

WORKING WITH ANIMALS

Professor Roland Rotherham

THE ORDER OF BARDS OVATES & DRUIDS
MOUNT HAEMUS LECTURE FOR THE YEAR 2006

THE MOUNT HAEMUS AWARD

There was already the Bond or circle of Druid fellowship between them, called the Caw, and companions of these several bodies founded the present-day Mount Haemus Grove in 1245.

Now Mount Haemus is a real mountain in the Balkans, and either this or another of the same name was the classical prison of the winds. ... The Aeolian isles off Sicily are also, however, given for this windy prison. It was, whatever the location, the allegorical name for powerful inspiration which lurked beneath the surface.

Ross Nichols, *The Book of Druidry*

As for the Mount Haemus Grove of 1245, I am simply baffled. The only historical connection between Druidry and Mount Haemus that I can discover comes from the mid-eighteenth century, when William Stukeley wrote letters describing himself as 'a Druid of the Grove of Mount Haemus'. All that he meant by this was that he was one of a group of friends who met at his house on a hill in the Highgate area near London which, because of its windy position, was nicknamed by them after the mountain in Greek mythology which was the home of the winds. His letters were published in the nineteenth century, and may somehow have become the basis for a myth involving the Middle Ages and John Aubrey.

Ronald Hutton, First Mt Haemus Lecture

Recognising the vital part that history plays within Druidry, and thanks to the generosity of the Order's patroness, the Order is now able to grant a substantial award for original research in Druidism, with particular emphasis on historical research. We have called this scholarship the Mount Haemus Award, after the apocryphal Druid grove of Mt Haemus that was said to have been established near Oxford in 1245.

Philip Carr-Gomm

Chosen Chief

The Order of Bards Ovates & Druids

Alban Eilir 2005

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During the course of this paper it is my intention to introduce some examples of cultures who work and or have worked with the concept of animals in their religious structure. I believe that during this exploration, giving as I hope it does, comparisons of sacred ritual that we can identify with, that perhaps we can see the emergence in other cultural beliefs that which will become evident as the “dawn” of Druidry in world-wide sacred beliefs as well as sacred structure that has preceded us.

I have wanted to tackle for many years the questions arising from the place of animals in our cultures and the positions held by them in our belief systems, particularly if any such relevance can be found with us today, hence my subject for this offering.

It is my intention to explore some of the more historical aspects of this subject whilst using some examples of “Shamanism” that are still extant in the world today. I do this because I believe that in so doing I will be illustrating that many cultures in the world still practice forms of animal worship and the usage of “Totem” creatures that we may recognise as, perhaps, examples from the dawn of “Druidry” in cultures that remain, to the large extent, still isolated from western culture.

Please allow me to explain this is very much a personal journey, an odyssey if you will that has been with me for much of my life, most of the time without my realisation.

From our earliest times and in our earliest incarnations we have always held various animals in places of reverence in our cultures and many of these have had religious significance that have remained, albeit corrupted, with us to this day. It is indeed a fact that the animal kingdom has enthralled humankind since our first steps on two feet after emerging from the primordial ooze.

Before I tackle the more important questions regarding this subject I wish to dwell for a moment in stating the obvious, just to put my mind at rest that it is indeed the obvious.

As man grew into the creature that we may recognise today as being *Homo Sapiens*, we started to work with the natural world that surrounded us. The “Hunter-gatherer”, who manufactured the cave paintings that so entice us now did so, if our suppositions are correct, to enable him to have power over the animals he hunted, to give him better fortune for the days chase, to enable him to have a type of “Dominion” over the creatures that he pursued. Yet, however, at this stage in our existence, we had not yet entered the supreme form of arrogance that dominates much of the human race in modern times that we are, indeed, superior to the animals that surround us.

From our earliest times we must be conscious of the fact that we were working with the world that encapsulated us, working with a knowledge that we were ‘part’ of and not ‘lord’ of the surrounding species.

I wish to look briefly at the form of animals in organised religion and here, to use as my pattern, I would introduce the formal religions of the people of ancient Egypt. Let us not forget that the religion of the Egyptians, as far as we can be *historically* certain is the longest existing faith in the history of the world. Let me quickly add that I mean no offence to the “Shamanist” beliefs, I speak purely as a historian dealing with document and relic. The Egyptian religion certainly lasted until the end of the 6th and possibly into the 7th century ad, and from its inception this gives us a documented and datable history of over 4000 years. (*note 1*).

Apart from a handful of deities such as Isis and Osiris, who have appeared in other forms, the Egyptian pantheon was adorned with goddesses and gods of animal likeness. They chose the nature around them to reflect their belief world. The animals, birds, reptiles, insects and other beings were used because they were recognisable they were part of the natural world they worked with and their symbolism was used in order to make the incomprehensible comprehensible.

The creation god Khnum was depicted as having a ram’s head as a symbol of potency and virility. He was also seen as a potter seated at a potter’s wheel and manufacturing man and woman from clay.

Hathor, the sky goddess who was the daughter of Ra the great sun god, he who gave the sun disc to the heads of the other deities and thereby inadvertently giving the later world the ‘halo’, was depicted as a cow. She was goddess of joy and love, dance, song and motherhood. It is her passage in the sky that we still call “Milky Way”.

Sebek, the crocodile god represented the skill of the Pharaoh in battle. This was due to the force and qualities witnessed by the Egyptian as he observed the crocodiles in their environment. So great was the deference due this deity that he had his own city at Crocodopolis. The faithful would feed the temple crocodiles on the finest foods and during the 16th dynasty many of the kings were called Sebekhotep, “Sebek is satisfied”.

We must of course mention Bastet. The cat headed goddess. Normally regarded as the daughter, or sometimes as the wife and sister of, Ra the sun god. She is said to have the head of a lioness but this became a cat as the years progressed and her symbolism was that of the warmth of the sun and its rage. She protected humans from disease and was also goddess of sexual health and love.

However, two divinities must be given room here, those being Horus and Anubis. The divine Horus, son of Osiris and Isis, whose eyes were the sun and the moon. Whose birthday was at the winter solstice. Anubis was said to be the 4th child of Ra. In later years it was also said that he was in fact child of Osiris and Isis’ sister Nephthys. After he was born Nephthys hid him in the rushes of the Nile for fear of Seth, her consort, finding him. He drifted down river where he was found by Isis and raised as her own son. After the death of Osiris it was Anubis who took charge of his funeral and thus created the first mummy. As a result of this Anubis came to be regarded as the inventor of funerary ritual and called “Lord of the Wrappings” (*note 2*).

We can only wonder at the scenes we could have witnessed in the temples of Egypt but the important thing to remember is that when the priests and priestesses, not necessarily in that order, entered the temple wearing the masks of the ancient deities, they were not representing the divinities they actually *were* those same gods incarnate. Every attendant would have known they that they were in fact in the very presence of their divine beings. As the rituals enacted themselves out to their conclusion, the temple was indeed the very home of the living gods and the rituals their performance in the life of the people. I sometimes envy them their simplicity in belief.

It is also evident that with this form of ritual we have the kernel of reports that have come down to us from the medieval period in various forms. In a late 15th century edition of Sir John Mandeville’s “Marvels of the World” we have reports of such lands as the island of “The Dog Headed People”. At first glance a preposterous

idea but on closer inspection and on knowing that Mandeville probably went no further than Calais and bought old sailors stories, we can glean a description of a people whose ceremonies are attended by dignitaries who have dog head dresses. This is further enhanced by similar lands of bird and cat headed folk. Indeed, in the 1512 edition of the Nurnberg Chronicles, we find similar descriptions and illustrations clearly showing humanoid robed figures with animal and bird heads. However, the description of the Schiapods, a people with one large foot that use as a parasol to shade themselves from the sun is a little far fetched to take on face value. (*note 3*).

In most cultures therefore, we can see the start of animal totem worship and/or the worship of animal associated deities as a natural choice with regard to the animals that are considered important in each particular culture in it's own merits. Dr Rapport writing in 1878 volunteers the opinion that "We link with each animal and it's attendant characteristics, each individual creature personifying that which we seek to identify with". A sentiment shared by Salamon Reinach, who in his book "Cultes, Mythes Et Religion" written in 1912 even goes so far as to suggest we identify with animals in culture in the same order of consciousness. For example we will look to the strength of the lion and the fleetness of the deer in order that these strengths will transfer unto ourselves. (*note 4*).

In addition to these thoughts, the local mage can also take unto themselves a creature to augment their existing powers. For example, again we travel to Egypt and see that the hawk is venerated also as a teller of fortunes, this is documented by Diodorus and that many sages will identify with the hawk to enoble their prophetic power. In the same way the sacred ibis is worshiped and 'totemised' by the scribes for as the scribe dips his pen into the ink so does the ibis dip its bill into the Nile. The same bird is also said to foretell of the annual Nile flood, or inundation as the Egyptian called it. So strong was their faith in this bird that they include it in their prayer to the Nile:

"Oh great flood come to us.
Bringer of happiness to the orphan.
Blessed feeder of the many.
Great waters of the ibis Thoth". (*note 5*).

When travelling down to the upper Nile, that region in the south of Egypt as we must remember that Egyptians saw the world differently to us, we come to the land of the Dinka tribe. These people share a common ancestry with their neighbours the Shiluk and also share the same animal belief system. From them we can again understand the association with the beasts that share their environment and their every day life. They worship the Elephant for its strength, the Lion for its skill in hunting, also the Hyaena for the same purpose. They venerate the Hippo and the Fox for their family virtues and the Crocodile for its wisdom.

In Kenya we can find how these atavistic thoughts have developed over the millennia when we observe the Masai and how their cattle have become central to their very existence. The Masai cattle are not just currency, not just commodities and goods, they are the very pivot to their culture. A great particular honour that can be bestowed upon you is to be invited to 'take blood and milk' with them. First the Masai take a bowl of milk from a recently calved cow, this is particularly thick and rich, they then carefully open a vein on the side of the neck of a bull. This is done with such care and very quickly staunches using herbs and in such a way that the animal does not appear even to flinch. The blood is then stirred into the milk and it is offered to you to drink. The outcome is a mixture quite similar to a pink and salty slightly fluid yoghurt and not in the least unpleasant. One can only imagine the vitamins and iron that are contained in this heady brew.

In the late 1950's, just on the border between Kenya and Tanganyika, during the incumbency of Lt Col Hugh Senior as district commissioner, some bone carvings were found by an expedition from the Institute of African Studies headed by Frank LeBreton. These clearly showed tribesmen bearing remarkable a resemblance to both Masai and Watutsi warriors. The tribesmen are shown kneeling around cattle and drinking from bowls in a form of communion libation act, very similar to the ceremony described earlier. (*note 6*).

In addition to this is the tradition of the Masai youth to enter into the bush and prove his transition into manhood by killing a lion and wearing its mane as a headdress to be fully allowed to enter the tribe. This however is not as simple as it sounds. The killing of the lion is not an act of violence but an absorption of the lion into the body of the young tribesman. The tribesman believes that he becomes "Simba" at that moment and that his particular lion continues to live within him and imbue him with its power and strength.

During the 'emergency' in Kenya, now known as the Mau Mau uprising, a similar ceremony took place but without the killing of any animals involved. The followers of Jomo Kenyatta, who chose an extreme path to independence, became known as "Chui Wata" or "Leopard Men". Their ceremony to adopting the leopard as their totem was drug induced and whereas many of them wore leopard skins when on their missions these were not necessarily killed for that purpose and many were existing trophies of some age. The skins were augmented with steel claws, which reached onto the tribesman's hands and these he used as a weapon when on his drug induced spree.

In some cultures the totem of the tribe is brought into play during a ceremony in which a member of the tribe is 'killed' to be tended by the totem.

In North America, in the area of the Nootka Sound, the native Indians have an astonishing ritual during which the son of the chief is symbolically 'killed'. The chief's son is introduced as his heir only after this ritual has taken place. At the age of 11 years the son is allowed to take part in the great ritual of the "Wolf Death". During this ritual he is 'shot' by his father with an arrow and the whole tribe enters a period of full mourning. During these mourning ceremonies in which the boy is laid upon a funerary bier, 2 wolves, (actually 2 shaman from the tribe), burst into the proceedings and carry off the boy's 'body'. He is taken away from the camp and undergoes a purification ritual. Upon completion he re-enters the camp as a wolf and is officially acknowledged as heir to his father thus ensuring the continuance of the chieftaincy of his nation. (*note 7*).

In North West Canada a similar incident occurs. The Inuit nation will accept members into their tribe providing they are reborn as Inuit after death. Every initiate is brought into a circle and is ceremonially 'marked' by wolf claws, during this ritual 2 wolves burst into the ring and abduct the initiate. The wolves are from a particular rank of the local shaman. The initiate is then brought back symbolically dead and his body is placed in a tent set aside for the purpose of preparing the body for the journey into the next life. It is then proclaimed by two more shaman that a magic stone is inside of the initiate's body which must be removed. The body is then cleansed by the mages and the magic stone symbolically removed and the initiate is then invited to become a full member of the nation as a reborn wolf and normally given a wolf's name.

North West Columbia as well holds a symbolic slaying. The Oala Indians have a ceremony during which however the new adult is slain by his tribe and his body removed from the camp, the reborn adult is then returned to the camp by his totem and he is welcomed into the tribe. Interestingly in this ritual the totem may be a shaman dressed as a variety of animals and birds. Whichever creature is involved becomes the totem of that individual for life.

If a tribe member is actually killed by a real animal that is his totem it is considered by most of the members of the tribe that the actual death be classed as a perfect “Karma” and that a balance is in order and indeed that the soul of the departed is doubly blessed as the departed has their life force associated with the totem, they are bound with it. Interestingly this brings up the question of the death of Balder, if his life force was bound with the mistletoe, it was in fact perfect balance that mistletoe in a form be responsible for his passing. Perfect Karma and indeed to be expected.

With the Aboriginal people of Australia totem play a most important role, as would be expected. Once again their animals are those with which they share their existence. Animals of particular significance to them are the Kangaroo, the Crow and the Owl. Each of these are said to have special powers in the foretelling of the future. The aboriginal will examine the number and pattern of the ‘hops’ for instance that a particular kangaroo will make over a certain space in a given time and these will determine the omens for that day. With the owl it is determined by the number of “Hoots” that the bird makes during certain hours of the night.

As with most tribal cultures, the creatures become sacrosanct and therefore ‘Taboo’ in its truest sense of the word. Apart from certain circumstances these animals are never killed and their existence is considered as vital to the wellbeing of the local tribe. Each of the tribes describes the animals as their ‘Ancestors’ and generally refrain from its consumption as food.

The augury properties of these animals certainly gave rise to the adoption of them as personal totems and all tribal youths who are undertaking the passage into manhood will identify with and accept an animal into themselves as personal spiritual totem. I personally witnessed one such ceremony in 1970 with a tribe who lived approximately 150 miles south east of Uluru (Ayers Rock).

The youth in question was 11 years old and ready to be accepted as a full male member of his tribe. This particular group lived near to one of the great rivers

and the animal chosen by the shaman and agreed by the boy was the crocodile. The youth was laid onto the ground a short distance from the river bank and ritually cleansed by the rubbing of sand over his body. This completed the shaman each proceeded to dance around the boy. During this part of the ritual the boy lay totally impassive to the ceremony.

The dance was not a furious whirl but more of a rhythmic stomping around the boy's body, still prone, and the chanting of the attendant prayers. This continued for some 20 minutes or so with the boy's expression still registering extreme disinterest. At once the dance stopped, the shaman knelt by his body, one each side, and they proceeded to draw imaginary lines over the chest and legs of the youth.

Then a paste-like paint was made using white sand and coloured mineral powders. These were mixed in a small number of bowls and then applied to the youth. The patterns that were produced were becoming more recognisable as time went on as the markings of the crocodile. The scales and ridges were indeed stylised but were true to form as the markings of the crocodile as if painted by a native artist. The thing of greatest interest to me however was the attitude of the boy, soon to become a man. As the markings covered more and more of body the expression changed dramatically and the boy's body started a mild convulsion. Nothing extreme but a definite and rhythmic convulsion as if there was something inside his body that either he was gently trying to expel or that was trying to extricate itself from him.

During this time the chanting prayers had become almost inaudible and were barely recognisable as sound. This continued for about another 20 minutes or so until the painting was complete, the shaman then stood and started to gently sprinkle the boy, who was by now getting very restless, the effect was astonishing. The body rolled onto his stomach and got onto all fours and proceeded to walk in the waddling type fashion associated with the crocodile. His voice started to make the strange hissing noise also allied to the beast and his spine started to convulse from side to side as if furiously beating a tail that we could not see. The boy then slithered, no other word for it, to the river and immersed himself in it started to swim again like a crocodile. Curiously there were three crocodile spotted in the river and my partner and I were ready with rifles just in case but nothing happened at all! He was completely ignored and continued to swim for some time without let or hindrance finally rising from the river all smiles and with a great aura of achievement. I felt greatly honoured

at having been allowed this event and also a little ashamed at my lack of faith in the crocodile's prudence in not attacking the young man. (*note 8*).

Whilst this was taking place, just some short distance from the boys inauguration ceremony, a further group of shamans were conducting a sand painting. This was of curious structure being about 5 feet square and consisting entirely, as you might expect of coloured sands from around the area, some of which were of marvellous colour. The scene depicted was a simple one, it was a vision through water of a river with plants and a single fish, the type of which I could not possibly identify. Suffice to say that no 'stickle back' was ever so glorious. The sand painting took about the same to complete as the ceremony with the boy and they had indeed started it at a similar period. It appeared to be finished some 15 minutes after the boy's ritual and we all went over to see this painting.

In its simplicity it was stunning, very similar to other aboriginal art I had seen painted on bark previously. Then the shaman who appeared to be in charge of this event waved his hand's some 2 feet above the sand painting and as we watched the fish started to swim! When they all saw the look of pure astonishment in my face they all, including the youth/crocodile, simply started to roar with laughter and with a final flourish the shaman destroyed the picture until it was no more than a mix of coloured sand. An experience never to be forgotten!

In the Australian Northern Territories they have yet another ritual that is something of a puzzle. This takes place in the land of the people known as the Erunta tribe who worship the Emu as a sacred and holy bird.

This seems to demonstrate the ritual killing of the totem and the mixing of totem and human into a communion. The tribe clear a space of ground until it is level and also free from any vegetation. Once this is done the ground is stamped on until reasonably firm and on an adjoining piece of land a fire is built. The Erunta then proceed to hunt and kill a large emu bird. Then the curious part, each tribesman opens a vein in his arm and they combine their blood to cover an area of some 3 square yards until it is soaked quite heavily with their blood. When this has dried and caked they paint an emu design on it and it is duly sanctified. The men then sit and consume that which they consider the best parts of the bird, namely the fat and the eggs and they commence to sing, with all the loss of blood it is a wonder they are still *compis mentis*. Dancers appear wearing emu headdresses and the sacred emu dance is performed to mimic the movements of the bird they worship. This ritual is to ensure

that the bird they hold sacred continues to multiply and that their territory will be forever flocked with their beloved emu. This is not a death but a making sacred and as with other tribes they believe that the emu they have consumed is not dead but alive in each of them participating. This ceremony has been well documented by Dr Frazer.

With most tribal civilisations there is a commonly held belief and one I find particularly enchanting. They each refer to animals as ancestors, with each story that occurs whether it be of creation or heroic deeds the animals are always referred to as those who have lived before human. Quite perceptive I believe for tribal cultures that are supposed to be 'primitive'. Indeed there is one rather beautiful belief with the aboriginal people of Northern Queensland that tells of what they call the "Dreamtime Still To Come", when the earth is populated again with races of animals, the animals having replaced the human tribes with their own but without conflict, it just seems to happen that we sleep and the animals take our place.

The Maori culture is also well represented in this manner. Their creation has a fabulous mix of man and animal both living together in perfect harmony but interestingly with man consorting with the animals over spiritual matters and telling of them as "They who came before", an admission on the part of tribal man that we were not the first and a condemnation of the belief that we have "Dominion" over the animals.

As with the Emu totem tribe in Australia, in East Siberia there is a tribe called the Gilyak, with them it is them it is the Bear that holds sway in their rituals. To the Gilyak the bear is the great food provider and bringer of prosperity to their people. The Gilyaks first set about catching their bear, this is done carefully by netting it in order that the beast is not harmed. There follows many weeks of pampering for the bear, it is normally kept in a cage but periodically it is taken out and brought around the village on a lead, the ability for this to happen is partly due to the diet that the bear is undergoing at the time. The bear is more than well fed on fish, cakes and large quantities of local brandy, this treatment makes him quite compliant after a time. His entry into a house is considered a great blessing and the inhabitants of the domicile enjoy minor celebrity status for sometime after the event.

When the time comes for the ritual to reach its climax, the bear is led out and once again heavily dosed with brandy, the beast is then quickly killed and his flesh is devoured and his blood drunk. The Gilyak believe that the passing of the bear unites all who take part in it, they too believe that the bear is not dead but living in them all,

the bear is their communion and provider and enjoys that status within their nation, indeed no bear hunting apart from this ritual takes place, the animal holding a special place in their reverence. (*note 9*).

Until the early years of the 19th century in northern Sweden a similar ritual took place. In an area that even now how has a separate language called “Transtransmall” the bear is very prevalent. As with the Gilyak the bear was hunted and well fed until the time of the ritual sacrifice. Then as well as eating the flesh and drinking the blood, some of the blood was sprinkled onto the attendants and the senior celebrant would wear the bears skin as a robe. Those who partook of the blood were considered to have taken on a rebirth with the bear.

When we talk of interaction with the animal world in our sacred past, at least as far as ritual is concerned, we cannot pass over the importance of the cult of Mithras. Here we have one of the most intriguing religious sects to grace our antiquity. Yet again within its borders we find a sacred sacrifice that involves the killing of the very animal that proves such a central point to the whole belief system.

The act performed by Mithras, which is known as the “Tauroctomy”, is possessed of such passion and determination that we can only stand by and look amazed as it unfolds. When Mithras holds the bull to perform this, at first glance, brutal act, his gaze is diverted that he may not witness his own actions. It is not that he abhors his action, not at all, his averting his gaze is central to the act itself. As the knife draws itself across the bull’s throat he is conscious of the fact that he is purifying himself by the very act of killing off his own ego, the very part of him that will stop his attainment of perfection. As with so many other sacred ‘super heroes’ he must conquer that side of himself that will detract from his spiritual excellence, that very part that must be destroyed in order that he can identify more directly with that which is more deeply hidden within himself. Here the bull is symbolic of the male ego in all its most accepted forms, the ‘laddish’ element is to be eradicated in order that the divine can surface. (*note 10*).

As with other heroes, to gaze upon your own ego is to turn, symbolically, to stone. The heart and soul would only maintain their former existence leaving no leeway for the powers to come, for the divine to interject and interact with the new born heroes calling and destiny. This, I believe, is also demonstrated in the legend of Perseus and the Gorgon Medusa, she must be conquered in order for the fulfilment of his purpose to be attained.

Again however the bull is not meanly butchered, the act is careful and calculated. This may well have direct parallels with the Zoroastrian belief in the creation, in which the sacred white bull is fed hemp by Ahura Mazda in order that when the time comes for Ahriman to deliver the fatal blow the animal feels no pain and the passing of the creature is deemed to be the very act that gives life to all things, flora and fauna. All beings emanate from the body and blood of the fallen beast.

Fortunately it is not always necessary for animals to die, symbolically or otherwise, to achieve their divine purpose. In the great sub-continent of India we can witness supreme devotion to animals as avatars of the holy Brahma. Here again we can see the evidence of a bull cult with deference shown to the great white 'Brahma' bull. This magnificent beast, as with the holy cows, is allowed to roam free and shown great reverence as it passes. Indeed even those who have little enough to eat themselves consider it a great boon to be allowed to pass food on to the enormous animals as they walk sedately around the towns and villages. Brahma, who is considered the creator of all gods and men, forms a trinity with the gods Vishnu and Shiva and they are collectively called the Trimurti. As divine creator Brahma is attended by a sacred swan called Hamsa, this is in tribute to his sacred being responsible for the creation of the Ganges river, "Mother Ganga", one of the 4 sacred rivers of the ancient world and supreme giver of life to all India.

The creation myth is actually rather beautiful and, I believe, worth sharing here. It states that in the beginning the universe was shrouded in darkness. Eventually a seed came floating in the cosmic ocean and gave rise to a great shining and wondrous egg. According to the sacred text, "The Laws Of Manu", "In this egg the blessed one remained for one whole year, then by the divine will of Him alone, by the effort of His thought only, the egg divided in two halves. From the halves He made the celestial sphere and Earth the material sphere. Between the two halves of the egg He placed the air, the eight cardinal points and the eternal abodes of the waters. From Himself he drew the Spirit, including in itself being and not being, and from the Spirit He drew the feeling of self which is conscious of personality and is master. The egg finally revealed Brahma the god who divided himself into 2 people, a male and a female. In due course these two beings gave rise to the whole of the rest of creation, whilst being watched by the divine avatars of the supreme Brahma.

It personally gives me great satisfaction when I attend our local Hindu temple occasionally to absorb elements of their service and witness the very central

roles played in the rituals by Hanuman and, my own favourite, Lord Ganesha. There is something of almost lost innocence that allows these divinities to hold their lofty positions. When you enter a Hindu temple the first deity that you face is Lord Ganesha and as you make namasti to him you are conscious of Hanuman at your side as guardian of the door you have entered by. Can we believe in animals as sacred avatars of the Supreme Being? I believe we can.

With these beings we can see all the elements of our existence explained to us and our purpose and conduct made clear to all of those who want to listen. I often wonder if we dream because of the stories we are told, or are the stories told to us to explain our dreams? And in those dreams do we glimpse our eternal purpose?

In Lord Ganesha we can experience in existence, at least in India, the devotion to the creature as sacred. The ordinary elephants, as well as those of the temples, are treated as extensions of Lord Ganesha's supreme being incarnate. As son of Shiva and Parvati and the patron of wisdom and literature and guardian of homes and business ventures it is hardly surprising that he has such favour with modern Hindus as much as in earlier times. His values are valid now as then and speaking as someone who has received a blessing from a temple elephant I am only surprised that many more do not hold this deity in greater reverence. With the daily offerings at his shrines of sweets and cakes to honour his divinity we can certainly identify with a part of our own divine make-up, that which he so proudly flaunts and we can recognise as our gluttony and weaknesses.

Even though the elephant is used by many as a working beast and in some cases not treated in a way that we would consider befitting a living incarnation of a deity, what of some of the animals that exist around us in Europe? Surely we can identify with our early totem worship of animals that have now become, to many, merely creatures to use and work as humans see fit.

It is now important for our searches to return us to Europe and to the cultural past that we will recognise as being an intrinsic part of our spiritual make-up. Europe in the periods that we define as the "Bronze Age" and "Iron Age" was, we believe, the home of the Celtic peoples and, as such, provided the crucible for "Druidry" as a religion for many of those same people. In Kendrick's book, "The Druids", he states that many but not all of the Celtic races were druid, some having allegiance to other atavistic beliefs. However, we can be sure that whatever the labelled source of faith,

the primary instinct was to worship the natural forces and energies and animals make up much of this portion of belief. (*note 11*).

It is an interesting point that out of some 380 plus deities that are listed with reference to this period in history for the Celts, approximately 305 occur as “Once only mentions”, with only about 7 having repetitive mentions of thirty or more times. Of course, we must remember that sometimes deities have changed and interchangeable names as we move from area to area but even so it makes an interesting statistic in so far as a purely historical context is concerned.

At this juncture I would like to briefly mention some of the Celtic pantheon that I personally find intriguing with regard to their animal connections and subsequent positions in the European structure of faith.

Indeed, many of the Celtic tribes adopted beasts and birds as their communal totems and by these they identified themselves as a community. Some of them were indeed very inspiring.

The Taurisci, the “Bull folk”. The Cattraighe, the “Cat people. The Epidii, the “Horse people”. The Brannovices, the “Raven people”. Each of these people and more would be identified by and, indeed, identify with these wondrous tribal totems.

The stories that grew around the beasts and birds would become almost anthems to the people who lived under their patronage and would, eventually find their way into the great works of early medieval literature that we know originated with the oral traditions of our ancestors.

Certainly one of the most entertaining stories regarding animals and transformation must be the story of Lleu and Blodeuedd. “Lleu of the Skilful Hand”, was as you will remember, the son of Arianhrod. She, however, laid certain curses upon him that would enable her to control his life for eternity. She cursed that he should have no name apart from one given by her, no weapons apart from ones that she devised for him and no wife could be his taken from the human race.

Fortunately for Lleu he was raised for much of his youth by his uncle, the fabulous Gwydion, whose exploits in the Druid and Bardic world are legion. His uncle devised a plan assist Lleu to overcome his taboos and also, in conjunction with the great wizard Math, they set about creating Lleu a mate. They made, of course, the beautiful Blodeuedd, “Lady of the Flowers”, for she was allegedly made of flowers. She was lovely indeed but in her making Gwydion and Math forgot to give her a

conscience, so that in a while the beautiful Blodeuedd was having consort with another man and they were plotting to kill Lleu. (*note 12*).

One day, as they attacked Lleu and as the first blow struck him, he changed into an eagle and soared upwards to escape their attack. His uncle Gwydion found him and nursed him back to health and had Blodeuedd turned into an owl, the bird of night and darkness. A modern retelling of this story has been expertly done in the form of the book “The Owl Service”, by Alan Garner, a writer who draws heavily on Celtic and Norse lore in children’s books.

It is strange but as the story unfolds and the characters shape shift and change, it is almost as if the reader, or listener, is expecting it. The world of metamorphosing not being alien to us but still holding it’s magic. Fabulous, yes, but not unbelievable.

The art of shape shifting when performed by the Druid/Bard, is not just a simple case of changing ones appearance or spiritual level during the act, it is far more. The transformation into the animal or bird of his or her choice forms a link with that creature that is acknowledged world wide in atavistic cultures. The whole process of transformation and divine dance has the ability to ascend the holy one into an area that is far above that of the uninitiated.

From the earliest sources available to us and, we can only go by those sources historically when making our studies, the art left us shows these totems clearly and we are able to deduce that the totems of each geographical area show the shamans alter ego or creature that the celebrant transforms into. They show not only the animals but also the actual transformed mage in the process of their craft. We are witnesses to actual picture magic, probably the oldest extant form of material magic known to us.

These beasts and birds that are often the totem of the tribe are also the guiding animals of each shaman and fulfil the purpose of taking the druid/shaman through their particular realms. These are often realms not normally open to humans existing as they sometimes do in elements in which humans can not thrive.

Interestingly, sometimes, these transformations take on a life in later beliefs that, perhaps, the original celebrants would be a little surprised at and, possibly, amused by. Most will be aware of the divine figure of Cernunnos, the antlered deity who has such a strong following today as, indeed, He did in our antiquity. The image is well known of the God seated in a lotus position with His head adorned by royal

points of a deer. He is normally, as depicted on the Gundestrup Cauldron, seated and holding a warriors torc in one hand and a serpent in the other, thus depicted he is the very epitome of the power deity in which guise he is worshipped. Certainly our predecessors would be wont adorn themselves with examples of his antlers and deer skin in order to achieve a oneness with Him. His appearance, when summoned and adopted by the priest, at any ritual would have been a cause of great jubilation and the tribesmen who were of the hunting persuasion would have been armoured with His presence prior to a ritual hunting or sacrifice. As the lord of all woodland creatures in our part of the world, he would be viewed on as the ultimate blessing. In much the same way that the great god Pan would be in veneration by our neighbours in the Mediterranean.

We must draw a line here connecting this god to the early legends of Saint Hubertus. He who went hunting on Good Friday and was about to fire his crossbow at a deer when a large white stag appeared and in between it's antlers there appeared a vision of the crucifixion. Hubertus was instantly converted and became the patron saint of huntsmen. (*note 13*). A magical stag is so common in our culture that I believe we must be looking at links with the great Cernunnos transformed by later beliefs from one avatar to another.

The wearing of stag's antlers and deer-skin is still wide spread. This is even now evident in Staffordshire, every year in the village of Abbots Bromley the famous "Horn Dance" takes place. Admittedly the antlers are those of elk which is curious as no elk were, we believe, indigenous to our shores and probably brought in by the invading Norsemen. The fact remains that the dance, which shows deer in full rut, is played out at various places throughout the day. The dance is a male only preserve even though the figure of the maiden is played by a man. The antlers are much older in date than the actual Norse invasion and have been carbon dated to centuries prior to that event. Obviously the antlers are relics in their own right and whoever brought them to Staffordshire did so as part of a sacred trust in order that the sacred dance of fertility could continue in their new homeland. It is interesting to note that the antlers must never leave the parish of Abbots Bromley and when the dancers are asked to perform at other venues, which they have all over the world, it is replicas that are taken, the originals never leaving the safety of the church in which they are housed. The dancers as well are quite unique, each dancer passes on his knowledge to his sons

and the same families have been performing the dance since Elizabethan times to our knowledge. (*note 14*).

As with the “Horn Dancers” there are other dances around Britain that echo our earlier world and it’s belief in the transforming of human into animal in order to achieve the given task or ritual. Nearly all of these now have degenerated from being sacred and have become simply tourist attractions and many who take part are probably not aware of their origins.

Many of the Celtic deities were adopted by other faiths and this was, indeed, the case with Epona, the horse goddess. As with the dog, the horse was one of the first animals that humans developed an intimate relationship with. Epona as their deity became one of the most popular within the Celtic world. Indeed, some of the great white horses that are cut into chalk cliffs are dedicated to her and of those perhaps none is more resonant of her cult than the white horse near Wantage. Epona is often seen with a young foal when depicted pictorially, this gives us a clue that she was also considered to be a fertility goddess by many. Upon the conquest of the Celtic people by the Roman forces, she quickly was recognised as a being of great importance and the Roman cavalry adopted her as their own immortal. When viewed in the Roman context we are generally given an image of her riding side-saddle and often surrounded by a covey of birds. Possibly due to this depiction of Epona she became connected with the lady Rhiannon in the tale of Pwyll from the Mabinogion. Many Celtic denizens of the other worlds shared tasks, powers and gifts, this was due sometimes to the geographical spread of the tribes and the emerging differences in their sacred pantheons.

The horse appears in many legends and has been important to many cultures as a totem animal from the deepest times of antiquity until more modern times. As an ex-cavalryman I have always been intrigued by our relationship with this animal and in particular how it has been perceived in earlier years. One of the finest volumes ever written on mans relationship with the horse was written in the 4th century bce by Xenophon, the fabled cavalry commander of the equally fabled Alexander the Great. Interestingly his book, “The Hippike”, is still available and still used by cavalry officers world wide today. Xenophon tells us in his preamble to the earliest version of his work, which is available in the British Library in translated version, “Make yourself at one with the very soul of your animal, let its nobility merge with your spirit and allow it to enrich your very being. Only then can you call yourself

‘horseman’”. A noble sentiment indeed and one that many have forgotten over the centuries and yet a theology that was openly recognised by William Cavendish, The Duke of Newcastle in his work “A General System of Horsemanship”, first published during the period we call the “Interegnum”, that period between the execution of King Charles 1st and the restoration of King Charles 2nd, when the duke was in exile, (as a royalist), in Antwerp. He frequently uses passages that are identifiable from Xenophon and although much of his training practice would be considered a little brutal today, his thoughts on the comparison between horse and human are interesting.

“If a man was locked up from birth until the age of 20 years in a dungeon and then released we should see that he lacks more and will be less rational than a beast who has been bred and disciplined.

“What makes scholastics degrade horses so much, is in my opinion, from nothing else but the small knowledge they have of them, and from a persuasion that they themselves know everything. They fancy they talk pertinently about them, whereas they know no more than they learn by riding a hackney-horse from the University back to London again.

If they studied them as a horseman should they would have a different opinion of them and talk otherwise”. (*note 15*).

There are many instances over Europe of the horse being used as a symbol for the corn-spirit, often the beast, either as mare or stallion, is identified with this ancient cult figure. In the area between Kalw and Stuttgart, when the corn is seen to bend in the wind the local cry goes out “There runs the horse”. In the Baden region the last sheaf of oats is called the “Oats-stallion” and indeed in our own country, in Hertfordshire to be precise, there was until recent years a ritual called “Crying the mare”. When the last blades of corn were left standing in the field they would be gathered up and fastened together to form what was known as ‘the mare’. The reapers would then stand at some distance from the ‘mare’ and throw their sickles at the structure. If one of them cut it through he would cry out “I have her”, the others would then shout “What have you”?, he would then reply “A mare, a mare, a mare”! The others then ask “Who’s is she”? And he replies naming the owner 3 times. The reply comes back “Whither will you send her”? And the man answers back with a name of one who has not yet reaped all his corn in. The corn spirit is in that way passed on to farm where the corn still stands and it may take refuge until that corn too

is reaped and so on. This also took place in Shropshire I believe. In France there is also a corn-spirit ritual that features a horse as its central theme. If a harvester grows too weary to work as hard as his fellows, it is said “He has the fatigue of the horse”, and the first sheaf reaped is called the “Cross of the horse”, and is placed on a wooden cross in the barn. The youngest horse must then walk over it and tread on it. The working party then dance round the last sheaves and cry out “See the remains of the horse”. The corn that ensues from this dancing and trampling is then fed to the youngest horse in the village. According to Dr Frazer and Dr Mannhardt, this represents the corn-foal or the corn-spirit of the following year who has consumed the old corn horse as it took its refuge in the last sheaf to be reaped and was therefore fed to the foal. Again the symbolic animal not dying, but living in another ready to be reborn the next season.

At this point I think it worthy to mention Demeter, as with many deities she has a ‘horse’ connection of interest. In Arcadia, to be precise in the cave of Phigalia, the ‘Black Demeter’ is portrayed with the body of a human but the head and mane of a horse. The legend tells us that in Phigalia the horse is again the corn-spirit, this being due the fact that Demeter assumed the form of a mare to escape from Poseidon as she searched for her daughter. She retired into a cave and there she robed herself in black and lived so long in the cave that the worlds vegetation was near to total destruction and if it had not been for the divine intervention of the Great God Pan who managed to talk her out of the cave and back in the world then mankind would surely have perished. In memory of this the local inhabitants set a statue to the Black Demeter in the cave where she hid. (*note 16*).

Another charming custom still survives in northern Saxony to this day. Every year when the apples are harvested in the orchards, the first of the apples is always fed to the oldest of the horses. This consuming of the new apples by the old horses is said to ensure a new crop the following year.

Having spent some time over the years with Solomon Lee, of blessed memory, the well-known “Horse-whisperer”, I was pleased when he informed me about accepting the horse as a spirit into himself. Not only in order that he may work with them more efficiently, but also so that he would be able to merge spiritually with the horse as a species as he felt that, as many Buddhists do, that he had indeed been a horse in a past life and wondered if he would be so again and if so what caused the rebirth.

He instructed me in the matter saying that he would virtually live in the stables with the horses for great lengths of time and sleep, eat and perform daily functions only with the horses. He found that in time he started to feel even closer with the animals and went so far as to actually share sleeping space with one particular horse he had an affinity with. Having started by 'sharing one breath' with a horse, which is indeed a fine way to adopt a horse to you. Simply approach a horse head on and place your face close to its and with one breath breathe through your nose directly into the horses nose and wait for it to return the breath, which it will. Incidentally, this is also a traditional Maori greeting. Having done this and then started sleeping with the horse he told me of one night whilst neither awake nor asleep he heard, or rather heard within himself the voice of the horse. He told me that the horse instructed him in their ways and methods of expressing their thoughts and feelings to humans. He could indeed 'speak' horse and his artistry with them was to witness a truly sacred moment. The serenity experienced was unearthly and the feeling of well being stunning in its entirety.

I have always found these wondrous animals spiritual in the extreme. I have felt when with them in the open and away from 'humans', a sense of sharing 'prayer' with them particularly in the solitude of night. Similarly when I spend time among the local deer herds there is a sense of timeless thought being shared.

Most people will now agree that animals have souls and are capable of much both emotionally and spiritually, also it is now becoming more accepted that it is possible to link with animals thoughts and feelings and to share the experience of spiritual growth with them. Much in the same way our forefathers did. It was with this in mind that I remembered Solomon and some of his teachings. I believe them to be valid to this study.

I was informed then, many years ago, that animals do talk and communicate with us if we listen but the communication mostly comes in the forms of mentally formed pictures from the animal to us. Surely this was the same for our Druid forebears? It was explained to me as being as being a series of pictographs and that, if I was open enough, the pictographs would be transmitted to me by an animal with which I had formed a bond. There are now numerous "Animal Psychologists" who are pronouncing this same method and making considerable money from it. Also, and this is of great interest as it clearly shows our potential, this is not a magical or secret skill as such but one that can be learned by anyone who is willing to apply themselves.

When a bond exists between the human and the animal it is almost impossible for the bond to be broken. Strange stories exist of animals that instinctively 'know' when a human is in danger and vice versa. The bond can be cultivated but not forced. As I remembered Solomon telling me about his 'talking' with a horse, so it was with my own first and totally unexpected 'melding' with an animal.

While asleep on Long Valley, Salisbury Plain with my horse "Butterscotch", I was aware during the night of a great warmth and peace. It appears that my horse had laid down by my back on it's side and placed it's legs around me in almost a gesture of embrace, my body being cradled within it's legs. I was only dimly aware of this but I became more conscious of a feeling of wellbeing emanating around me and then in short passages of sight I was shown, for want of a better word, images from what I gathered to be Butterscotch's life. Almost like sharing a dream if you will. Surely, this is similar to the dream visions within the Druid world? Can it not be that sometimes the visions are of the animals contacting us and not necessarily to just be there on our whim?

It is also my wont to occasionally go into the deer runs at Cannock Chase, a well-known forest near my home and there I have attempted at times to make contact with the deer. I have found the best method is to sit with my back to a tree, of some age if possible, it provides an anchor with antiquity I find. I then relax and picture the deer and, indeed, Cernunnos as being around me. Often this works and on numerous occasions I have been visited by many of the deer. Sometimes placing a ring of apples around me I have even had the deer come up to me and eat the apples from around my feet. Even, but infrequently, some have ventured to take apples from my hand and then I have experienced that which, in my mind, has been a truly religious communion and revelled of the feeling of the deer breathing on my face.

If this is possible now, for an inexperienced person like me, then surely the phenomena when witnessed or conducted by a Druid/Shaman would be enhanced ten-fold and certainly so when part of a ritual for the sanctity of the totem animal within the tribal context?

We have seen the importance of adopting the animals character and mannerisms, these are amongst our first experiments when our ancestors chose to become one with the animals. We have seen the benefits of wearing animal skins and by-products such as antlers and, in some cases horse's tails. However, our earliest

form of animal identification had to come from the skin markings given by the shaman to the initiate and upon his own body. Before the clothing came the paint. This I have already covered as far as the Australian Aboriginal is concerned and I think that it has direct relevance to our own development and the usage of markings by the Druid/Shaman.

Here I must site the case of the man found in Lindow Bog in Cheshire during the mid 1970's. The findings have been well documented by the British Museum in a book entitled "Life and Death of a Druid Prince". (*note 17*). Whereas I feel that in some areas their attitude to the sanctity of the man is little blasé I am fairly convinced that their historical detail is fine and that culturally findings do hold water.

The man, who they have named "Lovernios", had been completely preserved in the peat waters of the bog, it's name deriving from "Llyn Dhuw" or the Dark Water and this was in reference to the peat being prevalent in the bogs make up. According to the historical data, he was from a tribe in Ireland that had been summoned to assist Boudicca in her revolt against Rome in the 1st century ce. They arrived however too late and the theory was that a sacrifice had to be made in order to placate whichever god they thought had deserted them. It was decided to draw lots to find a sacrifice with all taking part. The 'lucky' recipient of the adventure being a particularly high-born Druid of their tribe.

It is not necessary to go into the details of how the sacrifice was undertaken, suffice to say Lovernios was duly despatched and his body placed into Lindow Bog. Of importance to us in this case however is that fact that as his body was so perfectly preserved, so was his skin with it's markings and his adornments. It transpired he was a member of the "Fox" tribe of the goddess Siobna from Ireland and his markings were indicative of his being of good birth and of the priesthood. He also had around his arm his band of fox fur sacred to his goddess. The markings on his skin proved most informative but also proved that the painting and in some cases tattooing of the human body to become initiate into a tribe or priesthood is almost universal. Indeed, some of the designs used by the Celtic Druid priesthood can also be seen in the body markings of the Hindu temple dancers, the Maori of New Zealand and, in more stylised form, by the Australian Aboriginal. Let us not forget that as the Lindow Man was found wearing his fox skin dedicated to Siobna so the same was worn by Dr William Price of Llantrisant in Wales during the later years of the 19th century. He himself identifying strongly with the fox goddess.

It will come as no surprise that I must advocate future students to study in closer detail the rituals from Africa and the Antipodes in order to ascertain if there is any stronger link with Europe's known rituals or if they are, indeed, a series of cases of generic non-linked cultural growth and development.

In attempting to sum up this brief study of the place of animals in our sacred past and their role in our future I feel I must express my appreciation for the work done in this field by Mr John Matthews and quote from his book "Taliesin", he tells us in his chapter on the art of transformation and I feel that it sums up the sense of physical and spiritual enhancement for the Druid/Shaman as well as for the communicant, " We are thus dealing with not one but three different, though related, kinds of change". (*note 18*).

"Metamorphosis or change of form;

Metempsychosis or passing from body another after death:

Reincarnation or becoming born again.

The most extraordinary thing about all of this is not that the humanity of the characters is changed, but that through their changes, Deity is changed as well. The descent of the initiate into the natures of each created species is an essential learning process".

All this is certainly made aware to us whether we are reading of the story of Tuan, or enjoying the tale of Gwion Bach. The transformations are there to change both body, soul and perception. It was not by accident that T.H.White included so much in "The Once and Future King" or again later in the "Book of Merlin", when the ageing Arthur listens to the counsel of the animals for the last time. With tales that span the centuries in such a way and with our own fascination with the animal world, it is high time we attempted to re-forged our links with our co-creatures and in so doing access our divine and, hopefully, theirs. I am sure the exchange would be astonishing.

NOTES

1 and 2. "The Ancient Egyptian Books Of The Afterlife". Erik Hornung. In particular the "Coffin Texts" and the New Kingdom Books of The Netherworld". The

Coffin Texts also are replicated on 2 sarcophagi in the Birmingham City Museum, one from the “Middle Kingdom” and one from the Ptolemaic dynasty.

3. In the Lichfield copy of “The Nurenborg Chronicles” the text is as one would expect a chronological history of the world according to the authorities of the late Middle Ages. These chronicles are, however, also decorated throughout with a pictorial representation of the family tree of the Holy Family, these drawings are represented as a fruited tree sprouting up the centre of each page and dividing the text into two columns on each page. The text is in classical Latin but well and clearly printed. The illustrations in question cover the years 1320 to 1380, the high-water mark of these type of legends.

4. “Cultes, Mythes et Religion”. Salamon Reinach, 1912. A book similar in form but not so well written as Wundt’s “Elements of Folk Psychology”, in which the author explores mans relationship with primal forms in his consciousness. J.G.Frazer draws upon the work in his 1922 edition, (Complete) edition of The Golden Bough but the references are discarded in editions after 1957.

5. The “Prayer to the Nile” is used in many neo-Egyptian rituals. Its origins are from heiroglyph carvings from the temple at Sakkara. It’s beauty and that of others can be found in “The Egyptian Book of Ritual” by Jocelyn Almond and Keith Seddon which is a remarkable work giving tabulated and formulated prayers and rituals of ancient Egyptian origin for use in today’s world.

6. “Letters from Africa”. Lt Col H.S.Senior. Privately published and also serialised in Blackwoods Magazine. (1955)?

7. “The Golden Bough”. J.G.Frazer. Totems, pages 112-113.

8. Personal experiences whilst on service in Australia during 1970 and 1971.

9. “The Golden Bough”. Pages 670-5.

10. “The Mysteries of Mithras”. Dr Payam Nabarz. Pages 41-58. This first class book not only gives us the history of the Mithras cult but also the use of the rituals for today. I feel this makes Mithras even more approachable to modern followers than has been earlier thought possible. With the use of ritual we can embrace the theology and the explanation of the self-destruction of the ‘ID’ is comfortably laid before us.

11. “The Druids”. Stuart Piggott. His volume is gives a modern and historically based view on the Druid Culture. This is balanced with archaeological evidence to support his findings. Whereas much of his findings can appear a little “Dry” it is

well balanced and compliments, I feel, the earlier work of the same name by T.D.Kendrick. Although perhaps out dated it still holds water to a classical view of the spread of Druid Culture.

12. The story of Blodeuedd is particularly beautiful and forms part of “The Mabinogion”. It can be found in the chapter marked “Math Son of Mathonwy”. In my own personal opinion I believe that the translation by Lady Charlotte Guest gives us the best form of the story but I reiterate, this is a personal preference.
13. The story of Saint Hubertus is traditional in Germany and spread throughout Europe from the 16th century onwards.
14. The “Horn Dance” is one of the most ancient ceremonies recorded and seen. For a rather lovely telling of its story read “The Fellowship of Cannock Chase” by “Pitman” published by the Express and Star newspaper in 1936.
15. Newcastle’s book revolutionised the training of horses in Europe upon its publication. It remained unchallenged until Capt Lewis Nolan’s book on horse and the cavalry was published in 1854.
16. The Black Demeter is well documented in the “Golden Bough”. The remnants of this belief can still be seen in Eastern Europe, particularly in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Again, I bear personal witness to the wide spread use of this legend.
17. “The Life and Death of a Druid Prince” Published by the British Museum. An excellent study of the finding and interpretation of Lindow Man. Although I still feel unease at the fact that his body is museum exhibit and has not been laid to rest with the correct ritual!
18. “Taliesin, A Study in Western Shamanism”. John Matthews. A seminal work and of great insight into this field of study. I have highlighted the phrase I used but it is impossible to return the debt this volume is owed.

The Author

Professor Rotherham has lectured for over twenty years in ‘other-worldly’ studies. His main areas of study are those surrounding relics and their use, and in particular the subjects of The Holy Grail and The Spear of Destiny. He holds doctorates in Ancient and Early Medieval Cultural Studies, Education, and Theology. He was the senior lecturer in Myths and Legends and Comparative Religious Studies for 12 years at the University of Staffordshire, and for 4 years Education Officer to the Walsall MBC Museums Service. He is currently researching the early Byzantine church.

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