

Ár nDraíocht Féin
Grove of the Rising Phoenix
Summer Solstice -2008
Hellenic Rite

PRE-RITUAL PREPARATION

Set out altar table, cast iron hibachi grill, and cast iron cauldron. Set the altar up, light some sage, have handy silver and ale for well, small bowl of cornmeal and oatmeal, whiskey, and oil for fire offerings, water of life preparations nearby, as well as divination tools. Have half a log ready in the grill and a lighter nearby. Place a small cup of ale by the fire for use with the outdwellers. Have sage ready for censuring, and a small bowl of water from the well for aspersing as well as a basket of barley.

PROCESSION

Folk sing:

We approach the Sacred Grove
With hearts and minds and flesh and bone.
Join us now in ways of old; We have come home.

The song is repeated until all folk find their places in the Circle. Seer stands near the well. Warrior stands near the fire. PD and Sacrificer stand by the altar, PD to the west, and Sacrificer to the east.

PD: The Seer will now ground us.

GROUNDING AND CENTERING

Seer leads folk in centering and grounding.

Folk close your eyes, take a deep breath in through your nose and breath out through your mouth... Release the cares of the outside world feel the tension slip from your shoulders, and find your center.... With a deep breath in through your nose and breath out through your mouth feeling relaxed, you will open your eyes when ready and return to the ritual space.

PURIFICATION

PD: Warrior! Make offering to appease those Outdwellers who are not in harmony with our ways.

Warrior moves outside of the circle with ale in hand and says:
Outdwellers, spirits of the land and sky, we welcome you with respect and gratitude, but ask you to keep the boundaries of our circle. The hand that guards is also the hand that gives, so with open hand and open heart, we offer to you this hearty beer for your patience and for holding the sacred ground we hold for you. Esto! So be it! (By David '08)

Warrior offers ale to the Outdwellers, pouring it on the ground.

PD: Hekas! Hekas! Esti bebeloi! (beb-o-lay) Begone profane ones!

Folk: Begone profane ones! Everyone throws their barley at the altar to consecrate the altar and to protect the fire from evil spirits.

Sacrificer and PD circle the Henge clockwise, censuring and aspersing the space and folk, as they chant:

By the might of the waters and light of the fire, this grove is made whole and holy.

After completely going around the circle, they move back to their places.

WELCOME

PD rings the bell 3 X 3, and says:

Nature Spirits... Ancestors... Shining Ones... Welcome! We shall meet here at the Sacred Center when we open the gates to the Otherworlds.

THE EARTH MOTHER

PD: Earth Mother! Gaia of Greece, Columbia of America, Bearer of all life! We show you honor! (By Avery '07)

Folk: kiss their hand and touch the ground.

Sacrificer offers the corn meal and dry oatmeal to the unlit Fire:
Gaia! We build our fire on Your bosom, reclaiming this place as sacred.
Esto! So be it!

Folk: Esto! So be it!

Warrior lights the fire, as folk join PD in singing:

Earth Mother

Earth Mother, we honor your body
Earth Mother, we honor your bones
Earth Mother, we sing to your spirit
Earth Mother, we sing to your stones
(repeat as necessary)

DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

PD: All flows in cycles. The end is just a reawakening of the beginning. Know and remember that whatsoever rises must also set, and whatsoever sets must also rise.

Warrior: Like the phoenix eternally rising from its own ashes, so does the cycle of life and re-birth mirror within our own lives. May we embrace this everflowing circle of growth and re-birth, letting each newly born moment be full of hope and potential. Paresmen timesonta tas theas kai tous theous. We are here to honor the Blessed Ones. (By David '08)

Seer: As the ancients did before us, so we do now, and so our descendants may do in the future.

Sacrificer: We gather here on the longest day, when the light is at its height, the time of the Summer Solstice. And even as we celebrate this time of light resplendent, so, too, do we remember that the wheel of the year now begins to bring us longer nights as we begin to cycle towards the dark time of winter.

PD: So let us join together as one folk to make our offerings in joy and reverence: Esto! So be it!

Folk: Esto! So be it!

IMBAS

PD: We ask for inspiration for our Rite.

Apollon Musagetes (mus-a-gay-tees)! I call to you!
To bring the lively daughters of Zeus
Lead the dancers with your lyre
Their grace and beauty will inspire
The Mousai's song our souls enflame
Calliope fair, Clio proclaims
Euroto (euro-toe) with her words of love
Urania shining from above

Catharsis from Melpomene (mel-poe-min-ee?)
The pleasing sound of Euterpe (Eu-tur-pee)
Terpsichore (terp-sick-ory) will dance and whirl
With Thalia the laughing girl
Polyhymina (poly-hee-mina) teaches the way
To the Kindreds we should pray
Bless our words to speak and sing
And accept our offering.

Warrior Make Offering of flower petals

Folk: Accept our offering.

THE LORE

PD: Heracles, son of Zeus and the mortal Alcmena. Hera, Queen of the Gods and Zeus's wife found out about his illegitimate son, she placed two snakes in his bed to kill him. Hera was unsuccessful, as Heracles, being born with great strength strangled the snakes when he found them.

Heracles married Megaera (meg-era). They had several sons, but after returning from war with the Minyans, the battle-fatigued Heracles slew his sons after mistaking them for enemy soldiers who had entered his home. Heracles then went to Delphi where the oracle revealed to him that he was the son of Zeus and revealed as well that as punishment he had to carry out whatever ten labors his cousin King Eurystheus (Eri-stay-oo's) imposed upon him. If Heracles carried out these ten labors, he would gain immortality.

As his 10th Labor, Heracles was sent to retrieve the cattle of King Geryone (Gary-own) of Erytheia (Eri-thay-ah). Heracles set sails for Erytheia (Eri-thay-ah), but became shipwrecked by storm in Libya. Wearing by heat on his way, he drew his bow and arrow on Helios the sun god out of annoyance, but the sun god amused by his nature surrendered to him a great cup to sail through the Straits of Gibraltar to land on the east coast of Britain ruled by Albion, son of Poseidon.

Helios is portrayed as a handsome god crowned with the shining aureole of the sun, who drives the chariot of the sun across the sky each day to earth-circling Oceanus and through the world-ocean returned to the East at night.

Helios is sometimes identified with Apollo; "Different names may refer

to the same being," Walter Burkert observes, "or else they may be consciously equated, as in the case of Apollo and Helios."

In Homer, Apollo is clearly identified as a different god, a plague-dealer with a silver (not golden) bow and no solar features.

In my research I could find no evidence that Helios had a consort, however I feel at this time of equal night and day that it is appropriate to honor Helios' sister Selene the moon goddess. Selene is generally depicted as a beautiful woman with a pale face, riding a silver chariot pulled by a yoke of oxen or a pair of horses. After her brother, Helios, finishes his journey across the sky, Selene, freshly washed in the waters of Earth-circling Ocean, begins her own journey as night falls upon the earth, which becomes lit from the radiance of her immortal head and golden crown.

THE THREE WORLDS & ATTUNEMENT

PD: We establish the Three Worlds of the Heavens, Midworld, and Underworld, when we attune ourselves with their powers, and magnify them within us. Our **Seer** will now lead us in the attunement.

Seer: Now, with your eyes closed and your body still and calm, imagine that from your feet, or the base of your spine, roots begin to grow downward... roots reaching and growing into the earth, down through soil and stone... down past the bones of your ancestors... deepening and spreading... reaching to touch the waters under the Earth... the Earth current... the dark, cool, magnetic power that nourishes and sustains life... as your roots touch this current it is drawn in and up toward your body... your breath draws the Earth power upward... into your body... the invisible, magnetic power fills your legs, energizing and strengthening... waters rise from the earth, into your legs... rising... into your loins... and pooling in your loins, a cauldron of Earth power... You breathe the power upward... rising from the earth, through your loins, rising up your spine... into your heart... pooling and filling a cauldron in your heart with healing, restoring energy... power rising from the deep, through your loins, through your heart... rising up your spine and into your head... filling a cauldron of wisdom and vision behind your eyes... and rising still, filling all your body and flowing out again through the crown of your head... through your hands... flowing out around your body and back into the earth... the power under the Earth flows in you... grounding you in the source of life...

Now imagine the sky overhead... The sun and moon and, far beyond them, the stars... imagine a single star at the center of the sky, shining directly over your head... the center of your inner sky, your own pole-star...see a flash of light shining down from that star... streaming down between moon and sun... gold, silver and blue-white light... the bright, warm, electric power of the sky... the light touches your head, filling and illuminating the cauldron like sun on still water... shining from above... filling your head with warm, awakening power... flowing down into your heart... warming the cauldron... shining down through head and heart, illumining the waters... downward to reach your loins... The cauldron shines with sky power in your loins... Tingling, electrical light in head, heart and loins... the light flows downward into Earth, and you are shining and flowing with the mingled powers of Earth and sky... the raw material of magic... the chaos of potential and the world order... When you are ready take a deep breath, open your eyes and return to the circle.

THE THREE REALMS

PD: We establish the Three Realms here!

Land and Sea and starry Sky,
you surround and sanctify.

Sacrificer:

Feel the Land beneath our feet,
where Earth and our bodies meet.
Let the Land hold firm, we pray.
May all ill be turned away!

Folk: May all ill be turned away!

Seer:

Hear the inner Ocean's roar,
As it pounds our sacred shore.
Let the Sea not rise, we pray.
May all ill be turned away!

Folk: May all ill be turned away!

Warrior:

See the wide and starry Sky,
all around us, far and high.
Let the Sky not fall, we pray,
May all ill be turned away!

Folk: May all ill be turned away!

PD:

Land and Sea and starry Sky,
you surround and sanctify.

Folk:

Land and Sea and starry Sky,
you surround and sanctify.

ESTABLISHING THE SACRED CENTER

PD: Let us establish the Sacred Center.

Sacrificer:

I place this stone as the Omphalos, the naval of the world, the sacred center of all the Cosmos. Like the sacred stone at Delphi, let this stone be the place where Zeus's eagles did meet to mark the center of the world. Let this stone mark the grave of the Pythian serpent, slain by Delian Apollon. Through this sacred center, let the World Tree grow, plunging deep within the earth to touch the Sacred Waters below and reaching through the sky to embrace the Sacred Fires above.

PD leads folk in singing:

By Fire and by Water

CHORUS

By Fire and by Water; between the Earth and Sky
We stand like the World-Tree rooted deep, crowned high

Come we now to the Well, the eye and the mouth of earth,
Come we now to the Well, and silver we bring

Seer *throws silver into the well*

Come we now to the Well, the waters of rebirth,
Come we now to the Well, together we sing

CHORUS

We will Kindle a Fire, Bless all and with harm to none.
We will kindle a Fire, and offerings pour.

Warrior *throws oil into the fire*

We will kindle a Fire, A light 'neath the Moon and Sun,
We will kindle a fire, our spirits will soar!

CHORUS

Gather we at the Tree, the root and the crown of all,
Gather we at the tree, below and above.

Sacrificer pours Olive oil on the Omphalos stone and **PD** pours water on the tree

Gather we at the Tree, Together we make our call
Gather we at the Tree, In wisdom and love

CHORUS

PD: Benevolent Hermes, befriender of men
Lending your strength to mortals in need
Kind-hearted god, guider of souls
Hermes, Hear our call!

Warrior : Hermes, Gate keeper, walk between the worlds
Traverse the three realms,
And open the gates.

Warrior makes an offering of olive oil to the fire

PD leads folk in singing:
Gatekeeper, open the portals
Between the gods and mortals
Power freely flows as our magic grows

PD faces the Fire, makes the sign of the sigil, and says: Hermes, join your magic with ours, and let the fire open as a gate.

PD faces the Well, makes the sign of the sigil, and says: Let the well open as a gate.

PD faces the Tree, makes the sign of the sigil, and says: Let the tree and Omphalos hold fast the Way between.

PD chants 3 times with folk joining in:
Well and Fire and Sacred Tree,
flow and flame and grow in me!

PD raises her arms: (as aneeksoon ee peeelhs) The Gates are open!
Esto!

Folk: The Gates are open! Esto!

Sacrificer: Folk, we are now woven into the fabric of the Otherworlds. Here, the Kindreds can hear our thoughts and know our hearts. Let there be only Truth here. Esto! So Be it!

Folk: Esto! So Be it!

KINDRED OFFERINGS

PD: We shall now honor the Kindreds –the Ancient Ones, the Noble Ones, and the Shining Ones – by sharing nourishment with them.

ANCESTORS

Michelle:

Ancestors, those who have come before us, heroes of our blood, heroes of our hearts, heroes of land and place, you who have sacrificed all that we may carry on and overcome, we give you honor and ask for your blessing this night. Akhilleus, Odysseus, Hippolyte, Theseus, Heracles, Bellerophon, Psykhe, we give you honor and ask that you be with us here and witness our right. We ask that you accept our offering as good to your eyes and bless us with your presence, your wisdom, your strength, your peace, your guidance, your courage and your love. Ancestors, Honored and Mighty Dead Ancestors... (By Michelle '08)

(Michelle offers ale to the earth by the Well)

Accept our offering.

Folk: Ancestors, accept our offering!

PD leads folk in singing:

Mothers And Fathers Of Old (Words by Sable)

From far beyond this mortal plane
Mothers and Fathers of Old
We pray that you return again
Mothers and Fathers of Old
To share with us the mysteries
And secrets long untold
Of the ancient ways we seek to reclaim
Mothers and Fathers of Old.

PD: Folk, close your eyes and take a moment to feel the Ancestors as they join us here.

NATURE SPIRITS

Sacrificer:

Spirits of the Land!
Fair folk, green kin, and totem beasts!

Kindreds of the Earth,
Come to our hearthside
Share with us this night,
and join us in our rite.

Sacrificer makes offerings of birdseed scattered around the Tree: Land-spirits, accept our offering!

Folk: Land-spirits, accept our offering!

PD leads folk in singing:

Fur and Feather

(Words and music by Sable)

Fur & Feather & Scale & Skin
Different without but the same within.
Many of body but one of soul
Through all creatures are we made whole.

PD: Folk, close your eyes and take a moment to feel the Nature Spirits as they join us here.

DEITIES

Warrior: Shining Ones!
Highest and mightiest,
First among the Kindreds, worthiest of honor,
To all the Theoi, Great Goddesses and Gods, Deathless Blessed Ones
Known and unknown deities of this place,
Gods and Goddesses of all those here,
We honor you in the old ways
And ask you to share our hearth and our bread.
Join us at our fire, O Great Beings.

Warrior offers bread to the fire: Shining Ones, accept our offering!

Folk: Shining Ones, accept our offering!

PD leads folk in singing:

Hail All The Gods

Hail all the Gods, Hail all the Goddesses,
Hail all the holy ones, we dwell together!
Powers of the sky, Powers of the sacred earth,
Powers of the underworld we dwell together.
Hail all the Gods! Hail all the Goddesses!
Hail all the Gods and Goddesses!

PD: Folk, close your eyes and take a moment to feel the gods and goddesses as they join us here.

KEY OFFERINGS

PD: Join us now, we pray, as we call to our patron deities for this rite.

Warrior offers scented oil to the fire, as PD invokes Helios:

Deity is invoked: Helios far- shining one, As you ride in your chariot, you shine upon men and deathless gods, and piercingly you gaze with eyes from your golden helmet. Bright rays beam dazzlingly from you, and your bright locks streaming from the temples your head gracefully enclose your far-seen face: stallions carry you. Then, when you have stayed your golden-yoked chariot and horses, you rest there upon the highest point of heaven, until you marvellously drive down again through heaven to Ocean. (*Homeric hymn xxxi*)

PD: Helios, accept our offerings!

Folk: Helios, accept our offerings!

Warrior offers scented oil to the fire, as Sacrificer invokes Selene:

Selene is invoked: Selene far-winged goddess From your immortal head a radiance is shown from heaven and embraces earth; and great is the beauty that ariseth from your shining light. The air, unlit before, glows with the light of your golden crown, and your rays beam clear, whensoever bright Selene having bathed in the waters of Ocean, and donned your far-gleaming, shining team, drives your long-maned horses at full speed, at eventime in the mid-month: then your great orbit is full and your beams shine brightest as you increase. So you are a sure token and a sign to mortal men. (*Homeric hymn xxxii*)

PD: Selene, accept our offerings!

Folk: Selene, accept our offerings!

PD: Folk close your eyes and and take a moment to feel as Helios and Selene join us this night.

THE PRAYER OF OFFERINGS

PD: It is now time for us to make offerings of praise to Helios, Selene, or Heracles. You may make a silent offering however we ask that you step forward and make an offering of wine on the ground or in the fire. You may offer silver to the Well, sing songs of praise, recite poetry, dance, or do whatever you feel would please our guests the most. Folk, as the spirit moves you, come forward and hold the wreath and make your Praise Offerings.

Sacrificer holds wreath, and hands it to person making offerings. When all offerings have been made, PD continues: As the wreath is passed to you, take a moment to add your energy to the offering wreath. Now is the time make our offerings to our honored guest, Helios, Selene, Heracles your patrons, the Kindreds, Land Spirits and all of the ancestors. You may also choose to make a donation to the Grove by placing it on the altar.

Sacrificer hands the wreath to the person to the left in the circle, who then passes it to the next person clockwise (deosil), until it goes all the way around.

When all offerings have been completed, and Sacrificer again holds the wreath, PD says:

O Helios far- shining one

O Selene far-winged goddess

O Noble, Ancient and Shining Ones!

Offerings have we made through the Well, Fire and Tree! And now our joy, love and reverence have filled this Wreath of Praise!

May our piety increase in your magic,

May our courage increase your power

And may our fertile creativity

show the world your abundance.

Mighty Kindreds, accept our offering!

Folk: Mighty Kindreds, accept our offering!

**As the wreath burns PD leads folk in singing:
The Offerings Song**

Let our voices arise on the Fire,

Let our voices resound in the deep,

Let the Kindreds accept what we offer,

As we honor the old ways we keep.

(repeat once)

THE PIACULAR OFFERING

PD and Sacrificer stand in front of the fire.

PD: If out of ignorance or faulty memory,
If we for any reason have offended You,
O Kindreds of our Folk, hear us now.
Accept this offering as recompense,
And know our hearts and our intent are pure.

Sacrificer offers scented oil to the fire.

PD: Esto! So Be it!

Folk: Esto! So be it!

THE OMEN

PD: In the spirit of hospitality, we now set aside a time to receive the blessings from the Powers. As our offerings rise to greet the Kindreds, take a moment to feel our connection with the Ancestors, the Land Spirits, and the Shining Ones.

During the meditation, while the offering burns, Seer prepares to read the omen, while Sacrificer prepares the Libation for the Waters of Life.

PD: Seer, what are the blessings that the Kindred now offer to us?

Seer interprets the blessing out loud for folk gathered and places the blessings around the Sacred Waters.

Blessings

Seer approaches the vial of Waters with the implements of their trade.

Seer: Folk shall I charge the Waters with this Omen?

Folk: Yes!

PD: These are the blessings of the Kindreds. The Waters have now been charged with this blessing and we shall incorporate them within our beings when we drink of this water.

PD stands in front of the Altar, elevates the Sacred Waters, and says: O Ancestors, Nature Spirits, Ancient, Noble, and Shining Ones!
Hallow these Waters! Pour now your blessings and power into it,

making them for us a true instrument of inspiration, that we may grow closer to you and to each other by sharing it among us. Bless our lives with love, magic and bounty as we drink of your essence. Kindreds, we ask you, **give us the Waters of Life!**

Folk: Give us the waters of life!

PD shows Folk the waters: Behold the waters of life!

PD pours holy water into the grape juice and a few drops on the pita bread, and hands them to the Sacrificer who start passing them around the circle. The bread and grape juice are passed, while PD leads folk in singing:

We drink of the waters

We drink of the waters of life,

We drink of the waters of life,

The kindreds have blessed us with strength, love and magic.

We drink of the waters of life,

(Repeat until all have had some cheese and milk then Bard collects the cups)

(Repeat until all have had some libations then volunteers collect the cups)

THE AFFIRMATION

PD: We have drunk of the Waters of Life and accepted the Omen! The Powers have given us true and wondrous blessings. We affirm the gifts of the Kindreds and acknowledge their power in our lives.

The worlds are in us, and we are in the worlds

The spirit in us is the spirit in the worlds

By Fire, Well, Tree and Omphalos

The blessings flow and shine in us!

Esto! So Be it!

Folk: Esto! So Be it!

THE WORKING

PD: As Heracles fired an arrow at Helios in annoyance with the heat, we will do the same. Perhaps Helios will grant us as great a boon as he gave Heracles, perhaps to step behind the curtain and allow the rains to fall. **Warrior:** *dry fires bow... grove members throw birdseed*

and flower petals in a joyous manner attempting to say in unison, "Opa! blessings of Helios on us all!!!"

<Insert David here :) >

CLOSING THE GATES

PD: The Mighty Ones have blessed us! So as we prepare to depart, let us give thanks to those who have aided us.

Sacrificer: Helios far- shining one and Selene far-winged goddess, for giving light and life Eycharisto (ef-har-ih-sto)! We thank you!

Folk: Eycharisto (ef-har-ih-sto)! We thank You!

Seer: Gods and Goddesses of elder days; mighty Ancestors; noble Spirits of the Land; our Kindreds, Eycharisto (ef-har-ih-sto)! We thank you!

Folk: Eycharisto (ef-har-ih-sto)! We thank You!

Warrior: Hermes, Gatekeeper, as warder of the ways, for your presence and power, for your guiding and guarding, we say, Eycharisto (ef-har-ih-sto)! we thank you!

Folk: Eycharisto (ef-har-ih-sto)! We thank You!

Sacrificer: Gaia, Earth Mother! For holding up the world and granting us Your blessings, Eycharisto (ef-har-ih-sto)! We thank you!

Folk: Eycharisto (ef-har-ih-sto)! We thank you!

PD: Now we end what we began.

Warrior: Let the fire be flame!

Seer: Let the well be water!

Sacrificer: Let all be as it was before, save for the magic we have made!

PD & Sacrificer shout: (*as kleesoon ee peeleh*s) Let the Gates be closed! Esto!

CONTINUITY AND GROUNDING

PD: Once again, we have continued in our traditions, honoring the Shining Ones, the Ancestors, and the Nature Spirits, just as in times of

old. We have made our offerings to the Powers and received their blessings in return.

Sacrificer: Great energy has been raised within us this day! Let's be grounded once more.

The Seer leads folk in grounding.

Close your eyes and remember your tree self... the powers are balanced in you... yours to shape and use... always with you in some degree... But for now, allow the powers to recede... waters to the Earth, light to the sky... knowing that each time you attune to them you become more attuned, more at one with the powers... breath deep... and allow your awareness to return to your common senses... as you open your eyes...

THE RECESSION

PD rings bell 3X3

PD: Walk with wisdom, Folk. The Rite is ended! Esto! So be it!

Folk: Esto! So be it!

Walk With Wisdom

Walk with wisdom,
from this hallowed place;
Walk not in sorrow,
Our roots shall 'ere embrace.
May strength be your brother
And honor be your kin;
And luck be your lover
Until we meet again!

At this time, folk exit the grove.

Presiding Druid: Deedra

Sacrificer: Aja

Seer: Avery/Don

Warrior: David