeated out to infinity.



THIRD METHOD: Construct a vesica piscis using the method in [exercise 2](#). Set the compass points to the distance between the two intersections of the circle at C and F, and then swing the compasses with either C or F as center to cut the circle at G. Connect C, F, and G with straight lines to create triangle CFG. If, with the compasses set to the distance from C to F, you draw two circles with their centers at C and F respectively, you will create a second, larger vesica with CF as its width and G as one of its points.

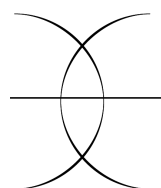
The threefold nature of the vesica piscis goes beyond its obvious geometrical side. If the distance across the middle of a vesica, called the minor axis by geometers—from A to B in our third diagram—is equal to 1, the distance from one point of the vesica to another, called the major axis—from C to F, in the same diagram—is  $\sqrt{3}$ , the square root of 3. This works out, in decimal notation, to 1.73205... and so on for an infinite number of digits.

Mathematicians refer to numbers of this kind as irrational numbers, but they might better be known as transrational numbers. In sacred geometry the various relationships that are denoted by transrational numbers, such as the  $1:\sqrt{3}$  proportion defined by the vesica piscis, represent primary spiritual principles that, in their fullness, transcend human reason. The principle that manifests in the vesica piscis and the equilateral triangle may be understood for the time being as the feminine principle, or the principle of creation; a more complete understanding of this principle may be gained through meditation on the process of constructing the forms just given.

**III. The Genesis of the Square**

The movement from the triangle to the square—or, as it may equally well be described, from the circle to the cross—begins once again from the vesica piscis, the core diagram of Druidical sacred geometry. Among the properties of the vesica is that it defines a precise right angle between its major and minor axes. Thus the vesica generates the cross, and the cross a square; from the square, in turn, unfolds the  $1:\sqrt{2}$  proportion, the governing proportion of the *ad quadratum* school of sacred geometry. In the same way, beginning with the square and its diagonal, the core diagram of the *ad quadratum* school, the  $1:\sqrt{3}$  proportion soon appears; each school thus implies and leads to each other—a binary that seeks its proper resolution in a third factor.

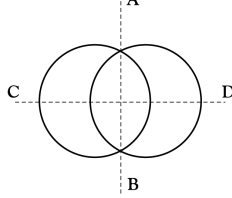
**Exercise 4: Divide Any Line in Half**



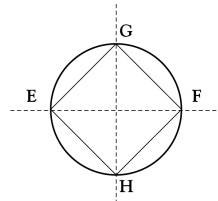
Draw a line of any length using the straightedge. Take the compass, and with the center on one end of the line and any setting of the compass that is more than half the length of the line, draw an arc to both sides of the line, as shown. Move the compass center to the other end of the line, leaving the distance between the compass points unchanged, and draw a corresponding arc, intersecting the first arc above and below the line. A line drawn between the two intersections will divide the original line in half.

To draw a line perpendicular to any line, use this same construction. The line extending above and below the original line is perpendicular to the latter.

**Exercise 5: Construct a Square Within a Circle**

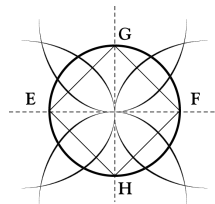


Begin with the diagram described in [exercise 2](#). Using the straightedge, draw a line from A to B, along the minor axis of the vesica, extending it as far as you wish to either side. Again using the straightedge, draw a line from C to D, along the major axis of the vesica, again extending it as far as you wish to either side.



Next, take the compass, and with the center placed on the intersection of line AB and line CD, draw a circle of any convenient size. The points E, F, G, and H, where the circle intersects the two lines, are the four corners of a perfect square.

**Exercise 6:** Construct a Square Around a Circle



Begin with the same construction used in [exercise 5](#). When you have finished it, place the compass center on point E and set the width between the compass points to the distance between E and the center of the circle. Draw an arc to each side of line EF, covering at least half a circle. Repeat the same process with the center of the compass on points F, G, and H. The points where the four arcs intersect with each other will be the corners of a square that exactly surrounds the circle EFGH.

This construction is also known as the doubling of the square, and it appears in this context in one of the dialogues of Plato. If you draw the entire construction and consider the two squares—the one within the circle and the one surrounding it—you will quickly notice that the one within is divided into four identical right triangles by lines EF and GH, while the one surrounding it is composed of eight such triangles.

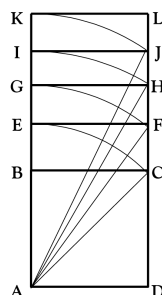
The corners of the outer square may again be used as the centers of four arcs and the construction repeated to produce a third square, which will be twice the size of the outer square and four times the size of the inner square. This process may be repeated to infinity.

Just as the vesica piscis embodies a threefold pattern that expresses itself in many ways, the square and equal-armed cross embody a twofold pattern that manifests in various forms of doubling and halving, and especially in the ratio between the side of the square and its diagonal. If the side—for example, line EG—is equal to 1, the diagonal—for example, line EF—will be equal to  $\sqrt{2}$ , the square root of 2, which is approximately equal to 1.4142... and so on, again, for an infinite number of digits. This principle may be understood as the masculine principle, or the principle of generation; a more complete understanding of this principle may be gained, in turn, through meditation on the process of constructing the forms just given.

**IV. The Genesis of the Fundamental Roots**

The square, which gives geometrical form to the principle of generation, is also unique in its ability to generate other transrational roots from itself. The relation between a square and its diagonal is the starting point for this process.

**Exercise 7:** Construct a Series of Root Rectangles



Begin by constructing a square ABCD using any convenient method—the methods in [exercise 5](#) and [exercise 6](#) are suitable for this. Extend two parallel sides of the square, AB and DC, out to one side as shown in the diagram above. Set the distance between the compass points to the diagonal of the square—for example, the distance from B to D. Then, with centers at A and D respectively, draw arcs down from B and C to cut the extended lines at E and F. Draw in line EF to create the rectangle AEFD. If the sides of the square ABCD are equal to one, the long sides of AEFD are equal to  $\sqrt{2}$ , since the diagonal of a square is  $\sqrt{2}$  times the side of the square. This is a “root two rectangle,” one of the basic forms in traditional design.

Next, repeat the process, setting the compass points to the diagonal of the new rectangle and drawing another pair of arcs to cut the extended sides of the square at G and H. If the sides of the original square remain equal to one, the sides of the new rectangle AGHD are equal to  $\sqrt{3}$ —you may wish to construct a vesica piscis using a line equal to AD as the minor axis, then set the compass points to the length of the major axis, and compare this to the length from A to G. AGHD is a “root three rectangle” and is also much used in traditional design.

Repeat the same process a third time, using arcs drawn from the diagonal of AGHD to mark points I and J on the extended lines, and create



the new rectangle AIJD. The long side of AIJD will be exactly twice the length of the side of the original square—that is, AIJD is a double square, with sides equal to  $\sqrt{4}$  (which, of course, equals 2). It could be called “root four rectangle,” though this term is never used in practice; “double square” is the standard term for this figure.

The diagonal of AIJD, finally, produces a “root five rectangle,” with a short side equal to one and a long side equal to  $\sqrt{5}$ . The root five rectangle is not much used in traditional design, and the rectangles with sides even longer are rarely seen at all. The importance of this part of the diagram, rather, is that the square root of five plays an important role in opening the door to a far more important transrational ratio, the Golden Section.

## V. Proportions and the Golden Section

The  $1:\sqrt{2}$  and  $1:\sqrt{3}$  ratios between them define a binary relationship that, like all binaries, naturally seeks a third factor to resolve it. The ratio that provides that third factor, transforming the binary into a ternary, comes from a different aspect of sacred geometry from those we have been discussing so far.

Any relation between two numbers—call them A and B for the present—is understood in geometrical terms as a ratio between two lengths: the height and breadth of a standing stone, for example, or the diameters of two stone circles in the same ancient temple site, as at Avebury. An identity between two ratios, in turn, defines a proportion. For example, if one standing stone is 10 feet high and 4 feet broad, and another is 15 feet high and 6 feet broad, a common proportion unites them. In modern notation, we write  $10:4::15:6$ , “ten is to four as fifteen is to six.” Any other pair of numbers in the same ratio is proportional with those already mentioned: for example, if a round barrow not far away from these stones is 20 yards across and 8 yards high, the attentive researcher will recognize that a common proportion, one doubtless meant to convey or express some particular symbolic meaning, was used by the builders. As is explained in another knowledge lecture of this grade, the proportions drawn from music and geometry have an important role in magical practice.

The type of proportion just described is known as a discontinuous proportion because it requires no continuity between the measures composing the varying ratios comprised in it. To a ratio of 10 feet by 4 feet any other pair of measures in the same relationship is proportional, be they in fractions of an inch or multiples of the earth’s distance from the nearest star. The builders of earlier times, seeking more coherence within their structures, commonly made use of another type of proportion, the continuous proportion, in which a common measure unites two ratios.

Let us imagine, for example, that one standing stone is 10 feet high and 4 feet broad, and a smaller stone next to it is 4 feet high and just over 1 foot 7 inches broad. These two stones are proportional to one another, and they also share a common measure, as the breadth of one is the height of the other. In modern notation, where a discontinuous proportion may be represented by  $A:B::C:D$ , a continuous proportion may be represented by  $A:B::B:C$ , “A is to B as B is to C.” In practice—whether in architecture, art, or in the magical applications of sacred geometry—a continuous proportion has stronger effects than a discontinuous one.

This fact inspired the ancient masters of sacred geometry to seek even more closely interrelated proportions and led them eventually to the ratio that resolves the binary between the  $1:\sqrt{2}$  and  $1:\sqrt{3}$  ratios. This is the Golden Section, which the great astronomer Johannes Kepler described as the “precious jewel” of sacred geometry.

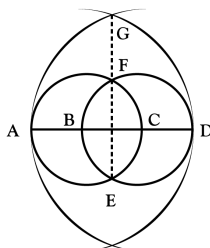
A discontinuous proportion,  $A:B::C:D$ , requires four differing measures: A, B, C, and D. A continuous proportion,  $A:B::B:C$ , requires three: A, B, and C. The ancient masters accordingly sought a more than continuous proportion,  $A:B::B:A+B$ —“A is to B as B is to the sum of A and B”—and discovered, first, that only one ratio can be used to construct such a proportion, and second, that that ratio involves another transrational number, which is usually represented by the Greek letter phi ( $\Phi$ ). In decimal numbers,  $\Phi$  works out to 1.61803... and so on for an infinite number of digits. It may more precisely be represented as  $(1 + \sqrt{5})/2$ ; it is the square root of 5, in other words, that provides the key to the genesis of  $\Phi$ , and many of the constructions that produce  $\Phi$  make use of  $\sqrt{5}$  in one way or another.

$\Phi$  is a number with surprising properties—for example,  $\Phi + 1 = \Phi^2$ ,  $\Phi - 1 = \sqrt{\Phi}$ , and  $\Phi - 1$  is also  $1/\Phi$ —and it appears in a remarkable range of phenomena throughout nature. Many people know that the shell of the chambered nautilus is structured according to  $\Phi$ , for each chamber within the shell is  $\Phi$  times as large as the chamber immediately behind it. Less commonly known is the fact that many of the proportions of the human body likewise depend on  $\Phi$ ; on average, for example, each joint of the human hand and arm is  $\Phi$  times the length of the one farther toward the fingertips; thus the length of the last joint of each finger multiplied by  $\Phi$  gives the length of the second joint, and so on, to the length of the upper arm, which is the length of the lower arm multiplied by  $\Phi$ . The branches of many species of trees are arranged in a similar manner and so on through all the kingdoms of nature.

## VI. The Genesis of the Golden Section

The Golden Section is easy to construct geometrically, and the constructions that follow show two ways of doing so, one starting from the vesica piscis according to the *ad triangulum* school, the other starting from the square according to the *ad quadratum* school.

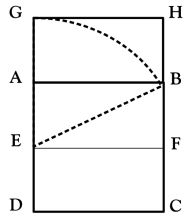
**Exercise 8:** Construct the Golden Section from the Vesica Piscis



Using the straightedge, draw a line of any convenient length and mark a point to one side of the middle (B in the diagram). Using the compass, draw a circle of any convenient size with B as center; then, with the compass points at the same distance, draw another circle with its center at C, where the circumference of the first circle crosses the line. This gives you the initial vesica piscis. Mark points A and D where the two circles intersect the line outside the vesica, as shown.

Next, put the center of the compass on C, set the other point on A, and draw an arc above and below the line. Move the center of the compass to B, and draw a second arc above and below the line from D. Using the straightedge, draw a line through the points of the vesica at E and F, and extend it to the upper intersection of the two arcs at G. The line segments FG and EF are divided according to the Golden Section; if FG is equal to 1, EF will be equal to  $\Phi$ .

**Exercise 9:** Construct the Golden Section from the Square

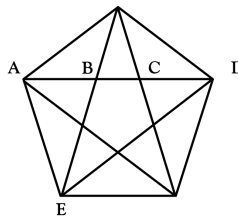


Construct a square ABCD using the method given in exercise 5 or any other convenient method. Divide two parallel sides of the square in half, at points E and F, using the method given in exercise 4. With the center of the compass on point E and the distance between the points equal to the distance from E to B, draw an arc above the square as shown (from B to G); move the center of the compass to F, and draw a second arc (which is not shown in the diagram but goes from A to H). Using the straightedge, extend the sides of the square out to intersect the arcs at points G and H, and draw in line GH to complete rectangle GHCD. If the length of the side of the square is 1, the length from C to H is  $\Phi$ .

The rectangle GHCD is called a Golden Rectangle. Studies have shown that most people find a rectangle of these proportions more aesthetically attractive than any other. Like the Golden Section that defines it, it replicates itself at different scales; subtract the original square and the rectangle left over, GHBA, is also a Golden Rectangle, and their areas relate to one another in the  $\Phi$  ratio; similarly, if you were to construct a square with sides that extend from G to D and add it to the long side of rectangle GHCD, the resulting rectangle would again be a Golden Rectangle, and its area would be  $\Phi$  times as great as the area of GHCD.

The Golden Section also plays a central role in one of the most important geometrical figures in magic, the pentagram. Several books provide constructions that will produce a geometrically perfect pentagram; this is a construction of some complexity, however, and you should gain some facility with the more basic diagrams of sacred geometry before attempting it. In the meantime, however, since you are constructing pentagrams on at least a daily basis in your practice of the Lesser and Elemental Pentagram rituals, you would do well to understand the sacred geometry of this figure.

The diagram will explain the geometries of the pentagram:



The  $1:\Phi$  ratio pervades both the pentagram and a pentagon drawn around it. If the distance from A to E in the diagram (or from A to C, which is the same) is 1, the distance from A to D is  $\Phi$ . If the distance from A to B is 1, the distance from A to C is  $\Phi$ , and if the distance from B to C is 1, the distance from A to B is  $\Phi$ . Thus the pentagram is a geometric expression of the Golden Section and embodies its full meaning and power.

Pentagrams are of great importance in Druidical magic. Where the  $1:\sqrt{3}$  ratio is traditionally held to represent creation and the feminine, and the  $1:\sqrt{2}$  ratio generation and the masculine, the  $1:\Phi$  ratio represents regeneration and the balanced union of the polarized powers of feminine and masculine. It is the great geometrical emblem of balance and harmony. This accounts for its power in ritual work, for the work of magic is that of regeneration and of bringing the often chaotic forces of the world of manifestation into harmony. More will be said concerning this in another grade.

### VII. Further Study

The material covered in this knowledge lecture is only a small portion of the field of sacred geometry as it has been practiced in the Druidical Mysteries and in other Mystery Schools around the world. Very little on this subject has been published to date in English; the writings of the American designer Jay Hambidge, found principally in his magazine *The Diagonal*, are a welcome addition to the otherwise meager resources, to which may also be added Fredrik Macody Lund's useful book *Ad Quadratum*.

# Plants in Magic and Alchemy

THE IMPORTANCE OF HERBS, trees, and vegetation to the Druids of old is a matter of common knowledge, even among those whose understanding of Druidical matters extends only to a dim notion or two about white-robed figures at Stonehenge. Like other peoples who lived close to the earth, the ancient Celts made much use of wild plants for food, healing, and folk magic of the kind that was commonplace everywhere in the world before the rise of our present-day enlightened civilization, and it will doubtless be commonplace again around the world after that civilization is no more. Like the priests and priestesses of every ancient nation, the Druids of ancient times took the body of knowledge shared by the common people as a foundation and added to it much additional plant lore, comprising much of their magic and, according to tradition, of their alchemy as well.

It is unfortunately the case that most initiates of the Druidical Mysteries in our present age are born and raised in cities and towns, and the old intimacy with the green world of vegetation is something few ever experience and fewer still have as an ordinary part of the daily round, as was once commonplace. Time spent sitting out of doors, attentively observing the subtle displays of nature through the cycles of the seasons, is still an essential of Druidical training, and time should be made for it at least once a week. Still, it is necessary to supplement this with the kind of learning at which most people are skilled nowadays, the knowledge of names, forms, and concepts that can be communicated in a lecture of this sort.

The following notes, together with time spent in silence in nature and further research in books on the subject, will help you achieve a basic grasp of the place of the plant world in Druidical magic.

## ***I. Plants and the Earth Spirit***

It is a matter of common knowledge that the great majority of living things belong to one of two great divisions, the plants and the animals. Those who recall the biology they studied in school may remember as well that the difference between the two divisions, as understood by science, is that plants produce their own food from air, water, and sunlight, while animals cannot do this and must seek their food from plants or other animals. This is quite correct so far as the physical plane is concerned.

Above the physical plane, in that division of the cosmos we call the aetherial plane, the same difference may be found between the same two divisions, but the direction of the flow is reversed. Where, on the physical plane, energy flows into material form by the action of the plants and is released again from material form by the action of the animals, on the aetherial plane it is the animals who bring the descending current from the cosmos and the plants who return it to the cosmos by way of an ascending current.

This may be seen to be symbolically expressed in the physical forms of plants and animals respectively. The stems of plants are at their most massive where they leave the ground and rise up into the air in progressively finer branchings; the bodies of animals are generally at their most massive at shoulders and hips, well above the ground, and taper downwards from there in those progressively finer branchings we call limbs, fingers, and toes. Consider the structure of your own arm as an example: the upper arm is most massive and contains a single bone; the lower arm is less massive and contains two bones; the hand has many bones, terminating in tapering fingers. The hair upon the human head corresponds to the roots of plants—it may be noted that many mammals have extra hair upon the head, neck, shoulders, or spine, and birds and reptiles very often have crests of feathers or scales respectively in the same place, echoing the root-function of the plant.

To the eye of the Druidical initiate, then, animals—human beings among them—are vessels for a current of force that descends from heaven to earth, while plants are vessels for an equal and opposite current of force that ascends from earth to heaven. There is an important difference between the two currents, however, which is that the descending current is much less varied than the ascending one. The descending ray comes to the animal creation directly from the sun; the ascending ray comes to the vegetable creation from within the earth, influenced by all the diversity and variation of material existence.

Thus every variety of animal receives from the sky above it and transmits to the earth beneath it the same quality of aetherial force, albeit varying to some degree with the cycles of time and the movements of the various heavenly bodies. Each variety of plant, by contrast, receives from the earth beneath it and transmits to the sky above it a quality of aetherial force unique to that variety of plant, drawn from the great reservoir of the earth. It is these unique qualities of force that Druids use in their magical and alchemical work with plants.

The sum total of energies flowing through the body of the earth and rising through plants of all kinds to return to the heavens constitutes what is called the earth spirit. This is a mighty force, one of two great forces that play a part in Druidical magic; the other, equally mighty, is the current descending from the sun. The ways of working with these two great forces vary from one school of the Druidical Mysteries to another. Some schools teach students to draw the earth spirit up into their bodies, to energize and purify the aetherial form; others work with both streams of power at the same time, and even unite them in certain ways.

In the system of Druidical magic you are studying, however, we work with these two great forces in our own way. We work with the single current of energy descending from the sun by means of the exercise of the Central Ray, and certain other formulae derived from it, which you will learn in due time. We work with the infinitely diverse currents of energy rising from the earth by means of their material expressions in plant substances. The descending current provides the force, the ascending current the form, and the intention that guides the magical ceremony, whatever that intention happens to be, brings this binary into balance as a ternary and enables wonders to be performed.

## ***II. Sixteen Herbs for Magic and Alchemy***

The following sixteen herbs represent only a very small selection from the vast number of herbs, or unique magical energies, that can be put to use in Druidical magic and alchemy. You are asked to familiarize yourself with them partly for a reason that will be explained in the instructions dealing with preparation for the Bardic Grade initiation and partly because the process of learning magical herb lore must begin somewhere!

All sixteen of these herbs are readily available from herbal suppliers and, in many cases, local herb stores, and all can be used in relative safety by most people; each of them can also be assigned readily to one of the geomantic figures with which it shares certain symbolic properties. Please take the time to look up the medicinal effects of these herbs in a standard manual such as *J. M. Nickell's Botanical Ready Reference*, and consult other books on herbal magic and alchemy concerning them as well.

You will find that different books describe the magical properties of herbs in different and often contradictory ways. This has been true for thousands of years, and learning to sort through the confusion and make your own judgments is one of the basic skills required for study of herbal magic and alchemy in modern times.

### **Mab: Southernwood** (*Artemisia abrotanum*)

Warm and dry in the third degree, southernwood is called Lad's Love by some herbalists and Maiden's Ruin by others! It stimulates the vital spirits, brings happiness, and removes sexual difficulties. The leaves are the part used.

### **Colled: Rose** (*Rosa* spp.)

There are more than a hundred different species of rose, but all share the same elemental balance—cold in the first degree, dry in the third

—and the same magical properties. They are used in the magic of all kinds. The petals are the part used.

**Gwyn: Dill** (*Anethum graveolens*)

A protective herb, dill is hot in the second degree and dry in the first. It banishes hostile spirits and evil influences of all kinds, and brings clarity and insight to the mind. The seeds are used.

**Pobl: Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Hot and dry in the second degree, rosemary strengthens the memory, clears the mind, and banishes depressed moods. Use the leaves.

**Bendith Fawr: Angelica** (*Angelica archangelica*)

Hot in the second degree and dry in the third, angelica has potent protective qualities; it will drive off hostile spirits and magical workings, banish bad luck, and change one's fortune for the better. The root is the portion used.

**Cyswllt: Cinquefoil** (*Potentilla anserina*)

Called Five Finger Grass by folk magicians, cinquefoil is cold and dry in the second degree. It has the power of strengthening any other magical herb and also grants the gift of communication and persuasion. The leaves or the root may be used.

**Merch: Lady's Mantle** (*Alchemilla vulgaris*)

Hot and dry in the second degree, lady's mantle is purifying and protective. Its leaves gather drops of dew, which are important in some alchemical workings. Use the leaves.

**Coch: Basil** (*Ocimum basilicum*)

Hot in the second degree and moist in the first, basil dispels fears and brings courage; taken in excess, it produces belligerence. Use the leaves.

**Elw: Dandelion** (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Cold and dry in the second degree, dandelion is among the world's most widespread plants. It has protective and visionary powers, and is used in spells to make wishes come true. The root is the part used.

**Carchar: Mullein** (*Verbascum thapsus*)

Temperate and dry in the first, mullein is a potent protective herb, placing firm limits on the powers of hostile spirits or evil magic. The leaves are used.

**Tristwch: Comfrey** (*Symphytum officinale*)

Cold in the first degree and moist in the second, comfrey is a powerful healing herb, but it also brings protection to travelers and is used in spells to help hold on to wealth. The leaves or root may be used.

**Llawenydd: Lemon Balm** (*Melissa officinalis*)

Hot and dry in the second degree, lemon balm dispels melancholy, restores the vital spirits, and attracts romance and new relationships. It is also much used in plant alchemy, for an interesting reason—it helps the mind understand the riddling language in which so much alchemical lore is written. The leaves are the part used.

**Llosgwrn y Ddraig: Mugwort** (*Artemisia vulgaris*)

Hot and dry in the second degree, mugwort is a powerful herb of magic. It is placed above doors and windows to keep evil spirits from a home, placed under the pillow to bring dreams of the future, and a sprig placed under the doorstep makes unwanted visitors go away! The leaves are the part that is used.

**Pen y Ddraig: Borage** (*Borago officinalis*)

Hot and moist in the first degree, borage overcomes feelings of fear and depression; "I, borage, grant courage" is an old rhyme remembered by herbal magicians. The leaves or flowers may be used for this purpose.

**Bendith Fach: Chamomile** (*Matricaria chamomilla*)

Hot and dry in the first degree, chamomile is an herb of protection and blessing, and is often grown in gardens to keep ill luck away. The whole herb is used.

**Ffordd: Plantain** (*Plantago major*)

This common roadside weed is cold and dry in the second degree, and has the power to banish nightmares and unwelcome spirits. The leaves are used.

### III. An Outline of Plant Magic

The practical formulae of Druidic magic are reserved to the Druid Grade so that the necessary preparation and instruction will have been completed before the ceremonial work is attempted. Nonetheless, just as the techniques of plant alchemy were surveyed in the Ovate Grade in order to provide you with a sense of the possibilities open to you, it is not out of place here to outline the ways in which plants are used in magical practice.

AMULETS ARE small containers of various kinds—cloth bags are the most common—in which one or several dried herbs or other plant substances are placed and then consecrated with a ritual working. Amulets have the great advantage of holding a magical influence for an extended period of time, so that the influence remains effective long after the ritual work is completed. Once made and consecrated, an amulet may be carried on the person, worn on a string around the neck, or placed in a location where its effects are needed.

BATHS AND WASHES are strong infusions of plant substances—in effect, very strong herb teas—that are made and consecrated, then added to the water of a bath or to the bucket of water used to clean a floor or anything else. Baths may be used for any magical purpose; washes are most often a means of protective and purifying magic, used to cleanse the floor of a room or house to remove unwelcome influences and introduce favorable ones.

INCENSES ARE plant substances of various kinds that are placed on hot coals to produce smoke in order to fill the air with a desired influence. Incense is a powerful tool in magical practice, and nearly all magical rituals make use of it, but it requires careful study. Not all herbs smell the same when burnt as they do in other contexts; peppermint, for example, loses all trace of its familiar scent when burnt and instead produces an odor that is unpleasantly reminiscent of cat urine. Plants suitable for incense should be finely powdered in a mortar and pestle before use.

OILS ARE made by steeping plant substances in a suitable vegetable oil such as grapeseed oil or almond oil. The best magical oils are never heated but are steeped for months or years in a cool, dry place, then strained to remove the plant matter and consecrated. Once made, they are used to anoint parts of the body or objects that are to receive a magical influence. They should not be confused with essential oils, which are distilled from plant matter and should never be applied undiluted to the body, as many of them are strong enough to cause skin burns, rashes, and toxic reactions. When time is short, a functional magical oil can be made by adding a few drops of one or more essential oils to a vegetable oil, but oils made by steeping herbs are preferable.

OINTMENTS ARE identical to oils except that wax or some other thickening substance, such as a vegetable butter, is melted and then added to the oil after the vegetable matter is strained out to produce a semisolid substance that is less messy to handle than oil.

POTIONS ARE, for all intents and purposes, mild herb teas made in the usual manner—by steeping a single herb or a blend of several herbs in boiling water, straining out the plant matter, consecrating the potion, and then allowing the water to cool. For magical purposes, a very light tea is normally appropriate, as the power of the plant passes readily into water. A potion may be used to bathe some part of the body—this is called “laving” when done in a ritual context—or an object that is to be charged with the plant’s energy; it may be sprinkled around an area like holy water to purify and bless the area or to affect it in any other way, according to the nature of the plant matter included in the potion; and it may also be taken internally, provided always that the herbs used are safe for internal use.

It should be noted that alchemical tinctures may be used in place of unprocessed plant matter in any of these contexts, with a great increase in effectiveness and power.

Many traditions of folk magic from around the world use these forms of plant magic, and most also include other forms as well—for example, in Africa and those parts of the New World settled by people of African ancestry, it is common to see folk magicians grind up plant materials into a fine powder, mix this with other substances and white clay or some substitute such as talcum powder, and use the resulting powder in magical workings. If you have the opportunity to learn the variety of folk magic practiced in the area in which you live, much can be learned by doing so; it is by attentively studying older folk traditions, in all probability, that the ancient Druids amassed much of their lore, and Druid initiates of later ages have made use of this same opportunity in replacing teachings that have been lost down through the years to persecution and the passage of time.

One additional way of using plants in Druidical magic should be mentioned at this time; though it is not available to every initiate, it is among the most powerful of all and should be explored by those who have the opportunity to do so: this is the magical garden. Living plants radiate the force of the earth spirit more powerfully than do dried herbs or even alchemical tinctures. Those students who have even a small patch of earth that can be set aside as a magical garden and who choose, plant, and tend plants there for their magical effects will find that the garden serves as a type of amulet, radiating magical influences of the kind determined by the chosen plants that grow there.

#### **IV. Further Study**

There are many books available on the folklore and magical uses of herbs, and it will be to your advantage to consult at least a few of these during the time you spend in this grade. Those specific to the region in which you live, if such can be found, will be particularly useful. One more general book that may be particularly recommended is Mrs. C. F. Leyel's *The Magic of Herbs: A Modern Book of Secrets*.

# Principles of Color and Sound

AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT tools of initiates in any Mystery School, color and sound are particular studies assigned to the Bardic Grade. The Bards of old made use of the ancient British harp, which spanned only a single octave, in studying and teaching the properties of sound, and their use of color was limited to those hues nature provided them. Students of the Druidical Mysteries today have more possibilities available, but the essential principles are still comprised in a single octave of seven distinct notes and the natural spectrum of seven distinct colors.

## I. The Octaves of Sound and Light

In music, an octave may be defined as the difference between two notes, one of which is produced by a vibration twice as fast as the vibration that produces the other. Thus the note we call middle C, for example, is produced by a string, tuning fork, or other object vibrating at a rate of 256 cycles per second; the c above middle C is produced by some similar object vibrating at a rate of 512 cycles per second, and to human ears the two notes are, in some sense, "the same." This relationship between notes is not unique to Western music; it stands at the foundation of most of the known musical systems around the world and throughout time, and it has been found to be recognizable by animals as well as human beings.

Between two notes in an octave relationship other notes can be placed, and here the world's musical systems embrace almost limitless variation. The music of China is famously based on an "octave" of five notes, called in the West the pentatonic scale; in Java, an "octave" of seventeen notes is known. In the Western world we place six notes between the two ends of the octave, for a total of seven distinct notes—the two at either end, again, are heard as "the same note." The eight divisions of the scale thus established are responsible for the term *octave*, which means "a group of eight."

The colors of the spectrum of visible light follow a similar pattern to the octave of sound, though the vibrations are almost unimaginably faster. The lowest vibration of visible red light is around 400 trillion cycles per second, while the highest vibration of visible violet light is a little under 800 trillion cycles per second, yielding nearly the same octave relationship. It is worth noting that to the human eye, red and violet seem to blend into one another; it is possible that if we could see infrared or ultraviolet light, we would see the "notes" of the light spectrum repeat themselves on a lower or higher octave, as the notes of the musical octave do.

The precise divisions of the octave of sound and the spectrum of light—the notes and the colors, respectively—may be determined mathematically in several ways, many of which have their own traditional meanings and symbolism. The notes used in nearly all modern music are assigned according to a system known as equal temperament, but as recently as the eighteenth century many different systems of temperament were in use. In the same way, the exact boundaries between colors are difficult to determine, and the exact shade that should be considered "pure red," say, is a matter of some dispute. Still, it is useful in practice to make notes and colors correspond precisely to one another so that each note represents a color and each color, a musical note. This makes possible certain important magical applications of each.

a	440 cps	798 tcps	red (G#—purple)
G	391 cps	709 tcps	violet (F#—see text)
F	352 cps	634 tcps	indigo
E	330 cps	594 tcps	blue (D#—turquoise)
D	293 cps	528 tcps	green (C#—chartreuse)
C	264 cps	475 tcps	yellow
B	248 cps	446 tcps	orange (A#—flame)
A	220 cps	396 tcps	red

cps = cycles per second

tcps = trillion cycles per second

(All figures rounded to nearest whole number)

## Scale of Sound and Color

The scale of sound and color shows the correspondence between these two, using one set of figures for the note values (the system called "just temperament"). The octave shown is a natural minor scale, or what was anciently known as the Aeolian mode; as its assignment to the first seven letters of the alphabet in order may suggest, it is the most basic of musical scales and the one fundamental to the Druidical symbolism of sound.

## II. The Structure of the Musical Scale

It is necessary to cover some basic music theory to make sense of what follows. Every scale in Western music is divided unevenly, with some intervals half the size of others. Here the intervals between B and C and between E and F are half steps, while the other intervals are whole steps. In minor scales beginning with other notes, flatted or sharped notes put half steps between the second and third notes of the scale and between the fifth and sixth, as having half steps there is what produces the distinctive sound of a minor scale, the old Aeolian mode. If the half steps are between the third and fourth and the seventh and eighth notes of the scale, the result is the major scale or Ionian mode. Other arrangements produce the other five musical modes; these are rarely heard now but were once important in Western music.

A chord is a harmonious relationship between three or more notes sounded at the same time. The most common type of chord is made by sounding three notes from the same scale: a so-called tonic note, which gives its name to the chord, and the third and fifth notes counting upwards from the tonic. In the scale printed above, for example, an A chord is made by playing A, C, and E at the same time. Because the interval between the first two notes is one and a half steps—remember that B and C are separated only by a half step—this chord is a minor chord, A minor. By contrast, the chord C-E-G is a C major chord, because C and E are separated by two full steps. Even among the notes of a minor scale there are some major chords. Both minor and major chords span a perfect fifth, the strongest of the musical harmonies.

## III. Chords, Colors, and Elements

By comparing the notes of the natural minor scale beginning with A to the spectrum of visible light and matching this with color symbolism, it is

possible to find the natural musical expressions of the four elements.

The color traditionally attributed to the element of fire is red, the first or lowest note in the spectrum, and its musical note will therefore be A, the first or lowest note of the minor scale. The corresponding chord, A minor, comprises the notes A-C-E, as already explained. The colors that correspond to these notes are red, yellow, and blue. These are the three primary colors—the colors from which all other colors may be derived. Since fire is the highest and most exalted of the elements, this is quite appropriate.

The color traditionally attributed to the element of air is yellow, and its musical note will therefore be C. The corresponding chord is C major, comprising the notes C-E-G, and the colors that correspond to these notes are yellow, blue, and violet. The first two of these are primary, but the third, violet, is a secondary color—it is made by the mixture of equal parts of two primary colors, red and blue. The shift from three primary colors to two primary and a secondary marks the descent of one step in the great chain of being from fire to air.

Note also that yellow and violet, the first and last notes in the color chord of air, have a special relationship to each other. They are flashing colors—put matching shades of yellow and violet next to one another and the eyes will be dazzled, as though the two colors flash and sparkle at their mutual boundary. As you have already learned, the notes corresponding to these colors, C and G, have the interval of a perfect fifth between them. (There is also a perfect fifth between the notes at either end of the chord of fire, A and E, but the flashing effect cannot take place between primary colors such as red and blue; it requires one primary color and a corresponding secondary color in contact with one another.)

The color traditionally attributed to the element of water is blue, and its musical note will therefore be E. The corresponding chord is E minor, composed of the notes E-G-b; remember that each octave blends without a break into the octaves above and below it, so the b played here is from the next octave up. The colors that correspond to these notes are blue, violet, and orange—one primary color, this time, and two secondary colors. This marks another step down the great chain of being. At the same time, blue and orange, the two colors at the ends of the color chord of water, are also flashing colors.

The color traditionally attributed to the element of earth is green, a secondary color, and its musical note is D. The corresponding chord is D minor, composed of the notes D-F-a. The colors that correspond to these notes are green, indigo, and red. Green, as already mentioned, is a secondary color. Indigo is neither primary nor secondary but tertiary; it cannot be made by combining equal amounts of any two primary colors, as it is a blend of primary blue and secondary violet. With red, finally, the first of the primary colors, the cycle comes back around to its beginning—and green and red, again, are flashing colors.

Indigo is the odd color out in the spectrum. The human eye is least sensitive to light in the indigo portion of the spectrum; some people cannot see it at all, and many others, recognizing that it is neither a primary or secondary color, insist on that basis that it does not belong in the spectrum at all. Nonetheless, it appears as the relatively wide, dark band just inside of violet in every rainbow.

#### **IV. Color and Sound on the Tree of Life**

The Tree of Life also has its traditional color symbolism, which relates in turn to the perspectives discussed already in this lecture. The first triad of spheres—Celi, Perydd, and Dofydd—are beyond color, as they are beyond all other forms of human experience. For symbolic reasons they are assigned three grades of colorless light: Celi is pure white brilliance, Perydd is the gray formed by the blending of light and darkness in equal amounts, and Dofydd is pure darkness. The second triad of spheres—Ener, Modur, and Muner—correspond to the three primary colors. Ener is represented by the color blue, Modur by red, and Muner by yellow. The third triad of spheres, Byw, Byth, and Ner, correspond to the three secondary colors. Byw is represented by the color green, Byth by orange, and Ner by violet.

The final sphere, Naf, is represented by the color indigo. Other Mystery Schools have used different colors to represent the final sphere of the Tree, and this is wholly appropriate since it is in the nature of symbolism that symbolic structures are adaptable to the needs of individual schools. Still, in the Druidical Mysteries indigo is the color assigned to Naf, and it will be found most effective as a representation of that sphere in practical workings.

Each of these color correspondences, in turn, has its own musical equivalent. The middle triad of the Tree of Life—Ener, Modur, and Muner—is represented by the C major chord, and the individual spheres by E minor for Ener, A minor for Modur, and C major for Muner, the chords of the elements water, fire, and air, respectively. While the middle triad, belonging to the circle of Gwynfydd, is, strictly speaking, above the realm of the elements, the roots of the elements are present in these three spheres—Ener is the root of water, Modur of fire, and Muner of air.

The triad in Abred of Byw, Byth, and Ner is more complex in musical terms, just as it is in terms of the process of manifestation discussed in another lecture. The three secondary colors also form a musical chord, but it is not one of the elemental chords already introduced; rather, it is the G major chord, G-B-D, extending up from below the initial A of the scale. Naf, finally, is represented by the F major chord, F-A-C.

#### **V. Practical Work with Color and Sound**

Most of the practical applications of this lore are reserved to the Druid Grade, where they will play an important role in the practice of Druidical magic. One application that may usefully be added to your practices at this time, however, is chanting or singing the divine names in ritual using the notes or chords of the elements.

To learn this you will need a musical instrument that does not require the use of your mouth—for example, a piano, a harp or any other stringed instrument, or a set of tuning forks. If you do not already know how to pick out the notes from A to a, ask someone more knowledgeable to teach you or find a suitable book that explains the instrument. Also, make sure the instrument is properly tuned so that you can be sure of making the correct note.

The simplest version of this practice is to learn the four notes corresponding to the elemental colors—C for air, A for fire, E for water, and D for earth. Listen to the note and match it with your voice, going up or down one or more octaves as needed to get the note into an octave where you can produce it without straining your voice. Practice chanting or singing the name Heu'c (pronounced "HEY'k") in a steady C, and so on for the others; if possible, learn to do so without having to check your voice against the musical instrument. (Some people find this relatively easy, while others do not.) When you are comfortable doing so, chant or sing the names in your daily practice of the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram.

The more complex and more potent version is to chant or sing the divine names to the notes of the elemental chords. Here a special rule applies: when you have traced a summoning pentagram, chant or sing the notes of the chord in their normal rising order—you are quite literally calling up the power of one of the elements, using the divine name to do so. For example, in a summoning ritual, you would sing the name Heu'c to a rising series of notes, like this:

"Heuuuuu'c"

C.....E.....G

When you have traced a banishing pentagram, by contrast, you chant or sing the notes of the chord in their reversed, descending order, like this:

"Heuuuuu'c"

G.....E.....C

Unless you have musical training or a great deal of natural talent, using the chords in this way will require extensive practice. The benefits in

terms of increased effect in ritual, however, are extensive, and the training will also prepare you for other forms of magical practice in the grade that is still before you.

### ***VI. Further Study***

Little has been published on the magical applications of color and sound in modern times, and the great majority of what has been published either consists of erudite works on complex systems of teaching poorly suited to the beginner in this branch of magic, on the one hand, or is of very doubtful quality on the other. Any introductory book on music theory, of the sort intended for the novice who is attempting to learn to play an instrument, would be worth studying at this point, and it will also be to your advantage to learn a little about playing a musical instrument of some kind. Serious musical study is not required of you, but the ability to pick out a simple tune and having some sense of how chords function will be helpful to your future Druidical work. You should plan on doing at least this much during the time you spend in the Bardic Grade.



# Practical Geomancy

THE ART OF GEOMANTIC divination using the Druid wands is an important part of the studies assigned to the Ovate Grade, and as you have already learned, it forms one of the foundations of training in the Bardic Grade as well. The form of geomantic chart introduced in the Ovate Grade knowledge lectures is only one of several that have come into use down through the centuries, and there are also a great many other methods of casting a chart, some more cumbersome, some less. You are free to explore other methods if those interest you. Nonetheless, the form of chart and method of casting already presented to you will be more than sufficient to take you to the depths and heights of the geomantic art.

What distinguishes the novice in geomancy from the master differs not at all from the equivalent factors in any other branch of occult studies, or indeed in any other skill whatsoever. There are two such factors, and the first is the unavoidable requirement of repeated practice. The more geomantic charts a student casts and interprets, the better he will become at casting and interpreting them. With this requirement we can provide little assistance except by encouraging each student of this art to cast and interpret a geomantic chart each day—and, of course, this is something already done in the lectures of this grade.

The second factor is partly up to the individual initiate but may also be furthered by instruction. This factor is the development of a richer and more elaborate sense of the meanings of the sixteen geomantic figures, which can then be applied to the interpretation of geomantic readings. Practice, again, will provide much assistance in this; each chart that is cast and read, and then compared to the events that followed, offers new insights into what the figures in the chart will have meant; and these insights, stored in memory either consciously or in that unconscious memory that comprises the largest part of what the world calls intuition, will provide the breadth of interpretive possibilities that will assist you in developing skill at geomancy. Yet it is also possible and useful to draw upon the experience of other geomancers, especially those masters of the art in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, when geomancy was much practiced and enriched with many subtle methods of interpretation.

The notes below, drawn from classic texts on the art of geomancy, may be found useful in this regard. They should not be used to replace the meanings of the figures you have already been taught, but to supplement them. Thus, for example, if you cast a geomantic chart for a question dealing with love, and the Judge and Witnesses are favorable but the figure Elw appears three times in the chart—an unfavorable indication for questions dealing with love, as mentioned below—this does not reverse the meaning of the Judge and Witnesses; instead, it suggests that the outcome will be generally favorable but with some difficulties. The nature of the difficulties may then be determined by considering the places in the chart where the figure Elw appears, particularly with regard to the four triplicities. The same principle should govern all the indications that follow; in all cases, the basic rules already learned take precedence.

## ***I. Fixed and Mobile Figures***

The geomantic figures are divided into two groups, these being fixed and mobile figures.

FIXED: Gwyn, Pobl, Bendith Fawr, Merch, Elw, Carchar, Llawenydd,  
Pen y Ddraig

MOBILE: Mab, Colled, Cyswllt, Coch, Tristwch, Llogswrn y Ddraig,  
Bendith Fach, Ffordd

A fixed figure represents a situation that is relatively stable and resistant to change; a mobile figure, one that is relatively unstable and subject to change. In interpreting the Judge in any geomantic chart, consider whether it is made from two stable figures, two unstable figures, or one of each; combine this with the stable or mobile nature of the Judge itself, and you will know whether the outcome revealed by the chart will be of long, medium, or short duration. If both Witnesses and the Judge are fixed, the situation will be of very long duration; if any two are fixed and one is mobile, of relatively long duration; if any two are mobile and one is fixed, of relatively short duration; if both Witnesses and the Judge are mobile, of very short duration.

The same rule may be applied to any other figure composed of other figures—for example, in reading each of the four triplicities, consider whether the third figure in each triplicity is fixed or mobile and whether it is made from fixed or mobile figures. This will yield an indication of the stability or transiency of the situation indicated by each triplicity.

## ***II. Repetition of the Figures***

As mentioned, these meanings should be seen as modifying the general meaning of the chart, not overturning the indications of the Judge and Witnesses. When any of the figures appears two or more times in a single chart, in addition to the meanings indicated by its position and relation to other figures, it has the following significance:

MAB indicates lamentations and changes; great difficulty; fornication and pleasures; barriers to journeys by land; madness, delirium, and furor; it is unfortunate in questions concerning voyages and prisoners but fortunate for questions concerning pregnancy.

COLLED indicates loss; dishonesty; empty words; disputes; the complete loss of whatever was stolen or misplaced; peace and reconciliation after war; good health during travels; clouds and wind.

GWYN indicates deception; levity; misfortune for the querent; good fortune and liberty for prisoners if it appears in the company of the figure Coch; it is unfortunate for questions concerning illness.

POBL indicates changes, disputations, and troubles of every kind but also presages healing from illness.

BENDITH FAWR indicates the recovery of things stolen, voyages to distant places, liberation from prison, and the return of those who have been abroad;  
it is unfortunate for questions concerning illness.

CYSWLLT indicates an abundance of words; struggle and victory; profit for conspirators and traitors; it is unfortunate in questions concerning prisoners, travel, and pregnancy.

MERCH indicates peace, passion, excessive desires, obstacles caused by fear; thieves and depredations during travel; healing from illness; an advantage for the querent; it is unfortunate for questions concerning travel and voyages.

COCH indicates prejudice and bloodshed, useless and difficult projects; in questions of health, a serious illness; in questions concerning prisoners, a long imprisonment; gain through the favor of a superior or ruler; fire, if it appears in the company of the figure Colled; thieves, if it appears in the company of the figures Bendith Fawr or Pen y Ddraig.

ELW appearing two or more times in a chart indicates gain, obstacles in travel, recovery of things lost, larceny and theft; it is unfortunate in questions concerning love, illness, and prisoners.

CARCHAR indicates peace and reconciliation between enemies, safety in travels, and release after imprisonment.

TRISTWCH indicates that whatever is predicted by the chart will come more quickly than expected; it predicts loss, and the capture of a thief; it is unfortunate in questions concerning pregnant women and prisoners.

LLAWENYDD indicates quarrels and brawls in the midst of enjoyments—for example, between friends at a dinner or drinkers in a tavern; it indicates an object desired by the querent; healing from illness; attainment of honors and official positions.

LLOSGWRN Y DDRAIG indicates losses to the querent, a change of route, liberation for prisoners, and improvement of health.

PEN Y DDRAIG indicates stability and perfect success in whatever the querent has asked about; confirmation of benefits received from superiors or rulers; it is favorable in questions concerning illness and pregnancy.

BENDITH FACH indicates disputes and illnesses, fevers, discords, envy, madness, and the loss of the thing asked about; it is unfortunate for questions concerning illness.

FFORDD indicates the postponement of anything asked about in the reading; patience and a need to plan for the long term; debauchery; and healing from illness.

Note that whenever the figure Pobl appears as the Judge, the two Witnesses will be identical, and the above notes may be used as a guide to the outcome of the question.

### **III. Special Meanings of the Figures**

Each of the geomantic figures also has, alongside its general meaning and its qualities, specific meanings that should be kept in mind when a given figure appears as Witness or Judge in a given class of questions.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND FERTILITY, the following figures are favorable: Gwyn, Bendith Fawr, Merch, Tristwch, and Pen y Ddraig. The following figures are medium: Colled, Pobl, Cyswllt, Elw, Carchar, and Ffordd. The following figures are unfavorable: Mab, Coch, Llawenydd, Llogswrn y Ddraig, and Bendith Fach.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING GAIN AND LOSS, the following figures indicate gain: Gwyn, Bendith Fawr, Cyswllt, Merch, Elw, Carchar, Tristwch, Llawenydd, and Pen y Ddraig. The following indicate loss: Mab, Colled, Pobl, Coch, Llogswrn y Ddraig, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING HONESTY AND DECEPTION, the following figures indicate honesty: Gwyn, Elw, Merch, Llawenydd, Pobl, Pen y Ddraig, and Bendith Fawr. The following indicate deception: Mab, Colled, Coch, Carchar, Tristwch, Llogswrn y Ddraig, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd. The following may indicate one or the other, depending on whether it is formed by figures of honesty or deception: Cyswllt.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING ILLNESS, the following figures are favorable for a prompt recovery: Colled, Merch, Llawenydd, Llogswrn y Ddraig, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd. The following predict gradual recovery: Gwyn, Bendith Fawr, and Carchar. The following predict that the illness will continue long: Pobl, Cyswllt, Coch, Tristwch, and Pen y Ddraig. The following predict that it will worsen: Mab and Elw.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING LOVE, the following figures indicate true love: Cyswllt, Merch, Elw, and Llawenydd. The following indicate false love: Mab, Colled, Coch, Llogswrn y Ddraig, and Bendith Fach. The remaining figures are mixed and suggest that some genuine affection coexists with other motives, relationships, or concerns.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGE, the following figures are best of all: Tristwch and Cyswllt. The following are good: Bendith Fawr, Elw, Llawenydd, and Pen y Ddraig. The following are medium: Mab, Gwyn, Pobl, and Merch. The following are bad: Colled, Coch, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd. The following are worst of all: Carchar and Llogswrn y Ddraig.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING PRISON AND OTHER DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, the following figures indicate a prompt release: Mab, Colled, Llawenydd, Llogswrn y Ddraig, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd. The following indicate that release will not come soon: Pobl, Bendith Fawr, Elw, Carchar, Tristwch, and Pen y Ddraig. The following indicate a middle time: Gwyn, Merch, and Coch. The following may indicate one or the other, depending on whether it is formed from figures indicating a quick or slow release: Cyswllt.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING RECEIVING BENEFITS FROM ANOTHER, the following figures are favorable: Gwyn, Bendith Fawr, Cyswllt, Elw, Llawenydd, Pen y Ddraig, and Bendith Fach. The following are unfavorable: Mab, Colled, Coch, and Ffordd. The remaining figures are neutral.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING RELOCATION, the following figures favor a move: Bendith Fawr, Llawenydd, Llogswrn y Ddraig, and Pen y Ddraig. The following figures are medium: Mab, Gwyn, Cyswllt, and Elw. The following argue against a move: Colled, Pobl, Merch, Coch, Carchar, Tristwch, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING SEX AND INFIDELITY, the following figures indicate that the person in question is faithful to his commitments: Gwyn, Bendith Fawr, Merch, Carchar, Tristwch, Llawenydd, and Pen y Ddraig. The following indicate that he is unfaithful: Mab, Colled, Pobl, Cyswllt, Coch, Elw, Llogswrn y Ddraig, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING THEFT, the following figures indicate that the item inquired about has been stolen: Mab, Colled, Pobl, Cyswllt, Coch, Carchar, Tristwch, Llogswrn y Ddraig, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd. The following indicate that the item has not been stolen: Gwyn, Bendith Fawr, Merch, Elw, Llawenydd, and Pen y Ddraig. The following figures indicate that the item will be recovered: Mab, Gwyn, Cyswllt, Bendith Fawr, Elw, Carchar, and Pen y Ddraig. The following indicate that it will not be recovered: Colled, Pobl, Coch, Llawenydd, Llogswrn y Ddraig, Bendith Fach, and Ffordd. The following indicate a partial recovery or a chance but not a certainty of recovery: Merch and Tristwch.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING TRAVELING, the following figures indicate a safe and speedy journey: Bendith Fawr, Elw, Llawenydd, Pen y Ddraig, and Bendith Fach. The following indicate a good journey, but only if the journey is by land: Ffordd and Carchar. The following figure is good for travel, but there will be delays: Merch. The following indicate a difficult journey: Colled, Gwyn, Pobl, Cyswllt, and Tristwch. The following indicate robbery on the journey: Coch and Llogswrn y Ddraig. The following figure indicates other dangers on the way: Mab.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING WAR AND PEACE, the following figures indicate war: Mab, Colled, Coch, Tristwch, Llogswrn y Ddraig, and Bendith Fach. The following indicate peace: Gwyn, Bendith Fawr, Merch, Elw, Llawenydd, and Pen y Ddraig. The remaining figures are uncertain, suggesting that the situation could go either way depending on the choices of individuals.

IN QUESTIONS CONCERNING WORRIES, the following figures indicate there is nothing to fear: Mab, Colled, Llosgwrn y Ddraig, and Ffordd. The following offer an unfavorable indication: Gwyn, Bendith Fawr, Cyswllt, Coch, Elw, and Pen y Ddraig. The remaining figures are neutral and depend on the figures accompanying them for their meaning.

#### **IV. The Figures as Descriptions of Persons**

Each of the geomantic figures also describes a type of individual, and that description may be read on one of three levels—the level of personality, the level of physical appearance, and the level of social relations. A grasp of these correspondences is useful for identifying persons described in readings, as well as obtaining insight into one's own affairs and those of others for whom geomantic charts may be cast.

**MAB** on the level of personality indicates cruelty and a hot temper, a tendency for feelings to show readily on the face, a preoccupation with appearance, easily aroused passions, and a fondness for fighting and sex. On the level of physical appearance it indicates short stature, a body more thick than thin, an attractive but fleshy face, skin of a reddish or brown color with a certain reddening of the face, a sparse beard (if male), little eyes, and poor teeth. On the level of social relations it indicates constant quarrels and difficulties with society, caused by rash behavior.

**COLLED** on the level of personality indicates love of reputation, simplicity, dishonesty, strong passions, and a quick temper. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a height a little shorter than average, a robust constitution, a long neck, a big head, large shoulders, a round face, a little mouth, attractive eyes, large feet, plenty of hair, and sometimes a visible scar or physical deformity. On the level of social relations it indicates a habit of easily spending money but also of escaping from misfortune.

**GWYN** on the level of personality indicates a love of peace and quiet, confidence, charity, innocence, modesty, a habit of easily acquiring friends but little ability to retain them, and a propensity to spend more than he earns. On the level of physical appearance it indicates an apple-shaped body, larger above the waist than below; a medium height; a large head; a forehead that perspires readily; a round face; a relatively thick beard (if male); coarse skin on the face; little eyes; and a mark on one eye. On the level of social relations it indicates many social connections but repeated problems with money.

**POBL** on the level of personality indicates inconstancy, dishonesty, pensive and variable moods, a love of travel and of change, and affections constantly shifting from one person to another. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a moderate height tending toward tallness, an attractive and smiling face, a good complexion, a large and heavy body, a spot over one eye or one eye larger than the other, sallow skin, long teeth, a visible scar or birthmark, and a stiff gait; if male, a thick beard. On the level of social relations it indicates a tendency to drift through life under the influence of others.

**BENDITH FAWR** on the level of personality indicates generosity, modesty, forthright speech, a love of order and tradition, easy manners, ambition tending toward arrogance, and the love of spending and dissipating wealth. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a large build, middle to tall height, a full face, small teeth, large eyes, fine skin, one leg larger than the other, and a propensity to blush. On the level of social relations it indicates high rank and station in life and a position in a respected trade or profession.

**CYSWLLT** on the level of personality indicates a love of reading and learning, glibness, goodwill, a facility at acquiring many friends, generosity, a propensity to spend more than he makes, dishonesty, luxury, talent, and illegal activities. On the level of physical appearance it indicates beauty and grace, a slender and lean body, a long and attractive face, attractive eyes, a small but fine beard (if male), a small nose, and fine legs.

**MERCH** on the level of personality indicates vanity, strong affections, love of harmony and beauty, concern for the regard of others, easy morals, and often a certain shallowness. On the level of physical appearance it indicates beauty, plumpness, a medium height, a soft voice, attractive eyes, a long neck, a large head, a round face, and a little mouth. On the level of social relations it indicates a busy social life and a habit of spending money freely.

**COCH** on the level of personality indicates vehemence, passion, violent speech, and a habit of sowing discord. On the level of physical appearance it indicates an angular face with a forbidding look, a pear-shaped body that is larger below the waist than above, skin reddish or brown, often red spots or pimples on the face, a sparse beard (if male), and a menacing and loud voice. On the level of social relations it indicates a bad reputation, criminal behavior, and plenty of boon companions who are no better.

**ELW** on the level of personality indicates modesty, tenacity, a love of fine clothing, an innate sense of elegance, and a lack of generosity and courage. On the level of physical appearance it indicates medium height, an attractive face, a small and narrow mouth, a body slightly bent forward, small ears, a long neck, plenty of hair, large eyes turned to the ground, the forward teeth larger than those further back, and narrow shoulders. On the level of social relations it indicates plenty of money and a respected position on account of ancestry, wealth, or power.

**CARCHAR** on the level of personality indicates harshness, self-discipline, cruelty, and an eagerness to gain wealth combined with an unwillingness to spend it; yet, despite this, it also indicates a certain greatness of soul. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a medium height tending toward shortness, a large head, short arms, relatively dark skin, a full and attractive beard (if male), strong jaws, a large chest, some defect of the feet, coarse hair, a short and slender neck, a small mouth, and small red eyes. On the level of social relations it indicates few but loyal friends and modest wealth well managed.

**TRISTWCH** on the level of personality indicates a tendency to hold grudges, disrespect for the law, dishonesty, a love of solitude, a quick temper, and very little inclination to laugh. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a long and lean body, dark or sallow skin, long teeth, a long face, a stiff gait, large feet, a mark on the heel, and coarse hair. On the level of social relations it indicates few friends and a bad reputation, which is not always earned.

**LLAWENYDD** on the level of personality indicates intelligence, good habits, religious feelings, honesty, rashness, and a fondness for white or light-colored clothing. On the level of physical appearance it indicates an attractive and modest appearance, a tendency to look toward the ground, a good figure, large feet, a round face, large eyes, a broad forehead, coarse hair, a thick neck, a large nose, and two teeth missing from the upper jaw. On the level of social relations it indicates a good reputation and ample wealth.

**LLOSGWRN Y DDRAIG** on the level of personality indicates unwholesome desires and habits, a lack of concern with the opinions of others, a hot temper, and an aged quality even in earliest childhood. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a lean, long body better shaped behind than before, a long face, large jaws, long and strong legs, a large nose and mouth, and long, uneven teeth. On the level of social relations it indicates a bad reputation, many disputes, and violence.

**PEN Y DDRAIG** on the level of personality indicates innocence, honesty, goodwill, enthusiasm, a lack of prudence, and a childlike quality

even in old age. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a medium height, attractive eyes, a round and attractive face, a large nose and mouth, long teeth, and plenty of hair. On the level of social relations it indicates many friendships and relationships but also unhappy secrets of some kind.

BENDITH FACH on the level of personality indicates audacity and arrogance yet also a surprising degree of personal modesty, strong religious feelings, and greatness of soul and generosity. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a moderately round body and a height average to short, a round and pale face, large hands, a large nose, dark eyes, fine skin, a large forehead, sparse and coarse hair, narrow shoulders, and (if male) a moderate beard. On the level of social relations it indicates many changes in life and success coming only late in life.

FFORDD on the level of personality indicates a temper slow to awaken but savage if roused, a love of travel and change, and an inability to stay in any place or with any person or situation for more than a relatively short time. On the level of physical appearance it indicates a medium height, an apple-shaped body larger above the waist than below, one eye larger than the other or a spot above one eye, small teeth, and a forehead that perspires easily. On the level of social relations it indicates poverty.

### **V. Miscellaneous Symbolism of the Figures**

Several of the geomantic figures also have additional correspondences that do not fit into the categories already given. These are worth keeping in mind, for it will sometimes happen that one of these additional correspondences will add a useful detail to the interpretation of a reading.

Mab also represents justice.

Colled also represents blood and events within hours.

Gwyn also represents books, manuscripts, and all-white objects.

Pobl also represents plants, herbs, and water.

Cyswllt also represents objects of diverse colors, temperance, and events within days.

Elw also represents prudence.

Carchar also represents prisons, tombs, dark pits, and dark, dull objects.

Llawenydd also represents fortitude.

Llogswrn y Ddraig also represents anger and quarrels, and events within weeks.

Pen y Ddraig also represents the home and herds.

Ffordd also represents trees.

### **VI. Further Study**

It is unfortunate that the classic texts of medieval and Renaissance geomancy are difficult to obtain. Cornelius Agrippa's *On Geomancy* and Gerard of Cremona's *On Astrological Geomancy* may sometimes be found reprinted as part of the *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* attributed to the former author; those students with access to the British Library or other scholarly libraries should consult the library catalogue for works on geomancy in English or other languages.

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